

## IN MEMORY OF PROFESSOR JIŘÍ NOSEK

Although it was known that in the last two years Professor Jiří Nosek had been in the care of a medical establishment, being too ill to continue living alone in his home at Říčany near Prague, to his lifelong friends and colleagues his death came as a sudden profound shock. For some of them the grief over his loss was even enhanced by having been unable to attend his funeral. Professor Nosek died in mid-August so that the sad news did not reach them until their return from holidays. He is buried at the Olšany Cemetery in Prague, not far from his great predecessors Vilém Mathesius, Bohumil Trnka and Josef Vachek.

PhDr. Jiří Nosek, DrSc., Professor Emeritus of Charles University, Prague, was born at Říčany on 10 June 1919, and died on 15 August 2001, at the age of eighty-two. From the beginning of his professional career till his retirement, he was closely connected with Charles University. After finishing his study of English and French, he first became the late Professor Bohumil Trnka's assistant, and later his closest co-worker. A fine proof of the close association between the two scholars was the posthumous edition by Jiří Nosek of Bohumil Trnka's manuscripts found after the latter's decease. Besides meticulous editorial work Jiří Nosek provided each paper with an extensive English summary, which was in itself an exacting task both with respect to the content and the rendition into English. The close contact with Professor Trnka, as well as the work of Vilém Mathesius (from whose pedagogical guidance he could no longer benefit) made him acquainted with the principles and theories of the Prague School of Linguistics, which he then consistently applied and further developed in his own work. After Professor Trnka's death in 1984, he was thus fully qualified to take over the chairmanship of the Group for Functional Linguistics, founded and chaired by Professor Trnka after the dissolution of the Prague Linguistic Circle.

During the five decades of his pedagogical and scholarly activities in the English Department at Charles University, Jiří Nosek educated several generations of graduates, among them future outstanding linguists whose postgraduate studies he supervised. His extensive linguistic studies gained him the highest scholarly degree of Doctor of Sciences (DrSc.), but as for the highest pedagogical title of Professor, first attempted in the seventies, he had to wait until the post-communist era, and till then content himself, as a non-party man, with associate professorship.

In his scholarly work, including over 150 publications, Jiří Nosek systematically applied the theoretical framework based on the principles of the Prague School of Linguistics to different linguistic subjects and disciplines. Apart from the grammatical system of English, in particular syntax, he was mostly concerned with gen-

eral linguistics and stylistics. His general linguistic studies deal with such basic questions as meaning and function, the relation between morphology and syntax, the role of word classes in functional sentence perspective, typology of lexical and syntactic units, language universals, the category of definiteness (determination) and others. His English studies focus on the syntax of the complex sentence (adverbial and relative clauses) and syntactic condensation (apo koinou constructions). In the sphere of stylistics, a recurrent theme is the metaphor, besides other figures of speech. The wide range of Professor Nosek's professional interests moreover included lexicological and phraseological studies, no less perspicacious than his treatises from the other fields. Some of the topics of his research were elaborated as university texts for students of English, among which his *Grafika moderní angličtiny* (Graphemics of Modern English) has become a classic. Another university text deals with a syntactic subject (clause elements), other major syntactic themes having been treated monographically. Although primarily concerned with Modern English, Dr. Nosek also paid attention to earlier stages of English, in particular to the language of the post-Shakespearean period.

The wide range of Jiří Nosek's professional interests offered many topics for his lectures at the meetings of linguistic societies, conferences and congresses held both at home and abroad. Of the linguistic societies which counted him as their member or even an official on the Executive Committee, let us name at least the Czech Modern Language Association, Prague Linguistic Circle, Linguistic Association, Philological Society, and Societas Linguistica Europaea.

Apart from his profound linguistic erudition, Professor Nosek was an inexhaustible source of various other kinds of knowledge drawn from the literature of fact, which was his favourite pastime reading. He was also fond of travel, and never missed a chance to visit a place of historical or cultural interest whenever he could, whether at home or abroad. Under the communist regime the possibility of foreign travel was of course severely restricted, but thanks to the initiative of the Linguistic Association Czech scholars were able to attend at least some of the major events in their field taking place abroad.

Professor Jiří Nosek dedicated all his life to linguistic studies and pedagogical work. In all his activities he always remained a consistent adherent of the Prague School of Linguistics, firmly rooted in functional structuralism. He left us an extensive linguistic work, an enriching contribution to the English studies and linguistic research of his renowned Czech predecessors. Still, Jiří Nosek will continue to live not only in his work, but also in the memories of those who knew him.

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