

## **My memories of Professor Jiří Václav Neustupný: A scholar's mind, an artist's sense**

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I have been a colleague of Professor Neustupný three times at three different universities. The first time was at Monash University, then at Osaka University, and finally at Chiba University. I also have had the honor of being Professor Neustupný's student when I started teaching at Monash University. Regrettably, I did not have the opportunity to attend his lectures in those days, although I did visit his office a couple of times for advice on my thesis. This is because he soon left for Osaka University, which made him the first foreign professor in a faculty of letters of a national university in Japan. Fortunately, I happened to become his colleague again in Japan. Actually, I became not so much his colleague as his student of language management after our supervisor-student relationship had finished.

As we all agree, Professor Neustupný's treatises are extremely rigorous and logical. Nevertheless, I personally believe that he has not only a scholarly mind, but also an artistic sense. Once, during a drive from Melbourne to Canberra to attend a conference, I asked him why he did not analyze poetry, as Roman Jakobson had done. He answered that he actually had done so several times, but never published this work. I hope I will have the chance to read it one day in the future.

As we have also learned from language management theory, Professor Neustupný places special emphasis on discourse and communicative contexts. However, when it comes to daily life, Professor Neustupný seems to have enjoyed engaging in discourse which *disregarded* the given context, very often unconsciously, but on many occasions even consciously (which might be called "Verfremdung" in German). I remember that one time I was in the Japanese department's corridor at Monash University, trying to ask the secretary if I could have a handwritten draft of a Japanese textbook typed (this happened in the 1980s). Professor Neustupný approached me in a rather abrupt manner and inquired, "Have you already experienced the encounter with a penguin?", without any introductory remarks! I was not able to say a word, but after a three-second pause, I

finally answered “Oh, not yet, I believe...” As it was only a month after had I arrived in Melbourne for the first time, I had no knowledge about the famous sightseeing spot of the parade of fairy penguins, 100 km away from Melbourne.

After Professor Neustupný’s arrival in Osaka in 1993, his concept of contact situation gained great attention among scholars and language teachers in Japan. Unfortunately, the theory of language management did not enjoy the same status. It is obvious that in the past “contact situation” was very often taken as an alternative term for “cross-cultural communication” because language management was not properly considered.

In my opinion, the current situation in Japan is rather different. With the increasing number of publications and symposiums on language management in recent years, more and more researchers and students, particularly in the fields of sociolinguistics and language policy, are showing interest in it. Needless to say, language management’s increasing popularity in Japan is also partly owed to Professor Nekvapil’s lectures in Japan, one of which was being held during the very moment of the great earthquake in March 2011.

I recall Professor Neustupný saying that although we had done a lot of work on language, we still don’t know what language actually is. I hope the popularity of the study of language management will continue. Through it, we will find new aspects of what Professor Neustupný has been investigating.