

Logical empiricism and language planning

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My contribution examines how romanticist vs instrumentalist views of language influence attitudes on language planning and language construction. I will use the controversy between Carnap and Wittgenstein concerning the possibility and legitimacy of Esperanto to illustrate these two philosophies. Rudolf Carnap, member of the Vienna Circle and spokesperson for logical empiricism, was an Esperantist from an early age, and he pursued his involvement in the international auxiliary language movement throughout his life. In his *Intellectual Autobiography*, he clearly mentions the relation between his activity of building symbol systems as a logician and his interest in language planning for international communication in the tradition of Descartes, Leibniz and Peano. For Carnap, both activities result from the critical and creative dimension of language. While he considers language a functional device for various purposes, in line with his philosophical project, Wittgenstein emphasizes the role of ethnic languages in sustaining tradition and defining identity. Against Wittgenstein's conservative view of language, Carnap points at the creative dynamics that shape our actual language use every day. Daily language evolves by the active work of locutors who invent new linguistic forms for new purposes, as attested by the emergence of a strictly defined terminology alongside the less precise vocabulary of everyday language for the needs of special sciences. These facts relativise the perceived radical departure of interlanguages from natural languages. Other language planners such as Einar Haugen and Valter Tauli emphasized the instrumental purpose of language and supported locutors' active intervention in it through language reform and language construction. Overall, the Vienna Circle's antimetaphysical rejection of the romanticist view of language led to a more liberal and flexible attitude toward language planning issues. The internationalism of logical empiricists was effective in shaping their favourable disposition towards international auxiliary languages and their critical analysis of metaphysical concepts such as *Volksgeist* lead them to a more malleable vision of collective identity, one not bound to the strict observance of established linguistic forms.

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