

CZECH Language News

Spring 1996

North American Association of Teachers of Czech

Number Six

NAATC News:

The spring semester is ending and it is time for all of us to ask ourselves "Co dál?" At the top of your list of future plans, of course, should be the next meeting of NAATC members, scheduled to take place under the auspices of the 28th National Convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies in Boston, Massachusetts on November 14-17, 1996. We will have both a roundtable panel and a business meeting, and there are at least three good reasons to attend.

1) Our roundtable panel entitled "New Research on Czech Language" has been approved for inclusion in the AAASS program and will feature presentations by five scholars of Czech. Three will deal with literary and sociolinguistic topics: Neil Bermel (UCLA) is proposing a talk on "Conveying Colloquiality in Literary Czech Dialogue"; Petr Břlek (now visiting at Brown U., permanent affiliation is Charles U.) will tell us about "Intertextuality: Transformations of Meanings and Ambiguity of Reference in the Style of Czech Contemporary Prose Fiction"; and Karen von Kuneš (Yale) will examine "Politically Correct Czech". Charles Townsend (Princeton) and Masako Ueda (Brown) will present papers on linguistic topics yet to be announced. I will again invite the current Czech Cultural Attaché to join us for this event and to say a few words on behalf of the Czech embassy. If past experience is any indicator, this panel alone will be well worth the trip to Boston.

2) We have a number of items to take up at our business meeting. For example, the National Council of Organizations of Less Commonly Taught Languages, with which we are affiliated, is currently planning a project to provide a central hub on the World Wide Web for information sites for member organizations. This means us. We will be called upon to provide a variety of services according to a carefully engineered plan that should improve our visibility and otherwise help to promote the goals of our organization. This is a terrific opportunity for us, and we will need to pool our ideas in order to take advantage of it. Whether you're a worldly web-crawler, a novice net surfer, or even among the electronically uninitiated, we will want to hear from you.

3) We will also be electing officers for 1996-1998 at our business meeting in Boston. It is only fitting that we stage our own upcoming velvet revolution in the city where the American revolutionary spirit was ignited. Don't miss our Boston Tea Party! Dunk both your lame duck leaders and your tea bags at the same time.

So please mark your calendar, call your travel agent, and make your reservations. We'll be looking forward to seeing you all in Boston in the fall.

- Laura Janda

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North American Association of Teachers of CZECH

I. The objective of our association is to promote study of the Czech language. Its main goals are:

1. To facilitate contacts among teachers of Czech in North America and elsewhere by organizing meetings, conferences, seminars, and workshops;
2. To encourage research in language learning pedagogy, as well as development and updating of Czech teaching materials;
3. To publish a newsletter to serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas and information among teachers and students of Czech and the interested public;
4. To coordinate teaching programs of the Czech language among North American institutions;
5. To seek contacts and affiliations with Czech academic institutions;
6. To raise funds for scholarships, teaching programs and other activities mentioned above.

II. Membership dues

1. Regular members: \$15 (150 Kč)
2. Student members: \$8 (80 Kč)
3. Honorary membership: \$50 (500 Kč)
4. Institutional membership*: \$75 (750 Kč)

III. Administration

The association is administered by an Executive Committee consisting of 3 members which is elected by the Delegate Convention every two years. The Executive Committee elects the President who takes care of day-to-day operations. Presently, the committee consists of the following officers:

Laura Janda, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: President
Jaromíra Rakušanová, Carleton University: Vice President
David Short, University of London: Vice President
Charles Townsend, Princeton University: Vice President
Jiří Stejskal, University of Pennsylvania: Executive Secretary
Michael Lenker, University of Pennsylvania: Treasurer

Please send membership fees for the calendar year of 1996 to one of the following addresses:

Members residing in the Czech Republic:

PhDr. Helena Confortiová
Ústav jazykové a odborné přípravy
Univerzita Karlova
Jindřišská 29
110 00 Praha 1

All other members:

Jiří Stejskal
Penn Language Center
413 Lauder-Fischer Hall
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6330

Please make checks payable to NAATC. The year for which dues have been paid is indicated on your mailing label.

New applicants: Please fill out the enclosed application form and send it to Jiří Stejskal at the address above. We are looking forward to hearing from you.

*Institutional membership includes one free advertisement (half page), a mailing list of NAATC members, and 5 copies of the *Czech Language News*.

The “Bohemia Club,” Sofia

Despite sometimes horrendous problems with even such simple matters as buying a loaf of bread, not to mention the general issue of low academic salary levels, teachers of Czech in Bulgaria have found the energy and inspiration to launch (September 1993) *Bohemia Club*, a lively association of professionals engaged in all aspects of Czech studies. The association's program consists of a variety of lectures, seminars, book launches, etc. Membership is open not only to past and present students of Czech at Sofia University (and other Bulgarian universities), and those who have studied Czech abroad, but to any Bulgarian with an interest in things Czech and a desire to support Czech studies in Bulgaria in any way. A number of leading Czech scholars have been made honorary members.

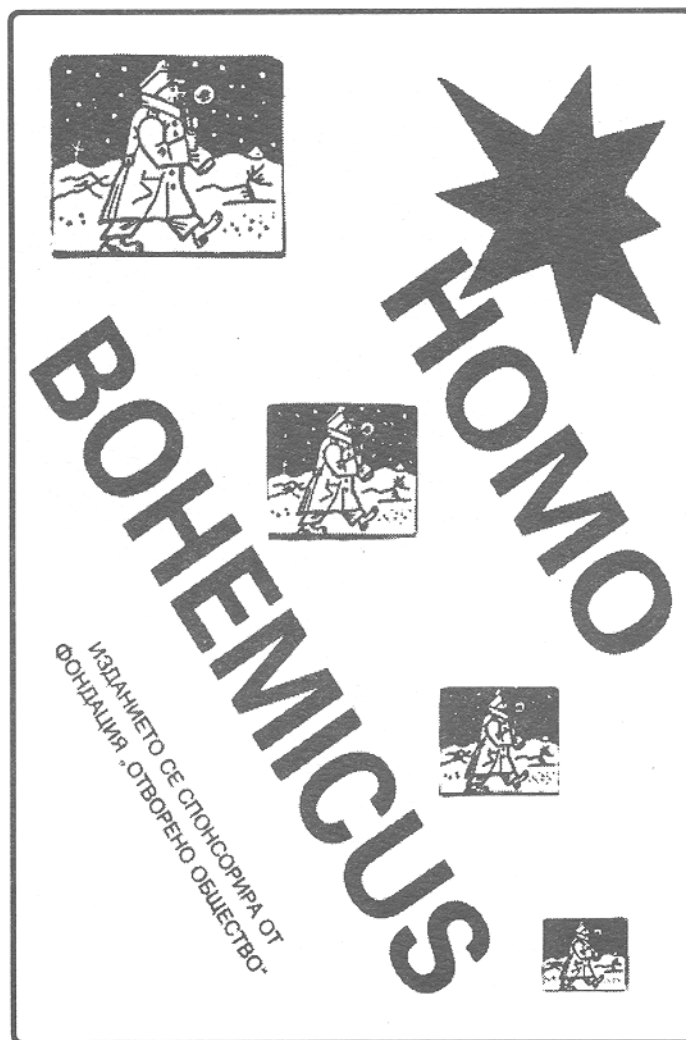
The association's major success is to have launched a quarterly review, *Homo bohemicus*, containing a wide range of scholarly articles, feuilletons, commentaries and reviews, devoted primarily to Czech literature and culture and Bulgarian-Czech contacts (academic and cultural relations, reception of each other's literature, etc.). Language is represented in discussions of particular literary translations, or in such items as the study on Bulgarian-Czech bilingualism (1994/2). The review is enlivened by the strain of whimsy that informs the sections on the Bohemia Club's own activities and the satirical “Švejknews” section.

Perhaps most striking of all and, to the best of this writer's knowledge, unmatched by any similar Czech Studies-oriented review elsewhere in the world, is the supplement that accompanies each issue of *Homo bohemicus*. The supplements constitute a series, *Malka češka biblioteka*, and consist of Bulgarian translations from Czech literature or, less usually, Czech translations from Bulgarian. On the Czech side these have included Erben's *Kytice* together with Jiří Suchý's *Kytice* (1994/1), selections from Karel Čapek (1994/2 and 1995/1), selections from Seifert and Nezval (1994/4), and a complete new translation of Vančura's *Rozmarné léto* (1995/2). This last is ideally suited to the format of the series; it is also the most ambitious and imaginative choice in a collection that can probably not avoid a degree of conservatism.

This entire initiative of our Bulgarian colleagues has had the financial support of a small number of advertisers in both the review and the supplement, but its main sponsorship has come from the Open Society Foundation and the Soros Center for the Arts.

The contact address for any interested NAATC member is:
Bohemia club (kab. 159a)
Sofijski universitet Sv. Kliment Orchidski
bul. Car Osvoboditel 15
1040 Sofia
Bulgaria

- David Short



Gender Bending in the Czech Lexicon

As is typical of an inflecting language such as Czech, one of the determining categories of the noun is grammatical gender. While it is intuitively obvious that male beings and creatures will have been accorded masculine gender and female feminine, and nearly as obvious - given the general practice of Indo-European languages - that juveniles are predominantly neuter, there is little obvious patterning in the gender-assignment of the rest of the vocabulary: that *stůl* 'table' is masculine, *židle* 'chair' feminine and *okno* 'window' neuter is as good a reflection as any of the largely random distribution of lexical items among the three available genders. Against this background there are, however, a number of distinct peculiarities.

1. Nouns of 'common' gender.

Most nouns denoting professions, nationalities, some relations of kinship, and general 'states of being', including appurtenance to a particular family, usually occur in Czech in a basic masculine form, with feminine counterparts derived by suffixation: *student-studentka* 'student (m./f.)', *chirurg-chirurgyně* 'surgeon', *Němec-Němka* 'German' (m./f.), *kmotr-kmotra* 'godfather-godmother', *lev-lvice* 'lion-lioness', *smolař-smolařka* 'one dogged by misfortune (m./f.)', *Navrátil-Navrátilová*, a surname, (m./f.). Close kin and common domestic animals tend to have gender-distinct names: *bratr-sestra* 'brother-sister', *býk-kráva* 'bull-cow', etc. The very strength of the gender opposition makes it therefore surprising when words occur which are of one grammatical gender only, that is, irrespective of the sex of the individual concerned. Thus, at least in modern usage, any parentless child is a *sírotek* (m.) 'orphan' and any sibling is a *sourozenec* (m.). *Sourozenec* embraces *bratr* and *sestra* much as *kůň* 'horse (m.)' embraces (generically) *hřebec* 'stallion' and *kobyla* or *klisna* 'mare', while *sírotek* is as general as *dítě* (n.) 'child', a word from the 'juvenile' category, which embraces *syn* 'son' and *dcera* 'daughter', or as *člověk* (m.), which embraces *muž* 'man' and *žena* 'woman' (and ultimately *dítě* as well). Only *člověk* has been a target for feminists, who on the whole have a hard time with inflecting

languages, where grammatical gender, like any other inherent category, is 'naturally' resistant to reinterpretation (dis-interpretation) through the prism of sex.

It is not as if all referentially common gender nouns need necessarily be masculine (like *sírotek* or *člověk*, or neuter (like *dítě*). Certainly the majority of those expressing more an attribute than an identity tend to be masculine or neuter (expressions like *anděl* 'angel', *d'ábel* 'devil', *blbec* 'idiot', *utopenec* 'drowned person', *nemehlo* 'incompetent', *trdlo* 'silly [as noun]'), but some feminines do exist, such as *mrtvola* 'corpse', *oběť* 'victim', *troska* 'ruin', though these more obviously represent former metaphors that have on the whole lost the metaphorical quality; *oběť* has the original meaning of 'sacrifice'. One truly referentially common-gender feminine word is just as general as *člověk*, namely *osoba* 'person', while, at the other end of the scale, there is one feminine noun of which the referent or referents is/are most likely to be male. The word is interesting in that it is not

only non-specific as to the gender, but even as to the number of the referents. This is the word *stráž* (f.) 'guard, sentry', which is regularly defined in precisely these terms in dictionaries through the synonyms *strážce* (m.sg.) and *strážci* (m.pl.). It is not without interest that *personne* (= *osoba*), *victime* (= *oběť*) and *sentinelle* (= *stráž*) are all also - purely coincidentally - feminine in French.

2. Nouns of variable gender

Here we have four types to think about: homonyms, nouns that differ in gender between singular and plural, gender doublets with and without formal distinctions.

The **homonyms** are either expressive nouns ending in *-a*, such as *nešika* (m./f.) 'a clumsy person', *naivka* (m./f.) 'a naive person'; some types of pet names: *Jarka*, *Míla*; and the word *chot'* (m./f) 'spouse'. In their way, adjectival surnames ending in *-í*, like *Dolejší*, are similar.

A different type of homonymy applies within the masculine gender, cutting across the animacy/inanimacy opposition. This is the realm of such items as *volič* (m.a.) 'elector, voter'

The very strength of the gender opposition makes it therefore surprising when words occur which are of one grammatical gender only, that is, irrespective of the sex of the individual concerned.

and *volič* (m.i.) 'selector, switch', or *protektor* (m.a.) 'protector' and *protektor* (m.i.) 're-tread'. Peculiarly, some inanimate objects denoted by a noun that is primarily animate, retain their animacy: *kůň* 'horse' is always masculine animate, even if referring to a piece of equipment in the gymnasium. Others, such as *činitel* 'agent, official; agent, agency, factor' may, but need not, lose their animacy. Even worse is the case of those other 'agent' nouns ending in *-tel* which have only inanimate referents, yet may show (accusative singular and nominative plural) animacy markers (*jmenovatel* 'denominator', *dělitel* 'divisor'). In all such instances the actual gender of the individual or thing to which a word applies will be revealed by the declensional pattern adopted by the word (context-dependently), or by patterns of agreement with other constituents in the sentence.

Nouns whose gender changes with number are an odd bunch that all learners have to cope with very early: *dítě* (n.sg.) > *děti* (f.pl.); *oko* 'eye' and *ucho* 'ear' (n.sg.) > *oči* and *uší* (f.pl.). In transferred meanings these retain their neuter gender in the plural, e.g. *ucha* 'bag-handles'.

Slightly odder is the case of such feudal names as *kníže* 'prince' (m.sg.) > *knížata* (n.pl., but usually showing m. agreement in the verb!). Like *kníže* there is *hrabě* 'count', *markrabě* 'margrave', archaic *purkrabě* 'burgrave', and *dóže* 'Doge'. Nouns of a similar morphological type, but denoting young men and thus being close to the 'juvenile' class, remain neuter throughout: *páže* 'page' and *práče* (originally) 'slinger [a boy whose job it was to service a sling or catapult in assaulting a castle]'. *Práče* has remained neuter even with the more modern accretion of such meanings as 'rowdy' or 'heckler', though it has also yielded a newer, but already obsolescent, *práč* (m.), which is in a different morphological class. Finally here there is the word *oblak* (m.sg.) > *oblaka* (n.pl., though the rare *oblaky* [m.pl.] is also possible).

Gender doublets without formal distinction tend to lack any obvious gender marker and so are potentially morphologically ambiguous. Gender variation in them tends to be eliminated through time in favour of one gender or another.

They include *trnož* (m./f. > m.) 'cross-bar [between the legs of a chair]', *kyčel* (m./f.) 'hip-joint', and such loans as *sprej* (m./f.) 'spray', *prestiž* (m./f. > f.) and the recent *lobby* (f./n. > ?f.) and *image* (m./f. > ?f.). An isolated word of a different formal type is *rukojmí* (m./n. > m.) 'hostage'. Some formal plurals, or items more likely to occur in the plural (footwear), show similar vacillation: *džínasy* (m./f.), *papuče* (m./f.) 'slippers', even *boty* (m./f.) 'shoes', though the variation tends to be limited geographically (*v botech* [m.] as opposed to *v botách* [f.] is deemed to be dialectal). Regional variation accounts for the age-old vacillation in such place-names as *Olomouc* (f. in standard Czech, m. in Moravia).

Gender doublets with distinct forms include *náruč* (f.) / *náručí* (n.) 'open arms, embrace, armful', *prostor* (m.) / *prostora* (f.) 'space', *rozmarýn* (m.) / *rozmarýnka* (f.) 'rosemary', *kedluben* (m.) / *kedlubna* (f.) 'kohl-rabi', *okurka* (f.) / *okurek* (m.) 'gherkin, cucumber', *brambor* (m.) / *brambora* (f.) (the variation also extends to *brambůrek* / *brambůrka* 'potato chip/crisp'), and *břich* (m.) / *břicho* (n.). Several of these, especially the last pair, reveal stylistic or collocational differences; *břicho* has become the neutral alternative. Several other variants are deemed to be regional (*okurek* is attributed to Moravia, but is certainly to be heard in NE Bohemia).

This short survey has not covered the entire ground, but may serve as a reminder of some of the existing gender-bending problems Czech has, or has had. Its problems are not over, since as society changes new ones arrive. While 'male nurse' has found an expression in *ošetřovatel*, rather than the 'obvious' equivalent **zdravotní bratr* of *zdravotní sestra*, and *stevard* serves for a male *stevardka* or *letuška* (but is there not some charm in the potential *letuš?*), and while a new *bankéřka* could be found painlessly, there is still some fun to be had in the search for masculine counterparts of, say, *pokojská*, *prostitutka*, *sekretářka* or *hosteska*. And it is not solely to do with equal opportunities.

- David Short

Nouns whose gender changes with number are an odd bunch that all learners have to cope with very early.

Elisabeth Billington, *Czech in Three Months*.
Woodbridge, UK: Hugo's Language Books
Ltd., 1995. 224 pp. 4 tapes. ISBN 0-85285-
209-6 (Copy supplied by publisher.)

Another British do-it-yourself textbook appeared in the bookstores last year, quite closely following the publication of David Short's *Teach Yourself Czech* (see the review in *CLN* No. 3). *Czech in Three Months* by Hugo publishing house is also a title in a series spanning languages from Arabic to Welsh. Its good-looking cover and subtitle reading "Simplified Language Course" look quite inviting for those who need to acquire a basic knowledge of Czech fast. "The essence of this course is simplicity" reads the back cover of the textbook, "...designed ...to make language learning enjoyable." The expectations set by the book's handsome jacket, however, will be frustrated for most students of the Czech language.

The textbook is a conglomeration of incredibly extensive detailed grammatical explanations, very few exercises and diminutive dialogs. Coupled with the fact that there are more errors in the book than pages, the book somehow loses its initial appeal. *Czech in Three Months* appears to be the antithesis to a communicative-approach textbook. Perhaps nine-tenths of the book is spent on grammatical explanations and tables. Given the author's keen interest in grammar, one is surprised to find in Lesson 13 that verbs of motion participate in the same aspectual system as any other verbs and that the pair *jít/chodit* is presented as the perfective and imperfective form of the same verb. One could ask, why bother with determinate/indeterminate (or uni-/multidirectional) aspect when the idea is to have the reader speak Czech in a mere three months. Well, why then spend four pages on the imperative (L 14) or nine on the accusative (L 3)?

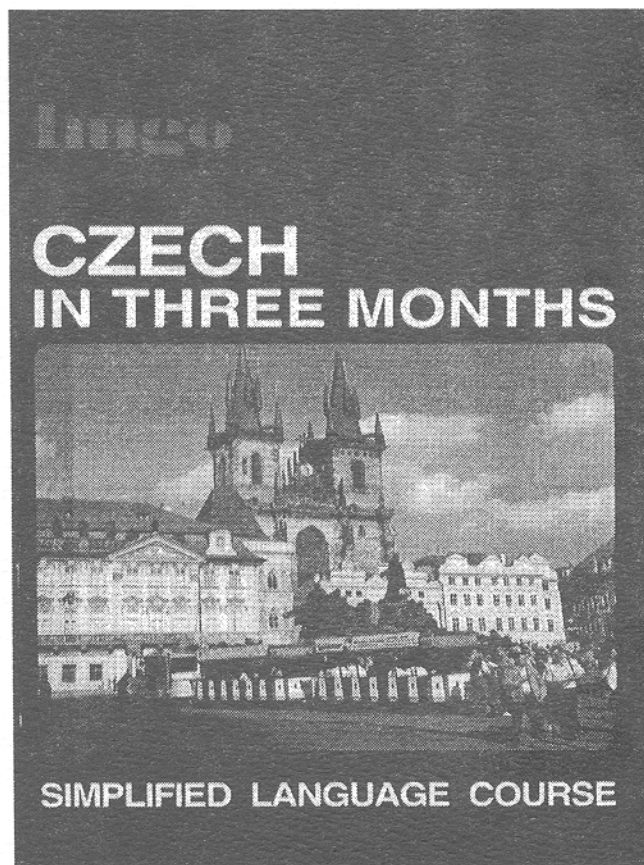
Dialogs, the only text presented, are replete with typographical errors and are inadequate considering the amount of grammar they are supposed to represent. There is no text at all in Lesson 1, and Lesson 9, the midpoint, has only a half-page dialog of mostly one- to three-word sentences (with translation into English immediately following); the dialog in the last lesson, Lesson 18 (also with the translation following), provides no greater challenge than that in Lesson 9. One has to question the usefulness of providing the English translation immediately following the Czech text, especially when the book contains a key to exercises which would be the natural

place to locate translations. The content of the dialogs, a notoriously difficult issue, is strongly reminiscent of the adolescent sex- and beer-oriented characters who people James Naughton's *Colloquial Czech; Czech in Three Months*, however, differs from *Colloquial Czech* in the number of typographical errors; Naughton comes out ahead.

There are some nice things to be said about the book. A good key to exercises is certainly a must for a work intended for self-instruction, and the key in *Czech in Three Months* appears to be of good quality. The index is also of a good scope, although, following the overall structure of the book, it is comprised exclusively of grammatical terms. The collection of four tapes complements the textbook quite nicely and the recording is professional.

I would recommend this book to those who love grammar and who would like to learn almost everything about Czech grammar in three months. For those who wish to build communication skills, I would suggest they try their luck elsewhere.

- Jiří Stejskal



M. Čechová and others: *Čeština - řeč a jazyk*.
Prague: ISV, 1996. 380 pages. (Reviewed from
the reviewer's own copy.)

The history of Czech grammar books goes back centuries. Modern Czech grammar theory has produced several new grammars in the last decade as a result of serious theoretical research leading to the creative development of previous research data as well as to the introduction of new, original ideas and approaches to the subject matter. Some of these grammars were also motivated by the needs of Czech-as-a-native language instruction in all school levels including universities.

Čeština - řeč a jazyk has been written by a team of prominent Czech linguists and published by ISV publishing house in Prague in 1996 (address: ISV nakladatelství, Kozí 7, 110 00 Praha 1). This new grammar follows the tradition of F. Trávníček's *Mluvnice spisovné češtiny* ("Standard Czech Grammar," 1951), B. Havránek and A. Jedlička's *Česká mluvnice* ("Czech Grammar," 1981), the Academy's *Mluvnice češtiny I-III* ("Grammar of Czech I-III", 1986-7) as well as the most recent *Příruční mluvnice češtiny* ("Czech Grammar Handbook," 1995) by a team of linguists from Brno University - to mention just some of the most important modern Czech grammars.

As the title shows, the book analyzes and describes Czech from the points of view of (1) its functioning in communication and the results of this functioning, i.e. speech (*parole*), and (2) its system, i.e. language (*langue*). Distinguishing these two aspects, it shows, though, their close relations. It is not just a grammar in a traditional sense - its content is broader: the book consists of chapters dealing with the naming processes, words as lexical units and with communication and texts. Its intent is not, however, the general description of Czech since it does not cover such special fields as etymology, etc. Stylistics is also introduced only in the limited space necessary to consider style as one of a text's characteristics. Greater space is given to the higher speech and language units (naming units - words, utterances - sentences, texts), rather than to the lower ones (sounds - phonemes). The language under consideration is standard Czech primarily, in its contemporary stage, with brief excursions into its history wherever it seems useful to describe Czech language development tendencies as reflected in modern Czech.

There are five main chapters in the book. The opening chapter offers general comments on Czech, its theory, characteristics, structure and position among other languages. Other chapters analyze individual planes of the Czech language system in an order starting with the lowest level of linguistic description. The second chapter deals with the aspects of spoken and written forms (sounds and graphemes). The third chapter explains briefly and richly illustrates theories of parts of speech, word formation, and grammatical meanings of words. It also offers the system of paradigms of Czech inflected word forms (formal morphology). The fourth chapter presents new approaches to the main syntactic terms of utterance and sentence. As the basis of his approach, the author (J. Hrbáček) makes a clear and strict distinction between two types of syntactic relations - those concerning meaning and form. Combining these two types of syntactic relations, he comes to the different syntactic structures, considering a sentence to be a unit of language and an utterance a unit of performance. He draws a line between so-called "complex sentences" (*složitě věty*) and traditional "compound sentences" (*souvěť*). He shows the following differences between them: a complex sentence consists of one main clause and one (or more) subordinate clause(s) and it represents one utterance; a compound sentence consists of two (or more) coordinated main clauses and represents two (or more) utterances. Therefore; only complex sentences belong to the framework of the utterance; compound sentences are a phenomenon of the text. Hrbáček's syntactic theory introduces one more new concept, namely that of sentence formation - parallels between the processes of word-formation and sentence-formation are made. The fifth chapter is devoted to speech act and text, analyzing the communication situations, participants, forms, construction of texts, text structures (horizontal and vertical) and text styles.

The book's content is well-arranged and its structure is easy to understand and work with. The book is logically divided into chapters and sections are carefully numbered; it has a comprehensive alphabetical index of terms and concepts.

Čeština - řeč a jazyk is designed for readers who are familiar with the basics of Czech grammar and whose intentions are to promote and broaden their knowledge in this particular field. It is aimed, first, at professional speakers of standard Czech, teachers (not only of Czech) and humanities-oriented university students, and college students with special interest

in Czech. It may also be very useful as an important and valuable source of grammar data in the teaching and acquisition of Czech as a second language. We can recommend it for teachers mainly, but advanced students of Czech could read it as well; perhaps with the teacher's explanations, it might be accessible even to the learners at lower levels of proficiency. Our belief is that this book is going to be of practical use to both Czech and foreign readers.

- Ivana Bozděchová

Appeal from the Reviews Editor:

The task of the Reviews Editor would be simplified and turn-over of book reviews accelerated if the search for suitable reviewers could be speeded up. To this end members are asked to supply him with their e-mail addresses (or fax numbers) and - ideally - some indication of any narrower fields of interest they may have. Details please to: d-short@ssees.ac.uk. It would also greatly simplify matters for both the review's editor and, particularly, the copy editor if unsolicited reviews were sent first to the former: David Short, SSEES, Senate House, Malet Street, London, WC1E 7HU.

Spisovná čeština a jazyková kultura. Sborník z olomoucké konference, 23.-27.8.1993.

Prague: Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy, 1995. 2 vols. (Reviewed from reviewer's own copy.)

The Proceedings of the 1993 Olomouc conference on Standard Czech and Language Cultivation have at last appeared. The conference followed on from a similar one held in 1968 with the aim of reviewing the development of standard Czech in the past 25 years. About 300 people, the most prominent linguists and Czech language scholars as well as practical bohemists from the whole Czech Republic and abroad, participated in the conference. The Proceedings present all the conference papers and 78 main discussion contributions.

The conference proceedings are arranged in eleven sections, containing opening speeches, papers covering seven main subject areas (with discussion contributions attached), a discussion summary, conference conclusions and an index. The structure of the proceedings reflects, among other things, the fact that increasing interest has been shown in the Czech language abroad, both in terms of the language of expatriate Czechs and their descendants and in terms of the teaching of Czech as a second/foreign language and its methodology.

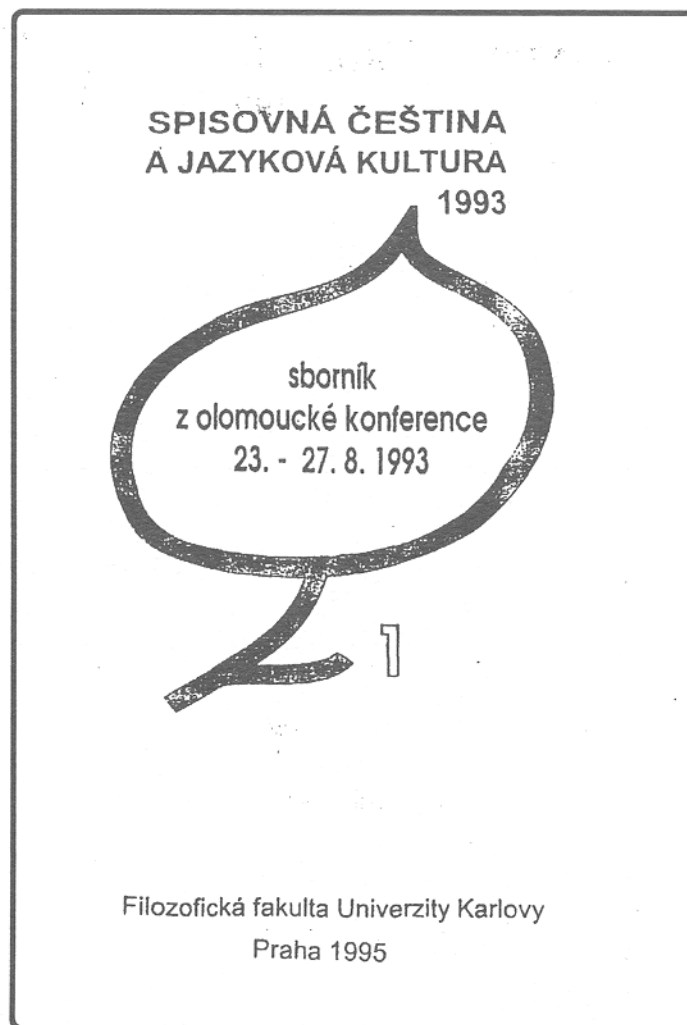
The first section of the Proceedings is devoted to the main general, conceptual and theoretical issues and research aspects of "The Function and Structure of the Czech National Language, Cultivation of Language and Speech," including such topics as: Czech in prospect and retrospect (F. Daneš), Standard and Non-Standard Czech and the historical roots and the present situation of this distinction (A. Stich), Standard Czech and the orientation towards values (O. Uličný), Standard and so-called Common Czech (F. Daneš, Z. Starý), etc.

The following four sections cover more specific fields, the most important and relevant areas of communication: "Czech in Everyday Communication" (including, among others: declining standards of spontaneous utterances - M. Hirschová; the speech of the young - S. Kloferová, the Czech of totalitarianism and the present - D. Šlosar, the degeneration of communication within the family - S. Pastyřík, research on slang, proper names - M. Knappová, J. Zeman); "Cultivation of Language and Speech in Journalism" (tendenciousness

and manipulation - O. Hausenblas, intertextual links and foreign-language interference in Czech commercials - Z. Jettmarová); "Linguistic and Textual Problems of Specialist Communication" (rhetoric of scientific language - J. Kraus; the dictionary and the cultivation of language - F. Čermák; Czech and computers - V. Koblížek); and "Language and Style in Literature" (Standard and non-standard Czech in literature - P. Mareš; the language of contemporary translations - A. Macurová; the language of consumer literature - M. Krčmová; language creativity in the names of jazz compositions - R. Brabcová).

The seventh chapter deals with "Topical Issues of Language Training" (including writing and the linguistics of writing - S. Čmejrková; motivation for spelling training - M. David; the role of the school in the language training), and the eighth with "Czech Abroad," represented mainly by foreign participants (including: Czech in the Ukraine - J. Anderš; cultivation of Czech in the USA - V. M. Henzl; the non-native Czech scholar's attitude to Common Czech - C. E. Townsend; the comparative study of Czech jargon - V. M. Mokijenko; idiomatic expressions in Czech and German headlines - A. Muschner; Czech-Arabic dictionaries and teaching Czech in Egypt - K. Elbltagi); some compared Czech teaching in the Czech Republic and in their homelands during the discussion (L. Janda - USA, M. Grygar - the Netherlands, J. Locher - Switzerland).

The conference on "Standard Czech and the Cultivation of Language" came, as reflected in its proceedings, to the conclusion that in a changing and, in many respects, challenging social situation there is, on the one hand, great variety and creativity in language expression and an increasing interest in language cultivation, as well as in culture in the broad sense; on the other hand, there are worries or doubts about the "decline" of Czech. The conference showed, though, that standard Czech is both a stabilized and a flexible means of present communication. At the same time, it needs to be nurtured in all spheres of public and private communication (with respect both to public speeches and language in school and to family interaction). For this purpose, among others, as well as for theoretical reasons of linguistic research, it is desirable to create a representative computer corpus of both spoken and written Czech texts which could serve as a base for modern dictionaries, grammars and reference books as well as for research observations and descriptions. Functional and stylistic values of all language expressions



should be taken into consideration whenever the grammatical and lexical structures of Standard Czech are being codified. In this point, as well as in some others, the conference proved the fruitfulness of the Prague School of Linguistics' resources and emphasized the importance of their development and enrichment through modern linguistic research.

The Proceedings may become a source of valuable information and data especially for those who approach Standard Czech and its cultivation as a matter of professional (theoretical) or practical interest. One of positive aspects of the Proceedings is that they present all the contributions in their original, "raw" face to capture the atmosphere of the conference itself. It makes reading not only authentic, but also more interesting.

- Ivana Bozděchová

Embassy on the Internet

<http://www.czech.cz/washington>

The Czech Embassy in Washington started its own Home Page on the Internet on March 21, 1996. In so doing we aspire to address efficiently and flexibly as wide a range of the U.S. public as possible. The information contained on the Web site strives to reflect our experience with inquiries the Embassy receives from the public, but goes far beyond that. Most of the data have been prepared by the Embassy staff, however the Home Page also provides for connection to other sites with information related to the Czech Republic. Thus, you can learn about Czech official representation in the U.S., Czech-American companies and Czech-American organizations, read the Embassy newsletter "Czech the News" (which has been on the Internet for two years now), but also get hooked up to servers of Czech government institutions and universities. The lessons from our transition towards democracy and a free market are reflected in speeches of President Havel and Prime Minister Klaus. For the business community, there is a comprehensive directory of useful government and business contacts in the Czech Republic with structured information on the legal framework of the Czech business environment. News media-wise users can browse daily newspapers and other news sources in Czech and English. The list of what is available would be too long, so why don't you visit us and see for yourselves. We hope you will enjoy surfing through the site and become our frequent guests.

- Rudolf Hykl

Are you a translator?

In the U.S. there is a growing number of translators from English to Czech and vice versa. The Czech translators' community has recently made an effort to organize and to make a clear distinction between professionals providing high quality translations and others whose qualifications as translators are limited.

The American Translators Association (ATA) administers for that purpose accreditation tests which help translators to establish themselves as "ATA accredited." Agencies and businesses seeking translators then have some assurance that the translator knows what he or she is doing.

Alas, these tests are available only for the "big languages," with the exception of a few (such as Finnish). At the last ATA conference in November 1995 I met with several other Czech translators and we decided to form an accreditation committee for Czech. I have contacted the *Czech Jednota tlumočnicků a překladatelů* in order to gain credibility in the eyes of ATA officials and, indeed, several first steps have been taken.

There will be a meeting of Czech translators at the ATA regional conference in Washington, DC on June 1, 1996, where we will discuss these issues and decide what to do next. If you are interested in the further development of this process and/or would like to get involved in it, please contact me at the address/fax/e-mail on the back cover.

- Jiří Stejskal

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CZECH Language News

Czech Language News is a newsletter published by the North American Association of Teachers of Czech under the auspices of the Penn Language Center. It serves the diverse and growing Czech language community as a forum for information on research, teaching and organization of Czech language instruction. It is intended to contribute to the promotion of interdisciplinary and international cooperation as well as the integration of theoretical and applied aspects of language study.

The News is an open exchange of information and ideas, and the editor welcomes ideas and submissions for inclusion in the next issue.

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Czech Language News welcomes submissions of articles, comments, letters to the editor, advertisements, etc. The contributions can be written either in English or in Czech, and should include the name of the author and his/her affiliation. Please include a diskette with your submission to save us time with retyping. The size of diskette can be either 3.5 or 5.25", and both IBM and Macintosh formats are accepted. Please indicate on the diskette label type of the operating system and word processor you are using. You can contact the editor at the address/phone/fax shown on the left or send an e-mail message to:

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