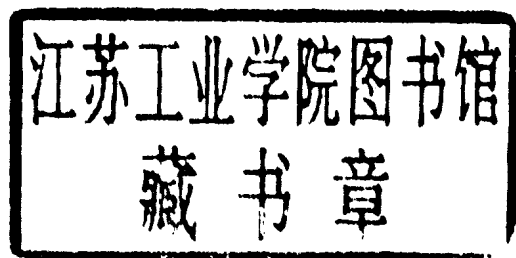


STUDIES IN FUNCTIONAL STYLISTICS

Edited by
Jan Chloupek
Jirí Nekvapil

STUDIES IN FUNCTIONAL STYLISTICS



LINGUISTIC & LITERARY STUDIES IN EASTERN EUROPE (LLSEE)

The emphasis of this scholarly series is on recent developments in Linguistic and Literary Research in Eastern Europe; it includes analysis, translations and syntheses of current research as well as studies in the history of linguistic and literary scholarship.

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STUDIES IN FUNCTIONAL STYLISTICS

edited by

JAN CHLOUPEK and JIRI NEKVAPIL

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Opening Remarks

These *Studies in Functional Stylistics* are freely linked to the *Reader in Czech Sociolinguistics* (Prague: Academia, 1986, and Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamins, 1987).

The contributions in the present collection can be divided roughly into these three groups:

(1) Contributions directly following up the main principles of functional stylistics and the theory of language culture, elaborated in the classical period of the Prague Linguistic School.

(2) Contributions concerning the problems of style in a wider communicative arena. These contributions are closely related to contemporary text linguistics and also deal with problems involving psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics and semiotics.

(3) Contributions having, at least in some part, a pronounced historiographic character. These contributions reflect the fact that contemporary Czech linguistic research is firmly anchored in the Prague linguistic tradition.

Although the authors' frame of reference is mainly the Czech language and the current language situation in Czechoslovakia, the majority of contributions were intended to have a more general linguistic character and general linguistic validity.

The manuscript was submitted to the publishing house in September 1989.

The Editors

Prologue

Ferdinand de Saussure and the Prague Linguistic Circle

Oldřich Leška, Jiří Nekvapil and Otakar Šoltys

This paper deals with the historical developments that created the conditions for the rise of modern linguistic theory in Czechoslovakia. The authors' attention is focused on the work of the founder of the Prague Linguistic Circle, Vilém Mathesius. His work forms the background for a description of F. de Saussure's ideas as given in the *Cours de linguistique générale*, and for a discussion of how they were received and interpreted. Emphasis is laid on the stimulating influence of the Saussurean concepts, and their modification by Prague linguistics is discussed. Special attention is paid to the application of the theory in the field of functional stylistics and language culture.

Reading V. Mathesius' memoirs of his student years at Prague university¹ we find no hint in its atmosphere of the subsequent tempestuous development of linguistic thought that was to be witnessed some twenty years later, from the mid-twenties.² An encounter with Jan Gebauer (1838 - 1907) appears to have been disappointing for Mathesius; on Gebauer's lectures (old Czech literature) and seminars (interpretations of old Czech texts), he commented: "It was an atmosphere in which the rigour of scientific method and the weight of scientific authority made themselves clearly felt, but one that bred no ideas."³ The founder of Czech German studies and also an English studies scholar by interest, Václav Emanuel Mourek (1846 - 1911), did not reach Gebauer's scientific level, but he had a warmer and livelier approach to people and things. He was not a wholehearted advocate of the Neogrammarian doctrine and gravitated to it only in the last years of the century; for this reason he was open to other trends of linguistic study of that time and was suited to the role of mediator between their representatives and his students.⁴ The biographical dates of Emanuel Kovář (1861 - 1898), assistant professor of general linguistics, shows him to be outside Mathesius' reach and the latter does not mention him. The body of Kovář's work, however, reveals a most interesting personality completely forgotten today. Josef Zubatý was difficult to place in context of contemporary linguistic trends, and his own work resists any such categorization. Respect for his teacher, A. Ludwig, together with sceptical views on the Neogrammarian theses, might rank him as

a conservative, but his inimitable feeling for the facts of language and his versatility, incompatible with any schematic or dogmatic approach, connect him more with the things to come in linguistics than the past.⁵ Judging from his works - it is typical that not one of them is systematizing; this also applies for example, to his lithographed lecture "The Czech Verb"⁶ - he was an invaluable teacher only for exceptionally purposeful students such as B. Havránek and a source of stimulation only for equally outstanding academic colleagues.⁷ František Pastrnek (1853 - 1940) and Jiří Polívka (1858 - 1933) were far too much immersed in special questions of Slavonic studies to become aware of the wider perspectives and methodological foundations of language study; Germanic studies and literary scholar Arnošt Kraus (1859 - 1943) and Romance studies specialist Jan Urban Jarník (1848 - 1923) conclude the short list of names in Mathesius' memoirs. He makes no mention of his English linguistics teachers at the German university.

On the whole it was not a linguistic environment to inspire new thoughts; on the other hand it was not controlled by any particular doctrine so that the search for new paths, conducted in an atmosphere of academic tolerance, did not encounter any particular obstacles. And it was because of this search that Vilém Mathesius, Protestant and heretic, as he was characterized by Otakar Fischer⁸ on the occasion of Mathesius' 50th birthday, went down in the history of Czech linguistics.

There is no need to guess at what paths Mathesius' thought took. He described them in general outline in his retrospective article "The Roots of My Linguistic Thought".⁹ The reasons why he did not succumb to the opinions traditionally held at the university were above all these: from secondary school he brought the gift and need to experience and evaluate the facts of contemporary language personally;¹⁰ he formed his own idea of what modern science should be like, an idea different from the scientism advocated by Neogrammarians.¹¹ Thence it was a small step to the discovery of German and English synchronic linguists.¹² This goes to explain why Mathesius' dissertation *Taine's Criticism of Shakespeare*¹³ counterbalances the attempts at determinist interpretation of literary development with a demand for a reliable method of scientific analysis of a literary work; why he chose word order in present-day English as the subject of his thesis;¹⁴ why in the academic year of 1909/10 he began his course with a lecture provocatively entitled "Introduction to the Scientific Study of the English Language through an Analysis of Present-Day Speech". In 1911 Mathesius published his treatise "On the Potentiality of the Phenomena of Language",¹⁵ which fully reveals him as an exponent of a synchronic

and functional approach. It should be noted that in the same year Ferdinand de Saussure finished the third and last version of his lectures in general linguistics at the University of Geneva.

Mathesius' development did not involve an internal struggle with the Neogrammarian system; that was simply put aside. His attention was directed to a less conspicuous companion of historicism - the Humboldtian tradition. For many others, however, the road to modern linguistics meant coming to terms with the Neogrammarian doctrine, which was far from easy.

The Neogrammarian approach was not as simple as might appear from the summary assessments made at the time when it already was, or was becoming, dated. One only needs to read Paul's *Prinzipien der Sprachgeschichte*¹⁶ carefully to realize that it was not blind to linguistic reality and issues of general linguistics. It is difficult to tax the author with something he has failed to notice and has not dealt with in his own way. The connections Paul makes between things look strange today until we put the author's requirements on scientific linguistic investigation into a present-day perspective. Scientific study must not merely state, it has to interpret; to explain a linguistic phenomenon means to establish its causal connections in historical sequence.¹⁷ The characterization of separate stages of a language is only the internal prerequisite for historical study.¹⁸ Synchrony hidden under historicism thus remains an open issue to be solved by future generations of linguists. The object of description of a linguistic stage lies in an individual "psychic (linguistic) organism", i. e. variable associative arrangements beyond the threshold of consciousness of all linguistic input that has entered individual consciousness,¹⁹ and the description of the linguistic stage must faithfully reflect these arrangements.²⁰ Perceptive introspection and analysis of one's own linguistic consciousness are both a preparation and a means for this kind of work²¹ with the aid of observed linguistic facts. Objectivization of the language arrangement will become the key problem of future synchronic studies. Common to a variety of "(linguistic) psychic organisms" is "language usage".²² The whole of *Prinzipienlehre der Sprachgeschichte* revolves around the relationship between language usage and individual manifestations.²³

The general issues of language - providing merely a framework for the Neogrammarian search for causal historical relations and not an aim in themselves - lost value as invigorating factors, failed to develop and stagnated into a more or less immobile background to a fairly simple technique of concrete work.²⁴ Such work was unsatisfactory for agile minds for its lack of challenge, but its high productivity and

impressive factual richness and precision made it attractive to those content with the Neogrammarian theoretical equipment. Until de Saussure's appearance, no one noticed that Neogrammarians (e. g. Paul - in our citations) had regarded language from different viewpoints, as was aptly shown by Z. Starý.²⁵ Unification of the viewpoints in de Saussure's approach (to continue in the spirit of the paper we have quoted) deprives the human subject of the role of prime agent; language speaks through him and becomes the definite integral subject matter of linguistics.²⁶ In this respect linguistics was not isolated; elsewhere, too, the human subject relinquishes its central position. Marx observes that people are unaware that they are making history.

The conditions for the change in atmosphere at the turn of the century were present not only in personal feelings, but also in the need for the search of linguistic models among the new generation to which Mathesius belonged. Stimuli also came from nonlinguistic spheres, especially contemporary philosophy, which, by turning to phenomenology, tried to revive philosophic thought after the crisis of classical philosophy - mainly German - in the 19th century. In this philosophical direction language played a significant role. Among the disciples of the school's founder, Franz Brentano (1838 - 1917), whose anticlerical attitude was another attraction, were Anton Marty (1847 - 1914), professor of the German University in Prague, and also T. G. Masaryk (1850 - 1937), to whose *Foundations of Concrete Logic* Mathesius refers in the conclusion of his treatise "On the Potentiality": hence his distinction between static (i. e. synchronic) and dynamic (i. e. diachronic) problems.²⁷ Mathesius' colleague, English linguistics scholar Otto Funke (1885 - ?), was a disciple of Marty's. In the treatise "Über Prinzipienfragen der Sprachwissenschaft"²⁸, Funke reproduces Marty's remarks on the interpretation of linguistic phenomena, found in his estate: "Sobald man - meinte Paul - über das bloße Konstatieren von Einzelheiten hinausgehe, sobald man den Zusammenhang zu erfassen suche, so betrete man geschichtlichen Boden. Marty entgegnet: demgegenüber ist daran zu erinnern, daß das Begreifen der Erscheinungen und das Erfassen der Zusammenhänge, wovon Paul als in engerem Sinne wissenschaftlicher Tätigkeit spricht, nicht notwendig das Erfassen der Kausalgesetze und das Begreifen der Erscheinungen aus ihren Ursachen sein muß. Begreifen bedeutet allgemein "ein einzelnes als Fall eines allgemeinen Gesetzes, einer Notwendigkeit erkennen". Solche

Notwendigkeiten aber bestehen nicht bloß in bezug auf die Entstehung, kurz: es gibt neben genetischen auch deskriptive Gesetze" (cf. quotation in Note 17 on this.)²⁹ Marty is also recalled by Mathesius, namely his sign conception of language, but much later.

When de Saussure (1857 - 1913) took over the course in general linguistics from his colleague Josef Wertheimer, he had scarcely seven years to live. The book which was published by his students³⁰ in the middle of World War I is, in this respect, a historical accident; if no one had taken care of and preserved the notes, historians of linguistics might later on have noted elements of structuralist thought without a general background in de Saussure's comparative works, and quite likely marvelled at his first treatise "*Mémoire sur le système primitif des voyelles dans les langues indoeuropéennes*" (1878), which sticks out like an erratic boulder at the beginning of the Neogrammarian era.³¹ Towards the end of his life de Saussure was engaged in the analysis of Latin anagrams; notes on this form the greater part of the unpublished material in his estate. The links between this interest and the theory he expounded in his lectures remain unclear. It is known that he was not going to publish his views on general linguistics;³² preserved notes and preliminary studies are few and far between.³³ There is no doubt that his posthumous book contains a certain number of accidental features. It is impossible, however, to determine which they are; the text of the *Cours* must therefore be taken as it is. The factors involved include the participation of the note-takers and editors in the text as well as the reflection of de Saussure's own doubts which he mentioned to L. Gautier in 1911: "Je suis toujours très tracassé par mon cours de linguistique générale (...) Je me trouve placé devant un dilemme: ou bien exposer le sujet dans toute sa complexité et avouer tous mes doutes (...) Ou bien faire quelque chose de simplifié (...) Mais à chaque pas je me trouve arrêté par des scrupules."³⁴ If the origin of this particular book was due to chance, then a similar book was bound to appear sooner or later just as someone like V. Mathesius was sooner or later bound to emerge in Prague. De Saussure's *Cours* was in fact in tune with the trends of both scientific and artistic thought of the period.³⁵

If it was previously possible to view things with their interrelations in the background or even without any reference to them at all, in the following period, these relations come to the fore and the focus is on things (objects) which have no existence outside their relations and are

defined by them. This new perspective is primarily reflected in the fact that the key notion of de Saussure's conception becomes the sign,³⁶ a relational concept *par excellence*. The change in the tide is above all manifest in the reception of de Saussure's work and the way it was being developed.³⁷ De Saussure's contribution was not a revelation of a new truth but a clear formulation of things more or less clearly realized. Strangely contrasting with the importance ascribed to *Cours* today is the following annotation in *Indogermanisches Jahrbuch* 1929/5 (in the bibliographic section summarizing the output between 1922 - 3) for the 2nd edition of *Cours*: "Unveränderter Abdruck der ersten Ausgabe. Sehr ungleich von Wert. Neben tiefen Einblicken in das Leben der Sprache, dilettantische Freisinnigkeiten." Whereas in the next item (143), announcing the publication of Jespersen's book *Language, its Nature, Development and Origin*, the annotator remarks: "Ausgezeichnete Arbeit, die nun auch jeder lesen möge." De Saussure's book did not fall into a vacuum. The linguistic public is a community of people engaged in concrete work, with a fundamental need of internal continuity in their work; they do not live on reactions to external stimuli such as the publication of a new book. And, of course, internal life of such a community carries with it a certain amount of inertia. Also, the spirit of the new times did not revive on the signing of the peace treaty; it took some time before Europe recovered from the shock of war and grew accustomed to the new conditions.

According to Mathesius' memoirs de Saussure's *Cours* reached Prague "some time in 1919".³⁸ De Saussure was, of course, known here but only as a specialist in Indo-European linguistics.³⁹ The Czech reader could first learn about his lectures on general linguistics from foreign sources; no news, not to mention a review, of the book was ever published here. It was not mentioned until 1926 by Mathesius, who also in a way assessed it.⁴⁰ This course of things was far from usual, though not entirely inexplicable. In the case of Mathesius, de Saussure's *Cours* could, in the first place, be seen as a confirmation of the correctness of the tenor of linguistic thought he had chosen.⁴¹ De Saussure's book seems first to have entered general linguistic consciousness as an idiosyncratic formulation of common - evident or guessed - general issues. And, as we shall see, only later - in a wide international exchange of views - did de Saussure's formulations gradually assume the nature of a referential basis with a conceptually unifying role in terms of a general

consensus (identification) or a background against which to identify differences in individual conceptions. Within a short time de Saussure's *Cours* began to occupy the position in linguistic consciousness that we are used to assigning to it today.⁴²

In the previous paragraphs we have considerably run ahead of our exposition; now it is time to go back and deal briefly with Mathesius' works from 1911 - 1920. First comes the above-mentioned treatise "On the Potentiality". (In the following, numbers in brackets refer to JKS.)⁴³ Here Mathesius treats variation in the quantity of English sounds,⁴⁴ variable marking of the beginning of words by the glottal stop in Czech and German (16ff), statistical tendencies in the degree of emphasis of particular parts of speech (19ff), statistical word-order tendencies (21), possibilities of investigating in this way what we would today call in Karcevskij's terms the asymmetric dualism of the sign,⁴⁵ statistical regularity in the length of the English sentence and the distribution of predications within it (21), and finally he considers the effects of the functional orientation of communication ("style of speech") and the individual characteristics of style within statistical selectional tendencies (22ff). Mathesius is markedly oriented (in de Saussure's words) towards parole, and only this may explain the wide range of topics appearing in his treatise (cf. potentiality of quantity/variability in measuring the quantity of a sound ~ the phonetic potentiality of a dialect which can be observed in its system of sounds or the structure of words, or both⁴⁶). It should be noted that Mathesius' lecture easily tells us more today than it told its listeners then. Not surprisingly, when delivered under the chairmanship of J. Zubatý, it was not followed by a discussion. Regardless of the fact that the text is not particularly suited to spoken communication, the silence was more likely a sign of academic liberalism than lack of understanding, as it was quite easy to point out the heterogeneity of facts and sketchy argumentation on some points.

Mathesius aims to show linguistic reality in its unsimplified, and yet structured, form while founding the idea of structuredness on the awareness of functional dependence, cooperation of a variety of factors and the interrelation of different aspects of the same phenomenon.⁴⁷ This awareness of the functional interrelation of linguistic phenomena was enough for him to identify with the idea of the systematic nature of language later on. Apparently, de Saussure's idea of systemic ar-

rangement blended with Mathesius' own view of the functional interdependence of linguistic phenomena, as shown here: "...in my lecture 'On the Potentiality of Linguistic Phenomena', published in *Věstník Královské české společnosti nauk* 1911, I also emphasize the mutual dependence of coexistent facts of a given language".⁴⁸ This was the starting-point of Mathesius' further ideas and may be seen as the amalgamating basis for everything new that was to come. In the context of Czech linguistics this treatise is invaluable. With further historical connections, Mathesius' functional thought gradually shifted away from de Saussure's structural thought and in this way not only the core but the overall contours of modern linguistics took shape. For our further discussion we must remember the extended untraditional conception of morphology in his "On the Potentiality": "The morphological aspect by which I understand all that concerns the forms of words and sentences..."⁴⁹

Mathesius' syntactic works "Notes on So-Called Ellipsis and English Verbless Clauses," "On Apposition in Modern English," "On Nominal Tendencies in New English Verbal Predication"⁵⁰ brought forth critical response. It was a good sign.⁵¹ The treatises "On the Passive in Modern English", "Notes on New English Qualifying Clauses"⁵² bring nothing new methodologically. The article "On Linguistic Correctness"⁵³ is somewhat special, giving a hint of Mathesius as the future theoretician of language culture.

Compared with the previous period, the early twenties saw a number of new developments: in 1920 Mathesius meets R. Jakobson; from 1923 B. Trnka becomes Mathesius' constant assistant and collaborator in the years he was suffering from an eye disease; the focus and material basis of Mathesius' work shift to Czech language studies (Mathesius concentrates on colloquial Czech which he could study aurally).⁵⁴ The treatise "A Few Words on the Essence of the Sentence"⁵⁵ takes up the ideas of K. Bühler⁵⁶ to outline the main pillars of Mathesius' system of functional grammar - functional onomatology and functional syntax - and foreshadows the future distinction between the sentence and utterance. With the above-mentioned extended conception of morphology of 1911 added, by 1923 the contours of Mathesius' functional grammar were complete. This must have been the way the contents and arrangement of his regular university readings, started in 1909, developed; their final version is known to us in a book edited by