Interslavic Language

Interslavic (Medžuslovjansky; Меджусловјанскы) is a zonal constructed language based on the Slavic languages. Its purpose is to facilitate communication between representatives of different Slavic nations, as well as to allow people who do not know any Slavic language to communicate with Slavs by being understandable to most, if not all Slavic speakers without them having to learn the language themselves. For Slavs it can fulfill an educational role as well. Interslavic can be classified as a semi-constructed language. It is essentially a modern continuation of Old Church Slavonic, but also draws on the various improvised language forms Slavs have been using for centuries to communicate with Slavs of other nationalities, for example in multi-Slavic environments and on the Internet, providing them with a scientific base. Thus, both grammar and vocabulary are based on the commonalities between the Slavic languages, and non-Slavic elements are avoided. Its main focus lies on instant understandability rather than easy learning, a balance typical for naturalistic (as opposed to schematic) languages. Precursors of Interslavic have a long history and predate constructed languages like Volapük and Esperanto by centuries: the oldest description, written by the Croatian priest Juraj Križanić, goes back to the years 1659–1666. In its current form, Interslavic was created in 2006 under the name Slovianski. In 2011, Slovianski underwent a thorough reform and merged with two other projects, simultaneously changing its name to "Interslavic", a name that was first proposed by the Czech Ignác Hošek in 1908. Interslavic can be written using the Latin and the Cyrillic alphabets.

1. Background
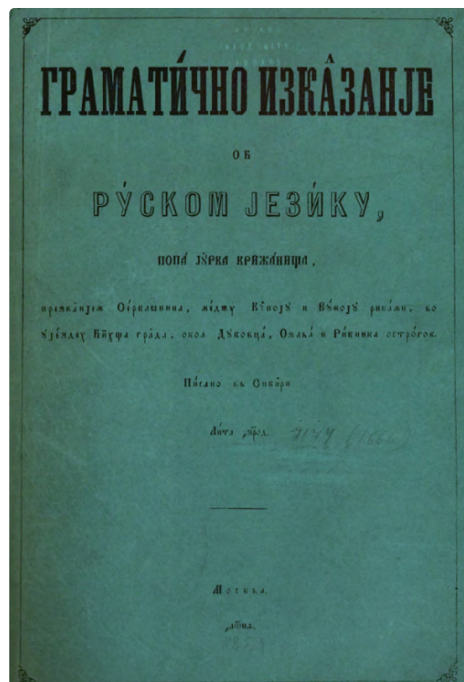
Cyrillic edition of *Gramatíčno izkâzanje ob rúskom jezíku* (1665) by Križanić, the first Interslavic grammar book. https://handwiki.org/wiki/index.php?curid=1721139

The history of the Interslavic or Pan-Slavic language is closely connected with Pan-Slavism, an ideology that endeavors cultural and political unification of all Slavs, based on the conception that all Slavic people are part of a single Slavic nation. Along with this belief came also the need for a Slavic umbrella language. A strong candidate for that position was Russian, the language of the largest (and during most of the 19th century the only) Slavic state and also mother tongue of more than half of the Slavs. This option enjoyed most of its popularity in Russia itself, but was also favoured by Pan-Slavists abroad, for example the Slovak Ľudovít Štúr.[1] Others believed that Old Church Slavonic was a better and also more neutral solution. In previous centuries, this language had served as an administrative language in a large part of the Slavic world, and it was still used on a large scale in Orthodox liturgy, where it played a role similar to Latin in the West. Old Church Slavonic had the additional advantage of being very similar to the common ancestor of the Slavic languages, Proto-Slavic. However, Old Church Slavonic had several practical disadvantages as well: it was written in a highly archaic

form of Cyrillic, its grammar was complex, and its vocabulary was characterized by many obsolete words as well as the absence of words for modern concepts. Hence, early examples of Pan-Slavic language projects were aimed at modernizing Old Church Slavonic and adapting it to the needs of everyday communication.

1.1. Early Projects

The first Interslavic grammar, *Gramatíčno izkâzanje ob rúskom jezíku* by the Croatian priest Juraj Križanić, was written in 1665.[2] He referred to the language as **Ruski**, but in reality it was mostly based on a mixture of the Russian edition of Church Slavonic and his own Ikavian Čakavian dialect of Croatian. Križanić used it not only for this grammar, but also in other works, including the treatise *Politika* (1663–1666). According to an analysis of the Dutch Slavist Tom Ekman, 59% of the words used in *Politika* are of common Slavic descent, 10% come from Russian and Church Slavonic, 9% from Croatian and 2.5% from Polish.[3]

Križanić was not the first who attempted writing in a language understandable to all Slavs. In 1583 another Croatian priest, Šime Budinić, had translated the *Summa Doctrinae Christanae* by Petrus Canisius into "Slovignsky",[4] in which he used both the Latin and Cyrillic alphabets.[5]

After Križanić, numerous other efforts have been made to create an umbrella language for the speakers of Slavic languages.[6] A notable example is Universalis Lingua Slavica by the Slovak attorney Ján Herkeľ (1786–1853), published in Latin and in Slovak in 1826.[7][8] Unlike Križanić' project, this project was closer to the West Slavic languages.

During the second half of the 19th century Pan-Slavic language projects were mostly the domain of Slovenes and Croats. In this era of awakening national consciousness, the Russians were the only Slavs who had their own state; other Slavic peoples inhabited large, mostly non-Slavic states, and clear borders between the various nations were mostly lacking. Among the numerous efforts at creating written standards for the South Slavic languages there were also efforts at establishing a common South Slavic language, Illyrian, that might also serve as a literary language for all Slavs in the future. Of special importance is the work of Matija Majar (1809–1892), a Slovenian Austroslavist who later converted to Pan-Slavism. In 1865 he published Uzajemni Pravopis Slavjanski ("Mutual Slavic Orthography").[9] In this work, he postulated that the best way for Slavs to communicate with other Slavs was by taking their own language as a starting point and then modifying it in steps. First, he proposed changing the orthography of each individual language into a generic ("mutual") Pan-Slavic orthography, subsequently he described a grammar that was based on comparing five major Slavic languages of his days: Old Church Slavonic, Russian, Polish, Czech and Serbian. Apart from a book about the language itself, Majar also used it for a biography of Cyril and Methodius[10] and for a magazine he published in the years 1873–1875, *Slavjan*. A fragment in the language can still be seen on the altar of Majar's church in Görtschach.[11] Other Pan-Slavic language projects were published in the same period by the Croatian Matija Ban,[12] the Slovenes Radoslav Razlag (sl) and Božidar Raič (sl),[13] as well as the Macedonian Bulgarian Grigor Parlichev[14] – all based on the idea of combining Old Church Slavonic with elements from the modern South Slavic languages.

- Authors of Pan-Slavic language projects in the 19th century

- Stefan Stratimirović (1757–1836). https://handwiki.org/wiki/index.php?curid=1481459

- Matija Ban (1818–1903). https://handwiki.org/wiki/index.php?curid=1397250

- Radoslav Razlag (1826–1880). https://handwiki.org/wiki/index.php?curid=1826240

- Božidar Raič (1827–1886). https://handwiki.org/wiki/index.php?curid=1178689

- Matija Majar-Ziljski (1809–1892). https://handwiki.org/wiki/index.php?curid=1167958
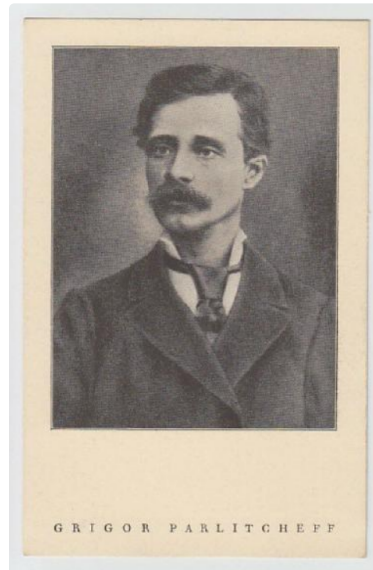
- Grigor Parlichev (1830–1893). https://handwiki.org/wiki/index.php?curid=1341647

All authors mentioned above were motivated by the belief that all Slavic languages were dialects of one single Slavic language rather than separate languages. They deplored the fact that these dialects had diverged beyond mutual comprehensibility, and the Pan-Slavic language they envisioned was intended to reverse this process. Their long-term objective was that this language would replace the individual Slavic languages.[15]:86 Majar, for example, compared the Pan-Slavic language with standardized languages like Ancient Greek and several modern languages:

> " The ancient Greeks spoke and wrote in four dialects, but nevertheless they had one single Greek language and one single Greek literature. Many modern educated nations, for example the French, the Italians, the English and the Germans, have a higher number of more divergent dialects and subdialects than we Slavs, and yet they have one single literary language. What is possible for other nations and what really exists among them, why should this be impossible only for us Slavs?[10]:154 "
>
> — —Matija Majar, Sveta brata Ciril i Metod, slavjanska apostola i osnovatelja slovstva slavjanskoga (1864)

Consequently, these authors did not consider their projects constructed languages at all. In most cases they provided grammatical comparisons between the Slavic languages, sometimes but not always offering solutions they labelled as "Pan-Slavic". What their projects have in common that they neither have a rigidly prescriptive grammar, nor a separate vocabulary.

1.2. The Twentieth Century

Bohumil Holý (1885–1947). https://handwiki.org/wiki/index.php?curid=1674387

In the early 20th century it had become clear that the divergence of the Slavic languages was irreversible and the concept of a Pan-Slavic literary language was no longer realistic. The Pan-Slavic dream had lost most of its power, and Pan-Slavists had to satisfy themselves with the formation of two multinational Slavic states, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. However, the need for a common language of communication for Slavs was still felt, and due to the influence of constructed languages like Esperanto, efforts were made to create a language that was no longer supposed to replace the individual Slavic languages, but to serve as an additional second language for Interslavic communication.[15]:118

In the same period, the nexus of Interslavic activity shifted to the North, especially to the Czech lands. In 1907 the Czech dialectologist Ignác Hošek (1852–1919) published a grammar of **Neuslavisch**, a proposal for a common literary language for all Slavs within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.[16] Five years later another Czech, Josef Konečný, published **Slavina**, a "Slavic Esperanto", which however had very little in common with Esperanto, but instead was mostly based on Czech. [17][18]:196 Whereas these two projects were naturalistic, the same cannot be said about two other projects by Czech authors, **Slovanština** by Edmund Kolkop[19] and **Slavski jezik** by Bohumil Holý.[20] Both projects, published in 1912 and 1920 respectively, show a clear tendency towards simplification, for example by eliminating grammatical gender and cases, and schematicism.[18]:214 [15]:128–132, 137–143, 159

During the 1950s the Czech poet and former Esperantist Ladislav Podmele (1920–2000), also known under his pseudonym *Jiří Karen*, worked for several years with a team of prominent interlinguists on an elaborate project, Mežduslavjanski jezik ("Interslavic language"). Among other things, they wrote a grammar, an Esperanto–Interslavic word list, a dictionary, a course and a textbook. Although none of those were ever published, the project gained some attention of linguists from various countries.[18]:301–302[21] Probably due to the political reality of those days, this language was primarily based on Russian.

1.3. The Digital Age

Although Pan-Slavism has not played a role of any significance since the collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, globalization and new media like the Internet have led to a renewed interest in a language that would be understandable for all Slavs alike. Older projects were largely forgotten, but as it became relatively easy for authors of new projects to publish their work, several new projects emerged.[22] Most of them originated from Slavic émigrée circles.[23] During the first years of the 21st century, especially Slovio of the Slovak Mark Hučko acquired some fame. Unlike most previous projects it was not a naturalistic, but a schematic language, its grammar being based largely on Esperanto.[24] Slovio was not only intended to serve as an auxiliary language for Slavs, but also for use on a global scale like Esperanto. For that reason it gained little acceptance among Slavs: a high degree of simplification, characteristic for most international auxiliary languages, makes it easier to learn for non-Slavs, but widens the distance with the natural Slavic languages and gives the language an overly artificial character, which by many is considered a disadvantage.[25]

In March 2006, the **Slovianski** project was started by a group of people from different countries, who felt the need for a simple and neutral Slavic language that the Slavs could understand without prior learning. The language they envisioned should be naturalistic and only consist of material existing in all or most Slavic languages, without any artificial additions. [25][26] Initially, Slovianski was being developed in two different variants: a naturalistic version known as **Slovianski-N** (initiated by Jan van Steenbergen and further developed by Igor Polyakov), and a more simplified version known as **Slovianski-P** (initiated by Ondrej Rečnik and further developed by Gabriel Svoboda). The difference was that Slovianski-N had six grammatical cases, while Slovianski-P—like English, Bulgarian and Macedonian—used prepositions instead. Apart from these two variants (**N** stands for *naturalism*, **P** for *pidgin* or *prosti* "simple"), a schematic version, **Slovianski-S**, has been experimented with as well, but was abandoned in an early stage of the project.[27] In 2009 it was decided that only the naturalistic version would be continued under the name **Slovianski**. Although Slovianski had three genders

(masculine, feminine, neuter), six cases and full conjugation of verbs—features usually avoided in international auxiliary languages—a high level of simplification was achieved by means of simple, unambiguous endings and irregularity being kept to a minimum.

Slovianski was mostly used in Internet traffic and in a news letter, *Slovianska Gazeta*.[28][29] In February and March 2010 there was much publicity about Slovianski after articles had been dedicated to it on the Polish internet portal *Interia.pl*[30] and the Serbian newspaper *Večernje Novosti*.[31] Shortly thereafter, articles about Slovianski appeared in the Slovak newspaper *Pravda*,[32] on the news site of the Czech broadcasting station ČT24,[33] in the Serbian blogosphere[34] and the Serbian edition of *Reader's Digest*,[35] as well as other newspapers and internet portals in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Ukraine.[36][37][38][39][40][41][42][43][44][45][46]

Neoslavonic logo. https://handwiki.org/wiki/index.php?curid=1130638

Slovianski has played a role in the development of other, related projects as well. **Rozumio** (2008) and **Slovioski** (2009) were both efforts to build a bridge between Slovianski and Slovio. Originally, Slovioski, developed by Polish-American Steeven Radzikowski, was merely intended to reform Slovio, but gradually it developed into a separate language. Like Slovianski, it was a collaborative project that existed in two variants: a "full" and a simplified version.[47] In January 2010 a new language was published, **Neoslavonic** ("Novoslovienskij", later "Novoslovĕnsky") by the Czech Vojtěch Merunka, based on Old Church Slavonic grammar but using part of Slovianski's vocabulary.[48][49]

In 2011, Slovianski, Slovioski and Novoslovĕnsky merged into one common project under the name **Interslavic** (*Medžuslovjanski*).[27] Slovianski grammar and dictionary were expanded to include all options of Neoslavonic as well, turning it into a more flexible language based on prototypes rather than fixed rules. From that time Slovianski and Neoslavonic have no longer been developed as separate projects, even though their names are still frequently in use as synonyms or "dialects" of Interslavic.[50]

In the same year, the various simplified forms of Slovianski and Slovioski that were meant to meet the needs of beginners and non-Slavs, were reworked into a highly simplified form of Interslavic, **Slovianto**.[51]

After the 2017 CISLa conference, the project of unifying the two standards of Interslavic has been commenced by Merunka and van Steenbergen, with a planned new, singular grammar and orthography. An early example of this endeavor is Merunka and van Steenbergen's joint publication on Slavic cultural diplomacy, released to coincide with the conference.[52]

2. Community

Vojtěch Merunka and Jan van Steenbergen at the Second Interslavic Conference in 2018.
https://handwiki.org/wiki/index.php?curid=1383107

The number of people who speak Interslavic is difficult to establish; the lack of demographic data is a common problem among constructed languages, so that estimates are always rough. In 2012, the Bulgarian author G. Iliev mentioned a number of "several hundreds" of Slovianski speakers.[53] In 2014, the language's Facebook page mentioned 4600 speakers.[54] For comparison, 320,000 people claimed to speak Esperanto in the same year. Although these figures are

notoriously unreliable, Amri Wandel considered them useful for calculating the number of Esperanto speakers worldwide, resulting in a number of 1,920,000 speakers.[55] If applied on Interslavic, this method would give a number of 27,600 speakers. A more realistic figure is given in 2017 by Kocór e.a., who estimated the number of Interslavic speakers to be 2000.[56]

Interslavic has an active online community, including four Facebook groups with 13060, 856, 316 and 117 members respectively by 25 April 2021[57][58][59][60] and an Internet forum with around 482 members.[61] Apart from that there are groups on VKontakte (1524 members),[62] Discord (1128 members)[63] and Telegram (366 members).[64] Of course, not every person who has joined a group or organization, or has registered in a language course, is automatically a speaker of the language, but on the other hand, not every speaker is automatically a member. Besides, membership figures have traditionally been used for calculations of Esperanto speakers as well, even though not every member could actually speak the language.[55] Considering the overlap between different groups, the Interslavic online community consists of at least 11,000 people, making it the constructed language with the largest online community after Esperanto.

The project has two online news portals,[65][66] a peer-reviewed expert journal focusing on issues of Slavic peoples in the wider sociocultural context of current times[67] and a wiki[68] united with a collection of texts and materials in Interslavic language somewhat similar to Wikisource.[69] Since 2016, Interslavic is used in the scientific journal *Ethnoentomology* for paper titles, abstracts and image captions.[70]

In June 2017 an international conference took place in the Czech town of Staré Město near Uherské Hradiště, which was dedicated to Interslavic.[71][72] The presentations were either held in Interslavic or translated into Interslavic. A second conference took place in 2018. In the same year, Vít Jedlička, president of the micronation Liberland expressed his intention to host a congress about Interslavic.[73] A third conference was planned in Hodonín in 2020, but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. Phonology

The phonemes that were chosen for Interslavic were the most popular Slavic phonemes cross-linguistically.

3.1. Consonants

Consonant phonemes[74]

	Labial		Alveolar /Dental		Post-alveolar		Palatal	Velar	
	plain	pal.	plain	pal.	plain	pal.		plain	pal.
Nasal	m		n	n^j					
Stop	p		t	t^j				k	
	b		d	d^j				g	
Affricate			$\widehat{ts}$		$\widehat{t\int}$ $\widehat{d\textbf{3}}$	$\widehat{t\textctc}$ $\widehat{d\textctz}$			
Fricative	f		s	s^j			$\int$	x	
	v		z	z^j			$\textbf{3}$		
Approximant							j		
Trill			r	r^j					
Lateral			ɫ			ʎ			

4. Alphabet

One of the main principles of Interslavic is that it can be written on any Slavic keyboard.[75] Since the border between Latin and Cyrillic runs through the middle of Slavic territory, Interslavic has an official orthography for both alphabets. Because of the differences between for example the Polish alphabet and other Latin alphabets, as well as between Serbian/Macedonian Cyrillic and other forms of Cyrillic, alternative spellings are allowed as well. Because Interslavic is not an ethnic language, there are no hard and fast rules regarding accentuation either.

What all varieties of Interslavic have in common is the following basic set of phonemes that can be found in all or most Slavic languages:

Latin	Cyrillic	Alternative representations	Pronunciation
A a	А а		ɑ ~ a
B b	Б б		b
C c	Ц ц		ts

Latin	Cyrillic	Notes	Pronunciation
Č č	Ч ч	Lat. cz, cx	tʃ ~ tʂ
D d	Д д		d
DŽ dž	ДЖ дж	Lat. dż, dzs, dzx Cyr: ѫ, Ж̌	dʒ ~ dʐ
E e	Е е		ɛ ~ e
Ě ě	Є є	usually: Lat. e, Cyr. e (or formerly ѣ)	jɛ ~ ʲɛ ~ ɛ
F f	Ф ф		f
G g	Г г		g ~ ɦ
H h	Х х		x
I i	И и		i ~ ji
J j	Ј ј	Cyr. й	j
K k	К к		k
L l	Л л		l ~ ɫ
Lj lj	Љ љ	Cyr. ль	lʲ ~ ʎ
M m	М м		m
N n	Н н		n
Nj nj	Њ њ	Lat. ň Cyr. нь	nʲ ~ ɲ
O o	О о		ɔ
P p	П п		p
R r	Р р		r
S s	С с		s
Š š	Ш ш	Lat. sz, sx	ʃ ~ ʂ
T t	Т т		t
U u	У у		u
V v	В в		v ~ ʋ
Y y	Ы ы	Lat. i, Cyr. и	i ~ ɪ ~ ɨ
Z z	З з		z
Ž ž	Ж ж	Lat. ż, zs, zx	ʒ ~ ʐ

Apart from the basic alphabet above, the Interslavic Latin alphabet has a set of optional letters as well. They differ from the standard orthography by carrying a diacritic and are used to convey additional etymological information and link directly to Proto-Slavic and Old Church Slavonic. The purpose of these characters is threefold:

- they allow for a more precise pronunciation,
- because sound changes from Proto-Slavic tend to be regular in all Slavic languages, they can be linked to a particular phoneme in every individual Slavic language, thus enhancing comprehensibility,
- by writing and/or pronouncing them in a different way, they can be used to manipulate the language in such way that it becomes more understandable for speakers of particular languages (in a process called "flavorization").

Latin	Notes	Pronunciation
Å å	in Proto-Slavic TorT and TolT sequences	ɒ
Ę ę	Matches OCS ѧ	jæ ~ ʲæ
Ų ų	Matches OCS ѫ	u ~ o ~ ow
Ė ė	Matches OCS strong front jer	æ ~ ɛ ~ ə
Ȯ ȯ	Matches OCS strong back jer	ə
Ć ć	Proto-Slavic tj (OCS щ)	tɕ
Đ đ	Proto-Slavic dj (OCS дж)	dʑ

Ď ď	Softened d		dʲ ~ ɟ ~ d
Ĺ ĺ	Softened l		ʎ ~ l
Ń ń	Softened n		ɲ ~ n
Ŕ ŕ	Softened r		rʲ ~ r̝ ~ r
Ś ś	Softened s		sʲ ~ ɕ ~ s
Ť ť	Softened t		tʲ ~ c ~ t
Ź ź	Softened z		zʲ ~ ʑ ~ z

The consonants **ľ**, **ń**, **ŕ**, **ť**, **ď**, **ś** and **ź** are softened or palatalized counterparts of **l**, **n**, **r**, **t**, **d**, **s** and **z**. The latter may also be pronounced like their softened/palatalized equivalents before **i**, **ě**, **ę** and possibly before **e**. This pronunciation is not mandatory, though: they may as well be written and pronounced hard.

Cyrillic equivalents of the etymological alphabet and ligatures can also be encountered in some Interslavic texts, though they are not part of any officially sanctioned spelling.

5. Morphology

Interslavic grammar is based on the greatest common denominator of that of the natural Slavic languages, and partly also a simplification thereof. It consists of elements that can be encountered in all or at least most of them.[76]

5.1. Nouns

Interslavic is an inflecting language. Nouns can have three genders, two numbers (singular and plural), as well as six cases (nominative, accusative, genitive, dative, instrumental and locative). Since several Slavic languages also have a vocative, it is usually displayed in tables as well, even though strictly speaking the vocative is not a case. It occurs only in the singular of masculine and feminine nouns.

There is no article. The complicated system of noun classes in Slavic has been reduced to four or five declensions:

- masculine nouns (ending in a – usually hard – consonant): *dom* "house", *mųž* "man"
- feminine nouns ending in **-a**: *žena* "woman", *zemja* "earth"
- feminine nouns ending in a soft consonant: *kosť* "bone"
- neuter nouns ending in **-o** or **-e**: *slovo* "word", *morje* "sea"
- Old Church Slavonic also had a consonantal declension that in most Slavic languages merged into the remaining declensions. Some Interslavic projects and writers preserve this declension, which consists of nouns of all three genders, mostly neuters:
  - neuter nouns of the group **-mę/-men-**: *imę/imene* "name"
  - neuter nouns of the group **-ę/-ęt-** (children and young animals): *telę/telęte* "calf"
  - neuter nouns of the group **-o/-es-**: *nebo/nebese* "heaven"
  - masculine nouns of the group **-en-**: *kameń/kamene* "stone"
  - feminine nouns with the ending **-òv**: *cŕkòv/cŕkve* "church"
  - feminine nouns with the ending **-i/-er-**: *mati/matere* "mother"

Declension of nouns

	masculine				neuter		feminine			consonantal		
	hard, animate	hard, non-animate	soft, animate	soft, non-animate	hard	soft	-a, hard	-a, soft	-Ø	m.	n.	f.
						singular						
N.	brat "brother"	dom "house"	mųž "man"	kraj "land"	slovo "word"	morje "sea"	žena "woman"	zemja "earth"	kosť "bone"	kamen "stone"	imę "name"	mati "mother"
A.	brata	dom	mųža	kraj	slovo	morje	ženų	zemjų	kosť	kamen	imę	mater
G.	brata	doma	mųža	kraja	slova	morja	ženy	zemje	kosti	kamene	imene	matere
D.	bratu	domu	mųžu	kraju	slovu	morju	ženě	zemji	kosti	kameni	imeni	materi
I.	bratom	domom	mųžem	krajem	slovom	morjem	ženojų	zemjejų	kosťjų	kamenem	imenem	materjų
L.	bratu	domu	mųžu	kraju	slovu	morju	ženě	zemji	kosti	kameni	imeni	materi
V.	brate	dome	mųžu	kraju	slovo	morje	ženo	zemjo	kosti	kameni	imę	mati
						plural						

N.	brati	domy	mųži	kraje	slova	morja	ženy	zemje	kosti	kameni	imena	materi
A.	bratov	domy	mųžev	kraje	slova	morja	ženy	zemje	kosti	kameni	imena	materi
G.	bratov	domov	mųžev	krajev	slov	morej	žen	zem(ej)	kostij	kamenev	imen	materij
D.	bratam	domam	mųžam	krajam	slovam	morjam	ženam	zemjam	kosťam	kamenam	imenam	materam
I.	bratami	domami	mųžami	krajami	slovami	morjami	ženami	zemjami	kosťami	kamenami	imenami	materami
L.	bratah	domah	mųžah	krajah	slovah	morjah	ženah	zemjah	kosťah	kamenah	imenah	materah

5.2. Adjectives

Adjectives are always regular. They agree with the noun they modify in gender, case and number, and are usually placed before it. In the column with the masculine forms, the first relates to animate nouns, the second to inanimate nouns. A distinction is made between hard and soft stems, for example: *dobry* "good" and *svěži* "fresh":

Declension of adjectives

	hard			soft		
	m.	n.	f.	m.	n.	f.
			singular			
N.	dobry	dobro	dobra	svěži	svěže	svěža
A.	dobrogo/dobry	dobro	dobrų	svěžego/svěži	svěže	svěžų
G.	dobrogo	dobrogo	dobroj	svěžego	svěžego	svěžej
D.	dobromu	dobromu	dobroj	svěžemu	svěžemu	svěžej
I.	dobrym	dobrym	dobrojų	svěžim	svěžim	svěžejų
L.	dobrom	dobrom	dobroj	svěžem	svěžem	svěžej
			plural			
N.	dobri/dobre	dobre	dobre	svěži/svěže	svěže	svěže
A.	dobryh/dobre	dobre	dobre	svěžih/svěže	svěža	svěže
G.		dobryh			svěžih	
D.		dobrym			svěžim	
I.		dobrymi			svěžimi	
L.		dobryh			svěžih	

Some writers do not distinguish between hard and soft adjectives. One can write *dobrego* instead of *dobrogo*, *svěžogo* instead of *svěžego*.

Comparison

The comparative is formed with the ending **-(ěj)ši**: *slabši* "weaker", *pòlnějši* "fuller". The superlative is formed by adding the prefix **naj-** to the comparative: ***naj**slabši* "weakest". Comparatives can also be formed with the adverbs *bolje* or *vyše* "more", superlatives with the adverbs *najbolje* or *najvyše* "most".

Adverbs

Hard adjectives can be turned into an adverb with the ending **-o**, soft adjectives with the ending **-e**: *dobr**o*** "well", *svěž**e*** "freshly". Comparatives and superlatives can be adverbialized with the ending **-ěje**: *slab**ěje*** "weaker".

5.3. Pronouns

The personal pronouns are: **ja** "I", **ty** "you, thou", **on** "he", **ona** "she", **ono** "it", **my** "we", **vy** "you" (pl.), **oni** "they". When a personal pronoun of the third person is preceded by a preposition, **n-** is placed before it.

Personal pronouns

	singular					plural			reflexive
	1st person	2nd person	3rd person			1st person	2nd person	3rd person	
			masculine	neuter	feminine				
N.	ja	ty	on	ono	ona	my	vy	oni	—

A.	mene (mę)	tebe (tę)	jego	jų	nas	vas	jih	sebe (sę)
G.	mene	tebe	jego	jej				sebe
D.	mně (mi)	tobě (ti)	jemu	jej	nam	vam	jim	sobě (si)
I.	mnojų	tobojų	nim	njų	nami	vami	njimi	sobojų
L.	mně	tobě	nim	njej	nas	vas	njih	sobě

Other pronouns are inflected as adjectives:

- the possessive pronouns **moj** "my", **tvoj** "your, thy", **naš** "our", **vaš** "your" (pl.), **svoj** "my/your/his/her/our/their own", as well as **čij** "whose"
- the demonstrative pronouns **toj** "this, that", **tutoj** "this" and **tamtoj** "that"
- the relative pronoun **ktory** "which"
- the interrogative pronouns **kto** "who" and **čto** "what"
- the indefinite pronouns **někto** "somebody", **něčto** "something", **nikto** "nobody", **ničto** "nothing", **ktokoli** "whoever, anybody", **čto-nebųď** "whatever, anything", etc.

5.4. Numerals

The cardinal numbers 1–10 are: 1 – **jedin/jedna/jedno**, 2 – **dva/dvě**, 3 – **tri**, 4 – **četyri**, 5 – **pęť**, 6 – **šesť**, 7 – **sedm**, 8 – **osm**, 9 – **devęť**, 10 – **desęť**.

Higher numbers are formed by adding **-nadsęť** for the numbers 11–19, **-desęt** for the tens, **-sto** for the hundreds. Sometimes (but not always) the latter is inflected: *dvasto/tristo/pęťsto* and *dvěstě/trista/pęťsȯt* are both correct.

The inflection of the cardinal numerals is shown in the following table. The numbers 5–99 are inflected either as nouns of the *kosť* type or as soft adjectives.

Declension of the numbers 1–5

	1			2		3	4	5
	m.	n.	f.	m./n.	f.			
N.	jedin	jedno	jedna	dva	dvě	tri	četyri	pęť
A.	jedin	jedno	jednų	dva	dvě	tri	četyri	pęť
G.	jednogo		jednoj	dvoh		trěh	četyrěh	pęti
D.	jednomu		jednoj	dvoma		trěm	četyrěm	pęti
I.	jednym		jednojų	dvoma		trěma	četyrmi	pęťjų
L.	jednom		jednoj	dvoh		trěh	četyrěh	pęti

Ordinal numbers are formed by adding the adjective ending **-y** to the cardinal numbers, except in the case of *pŕvy* "first", *drugy/vtory* "second", *tretji* "third", *četvŕty* "fourth", *stoty/sȯtny* "hundredth", *tysęčny* "thousandth".

Fractions are formed by adding the suffix **-ina** to ordinal numbers: *tretjina* "(one) third", *četvŕtina* "quarter", etc. The only exception is *pol* (*polovina, polovica*) "half".

Interslavic has other categories of numerals as well:

- collective numerals: *dvoje* "pair, duo, duet", *troje, četvero...*, etc.
- multiplicative numerals: *jediny* "single", *dvojny* "double", *trojny, četverny...*, etc.
- differential numerals: *dvojaky* "of two different kinds", *trojaky, četveraky...*, enz.

5.5. Verbs

Aspect

Like all Slavic languages, Interslavic verbs have grammatical aspect. A perfective verb indicates an action that has been or will be completed and therefore emphasizes the result of the action rather than its course. On the other hand, an imperfective verb focuses on the course or duration of the action, and is also used for expressing habits and repeating patterns.

Verbs without a prefix are usually imperfective. Most imperfective verbs have a perfective counterpart, which in most cases is formed by adding a prefix:
dělati ~ sdělati "to do"
čistiti ~ izčistiti "to clean"

pisati ~ napisati "to write"

Because prefixes are also used to change the meaning of a verb, secondary imperfective forms based on perfective verbs with a prefix are needed as well. These verbs are formed regularly:

- **-ati** becomes **-yvati** (e.g. *zapisati ~ zapisyvati* "to note, to register, to record", *dokazati ~ dokazyvati* "to prove")
- **-iti** become **-jati** (e.g. *napraviti ~ napravjati* "to lead", *pozvoliti ~ pozvaljati* "to allow", *oprostiti ~ oprašćati* "to simplify")

Some aspect pairs are irregular, for example *nazvati ~ nazyvati* "to name, to call", *prijdti ~ prihoditi* "to come", *podjęti ~ podimati* "to undertake".

Stems

The Slavic languages are notorious for their complicated conjugation patterns. To simplify these, Interslavic has a system of two conjugations and two verbal stems. In most cases, knowing the infinitive is enough to establish both stems:

- the first stem is used for the infinitive, the past tense, the conditional mood, the past passive participle and the verbal noun. It is formed by removing the ending **-ti** from the infinitive: *dělati* "to do" > *děla-*, *prositi* "to require" > *prosi-*, *nesti* "to carry" > *nes-*. Verbs ending in **-sti** can also have their stem ending on **t** or **d**, f.ex. *vesti > ved-* "to lead", *gnesti > gnet-* "to crush".
- the second stem is used for the present tense, the imperative and the present active participle. In most cases both stems are identical, and in most of the remaining cases the second stem can be derived regularly from the first. In particular cases they have to be learned separately. In the present tense, a distinction is made between two conjugations:
  - the first conjugation includes almost all verbs that do not have the ending **-iti**, as well as monosyllabic verbs on **-iti**:
    - verbs on **-ati** have the stem **-aj-**: *dělati* "to do" > *dělaj-*
    - verbs on **-ovati** have the stem **-uj-**: *kovati* "to forge" > *kuj-*
    - verbs on **-nųti** have the stem **-n-**: *tęgnųti* "to pull, to draw" > *tęgn-*
    - monosyllabic verbs have **-j-**: *piti* "to drink" > *pij-*, *čuti* "to feel" > *čuj-*
    - the second stem is identical to the first stem if the latter ends in a consonant: *nesti* "to carry" > *nes-*, *vesti* "to lead" > *ved-*
  - the second conjugation includes all polysyllabic verbs on **-iti** and most verbs on **-ěti**: *prositi* "to require" > *pros-i-*, *viděti* "to see" > *vid-i-*

There are also mixed and irregular verbs, i.e. verbs with a second stem that cannot be derived regularly from the first stem, for example: *pisati* "to write" > *piš-*, *spati* "to sleep" > *sp-i-*, *zvati* "to call" > *zov-*, *htěti* "to want" > *hoć-*. In these cases both stem have to be learned separately.

Conjugation

The various moods and tenses are formed by means of the following endings:

- *Present tense*: **-ų, -eš, -e, -emo, -ete, -ųt** (first conjugation); **-jų, -iš, -i, -imo, -ite, -ęt** (second conjugation)
- *Past tense – simple* (as in Russian): m. **-l**, f. **-la**, n. **-lo**, pl. **-li**
- *Past tense – complex* (as in South Slavic):
  - *Imperfect tense*: **-h, -še, -še, -hmo, -ste, -hų**
  - *Perfect tense*: m. **-l**, f. **-la**, n. **-lo**, pl. **-li** + the present tense of *byti* "to be"
  - *Pluperfect tense*: m. **-l**, f. **-la**, n. **-lo**, pl. **-li** + the imperfect tense of *byti*
- *Conditional*: m. **-l**, f. **-la**, n. **-lo**, pl. **-li** + the conditional of *byti*
- *Future tense*: the future tense of *byti* + the infinitive
- *Imperative*: **-Ø, -mo, -te** after **j**, or **-i, -imo, -ite** after another consonant.

The forms with **-l-** in the past tense and the conditional are actually participles known as the *L-participle*. The remaining participles are formed as follows:

- *Present active participle*: **-ųći** (first conjugation), **-ęći** (second conjugation)
- *Present passive participle*: **-omy/-emy** (first conjugation), **-imy** (second conjugation)
- *Past active participle*: **-vši** after a vowel, or **-ši** after a consonant
- *Past passive participle*: **-ny** after a vowel, **-eny** after a consonant. Monosyllabic verbs (except for those on **-ati**) have **-ty**. Verbs on **-iti** have the ending **-jeny**.

The *verbal noun* is based on the past passive participle, replacing the ending **-ny/-ty** with **-ńje/-ťje.**

Examples

First conjugation (*dělati* "to do")

	present	imperfect	perfect	pluperfect	conditional	future	imperative
ja	dělaju	dělah	jesm dělal(a)	běh dělal(a)	byh dělal(a)	budu dělati	
ty	dělaješ	dělaše	jesi dělal(a)	běše dělal(a)	bys dělal(a)	budeš dělati	dělaj
on ona ono	dělaje	dělaše	jest dělal jest dělala jest dělalo	běše dělal běše dělala běše dělalo	by dělal by dělala by dělalo	bude dělati	
my	dělajemo	dělahmo	jesmo dělali	běhmo dělali	byhmo dělali	budemo dělati	dělajmo
vy	dělajete	dělaste	jeste dělali	běste dělali	byste dělali	budete dělati	dělajte
oni	dělaju	dělahu	sut dělali	běhu dělali	by dělali	budut dělati	

infinitive	dělati
present active participle	dělajuć-i (-a, -e)
present passive participle	dělajem-y (-a, -o)
past active participle	dělavš-i (-a, -e)
past passive participle	dělan-y (-a, -o)
verbal noun	dělańje

Second conjugation (*hvaliti* "to praise")

	present	imperfect	perfect	pluperfect	conditional	future	imperative
ja	hvalju	hvalih	jesm hvalil(a)	běh hvalil(a)	byh hvalil(a)	budu hvaliti	
ty	hvališ	hvališe	jesi hvalil(a)	běše hvalil(a)	bys hvalil(a)	budeš hvaliti	hvali
on ona ono	hvali	hvališe	jest hvalil jest hvalila jest hvalilo	běše hvalil běše hvalila běše hvalilo	by hvalil by hvalila by hvalilo	bude hvaliti	
my	hvalimo	hvalihmo	jesmo hvalili	běhmo hvalili	byhmo hvalili	budemo hvaliti	hvalimo
vy	hvalite	hvaliste	jeste hvalili	běste hvalili	byste hvalili	budete hvaliti	hvalite
oni	hvalęt	hvalihu	sut hvalili	běhu hvalili	by hvalili	budut hvaliti	

infinitive	hvaliti
present active participle	hvalęć-i (-a, -e)
present passive participle	hvalim-y (-a, -o)
past active participle	hvalivš-i (-a, -e)
past passive participle	hvaljen-y (-a, -o)
verbal noun	hvaljeńje

Whenever the stem of a verbs of the second conjugation ends in **s, z, t, d, st** or **zd**, an ending starting **-j** causes the following mutations:

- *prositi* "to require": *pros-ju > pro**š**u, pros-jeny > pro**š**eny*
- *voziti* "to transport": *voz-ju > vo**ž**u, voz-jeny > vo**ž**eny*
- *tratiti* "to lose": *trat-ju > tra**ć**u, trat-jeny > tra**ć**eny*
- *slěditi* "to follow": *slěd-ju > slě**dž**u, slěd-jeny > slě**dž**eny*
- *čistiti* "to clean": *čist-ju > či**šć**u, čist-jeny > či**šć**eny*
- *jezditi* "to go (by transport)": *jezd-ju > je**ždž**u, jezd-jeny > je**ždž**eny*

Alternative forms

Because Interslavic is not a highly formalized language, a lot of variation occurs between various forms. Often used are the following alternative forms:

- In the first conjugation, **-aje-** is often reduced to **-a-**: *ty dělaš*, *on děla* etc.
- Instead of the 1st person singular ending **-(j)u**, the ending **-(e)m** is sometimes used as well: *ja dělam*, *ja hvalim*, *ja nesem*.
- Instead of **-mo** in the 1st person plural, **-me** can be used as well: *my děla(je)me*, *my hvalime*.
- Instead of **-hmo** in the imperfect tense, **-smo** and the more archaic **-hom** can be used as well.
- Instead of the conjugated forms of *byti* in the conditional (*byh, bys* etc.), *by* is often used as a particle: *ja by pisal(a)*, *ty by pisal(a)* etc.
- Verbal nouns can have the ending **-ije** instead of **-je**: *dělanije*, *hvaljenije*.

Irregular verbs

A few verbs have an irregular conjugation:

- **byti** "to be" has *jesm, jesi, jest, jesmo, jeste, sųt* in the present tense, *běh, běše...* in the imperfect tense, and *bųdų, bųdeš...* in the future
- **dati** "to give", **jěsti** "to eat" and **věděti** "to know" have the following present tense: *dam, daš, da, damo, date, dadųt*; *jem, ješ...*; *věm, věš...*
- **idti** "to go by foot, to walk" has an irregular L-participle: *šel, šla, šlo, šli*.

6. Vocabulary

Words in Interslavic are based on comparison of the vocabulary of the modern Slavic languages. For this purpose, the latter are subdivided into six groups:

- Russian
- Ukrainian and Belarusian
- Polish
- Czech and Slovak
- Slovene, Croat, Serbian, Montenegrin and Bosnian
- Bulgarian and Macedonian

These groups are treated equally. In some situations even smaller languages, like Cashubian, Rusyn and Sorbian languages are included.[77] Interslavic vocabulary has been compiled in such way that words are understandable to a maximum number of Slavic speakers. The form in which a chosen word is adopted depends not only on its frequency in the modern Slavic languages, but also on the inner logic of Interslavic, as well as its form in Proto-Slavic: to ensure coherence, a system of regular derivation is applied.[78]

Sample words in Interslavic, compared to other Slavic languages

English	Interslavic	Russian	Ukrainian	Belarusian	Polish	Czech	Slovak	Upper Sorbian	Slovene	Serbo-Croatian	Macedonian	Bu
human being	člověk / чловєк	человек	чоловік (only "male human"; "human being" is "людина")	чалавек	człowiek	člověk	človek	čłowjek	človek	čovjek, čovek	човек	чо
dog	pes / пес	пёс, собака	пес, собака	сабака	pies	pes	pes	pos, psyk	pes	pas	пес, куче	пе
house	dom / дом	дом	дім, будинок	дом	dom	dům	dom	dom	dom, hiša	dom, kuća	дом, куќа	до къ
book	kniga / книга	книга	книга	кніга	książka, księga	kniha	kniha	kniha	knjiga	knjiga	книга	кн
night	noč / ноч	ночь	ніч	ноч	noc	noc	noc	nóc	noč	noć	ноќ	но
letter	pismo / писмо	письмо	лист	пісьмо, ліст	list, pismo	dopis	list	list	pismo	pismo	писмо	пи
big, large	veliky / великы	большой, великий	великий	вялікі	wielki	velký	veľký	wulki	velik	velik, golem	голем	го
new	novy / новы	новый	новий	новы	nowy	nový	nový	nowy	nov	nov	нов	но

7. Example

The Pater Noster:

Interslavic (Extended Latin)	Interslavic (Cyrillic)	Old Church Slavonic (Romanized)

Otče naš, ktory jesi v nebesah,
nehaj svęti sę imę Tvoje.
Nehaj prijde kråljevstvo Tvoje,
nehaj bųde volja Tvoja, kako v nebu
tako i na zemji.
Hlěb naš vśakoděnny daj nam dnèś,
i odpusti nam naše grěhy,
tako kako my odpušćajemo našim
grěšnikam.
I ne vvedi nas v pokušeńje,
ale izbavi nas od zlogo.
Ibo Tvoje jest kråljevstvo i moć i
slava, na věky věkov.
Amin.[79]

Отче наш, кторы јеси в небесах,
нехај свети се име Твоје.
Нехај приде краљевство Твоје,
нехај буде воља Твоја, како в небу
тако и на земји.
Хлеб наш всакоденны дај нам днес,
и одпусти нам наше грехы,
тако како мы одпушчајемо нашим
грешникам.
И не введи нас в покушење,
але избави нас од злого.
Ибо Твоје јест краљевство и моч и
слава, на векы веков.

Otǐče našǐ, iže jesi na nebesǐchǔ,
da svętitǔ sę imę tvoje,
da priidetǔ cěsarǐstvije tvoje,
da bǫdetǔ volja tvoja, jako na
nebesi i na zemlji;
chlěbǔ našǐ nastojęštajego dǐne
daždǐ namǔ dǐnǐ sǐ,
i otǔpusti namǔ dlǔgy našę,
jako i my otǔpuštajemǔ dlǔžǐnikomǔ
našimǔ.
i ne vǔvedi nasǔ vǔ napastǐ
nǔ izbavi ny otǔ neprijazni.[80]

8. In Popular Culture

Interslavic is featured in Václav Marhoul's movie *The Painted Bird* (based on novel of the same title written by Polish-American writer Jerzy Kosiński), in which it plays the role of an unspecified Slavic language, making it the first movie to have it.[81][82] Marhoul stated that he decided to use Interslavic (after searching on Google for "Slavic Esperanto") so that no Slavic nation would nationally identify with the villagers depicted as bad people in the movie.[83][84]

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