On March 18, 2015, only a few months before his ninety-sixth birthday, one of the foremost Czech linguists, Professor František Daneš, died.

František Daneš was born on July 23, 1919, in Písek in south Bohemia. Throughout his professional career he had to face many dramatic events that interfered with his plans, which was fortunately remedied by a fulfilling and contented family life. As a student of the Faculty of Arts, Charles University, where he had enrolled for Czech and English, he experienced the closure of Czech universities by the German occupants. He completed his university studies shortly after the war, in 1947. Among his university teachers who directly or indirectly influenced him were Vilém Mathesius, Bohumil Trnka and Bohuslav Havránek. His professional career started at the Institute of the Czech Language and remained linked with it throughout his life. After habilitation at Charles University he obtained the degree of associate professor (in 1962), but his full professorship had to wait for almost thirty years, until 1992. Succeeding Bohuslav Havránek he became director of the Institute of the Czech Language, in which function he acted for five years (1965–1970). He resumed this office after almost twenty years, in 1989 after the Velvet Revolution. In between he participated in directing several major grammatical projects and acted as supervisor of PhD students. His share in the Institute’s projects was especially substantial in the case of the conception of the academic grammar of Czech (Mluvnice češtiny) and in the final version of the text of Volume 3, Syntax (1987). During the seventies and eighties, as far as it was possible, he gave lectures at universities and research institutes in the United States, Germany, the Netherlands, Brazil and Austria. He was a member of foremost linguistic associations both at home and abroad (Jazykovědné sdružení (The Linguistic Association), Prague Linguistic Circle, Societas Linguistica Europea, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Semiotik, International Association for Dialogue Analysis), member of the editorial board of prestigious linguistic journals and periodicals (Slovo a slovesnost [Word and word art], Naše řeč [Our speech], the post-war Travaux linguistiques de Prague, Functions in Language, Language in Society. He was awarded the medal of the President of the Republic for his contribution to the field of science, the Medal of Josef Dobrovský, and the medal of the President of the Academy of Sciences De scientia et humanitate optime meritis.

The principal lines of Daneš’s research interests continued in the domestic Mathe- sius tradition of investigating the sentence, text and functional sentence perspective. The beginnings of these pursuits can be found in his first synthetic work Intonace a věta ve spisovné češtině (Intonation and the sentence in Standard Czech, 1957). This work reflects not only the author’s faculty of discerning the specific features of the spoken language and its aesthetic function, but also his interest, based on musical understanding acquired by his musical education, in the semantic impact of the changes in sentence dynamics and melody. The methodology of his investigation of the phonic aspect of speech is summarized in his article “Sentence intonation from a functional point of view”, issued in the journal Word in 1960. His best-known stud- ies, frequently cited both at home and abroad, are his synthetising treatises “A three-
level approach to syntax” (1964) and “On linguistic strata (levels)” of 1971. The study of the role of functional sentence perspective led Daneš to the elaboration of questions of the grammatical and meaning coherence of text, viz. to determining the language means involved in the linking and hierarchization of utterance themes. The results of his investigation are summarized in the treatise “Functional sentence perspective and the organization of the text,” which appeared in the volume presenting the papers from the Mariánské Lázně Conference Papers on Functional Sentence Perspective (1974). On the occasion of his seventy-fifth anniversary his coworkers and pupils paid homage to his life-long work in the spheres of sentence syntax and text by producing a volume with a characteristic title The Syntax of Sentence and Text (1994, edited by S. Čmejrková and F. Štícha).

Thanks to his ability to explain language phenomena in a clear and accessible way František Daneš devoted a considerable part of his scholarly activities to popularization of the results of his research work. His attention was primarily focused on the standard language as a functionally multifariously differentiated phenomenon which native speakers not only use but also emotionally and aesthetically experience. This is shown by a selection from his language columns that had appeared in Lidové noviny, published in 1964 under the title Malý průvodce po dnešní češtině (A short guide to present-day Czech). By elucidating and generalizing apparently commonplace examples, the volume leads the reader to a more enlightened treatment of the mother tongue in its different practical and specialized functions. Daneš imparted this view of language even to his coworkers in the popularizing cycle of radio lectures “Čeština, jak ji znáte a neznáte” (Czech as is known and unknown to you) (1996). This is the source of a further, no less important sphere of Daneš’s scholarly orientation that had a remarkable influence on both Czech and foreign research in the field of language culture and the newly developing sociolinguistics. The questions here treated concern the relationship of language and society, language attitudes of individual language users and social groups, the social status of the standard language as well as of non-standard formations, poetic language, the language of scientific communication, language hygiene and language therapy, etc. Many of these themes Daneš was able to regard from the viewpoint of the social changes that characterized the Czech society in the new political and cultural conditions of the nineties, as is shown by the volume Český jazyk na přelomu tisíciletí (Czech language at the turn of the millenium) of 1998, which he inspired and edited.

Thanks to his pupils and followers the Publishing House of Charles University Karolinum issued a selection from his works written between 1949 and 2009, Kultura a struktura českého jazyka (The culture and structure of the Czech language) and a volume produced in his honour on the occasion of his ninetieth birthday, characteristically entitled Užívání a prožívání jazyka (Using and experiencing language), 2010 (546 pp.). The two volumes not only demonstrate the live spirit of Daneš’s work but also the meritorious fact that by his personal example he educated several generations of pupils and followers. His multifarious work and pedagogical activities make him one the most prominent personalities of Czech and world linguistics.

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