

IN MEMORY OF THE LATE PROFESSOR JACEK FISIAK, 1936–2019

June 3, 2019 marks a sad moment for both the national and international community of anglicists: the passing of Prof. Jacek Fisiak, an eminent scholar.

Describing the late Professor is a difficult task, since much has already been written about his astounding scholarly career; organizational, leadership, and managerial skills; and academic legacy. Before outlining Prof. Jacek Fisiak's accomplishments, a short, academically focused biography is warranted.

A brief biography

He was born on May 10, 1936 in Konstantynów Łódzki, where he attended elementary school. Upon graduating from high school in Łódź, Jacek Fisiak pursued his academic interests at Warsaw University, where he obtained a master's degree in 1959. The pace of his career is particularly impressive: only three years later, he was awarded his Ph.D. from the University of Łódź, and this was immediately followed by a post-doctoral Fulbright scholarship at the University of California, Los Angeles (1963–1964). Following his return from the United States, the future professor submitted a manuscript to Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. This formed the basis for the conferral of a degree of D. Litt. in Germanic Linguistics a year later. In 1977, Jacek Fisiak was awarded full professorship.

Career in academia

The next steps in his career seem unmatched among Polish anglicists thus far. He entertained an array of scholarly interests: he was an English language historian, the creator of the Polish school of contrastive studies, and a lexicographer. He worked with such renowned scholars as, inter alia, Lord Randolph Quirk and Robert P. Stockwell. During his career, he was a visiting professor of linguistics/English in numerous universities around the world, as well as a member of 33 professional organizations and countless editorial boards. He was chief editor of such respected journals as *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia: An International Review of English Studies* (1967–2012), *Papers and Studies in Contrastive Linguistics* (1972–1999), and *Folia Linguistica Historica* (1978–2003). He delivered over 100 guest lectures all around the world and approximately 60

conference presentations. He also organized circa 50 international conferences and congresses and was a (vice)president, (vice)chairperson, and member of numerous scientific organizations.

As for Prof. Fisiak's scholarly output, he (co-)authored 11 monographs and 1 dictionary, published 80 scholarly articles and 23 reviews, and edited altogether 47 books and dictionaries (he was not only a historical and contrastive linguist, but an accomplished dictionary maker).

Teaching and mentorship

He began his teaching career at the University of Łódź in 1959, first as an assistant lecturer, then as lecturer and as a "docent". Six years later, he started teaching at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań: first as a docent (1965–1971), then as professor extraordinarius (1971–1977), and – from 1977 until his retirement in 2006 – as professor ordinarius of English. After his retirement, he was a senior professor at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań.

During his teaching career, he supervised over 330 master's theses and 61 doctoral dissertations, and he reviewed numerous theses, dissertations, and scholarly articles. He was a person of passion and great scientific curiosity, an inspiration, and a mentor to his students, allowing them to explore the hitherto unexplored.

Organizational skills

Jacek Fisiak was not only a prolific scholar, but an accomplished academic manager. He invited many renowned linguistic scholars to Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, many of whom stayed longer and taught at the School of English. As well as being a member/chairperson/president of innumerable committees, societies, and bodies, he was (1) the Head of the English Department (1965–1969) and (2) the Head of School of English (1969–2005) at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. At the same time, Prof. Fisiak was the Head of English Language Department at the School of English (1969–2000) and the Head of the Department of the History of English (2000–2006). At the peak of his career in this field, he became the Rector of Adam Mickiewicz University (1985–1988) and a Minister of National Education of Poland (1988–1989).

Honors and awards

His scholarly output, organizational skills, and merits were formally recognized on a number of occasions. Prof Fisiak was the recipient of two honorary

doctorates; he also received medals, orders, officer's and commander's crosses, and badges of merit. Last but not least, there are four festschriften and volumes dedicated to this eminent scholar¹.

As a person, friend, and colleague

Professor Jacek Fisiak had a lust for life. He was outgoing and generous, and he was appreciative of people with a good sense of humor – he always had a handful of anecdotes up his sleeve, often involving VIPs he had had a chance to get to know in his lifetime. Most importantly, he was ready to help all those who needed it. Those who knew him closely remember him as a trustworthy human being.

As a boss, he was demanding and valued punctuality, and he assiduously pointed out his co-workers' and colleagues' occasional lack of commitment. He was a fierce advocate for ethical scholarship (he was known for fighting plagiarism with fire and sword, and for being meticulous with data and research results). Importantly, he – alongside his name – opened scholarly doors for many. Prof. Fisiak issued a plethora of recommendation letters on behalf of his students and colleagues, which invariably worked miracles. He sent undergraduate and postgraduate students, Ph.D. candidates, and faculty members of the School of English at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań to various foreign institutions, and he supported his younger colleagues in their scientific career choices.

Needless to say, Prof. Jacek Fisiak has been sorely missed by a global community of anglicists, none more so than the ones who had the privilege to know him and/or work with him.

Special issue of *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia* – Jacek Fisiak, in memoriam

Publishing this issue of *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia: An international Review of English Studies* is deliberate. The journal was established in 1968 by the late Professor and has been published continuously ever since by Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. Not only was Prof. Fisiak the founder of *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia*, but also the head editor of the journal for decades.

This volume puts together articles written by the professor's friends, colleagues, and former (Ph.D.) students. The contributors are not only from the Faculty of English – the faculty to the creation which Prof. Fisiak himself contributed – but also from other Polish and international institutions. The variety of themes presented in these articles embraces and reflects the professor's broad scholarly interests. Thus, studies on Old and Middle English – for which Professor Fisiak, among other eminent historical linguists, laid the foundations –

¹ See the reference list below.

are represented by Janusz Malak's article on the strength and weakness of the Old English adjective, Jeremy J. Smith's "The Manuscripts of the Middle English *Lay Folks' Mass Book* in Context", and Jerzy Welna's paper entitled "Word-Initial Prevocalic [h-] in Middle English". Studies which encroach upon or deal with further stages in the development of the English language are Rafał Molencki's "The Grammaticalization of the Epistemic Adverb *Perhaps* in Late Middle and Early Modern English" and Minako Nakayasu's "Spatio-Temporal Systems in Shakespeare's Dialogues: A Case from Julius Caesar". Finally, English (historical) dialectology is represented by Peter Trudgill's article entitled "The East Anglian Dialect of English in the World".

The next group of papers has been written by Professor Fisiak's former M.A. and Ph.D. students, as well as colleagues from the Faculty of English. Paulina Zydorowicz, Michał Jankowski, and Katarzyna Dziubalska-Kołaczyk write on the phonotactic complexity and diversity of Polish words. Jacek Witkoś, in turn, discusses a certain contradiction in the application of the Phase Impenetrability Condition (PIC) to domains involving the long-distance Genitive of Negation (GoN) and *wh*-movement in Polish. Finally, Radosław Dylewski's paper addresses the issue of the use of lexeme *shit* in Dave Chappelle's stand-up routines.

Until the end of his career, Professor Jacek Fisiak was deeply involved in the process of compiling a corpus of English lexical transfers to Polish (it ought to be emphasized that his seminal Ph.D. dissertation written in 1961 was just on lexical borrowings). The article paying homage to Jacek Fisiak's legacy in the realm of English borrowings in Polish is the one by Radosław Dylewski and Magdalena Bator, entitled "The Fate of Mid-20th-Century Sports Loanwords from English in Polish". The other – also delving into lexical transfers in Polish – is by Alicja Witalisz: "Polish LGBTQ+ – Related Anglicisms in a Language Contact Perspective". The final paper, by Camiel Hamans, talks about contact-induced borrowings of American English morphological processes in Dutch.

It is hoped that these contributions will help to keep the memory of the late Professor Fisiak alive for generations of anglicists and linguists to come.

Note: In 2021, to commemorate the later Professor Fisiak's scholarly and organizational achievements for English Studies in Poznań, a tree (*ginkgo biloba*) was planted in the yard of Collegium Heliodori Święcicki (the location of the Faculty of English), under which a plaque with a commemorative inscription is located.

REFERENCES

- Dziubalska-Kołodziej, Katarzyna (ed.). 2006. *IFAtuation: A festschrift for Professor Jacek Fisiak on the occasion of his 70th birthday*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM.
- Hickey, Raymond & Stanisław Puppel (eds.). 1997. *Language history and linguistic modelling: A festschrift for Jacek Fisiak on his 60th birthday*. De Gruyter Mouton.
DOI: [10.1515/9783110820751](https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110820751).
- Kastovsky, Dieter & Aleksander Szwedek (eds.). 1986. *Linguistics across historical and geographical boundaries: In honour of Jacek Fisiak on the occasion of his Fiftieth birthday*. Vol. 1: *Linguistic theory and historical linguistics*. Vol. 2: *Descriptive, contrastive, and applied linguistics*. De Gruyter Mouton.
DOI: [10.1515/9783110856132](https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110856132).
- Sauer, Hans & Piotr P. Chruszczewski (eds.). 2020. *Mostly medieval: In memory of Jacek Fisiak*. Æ Academic Publishing.