IN MEMORIAM

Vladimir Ivir (Zagreb, 1st November 1934 – Zagreb, 21 February 2011)

Academic English Studies, though present at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb before the Second World War, started developing as an area of research after the War, and if we think of the Croatian scholars who contributed to the development of the discipline and achieved an international reputation, particularly in English linguistics, the late Vladimir Ivir comes to mind as one of the most prominent figures.

Ivir's early interest was in the English syntax. While doing postgraduate research at University College London in 1962/1963, under the supervision of the well known grammarian Randolf Quirk (presently Lord Quirk), he completed a thesis on predicative adjectives which was accepted there. University College in those days had a lively linguistics collective, both at the Department of English and at the Department of Linguistics and Phonetics. Some time before Ivir's arrival, Randolph Quirk launched The Survey of English Usage which would later result in the first corpus based English grammar written in cooperation with Jan Svartvik and Sidney Greenbaum, M.A.K. Halliday was active with his group of promising young linguists including Rodney Huddlestone and Geoffrey Leech. David Crystal was on the Survey as a recent graduate. Professor Gimson was an active phonetician. Ranko Bugarski from Belgrade University spent then his study year there. At the same time James H. Sledd from the University of Texas happened to be a visiting professor at University College. The group were in regular contact and it must have been a great experience and stimulus for Ivir's future work, as he often referred to that period. It was the time when Chomsky's ideas, that some labelled a linguistic revolution, became very influential and widely discussed. Ivir became interested in the new paradigm, critical of narrow American structuralist empiricism, and on returning home, he was the first Croatian linguist to write an outline of transformational linguistics (as it was then known) in Croatian.

Later, his syntactic and semantic research was channelled towards contrastive analysis of English and Croatian and Serbian. This was enhanced by a major international project, led by Professor Rudolf Filipović, which brought together English scholars from different universities in the former Yugoslavia. The results of the research on the project were published in three different series, *Reports, Studies* and *Pedagogical Work*, and Vlado Ivir was one of the most active researchers and contributors, and he also published his contrastive works in other domestic and foreign periodicals. The project certainly contributed to the advancement of

teaching English in Croatia and to the teaching of Croatian and Serbian abroad. It also contributed to the theoretical insight offered by contrasting language structures. This was the time when contrastive linguistics went through its 'golden period' in Europe. His book: A Contrastive Analysis of English Adjectives and their Serbo-Croatian Correspondents (1982) based on a corpus of translated texts was well received and influenced the research in the field. Ivir's elaboration of the distinction between translation equivalence and formal correspondence clearly presented in this book, he developed further in a number of his papers as in Translation equivalence and formal correspondence and in Translation equivalence and formal correspondence revisited ' in the international periodical Poetics Today.

The linking of linguistic and cultural aspects of translation was another field in which Ivir excelled and for which he became known internationally. He insisted on a theoretical perspective to this old field of human activity at the time when linguists and applied linguists saw little use from that approach, and for whom a good knowledge of the target and source languages was deemed sufficient. V.Ivir became well known among the Croatian public through his masterly simultaneous interpreting of major world events on TV (e.g. the landing of the astronauts on the moon). He had an intuitive talent for translation and simultaneous interpreting and strived to analyse this competence linguistically and conceptualise it.

After publishing a number of works dealing with various aspects of translation, he was invited to write a textbook for linguistically orientated secondary schools where translation as a special subject was being introduced. The book *Translation Theory and Technique* appeared in 1978 as a humble textbook for schools, but it turned out to be adopted as a set book in many Universities in the former state which offered translation courses. In this book Ivir defines translation, gives his graphic model of the process, looks at the social functions of translation, writes about its history, about the different types of translation and pays special attention to the translation of the notions relating to culture and civilisation. He considers the possibility of a general theory of translation and the problems that could appear in constructing it. The book was written in a student friendly style but had a fully developed intellectual content.

Lexicography is another field to which Ivir was dedicated. He began working as a co-author of the English – Croatian and Serbian Dictionary edited by Rudolf Filipović, published by Školska knjiga, which has had several revised editions. He also contributed to some smaller Croatian-English Dictionaries published by Langenscheidt. However, his major contribution to Croatian lexicography consisted in compiling the several revised editions of the Croatian English dictionaries of economic and business terms (with M. Urbany and V. Protega, later with V. Špiljak). The dictionary was planned in such a way that in its later editions it would be innovated with new terms as they appear in business and economic registers. The author warned the users that this was a dictionary for those who were aware of the relativity of the terms depending on the context. The dictionary was positively reviewed in the international translation periodical *ATA Chronicle* emphasising the author's precision and awareness of neologisms connected with social and economic changes.

Vladimir Ivir was born in Zagreb on the 1st November, 1934, where he completed his elementary and secondary education (2nd Zagreb Male Gymnasium) and in 1953 enrolled in the University of Zagreb to study English and Croatian. He took his degree in 1958. He worked briefly as a translator in Federal Centre for the Education of Managers after which, he was invited in 1960 to join the Department of English as an assistant professor. He spent the academic year 1962-63 at University College London, on a British Council scholarship, where he attended a postgraduate course in English linguistics and prepared a thesis under the supervision of Professor Randolph Quirk, an authority on Modern and Old English. He completed the exams and the thesis and was awarded in 1964 the Postgraduate Diploma in English Linguistic Studies. In 1965 he handed in his doctoral dissertation *The relation of the adjectival and verbal in the predicative position in Modern English* and obtained his doctorate from the University of Zagreb.

He was elected 'docent' in 1966, associate professor in 1973, full professor in 1982, and obtained his tenure in 1993.

Besides his year of study at University College London, he spent the academic year 1969-70 at the Center for Applied Linguistics ,Washington, D.C. and at the University of California, San Diego (IREX Fellowship), and in 1982-83 as a Fulbright Lecturer at the University of California at Berkeley. He also lectured at the Universities of Trieste, Provo, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Taipei, Graz, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Novi Sad and Skopje, and at home Universities of Osijek, Split and Rijeka.

V. Ivir was on the International Advisory Board of the translation theory periodicals *Target* and of the translation periodical *Across*.

The occasional official University positions that he had held include: Head of the Linguistic Section in the Department of English, Head of the Department of English, Vice-Dean for Research and Teaching, and Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the Zagreb University.

V. Ivir was a member of scholarly and professional societies: Societas Linguistica Europea, Association Internationale de Linguistique Applique, European Society for the Study of English, European Society for Translation Studies, Federation Internationale des Traducteurs, Croatian Philological Society, Croatian Society of Translators, Croatian Society of Court Interpreters.

His work was recognised by the state authorities and he was awarded, in this country, the Order of Labour, became the Member of the Victoria Order (UK) and Ridder af Dannebrogordenen (Danmark).

Vlado was a gifted linguist in both senses of the term. He combined his theoretical linguistic insight with high quality practical language work. Although engaged a lot in both areas, frequently travelling within the country and abroad, he found enough time to carry out important and demanding academic administrative duties. The problems they carry he faced and solved in an extremely calm and sober manner. His lectures and tutorials were popular with the undergraduates and postgraduates. He was sociable and enjoyed good company.

But above all, he was a gentle person, a good colleague and genuine friend. He had a multilingual family: a German wife and three children who spoke three languages fluently from an early age.

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