

IN MEMORIAM: KARI SAJAVAARA (1938–2006)

Professor Kari Sajavaara unexpectedly died of cancer in Jyväskylä on 24th October 2006 shortly after his disease was diagnosed.

I met Kari at the 3rd International Conference on Contrastive Linguistics at Ustroń in Poland in December 1973. We became friends instantaneously and our friendship lasted until Kari's last days although we did not meet so often in the last decade as we used to in earlier days. I, personally, and many other Polish linguists owe Kari a lot. Invitations to conferences, guest lectures, summer schools, books, all were at the expense of Finnish sponsors found by Kari at a time when Polish currency was not convertible and when we had very little of it anyway. At his conferences, meetings and summer schools Kari created a special atmosphere where camaraderie was combined with scholarly seriousness, which encouraged both experienced and beginning linguists to search for new solutions to old and new questions posed by linguistic theories and data.

Professor Kari Sajavaara was born at Pieksämäki on 18th January 1938. He received both his licentiate degree and PhD at the University of Helsinki in 1965 and 1967 respectively. In 1967 he started his academic career as a research assistant in the Finnish Academy of Sciences in Helsinki where he worked until 1969. That year he accepted the position of an associate professor of English at the University of Jyväskylä, where he moved and lived for 37 years. In 1979 he was promoted to full professor. In 1996 Professor Sajavaara accepted professorship of applied linguistics at the University of Jyväskylä and the directorship of the Centre for Applied Language Studies, positions which he held until his retirement. He was also active in the administration of the University. He served as Dean of the Faculty of Humanities in the late nineties and Vice-Rector (=Pro-Vice-Chancellor) of the University from 1982 to 1991. He was docent of English at the University of Helsinki from 1969 until 2006. In 1987 he became a member of the Finnish Academy of Sciences. He also spent some time abroad as a research fellow (American Studies Fellow, American Council of Learned Societies, 1977–78; Mellon Fellow, Johns Hopkins University, 1992; Visiting Fellow, Macquarie University, Sydney, 1994). Professor Sajavaara served as co-editor of the publication series *Jyväskylä Cross-Linguistic Studies* and as a member of numerous editorial boards of academic journals, including *Papers and Studies in Contrastive Linguistics* (from 1998 *Poznań Studies in Contemporary Linguistics*) since 1977 and *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia* since 1984. He was awarded several high decorations, including Officer's Cross of the *Order of Merit of the Polish People's Republic* (1989).

Professor Sajavaara began his academic career as a philologist and literary scholar. His first printed work was devoted to two English prose texts of *Robert the Devil* printed by Wynkyn de Worde (1962). In 1967 he published the edition of *The Middle English translations of Robert Crosssetestes 'Chateau d'Amour'* and in 1975 *Imagery in Lawrence Durrell's prose*. From the early seventies to the late eighties of the last cen-

ture his interests moved to contrastive and cross-language studies. He wrote and edited a number of books and papers. Many of them were seminal for the development of contrastive linguistics in general. In particular he was interested in psycholinguistic aspects of CL. His major works from the period include [with J. Lehtonen and A. May] *Spoken English: Perception and production of English on a Finnish-English contrastive basis* (1977), [with J. Lehtonen] *Contrastive papers* (1977) and *Cross-language studies*, 2 vols. (1983). From the early eighties Professor Sajavaara's interests focus on applications of cross-language studies, cross-language communication and discourse, second language acquisition and transfer, sociolinguistics and language planning. Among major contributions which belong to those areas are the following ones: *Discourse analysis: Openings* (1987), *Applications of cross-language analysis* (1987), *Equality in language learning* (1987), [with D. Marsh and T. Keto] *Communication across cultures and languages* (1991), [with C. Fairweather] *Approaches to second language acquisition* (1996) and two papers [with J. Lehtonen] on the "silent Finn" (1985 and 1997). There is no space here to give a detailed analysis of Professor Sajavaara's numerous papers, many of which already belong to the canon of second-language acquisition and cross-language studies. The present brief outline of his work cannot do justice to him but can only indicate areas where his important ideas can be found.

Professor Kari Sajavaara promoted international understanding and friendship not only among scholars but also nations. Poland had a special place in his heart. He was president of the Finnish-Polish Society of Central Finland (1980–1993) and member of the Council of the Union of Finnish-Polish Societies (1984–1989).

Kari's untimely death has deprived the international scholarly community of an outstanding scholar and excellent academic administrator. Poland and Polish linguists have lost a great friend. Scholars, however, like soldiers, do not simply die, they fade away and leave indelible imprints on the past which can serve the future.

Jacek Fisiak, Adam Mickiewicz University