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Josef Hladký – sexagenarian

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BORN 30 JUNE 1931

JOSEF HLADKÝ — SEXAGENARIAN

Jan Fírbas

The community of teachers and students (*communio magistrorum et scholarium*) forming the Masaryk University Department of English and American Studies has good reason for bringing out a collection of papers in honour of Josef Hladký's sixtieth birthday. In doing so it wishes to thank him for what he has done for the Brno English Department, and together with colleagues from the English Departments of the Arts Faculties of Charles University, Prague, Comenius University, Bratislava, Palacký University, Olomouc, and Šafárik University, Prešov, to thank him for what he has done for the fostering of English studies in our Republic.

Habent sua fata communiones magistrorum et scholarium. Looking back on the past, especially on the four decades between 1948 and 1989, the present and the former members of the Brno Department of English gratefully recall the congenial atmosphere, based on mutual respect and created by ties of loyal friendship, that developed in the Department throughout those years. Since 1948 the post of departmental head has been held in succession by seven scholars, all endeavouring to observe the rules of fair play, a necessary precondition for a good team spirit. Josef Hladký was one of them, filling the post for seven years (1973—80). But although performing his duties with exemplary dedication, he officially remained a "temporary" head. The present homage volume is to be regarded as an expression of the Department's gratitude for his unselfishly carrying on his work in spite of adverse circumstances. In addition, it is to be regarded as the Department's appreciation of his co-editorship of the series of Brno Studies in English. (He has been acting as its co-editor since 1968.)

The colleagues from the other Czechoslovak university Departments of English join the members of the Brno Department in recalling that it was Hladký who was the initiator, convener and organizer of two highly

successful Anglistic conferences open to Czech and Slovak Anglicists and held in Brno in 1986 and 1989. These were the first — and so far only — such events to bring together the whole of the by no means small community of Czech and Slovak Anglicists, thus permitting them to inform one another fully of the research — in linguistics, literature and teaching methodology — pursued in their departments. Let us also recall that, together with Mrs Rosalind Burford and her colleagues from the English Language Promotion Unit of the British Council in London, Hladký and his team from Masaryk University prepared and hosted the very successful Brno English Teacher Education Conference at the Brno Arts Faculty in May 1991 (see Pospíšil 1991).

Having been elected Dean of the Brno Faculty of Arts in a free and democratic way immediately after the Velvet Revolution of 1989, Hladký has become head of a community of teachers and students in which Anglicists are heavily outnumbered by non-Anglicists. In the eyes of the members of the Brno Department of English, this election is a gratifying testimony that the personal qualities of the scholar to be honoured by the present volume are also valued by the wider academic public.

What are the beginnings of Hladký's academic career? They date back to 1951 when he enrolled at the Brno Faculty of Arts as a student of English and Dutch and became a pupil of Professor Josef Vachek, an outstanding representative of the Prague school of linguistics and founder of the linguistics section of the Brno Department of English. Vachek's lectures and seminars roused Hladký's interest in English linguistics. Regarding Hladký as a promising young scholar, his university teachers encouraged him to apply for an assistantship in the Brno Department of English. They strongly supported his application; for political reasons, however, he could join the Department as a senior assistant only nine years later (1965). In the meantime, he worked as an interpreter and translator, and later as a patent researcher in the First Brno Engineering Works (1956—63), and taught in the Modern Languages Department of the Electrical Engineering Faculty of the Brno Technical University (1963—5). After joining the Brno Department of English, he took his PhD. in 1967, and his CSc. in 1980. In 1985 he was appointed Docent (Associate Professor).

In choosing his fields of research, Hladký has been inspired by his teacher, Josef Vachek. Hladký's writings on English linguistics concern problems of functional syntax, the linguistic characterology of English (contrastive linguistics), historical grammar, spoken and written language and lexicology. In a number of his works he applies statistical methods specially devised for the purposes of the investigations in hand. For his students, he has prepared, or participated in the preparation of, a number of useful university textbooks.

In "Remarks on complex condensation phenomena in some English and Czech contexts" (1961), "An attempt at a quantitative expression of the

communicative value of the verb in English and Czech" (1968), and "A note on the quantitative evaluation of the verb in English" (1969), Hladký deals with the English tendency towards nominal expression. He compares it with the corresponding tendency in Czech and subjects his corpus to synchronistic, diachronistic and statistical evaluations. His research corroborates that in comparison with its Czech counterpart the English verb proves to be dynamically weaker; this holds good especially in the sense that in contrast with its Czech counterpart the English verb tends to contribute less information towards the further development of the communication.

Hladký's interest in the verb has induced him to tackle the vexed question of modality. He does so in two papers, "A brief comment on some previous work on modality" (1976) and "Parts of speech and modality in English and Czech" (1983a). In the first paper he comments on the works on modality by Czechoslovak Bohemicists and Slovakists (Lubomír Ďurovič, Miloš Dokulil, František Kopečný, Jaroslav Bauer and Miroslav Grepl). Perhaps one of Hladký's most valuable comments is his insistence that the extralinguistic reality should not be regarded as an unspecified sum of everything outside language. Investigation into modality requires that the speaker and the hearer should be separated from the rest of the extralinguistic reality. This separation aids the investigator in establishing the sources of modal attitudes. If, for instance, the source is the speaker's mind, modality is to be regarded as internally determined; if, on the other hand, the source is the world outside the speaker's mind, modality is to be regarded as externally determined (1976.90).

In his second paper on modality (1983a), Hladký comments on the works on modality by Czechoslovak Anglicists (Ivan Poldauf, Libuše Dušková and Jaroslava Tárníková) and offers an extensive analysis of texts drawn from six corpuses constituted by (i) editorials published in *The Times*, (ii) recordings of the BBC *Any Questions* programmes, (iii) editorials and commentaries published in Czech dailies, (iv) Czech theatre, television and radio plays, (v) contemporary English fiction and (vi) its Czech translations. The analysis shows that the spheres of modality in the texts vary. The English texts display a higher percentage of means expressing probability than the Czech texts do. The Czech and the English texts differ mainly in the sphere of modality of certainty, where the percentage of Czech adverbs is higher than the percentage of English adverbs, the Czech adverbs corresponding to English modal verbs.

The problem of the relationship between the derived adverb (implemented by a single word) and the verb has been taken up by Hladký in his paper "A contrastive view of adverb frequency in English and Czech" (1981). In it he evolves a method of showing the differences in English and Czech adverb frequencies. An analysis of English original texts and their Czech translations enables him to demonstrate that every second derived Czech adverb has a non-adverbial counterpart in English

(a noun, adjective, verb or some other non-adverbial item). He regards this phenomenon as part of the English tendency towards nominal expression and links it with the operation of functional sentence perspective in English, recalling the strong tendency of the English verb to serve as transition, which raises the frequency of nominal expressions in the rheme.

The English tendency to nominal expression is also illustrated by Hladký's paper "On the function of some deverbative nouns in *-er*" (1979a). Drawing examples from newspapers, literary works and pieces of conversation, the paper offers a thorough discussion of the deverbative nouns in *-er*. Among other things, it examines the features these nouns share with the verbs, takes up the question of drawing a distinct line between lexicalized deverbatives in *-er* and those formed ad hoc, and discusses the problems of meaning involved. A comparison of English and Czech shows that Czech, though rich in deverbative nouns, does not produce them ad hoc. Moreover, the way it derives nouns from verbs is different from that applied by English.

An intriguing phenomenon of the written language is dealt with in the paper "The orthography of British trade names" (1971). Based on a large corpus, the paper examines the written form of the British trade name (a special type of proper name), the spelling of which shows frequent deviations from traditional usage. This raises the question of the position occupied by these deviations in the system of English orthography. The detailed analyses carried out in the paper show that most of the authors of the respellings have recourse to peripheral (extreme) grapheme-phoneme correspondences. A comparison with Wijk's *Regularized English* reveals that most of these respellings do not bear the regular features of English orthography.

Another important problem of the written language is that of word division, taken up in the following series of articles, in which Hladký also pays attention to the historical aspect of the problem and takes both British and American usage into account: "A note on word division in English" (1985a), "Word division and syllabification in English" (1986a), "Notes on the history of word division in English" (1985b), "Word division in Caxton and Dryden" (1985c). To my knowledge, this series of articles is the first to discuss the problem on a wider theoretical basis.

Hladký views word division as a phenomenon of the written language norm which does not invariably reflect syllabification viewed as a phenomenon of the spoken language norm. He examines the relationship between the criteria determining the written word division, especially between what he terms the ssVC rule ('according to which a short stressed vowel attracts the following consonant, as in *bal-anced*, *res-urrection*, *psychol-ogy*' 1986a.123) and the morphological/etymological rule. He demonstrates that a point of particular interest is the division of consonant pairs and consonant clusters. Contrasting contemporary British English

with contemporary American English, he establishes that the latter gives greater play to the ssVC rule and less play to the morphological/etymological rule (1986a.124). In fact, the ssVC rule is a recent innovation in British printed texts, whereas in American texts it has been common since at least the second half of the 19th century (1985c.139). Going back to Caxton's time, Hladký finds that word division rules were then very few; they were influenced by the technology of the time and were not applied systematically (1985c.140). Comparing Caxton's word division practice with Dryden's, Hladký draws the conclusion that the latter displays the application of the morphological rule as an important innovation (1985c.137).

In "A coroner's inquest in eight newspaper versions" (1986b), Hladký explores the way newspaper reports covering the same event could be subjected to statistical linguistic analysis. In this manner, eight British newspaper reports of an inquest into the death of a girl parachutist are analysed in regard to the length of paragraphs, sentences and clauses, the types of clauses, the use of non-finite verb forms, the terminology and the length of words. An analysis of this kind enables the investigator to characterize the texts examined, to compare texts from various stylistic strata, and to show the wide gamut of statistical values yielded by texts verbalizing the same factual content.

Hladký's dictionary *Zrádná slova v angličtině* [False friends in English] (1990) records words that occur both in English and Czech and show a degree of formal identity, but differ in all or in at least some of their semantic applications. The dictionary is the first list of such English and Czech words to appear in book form. It is a valuable contribution to comparative lexicology and lexicography and fills a gap in the literature. It is a welcome book of reference for the Czech user of English.

Of Hladký's textbooks prepared for students, let us mention at least the following three.

One of them offers an introduction to the language of English newspapers. It has appeared under the title *Slovní zásoba anglického denního tisku* [The lexis of English newspapers] (1979b) and deals with the characteristics of the journalistic register. It contains important observations on differences between English and Czech usage in this sphere.

Another useful work of reference accompanies Hladký's *Čítanka pro seminář z historického vývoje angličtiny* [A reader for the seminar on the historical development of English] (1985d). It bears the title *Diachronní slovník k čítance pro seminář z historického vývoje* [A diachronistic dictionary supplementing the Reader for the seminar on the historical development of English] (1983b) and gives the histories of the words occurring in the O(ld) E(nglish), M(iddle) E(nglish) and E(arly) N(ew) E(nglish) texts contained in the Reader. It does so in a tabular form, which permits the OE, ME and ENE words to be presented in one alphabetical order, but placed in three different columns. Additional columns

cover the pre-OE stages of development. The word form occurring in the Reader is given typographical prominence, its historical predecessor(s) and/or successor(s) — established or merely hypothetical — appearing on the same line in the appropriate column(s). This ingenious arrangement presents the histories of the words in a truly surveyable way.

It is not the aim of the present paper to comment on all the writings of Josef Hladký as they are recorded in his bibliography, prepared by Eva Golková (1991). There is, however, a group of articles by Hladký that should not pass unnoticed — articles on, or rather portraits of, Anglicists linked with the Brno Department of English (in order of appearance of the portraits, Josef Vachek, Jan Firbas, Jaroslav Ondráček, Samuel Kostomlatský, Jessie Kocmanová and Aleš Tichý). The present paper is an addition to extend Hladký's series.

It was not possible to open the present homage volume to all the members of the community of Czech and Slovak Anglicists. The community is represented in the volume by Jan Čermák, Libuše Dušková and Soňa Nováková from Charles University, Prague; Ada Böhmerová and Miroslav Bážlik from Comenius University, Bratislava; Jana Chamónikolasová, Jan Firbas, Paul Garvin (as Visiting Professor to the Brno Department of English and Doctor honoris causa of Masaryk University), Eva Golková, Naďa Kudrnáčová, Miroslav Pospíšil and Josef Vachek (as founder of the linguistics section of the Brno Department of English and Doctor honoris causa of Masaryk University) from Masaryk University, Brno; Libuše Hornová and Jaroslav Macháček from Palacký University, Olomouc; and Josef Grmela and Ludmila Urbanová from Šafárik University, Prešov. The members of the Czech and Slovak Anglicist community extend their heartfelt thanks and best wishes to the sexagenarian Josef Hladký.

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