

TEACHING LITERATURE AT UNIVERSITIES AND THE BOLOGNA DECLARATION (LITERARY ENCYCLOPAEDIAS AND DICTIONARIES IN UNIVERSITY TEACHING)¹

Avtor obravnava poučevanje književnosti na univerzah, na katerih izvajajo program v skladu z Bolonjsko deklaracijo, ter analizira uporabo tradicionalnih literarnih enciklopedij in slovarjev v učnem procesu na univerzi. Na začetku skuša podati tipologijo teh podpornih besedil in analizira njihovo metodologijo, pri tem pa izvira iz gradiva številnih nedavno izdanih čeških publikacij, vključno s serijo slovarjev o pisateljih, ki je izšla pri založbi LIBRI, enciklopedijo literarnih žanrov, slovarjem literarnih del in *Enciklopedijo literarne terminologije in metodologije*, ki jo trenutno pripravlja skupina raziskovalcev s Filozofske fakultete Masarykove univerze v Brnu. Avtor skuša identificirati dejansko vlogo tradicionalnih slovarjev in enciklopedij v širšem kontekstu različnih informacijskih virov, ki jih imajo trenutno na voljo univerzitetni študenti. Obravnava tudi potrebne jezikovne spretnosti, terminološke probleme in spremembe pomena na tem področju, kar je zelo pomembno pri ukvarjanju z literarnimi artefakti. V zvezi z brnskimi terminološkimi slovarjem omenja bistvene probleme tovrstne enciklopedije, poudarja pomembnost primerjalnih in področnih načel in skuša analizirati uporabo tradicionalnih slovarjev in enciklopedij v okviru univerzitetnih predavanj in seminarjev v procesu realizacije Bolonjske deklaracije.

Bolonjska deklaracija, drugostopenjski in prvostopenjski študij, specifične značilnosti filoloških programov, področni programi, internetne enciklopedije, slovarji in e-učenje, integracijski filološki študijski programi

The author deals with the teaching of literature at universities after the Bologna Declaration, analysing the use of traditional literary encyclopaedias and dictionaries in the process of university teaching. He begins by aiming at a typology of these supporting texts and analyses their methodology, based on material from several recent Czech publications including the LIBRI series of writers' dictionaries, an encyclopedia of literary genres, a dictionary of literary works and the *Encyclopaedia of Literary Terminology and Methodology* which is now being prepared by a team of researchers from the Faculty of Arts at Masaryk University in Brno. The author tries to identify the actual role of traditional dictionaries and encyclopaedias within the broader context of various informational resources that are now available to university students. He also deals with the necessary language skills, problems of terminology and shifts of meaning in this field, which are extremely important when dealing with literary artefacts. In relation to the Brno terminological dictionary he mentions the crucial problems of such an encyclopaedia, accentuates the importance of comparative and domain principles, and tries to analyse the application of traditional dictionaries and

¹ This contribution was written as part of a project for the Grant Agency of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic IAA9164301.

encyclopaedias in the framework of university lectures and seminars in the process of the realisation of the Bologna Declaration.

Bologna Declaration, masters and bachelors courses, specific features of philological programmes, area studies programmes, on-line encyclopaedias, dictionaries and e-learning, integrational philology study programmes

At the beginning it seemed to be just one of the texts EU bodies often submit; but the Bologna Declaration of June 1999 was a very important document which changed slowly, but extremely radically, the whole system of university education in the countries of the EU and very often also beyond its borders.

The second paragraph of the declaration mentions the importance of education in general for all human civilization: »A Europe of Knowledge is now widely recognized as an irreplaceable factor for social and human growth and as an indispensable component to consolidate and enrich the European citizenship.« Continuing the so-called Sorbonne Declaration of 25 March 1998 the Bologna Declaration concerned the core of university education, especially the following passages:

Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, also through the implementation of the Diploma Supplement, in order to promote European citizens employability and the international competitiveness of the European higher education system.

Adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles; undergraduate and graduate access to the second cycle shall require successful completion of first cycle studies, lasting a minimum of three years. The degree awarded after the first cycle shall also be relevant to the European labour market as an appropriate level of qualification. The second cycle should lead to the master and/or doctorate degree as in many European countries.

Establishment of a system of credits – such as in the ECTS system – as a proper means of promoting the most widespread student mobility. Credits could also be acquired in non-higher education contexts, including lifelong learning, provided they are recognised by the receiving universities concerned.

Promotion of mobility by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement with particular attention to:

- for students, access to study and training opportunities and to related services
- for teachers, researchers and administrative staff, recognition and valorisation of periods spent in a European context researching, teaching and training without prejudicing their statutory rights. ([Http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/bologna_declaration.pdf](http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/bologna_declaration.pdf), 2003.)

All the three points have already been implemented in the teaching schemes of the EU universities, at a slower or faster rate. Of course, they also concerned philology. As we all perfectly know, philologists are quite conservative. This fact goes back to the object of research: language and its »products«, i. e. texts, literary works, literature as such. Practical language training and its theoretical reflection in the framework of linguistics and literary scholarship need an individual approach

comparable to that of a natural scientist or a musician; it is impossible to teach regularly for an audience comprising several hundreds of students; it may function only as a mere exception to the rule when explicating general problems; it is not possible to teach, for example, syntax to joint groups of students of, say, Slovene, Croatian or Macedonian though the languages are all Slavonic and strictly speaking even South-Slavonic. It is possible to deliver a lecture in comparative Slavonic syntax, but that is something else, like a scholarly superstructure. Thus teaching philology is a very difficult and lengthy process. The proposed division of the master's study into two halves, or two separate study programmes, though associated and ensuring some continuation up to the doctoral level, represents a major change. Some universities or, strictly speaking, some philological departments were reluctant to implement such a radical measure, but the pressure from different sides could not be ignored; from the very beginning the problem consisted not in a yes-no answer, but in how it could be done while still preserving the elementary quality of philological training and education in general.

This problem has two aspects. One is connected with the possibilities for graduates on the European labour market. Those with the bachelor's degree have some chances in the private commercial sector as lower managerial staff, those with a masters or doctorate can teach or do research work. So, the opportunities for future bachelors are much better than those of the masters – it is a special case. So it might be advantageous to study just the bachelor's programme: if one does not wish to do highly qualified educational or research work, then one can avoid further study – not to mention the higher salaries in the commercial sector. Employers will not ask about historical grammar, syntax or the substance of the poetic metaphor but about practical language and corresponding social intelligence. Thus the situation of philologists who have just finished the study of languages and literatures which are not taught at primary or secondary schools have less chance and lose a minimum of two years. Only a minority of them can immediately go on studying, teaching at universities or doing some research within the framework of the Academy of Sciences or elsewhere.

Speaking about the methodology of teaching literature, it is necessary to reflect this situation, to model the study programmes in a different way, to look for and find a new direction in philology, focusing on some other fields of study, stressing new criteria and support at least a shift of emphasis in study schemes. It is no good dividing the philological study along the axis general-special, saying that the bachelor's degree should be connected with outlines, while the master's degree with some special fields of research. In other words, the bachelor's student should get all the condensed knowledge in three years, while the master's specialises according to the programme and to his own choice. This educational situation cannot be completely resolved without a deeper knowledge of the methodology of particular disciplines.

Let us give one example: Slavonic studies, at least in the contemporary Czech Republic. Although intrinsically differentiated, these are based on traditional philology with a background of other disciplines including history, ethnology and folklore studies, as well as philosophy and political science. The school of comparative studies in Brno has a tradition going back to the 1920s and the 1930s. It is connected with the work of Frank Wollman (1888–1969) and his students – the tradition of genre research within the framework of various Slavonic Institutions in the Arts Faculty of Masaryk University in Brno has gone on since the 1970s. However, the present methodology would bring together Slavonic, English, Romance, German and Classical Studies and would simultaneously connect them with philosophical, historical and sociological texts. It is impossible simply to adhere to the Czech tradition – it is essential to study those trends being pursued, especially in the Anglo-Saxon world, which are known as metahistory. Trends similar to metahistory are also appearing in other social sciences as well as in philosophy. The substance of this approach is the conception of a scholarly text as a distinctively structured narrative. It would be necessary to draw parallels between Anglo-American metahistory and the similar movement in Scandinavian countries and also with the new Franco-Polish study of manuscripts (manuscriptology), and to compare the Russian work being carried out by the cultural historians associated with the journal *Odissej*.

To avoid the danger of the mechanical connection of these two scientific spheres, for example, as a study of language and literature as the means for social and political studies, a small group of researchers from the Institute of Slavonic Studies at the Faculty of Arts and the Department of Political Science at the Faculty of Social Sciences in Brno began supported research in the sphere of textual typology trying to link the disciplines dealing with both belles lettres and texts connected with journalism and the study of mass media. The key to this research, which is the result of the new impact of social sciences upon traditional philology caused by the contemporary situation of area studies, consists in the conception of fiction and non-fiction as a certain type of narration which may be analysed as a particular genre entity. The linguistic characterisation of the text, the problem of transitory genres on the boundary of fiction and non-fiction, the place of mass literature (Trivalliteratur), the visualisation of the text and the electronic media, the text and rhetoric, and the new terminology. The specific subject called Integrated Comparative Genre Studies has the following structure: the general history and theory of literary genres, the comparative history of literature, the genre structure of non-fiction, literature as a source of information for social sciences, the literary character of social studies, the problem of the language in fiction and non-fiction. The main aim of the study group is to overcome the methodological split between the two main groups of sciences and to avoid the situation in which traditional philology served as auxiliary means for the purposes of social sciences. Now the representatives of area studies, which are a transitory zone between social sciences

and philology, show that they need not only practical language, but the whole linguistic and cultural background. Without the practical knowledge of the language of a particular area in all its dimensions, including the historical, and with clusters of allusions presented in literature which became the common property of all educated people it is very hard to construct the principles the political system should be based on.

I would, therefore, support a more practical dimension in bachelors programmes in philology, practical language skills and the understanding and interpreting of literary texts, but it is too difficult without having a deeper insight into certain theoretical and historical suppositions. Philological study is simply not created for this dual structure, its subdivision is artificial and problematic. Another solution could be focused on the concept of a bachelors programme as a minimalised masters programme, so that the student would have practically the same knowledge as the former master who studies five years. This concept is based on good support, i.e. on easy access to all the necessary study materials and on a new orientation of the study consisting in transcending the boundaries of pure philology towards area and social studies so that the future bachelor or master would present himself being not just an expert in a special language and literature, but in the area on which a language is spoken and the literature is written and read (Pospíšil, 1999, 2002a, 2002b, 2004, 2005a).

The focusing on area studies should be linked to both educational and scholarly conceptions. Let us give some examples based on the experience of the Brno conception of Slavonic studies practised since the mid 1990s. The focus on area studies as a synthetic module connecting philology with political and social sciences is being realised in two directions:

- 1) as a specific programme of Czech-Slovak language and literary relations in the Central European context;
- 2) as a study of the European cultural area focusing on Central Europe as a mixed area where Germanic, Romance, Hungarian and Slavonic elements permeate. In the framework of European area studies, the Slavonic elements are present or even dominate in the East-European area (Balto-Slavonic language unity), in the Balkans (Slavonic and non-Slavonic elements) and, of course, in Central Europe, which represents probably the most complicated and diverse model. The Brno concept of area studies brought some good results, including several grant projects together with social sciences, Czech-Slovak conferences and conference volumes as their output, and international workshops and projects with Austria and Slovenia. A similar tendency can be seen in the Cracow conception of Russology (Suchanek 2004, Kowalska 2001, Pospíšil 2005a, 2006).

The methodological starting point of the research of area studies which should enrich philology and the teaching of both language and literature is the concept of the integrated genre typology based on comparative and genre studies exploiting the

area principle and the complex of humanities and social sciences such as sociology, political science, psychology, informatics, gender studies etc. The postmodernist tendency towards the adoration of minimalism and absolutely free interpretations evokes a return to former cultural historical and sociological approaches, such as newly conceived literary sociology, interliterariness created by Đurišin's international research team, criticism of prevalent immanentism (formism, formalism, structuralism) and the accentuation of relevantly stable terminology as a defence against the threat of dilettantism. The social sciences could not live without philology and vice versa, the language is the main hero in this human world.

Easy access to all materials might be connected with literary on-line catalogues and unified university information systems, one of which functions at Masaryk University in Brno. However, it would be inevitable to regularly produce innovated encyclopaedical materials, such as writers, poetological and terminological dictionaries transparent, multi- and interdisciplinary. To give students a flexible tool to grasp the substance of literature and to reveal all the would-be mysteries of literary creation would seem to be the main task. Besides dictionaries and encyclopaedias giving factual material and elementary data about the literary development, various streams, currents, trends and aesthetic doctrines, it is useful to give them a good encyclopaedia of linked methodology and terminology.

The important basic criteria for such a handbook:

- 1) aesthetic criterion: should be the basic and determining factor connected with the significance of terminology and methodology;
- 2) the poetological impulse is associated with the significance of terminology for a pattern of literary evolution;
- 3) the relativization criterion expresses the change of value in connection with the development of single national literatures;
- 4) the representative criterion represents a challenge for the balance between various currents, tendencies and poetics;
- 5) the comparative criterion is based upon the model of the contextual vision of terminology and methodology;
- 6) the national and political criteria expresses the morally obligatory demands of a certain national or political community based, for example, on tradition and democratic plurality of methods and terms;
- 7) the individual criterion concerns the author's likes and tastes;
- 8) the criterion of temporal perspective reflects the historical, diachronous dimensions of such an encyclopaedia: more important and topical are the methods and terms linked to the present time.

Though various terminological dimensions arose, they lack a certain reliable, deep and comparative character. There is no need to give numerous examples, but still: each term has not only the meaning given in dictionaries, but also a whole array of connotations based on the different historical background of a national

literature, e.g. »roman«, »novel«, »novella« »powieść«, »повесть« etc. These terms are comparable, but not identical; they reflect numerous clusters of specific texts. We are not speaking, of course, about national or individual terms which cannot be simply translated, but rather explicated or compared with similar, not fully adequate domestic terms. In particular, dictionaries or encyclopaedias of genre terms provide numerous examples of difficulties and understandings; it is always necessary to be a specialist, say, in genre theory, comparative studies etc., not just a literary scholar as such.

The Brno interdisciplinary project the *Encyclopaedia of Comparative Literary Methodology and Terminology* which is now being completed, may serve a wide public, but may also function as an example of future on-line material prepared for bachelor students of area philological studies as a good comparative basis for the completion of the bachelors course and a prerequisite for a future master's programme. It strives to embody the synthesis of an outline and the starting point of a more profound grasp of literature as such, taking into account the diverse language, semantic and cognitive background.

So the Bologna Declaration, the realisation of which complicated the situation facing philological programmes, might lead not to a mechanical, but to a conceptual solution which should preserve the core of the former qualities of classical philological education and research, but, at the same time, respond adequately to a changing world and to the dominant political concepts of this epoch.

Bibliography

- Ameryka oczami emigrantów rosyjskich trzeciej fali*, 2004. Kraków.
- KOWALSKA, H., 2001: *Интеллигенция – Традиции и новое время*. Kraków.
- POSPÍŠIL, I. (ed.), 1998: *Brněnská slovákistika a česko-slovenské vztahy*. Brno.
- POSPÍŠIL, I. (ed.), 1999: *Integrovaná žánrová typologie (Komparativní genologie). Projekt – metodologie – terminologie – struktura oboru – studie*. Brno.
- POSPÍŠIL, I. (ed.), 2002a: *Areál – sociální vědy – filologie*. Brno.
- POSPÍŠIL, I. (ed.), 2002b: *Litteraria Humanitas XI. Crossroads of Cultures: Central Europe*. Brno.
- POSPÍŠIL, I., 2005a: Novodobé koncepcie slavistiky a rus(k)ologie z Krakova a problém typologie textů. *Slavica Litteraria* 10/8. 131–134.
- POSPÍŠIL, I. (ed.), 2005b: *Ústav slavistiky Filozofické fakulty Masarykovy univerzity. Východiska – koncepcie – výhledy*. Brno.
- POSPÍŠIL, I., 2006a: *Ареальные исследования: между Центральной Европой и Россией*, in the press.
- POSPÍŠIL, I., 2006b: Literárněvědná lexikografie a slovníky literárněvědných termínů. *Slavica Litteraria* 10/9. 129–133.
- POSPÍŠIL, I., 2006c: Problém tzv. cestopisu: statika/dynamika prostoru a lidská existence. *Slavica Litteraria* 10/9. 155–170.
- POSPÍŠIL, I., MOSER, M. (eds.), 2004: *Comparative Cultural Studies in Central Europe*. Brno.

- POSPÍŠIL, I., MOSER, M., NEWERKLA, S. M. (eds.), 2005: *Litteraria Humanitas XIII. Austrian, Czech and Slovak Slavonic Studies in Their Central European Context*. Brno.
- POSPÍŠIL, I., ZELENKA, M. (eds.), 1999: *Slovakistika v české slavistice*. Brno.
- POSPÍŠIL, I., ZELENKA, M. (eds.), 2000: *Česko-slovenská vzájemnost a nevzájemnost*. Brno.
- POSPÍŠIL, I., ZELENKA, M. (eds.), 2002: *Literatury v kontaktech. Jazyk – literatura – kultura. Brněnské česko-slovenské texty k slovakistice*. Brno.
- POSPÍŠIL, I., ZELENKA, M. (eds.), 2003: *Česko-slovenské vztahy v slovanských a střeoevropských souvislostech. Meziliterárnost a areál. Brněnské texty k slovakistice 5*. Brno.
- POSPÍŠIL, I., ZELENKA, M. (eds.), 2004a: *Aktuální slovakistika. Brněnské texty k slovakistice 7*. Brno 2004.
- POSPÍŠIL, I., ZELENKA, M. (eds.), 2004b: *Česko-slovenské vztahy, Evropa a svět. Brněnské texty k slovakistice 6*. Brno.
- SUCHANEK, L. (ed.), 2004: *Wprowadzenie do studiów nad Rosją. Podręcznik Akademicki*. Kraków.
- Teoria Mikołaja Danilewskiego i późniejsze koncepcje monadycznych formacji socjokulturowych*, 2002. Kraków.
- The Bologna Declaration of 19 June 1999*. [Http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/bologna_declaration.pdf](http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/bologna_declaration.pdf).