

PROFESSOR JOSEF HLADKÝ – POSTHUMOUS OCTAGENARIAN

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On June 30th, 2011, Professor Josef Hladký would have reached the age of eighty, had not an incurable illness overcome him three and a half years before that date. His valiant struggle with his illness was destined to fail on January 5th, 2008.

Accounts of Professor Hladký's academic career and professional pursuits have been published on the occasion of his anniversaries (Firbas 1991, Chamonikolasová 2002, Urbanová 2002, Dušková 2006), and summarized and supplemented in his obituaries (Urbanová 2008, Golková 2008, Dušková 2008). Since the anniversary articles, together with the obituaries, cover nearly all his academic life, these posthumous lines can but recall the major points and in conclusion attempt to bring to the fore those of his studies that remained outside the main stream of his academic interests.

Professor Hladký was an outstanding personality in several spheres of academic activities: as administrator, organizer, researcher, pedagogue and editor. From 1973 to 1980 he was the head of the English Department and in 1989 he was elected Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University. In the nineties he helped to found the English Department at the Silesian University in Opava, and from 2000 he directed the English Department at the Faculty of Education of Masaryk University in Brno. His organizational abilities were best manifested in the role he played in the Brno conferences of English, American and Canadian studies. He was their initiator and in the case of the first two (in 1986 and 1989) their convener. As a university teacher, he continuously bore in mind the need of students for study materials, which prompted him to continue writing and rewriting university texts throughout his academic career. He produced some fifteen titles, most of which appeared in several editions and covered a variety of subjects, viz. the historical development of English (readers and a dictionary), functional onomatology, introduction into the study of English, grammar, vocabulary of the daily press, older poetry and others. No less efficient was Professor Hladký as an editor. For thirty years he was a member of the editorial board of *Brno Studies in English*; from Vol. 8 (1969) through the seventies and eighties he acted with Professor Jan Firbas as co-editor and in the nineties as executive editor. The books that he edited were all dedicated to the memory of his great teachers: the first to Josef Vachek (1998), two volumes to Jan Firbas (2003) and the last to

Vilém Mathesius, in which he preserved Mathesius's memoirs for the posterity (2009).

As a writer, Professor Hladký has been and is best known in the field of lexicography and lexicology, not only for his books (on false friends in English, 2nd ed., 1996; names of English and Czech mushrooms, 1996), but also for his studies on word formation (1979, 1995, 1996, 1998), the first Latin words in English (1996), slang (1993) and others. Another prominent line of his scholarly pursuits was word division, both from the synchronic and diachronic points of view (1985, 1987), and spelling (1971). His contributions to morphology and syntax are conceived, like his books, contrastively in comparison with Czech and include, among others, his frequently cited study of complex condensation (1961), articles on modality (1976), parts of speech in connection with modality (1983) and adverb frequency (1981). As a bibliographer, Professor Hladký contributed, together with Jan Firbas, to E. Vorlat's *Analytical Bibliography* Czech writings on ModE morphology and syntax from 1961-1970. Another, perhaps even more important service that he rendered to English studies in this country was his article on their history and present state (2000). Two more major points remain to be added to this greatly compressed survey of Professor Hladký's work. The first is an excursion into the sphere of stylistics (1987). Here he analysed eight newspaper reports informing about a coroner's inquest into the same event, with the aim of proposing a statistical procedure for characterizing different samples of a text sort, applicable to comparative stylistic studies in general. The second point, which has been left till the end, although it dates from the very beginning of his academic pursuits, is based on the work of his teacher Jan Firbas and concerns the communicative value of the verb in English and Czech (1968, 1969). In Professor Hladký's work, this line of research was early abandoned in favour of the spheres briefly summarized above, and has thus received less attention than his other work. English and Czech verb forms are here compared from three points of view: grammatical (grammatical categories), semantics of the verb and the functions of verbal forms in functional sentence perspective. This approach is remarkable in that it displays the relationship between the communicative value of the verb and its degree of communicative dynamism. While the first two parameters, grammatical categories and lexical semantics involve the inherent static semantics, the functions of verbal forms in functional sentence perspective represent dynamic semantics. The greatest difference in the communicative value of the verb between English and Czech was found in the grammatical categories, in contrast to verbal semantics, which appears to be closely comparable. As regards the function of verbal forms in FSP, the quantitative results show a not insignificant difference in favour of Czech, which suggests that static semantics

may play a role, however partial, in dynamic semantics.

Brief as this survey of Professor Hladký's publications has to be, mention must be made of his anniversary articles, obituaries, and reviews, viz. a line of publication hardly ever recognized as a merit. Altogether these include over three dozen titles. In the former he repeatedly wrote about his teachers Josef Vachek, for whom he also collected the bibliography, and Jan Firbas, and his colleagues A. Tichý, J. Ondráček, S. Kostomlatský, J. Kocmanová, and others. His reviews mostly cover the same fields as his books and articles, dictionaries and books on the history of English. Among these we also find reviews of Czech books, Jaroslav Peprník's dictionary of Americanisms and Jan Čermák's *Béowulf*. The latter is noteworthy not only for the insightful appreciation of Čermák's translation in comparison with that by the Nobel Prize Winner Seamus Heany, but also for including a survey of all *Béowulf* translations.

Let the life and work of Professor Josef Hladký serve as a model to be followed.

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¹ For references to Professor Hladký's work, see his Bibliography.