

PROFESSOR ALEŠ KLÉGR SEXAGENARIAN

«PROFESSOR ALEŠ KLÉGR SEXAGENARIAN»

by Libuše Dušková

Source:

Linguistica Pragensia (Linguistica Pragensia), issue: 1 / 2012, pages: 42-44, on www.ceeol.com.

The following ad supports maintaining our C.E.E.O.L. service

eBooks on Central, East and Southeast Europe



**Die polnische Wende
1989 in der DDR-Press.
Eine Quellensammlung**

**The Polish Political Change 1989
Reflected in the GDR Press.
A Collection of Sources**

By **Tytus Jaskułowski**

Osteuropa-Zentrum Berlin, Berlin, 2007
(in German)

This book is a source of the East German press publications from the 1989-1990, which had dealt with the origins, causes and effects of the peaceful revolution in Poland (January - Dezember 1989).

more on:

www.dibido.eu

ANNIVERSARIES
JUBILÄEN
ANNIVERSAIRES
ANIVERSARIOS

PROFESSOR ALEŠ KLÉGR SEXAGENARIAN

Towards the end of last year English studies at Charles University celebrated the sixtieth birthday of their eminent personality, a foremost specialist in the fields of English lexicology and lexicography, Professor Aleš Klégr.

Professor Klégr was born on 27 November 1951 in Prague, where he received all his education. He studied at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University, taking English and psychology as his subjects. After graduation in 1977 he gained the degree of PhDr. in 1982 and in the same year extended his qualifications so as to include general pedagogy. Perhaps prophetically, the first steps in his professional career envisaged his principal future concern, his wholehearted dedication to lexicography. He found his first employment at the Encyclopedic Institute of the then Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, where he worked for three years (1977–1980), writing entries for an illustrated encyclopedic dictionary¹. Even during the next five years, when he taught at the Prague Language School, he continued to engage in lexicographic work, as the main author of a children's encyclopedia of the world languages (1989). At university level Aleš Klégr was able to start teaching in the mid-eighties thanks to the less constrained political atmosphere preceding the overthrow of the totalitarian regime in 1989. From 1985 to 1988 he taught English at the Faculty of Engineering of the Czech Technological Institute, and in 1988 he returned to his Alma Mater as an assistant in the Department of Foreign Languages of the Faculty of Arts, Charles University.

Since 1990 Aleš Klégr's career has been quite straightforward, showing continuous progress through the successive stages of academic advancement. As a member of the Department of English and American Studies (whose linguistic section now bears the name Department of English Language and ELT Methodology) he obtained his associate professorship in 1996 and full professorship in 2004. For twelve years (1998–2008, 2009–2011) he held the position of deputy head of the Department. He chairs the Council for doctoral studies of the English language programme and is a member of several other councils. Since 2009 he has been the editor-in-chief of *Časopis pro moderní filologii* (Journal of Modern Philology).

In his early days in the Department he taught all subjects concerned with the synchronic study of English language, but his authorial endeavours show continuing devotion to his principal concern: as early as 1991 (2nd ed. 1992) and 1994 (2nd ed. 2004) he published his two collocational dictionaries, *Do you know your English verbs?* (jointly with Norah Hronková and Zdeněk Hron) and *Do you know your English adjectives?* (with Norah Hronková). With the gradual enlargement of the Department he has been able to specialize in English lexicology, word-formation, lexical semantics, lexicography, and lately phraseology, taking, in addition, a course in pragmatics, presumably as an indispensable background to semantic studies.

Further evidence of the characteristics of Aleš Klégr's academic personality emerging from the preceding lines is provided by his publications (cf. pp. 45ff.), above all by his monumental Thesaurus of the Czech language (2007), a work far surpassing the capacity of a single author and yet brought into existence. His occupation with the collocational aspects of lexical items materialized in a third Czech-English dictionary of noun-verb collocations (2005), based on the 1991 dictionary but thoroughly revised and greatly enlarged in collaboration with Petra Key. He also participated in the English translation of Josef Vachek's *Dictionnaire de linguistique de l'École de Prague (Dictionary of the Prague School of Linguistics)*, 2003) and as co-author of an English-Czech dictionary (1998). Apart from the dictionaries, Aleš Klégr has written two monographs testifying to his other major spheres of interest, concerned, respectively, with word-class constancy in translation (1996) and English complex prepositions with a noun head (2002). His book publications have so far been rounded off by two pedagogical texts written in joint authorship (1992; 2001, 2nd ed. 2012), with a new monograph on Czech equivalents of English prepositions co-authored with Markéta Malá and Pavlína Šaldová, forthcoming this year.

The subject matter of his articles is more varied, showing both the lines of his minor pursuits and those of the central ones. Papers on a variety of subjects appeared mostly in the eighties, e.g. the use of articles (1984, 1987), psychological aspects of language learning and acquisition (1984), forms of address (1986), phrases used at leave-taking (1984), common errors (1983, 1987), the first Czech grammars of English (1988) and others, but as early as 1985 Aleš Klégr also addressed a pragmatic point, linguistic distance. Except for article usage, later excursions into the minor spheres take up new topics. The determiners are revisited in connection with the semantics of the conjoins in coordination (2002) and in the phrase *so* modifier *alan* noun from the viewpoint of the position of *alan* and the realization form of the modifier (2010). An exposition of a syntactic point appears in the article on the adjectival object complement of complex-transitive verbs (2000). There is even a paper from the sphere of functional sentence perspective (2009), which poses the question of the devices of written language as an additional factor of FSP structure. The most recent articles display interest in proverbs (2011 and at press).

Impressive as this brief survey of Aleš Klégr's minor interests may be, the studies written with a few exceptions since the turn of the century clearly demonstrate the *leitmotifs* of his work: lexicology and lexicography, prepositions, and contrastive studies, all approached where feasible on the basis of monolingual and/or parallel computer corpora and electronic dictionaries. Articles treating lexicological points address different aspects of word formation (elliptic shortening 2004, onomasiological cycle 2006, analogy as a word-formation process 2010), a recurrent theme here being corruption as a means of onomasiological variation (1999, 2010). Several studies deal with collocations and binomials, mostly from the contrastive point of view (binomials 1990, 2008; Czech and English collocates of *sadness* 2005, collocations across languages 2007, collocational faux amis 2006). Lexicographic points are inevitably connected with the thesaurus (2000, 2008), apart from a dozen book reviews devoted to dictionaries. Prepositions also rank high in Aleš Klégr's work. In addition to two monographs (2002 mentioned above and the forthcoming new one), several articles examine special points such as preposition-noun combinability patterns (1997),

English complex prepositions of the prepositional phrase type (2000) and particular frequent prepositions from a contrastive Czech-English point of view (2009, 2010).

As regards Aleš Klégr's contrastive studies, extensive adoption of this approach, following up Mathesius's legacy on a novel, computer-aided, more effective basis, has been abundantly demonstrated in the foregoing paragraphs. Nevertheless, in connection with his monograph on the constancy of the noun in translation (1996) and another study devoted to the same topic (1993), one more remark needs to be added. Aleš Klégr has done a lot of translating, which inspired him with the idea of a translation grammar. These two works may be regarded as the first steps in this direction. Further steps may be seen in the treatment of points which in fact deal with local grammar: constructions of nouns with prepositions, article usage in noun phrases with an *of*-modifier (1984), in coordination, in the *so* adjective *a/n* phrase, counterparts of the conditional and other points. To my mind, grammatical structure is too context dependent to be strait-jacketed into all-covering translation counterpart patterns, but such contributions as appear in Aleš Klégr's work certainly call for continuation.

The last but not least group of Aleš Klégr's publications includes articles devoted to the anniversaries and obituaries of his colleagues. They show not only a thorough acquaintance with the respective scholars' work, but also his true friendliness and empathy. These traits of his have often led him to help and encourage where support and standby were needed.

The picture of Aleš Klégr's personality as it has been formed in my mind in the course of some thirty years of shared work would be incomplete without adding three more closely connected characteristics each of which more or less entails the other two. He is an innovator, initiator and conception-creator, always riding on the crest of a wave. He was among the first who used the early primitive computers in this country: it was on such a computer that he compiled the index to my contrastive grammar. As a conception-maker and initiator, he is truly in his element. I suspect that this is connected with his mode of local transfer. He hardly ever uses public transport; his almost exclusive manner of moving about town is walking. And as the distances usually involve several kilometres, he has plenty of time for thought, stimulated by the brisk tempo. Whether this is also the case when he is jogging or taking part in the annual Běchovice ten-kilometre run or viewing Prague from a balloon is presumably less likely, but not inconceivable.

Aleš Klégr may have turned sixty but will always remain a youngster in my eyes.

Libuše Dušková, Prague

Notes

¹ *Ilustrovaný encyklopedický slovník*, Academia 1980. In the body of the article the titles of Aleš Klégr's Czech works are given in English, with the year of publication for reference to the attached bibliography.