

Empirical Approaches to Text and Language Analysis

*dedicated to Luděk Hřebíček
on the occasion of his 80th birthday*

edited by

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A letter to Luděk Hřebíček from the editors

Dear Luděk Hřebíček,

The years have quickly passed since the time when we were happy to dedicate to you a volume „*Text as a Linguistic Paradigm: Levels, Constituents, Constructs*“ (Quantitative Linguistics, Vol. 60, Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier)“ to celebrate your 65th birthday. Now, fifteen years later, we have another great opportunity to congratulate you most sincerely: Please accept the content of the present book as a kind of scientific metaphor and paraphrase of “*Happy birthday to you*“... composed by 25 scientists from 10 countries on the occasion of your unbelievable 80th birthday. This festschrift is meant to be an expression of a deep respect for you as a prominent Czech orientalist, a theoretician of language and text structure, an author of numerous books, studies, and articles published in English, German and Czech in publishing houses across Europe, and last but not least, for you as an excellent essayist who knows perfectly how to persuade your readers that to build a theory of text is an everlasting and fascinating adventure.

The editors

A Postscript

All of us, who are Hřebíček’s readers, colleagues, students and successors, know well that perhaps the most characteristic and, probably, the most impressive feature of Hřebíček’s scientific work – from the very beginning of his career – is a unique and original methodological line of thinking and reasoning. For several decades, he has been construing his quantitative text theory as an interdisciplinary field, and as a testable theory, very near to those done/performed/ implemented in mathematics and the natural sciences. He formulates models, hypotheses, and conjectures, using various mathematical procedures to test them. He hates chaos (with the only exception of *deterministic* chaos). He loves order, rules, laws, and synergy. He views and interprets linguistics as a *science of language*. He is one of the well-known representatives of such exact thinking in the European scientific context, as well as a singular voice in the context of present-day Czech linguistics. (Of course, not a singular voice in the sense of an isolated promoter of certain linguistic ideas, but in the sense of a perfectly “sharpened” thinker – a linguist and philosopher of language.)

The festschrift mentioned above contains Hřebíček’s selected bibliography of monographs, textbooks, articles, book reviews and popular articles (not to speak about his translated novels and works for the stage, mainly from Turkish). Still, comparing the rich bibliography published there with what he has written since 2000, it is clear that the period of the last fifteen years has been most productive and most fruitful. In addition to articles and papers published both in the Czech Republic (e. g., in the journals *Slovo a slovesnost* or in *Vesmír*), and

abroad (in various volumes, mostly in English), three books have appeared: *Variation in Sequences* (2000, Prague: Oriental Institute); *Vyprávění o lingvistických experimentech s textem* (2001, Prague: Academia); *Text in Semantics* (2007, Prague: Oriental Institute). In addition, Hřebíček is a co-author of a voluminous collective book written together with G. Wimmer, G. Altmann, S. Ondrejovič, and S. Wimmerová *Úvod do analýzy textov* (2003, Bratislava: Veda). The books represent a further decisive step in the development of modern text linguistics. Hřebíček's ideas are acknowledged, accepted, approved and further developed, especially by the younger generation. The present festschrift is good evidence of it. It is not "only" a birthday present, but a manifestation of the undeniable fact that Hřebíček's ideas represent a big challenge to follow.

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