

Preamble

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Erling is a hapax!

A hapax (or hapax legómenon, from the Greek ἄπαξ λεγόμενον, ‘only said once’) denotes in linguistics and philology a word that, in a given corpus of texts or in an author’s work or in a language system, occurs only once. Although hapaxes can account for up to 30-40% of the words in a given text, in statistical studies they are usually (and perhaps prudently) ignored as ‘accidents’, or ‘noise’, that pollute the results of analysis and make any attempt at generalisation unreliable. Because they appear only once in a given corpus, they are often difficult to decipher and subject to controversial interpretations. But for the philologist they are also circumstantial elements, for instance in the attribution of a work to a given author attesting to its authenticity, or in the discussion of previous assignments, correct or incorrect.

In short, hapax indicates exclusivity. It is not just rare, it is unique. In a necessary and somewhat serendipitous turn of phrase, we will use hapax as an index of Erling, whose uniqueness consists of a singular combination of exemplary human qualities and unquestionable academic virtues. Qualities and virtues that all of us, colleagues and friends of Erling Strudsholm of long standing or more recent times, appreciate and admire. It is this human hapax – precisely and fortunately not generalisable, and indeed concrete, helpful and very reliable – whom we wish to celebrate with the present miscellany of articles written in his honour, under the title *The Many Colours of Philology*.

We are all familiar with Erling’s passion for grammar and linguistics, but it should be pointed out that he himself does not primarily call himself a ‘grammarians’ or ‘linguist’, preferring instead the term ‘philologist’. “Etymologically, philology designates a potentially infinite range of activities conducted for the ‘love of language’,” states Warren (2003: 20, cited in Helle 2022: 613). If by philologist is meant a lover of language who examines linguistic phenomena in their diversity and complexity, enriching the analysis with attention to their literary, historical, social and cultural context, then Erling fully falls into the category of philologists. His studies, as well as his teaching, are indeed characterised by a great open-mindedness and curiosity for the areas in which ‘traditional’ grammar meets and interacts with the history of language, literary studies, computational linguistics, cognitive linguistics, new media and much more. Nor has his unquestionable vocation as an Italianist ever prevented him from taking into consideration other languages and adopting a contrastive perspective.

We will not enter here into the long and not easy discussion on how to define, and even redefine, the concept of philology and reaffirm its current relevance in the field of humanistic studies. It seems to us, however, that Erling’s approach, open to outcomes and stimuli from other disciplines, in some ways aligns with that of the proponents of the ‘new philology’. Indeed, their regret or criticism concerns “the splintering of philology into sub-disciplines [which] marked the end of true interdisciplinarity in the humanities” and gave rise instead to “an academic system fragmented into innumerable bubbles of specialization” (Helle 2022: 627). To this myopia of specialisms, the new philologists counterpose a synergetic approach that welcomes and combines different disciplines which have sometimes failed to communicate for years – approaches to be implemented in the reading of texts, reading understood in a broad sense and at all levels of the text, including syntactic, lexical and morphological.

Sophus Helle, in his article ‘What is Philology? From Crises of Reading to Comparative Reflections’, argues that “philology not only undoes readily apparent crises of reading, but can also

detect or actively create crises that less cautious readers would overlook” (Helle 2022: 615). This philological ability to detect and possibly explain phenomena in the text that do not ‘fit’ with the usual interpretations and can therefore create reading crises, we find in Erling. In fact, Erling seems to have a predilection for linguistic phenomena that do not behave as they should, according to the system, phenomena such as pseudorelatives, verbs of perception used as discourse markers, verbs of movement used as auxiliaries, or colour terms present in idiomatic expressions with the most disparate meanings. Phenomena considered by traditional grammar to be peripheral, to account for which one must necessarily broaden one’s perspective, take into account a series of contextual factors and make use of not only strictly linguistic disciplines.

In his versatility and disciplinary openness, Erling is thus an eclectic, but he is at the same time a linguist firmly rooted in the structuralist (or neo-structuralist) tradition. “He knows his grammar”, as they say in Danish. At first glance, he might even appear to be a classic ‘grammarian’: his interest in Italian stems from his studies of Latin in secondary school, and his acumen and attention to detail, certainly innate and probably developed during his training as a librarian prior to his studies as an Italianist, is unquestionable. Qualities, including those of scrupulousness and care, that Erling put to good use in his work as a researcher, in the editing of numerous Italian-Danish-Italian dictionaries and the renowned journal *Revue Romane*, and not least to the benefit of his colleagues and students – the latter of whom certainly learnt many academic virtues from him.

However, Erling uses this solid and meticulous knowledge of the linguistic system, of linguistic structures, of the linguistic code, above all as a starting point to venture, as mentioned above, into explorations of peripheral and atypical areas of the system. His attention is mainly focused on the *parole*, on how speakers of a given geographical area, of a given social location, in a given communicative situation, at a given historical moment, actually express themselves. Linguistic variation – whether diatopic, diastratic, diaphasic, diamesic or diachronic – is in fact a recurring theme in many of his published works. His concise and pedagogical presentation, in Danish, of ‘The Diasystem and its Parameters – with Italian Examples’ is regularly cited in theses and dissertations of students throughout the Department of English, Germanic and Romance Studies.

Let us here make a small digression on the father of structuralism, Ferdinand de Saussure, and his famous saying: “Linguistics has for unique and true object the language considered in itself and for itself” (*Cours de Linguistique Générale* 1916), to which we would like to counter a passage from a letter he sent in 1894 to his colleague Antoine Meillet. “In the final analysis,” Saussure writes here, “the only thing that retains an interest for me is the ethnographic aspect, so to speak, of a language, that picturesque aspect that differentiates it from all others, insofar as it belongs to a people with certain origins”. If we add to the ‘ethnographic aspect, so to speak’, also the pragmatic one which, with the parameters of the diasystem, succeeds in differentiating even the varieties of individual speakers, we seem to grasp the composite nature of Erling’s approach, which probes the linguistic disciplines through the exploration of peripheral phenomena that are difficult to integrate into the traditional conceptual systems.

Erling’s commitment to the field of Italian Studies has been recognised and rewarded several times. He has received the honour of ‘Cavaliere dell’Ordine della Stella d’Italia’ for his assiduous work in promoting “relations of friendship and cooperation between Italy and Denmark” and recently, at the Danish Academy in Rome, he was presented with the ‘Premio S.M. Regina Margrethe’ for his extensive and in-depth studies of the Italian language. But the award he perhaps appreciated most was the prize given to the ‘Teacher of the Year’ of the Department of English, Germanic and Romance Studies, an award for which he was nominated and elected by the students themselves. His attentiveness, respect and affection (as well as his enviable patience) towards the students well merited him this recognition – and leads us almost inevitably to add another epithet to him, in addition to those of linguist, grammarian and philologist, namely that of ‘humanist’. Erling’s door is always open, literally as well as metaphorically. He is ready to exchange views, but always lets his

interlocutor speak before having his say and only then suggesting alternative hypotheses and outcomes. His respect for the other, his vocation for teaching, his spirit of collaboration (attested by the many projects and articles by four or more hands in which he has participated), in addition to qualifying him as a ‘humanist’, brings us back to another meaning of ‘philologist’, this time of Plato. By the term ‘philología’, in the *Theaetetus* (146a), Plato in fact refers to the love of conversation, of dialogue – not the study of texts – a meaning the word only acquires later (cf. Helle 2022: 615).

We conclude our preamble with a brief presentation of the articles collected in this volume. Most of the authors have collaborated closely with Erling on various occasions – and not infrequently for many years – in writing articles, organising seminars, symposia and conferences, editing anthologies, conference proceedings and dictionaries, in research projects and in teaching. As the following review shows, the topics range widely, but it nevertheless seems to us that almost all of them relate, in a more or less explicit manner, to Erling’s long and varied work in the field of linguistics and Italian studies (cf. the bibliography at the end of the volume).

The first section comprises six articles on the history of language and linguistics. Diachronic variation and grammaticalization phenomena are topics that Erling has been increasingly concerned with. His interest in the dynamic nature of language can be seen, among other things, in his numerous studies both on the evolution of personal pronouns from Latin to Italian (often including comparisons with French), and on the diachronic course of his beloved verbs of movement and perception.

The opening article, **Storia dei termini di colore italiani nell’area ROSA** (History of Italian colour terms in the PINK area), by Paolo D’Achille and Maria Grossmann, aligns perfectly with Erling’s work on the colour lexicon and his ambition to found ‘a grammar of colours’, also from an Italian-Danish perspective. The two authors explore the trajectory of the colour terms in the PINK area from Old Italian to the present day, identifying the emergence of *rosa* as a basic term and presenting a range of examples of its idiomatic use today. In the contribution, **Variational approach to the use of the preposition *vu* and the conjunction *vu que* in French**, Kirsten Jeppesen Kragh and Lene Schøsler, in the wake of Erling’s interest in grammaticalization and the use of large corpora, investigate the evolution of the participle *vu* – on the one hand into the preposition *vu*, and on the other into the conjunction *vu que* – proposing the hypothesis of a diachronic process spreading from ‘above’ to ‘below’, i.e. the opposite of what usually happens. Eva Skafte Jensen, too, in her article, **The perfect participle and the supine in two chronolects of Danish**, uses corpora to study the distribution of the perfect participle and the supine in two Danish chronolects, one from the nineteenth century, the other the modern standard, concluding that the markedness relationships have reversed: in modern Danish the perfect participle is marked, whereas in the nineteenth century it was the supine that had a more restricted use. Bjarne Ørsnes, with **On obligatorily fronted adverbials in German – the case of German *klar* ‘of course’**, offers us a detailed syntactic-semantic analysis of the two interpretations of the German *klar* as a sentence adverbial (in English *of course* vs. *clearly*) depending on its position in the sentence. The synchronic analysis is supported by the diachronic analysis showing the re-interpretation of the isolated use of the adjective *klar* as ‘of course’ to a sentence adverb that occurred after 1900. In his **Appunti per una teoria unificata dell’ausiliarizzazione** (Notes for a Unified Theory of Auxiliarisation), Verner Egerland presents a wide-ranging analysis of the evolution of auxiliary verbs in Romance and Germanic languages, suggesting that the process of auxiliarisation of these verbs, which originally all denoted some element of possession, reception or control, followed similar paths. In the last article of this section, **Otto Jespersen (1860-1943) romanista: la rilevanza della sua analisi dei *Passive tenses* in italiano ed altre lingue** (Otto Jespersen (1860-1943) Romanist: the relevance of his analysis of the *Passive tenses* in Italian and other languages), Viggo Bank Jensen takes us from the history of language to the history of linguistics and, more specifically, to some pages on the Italian passive by the Danish linguist Otto Jespersen, significant pages that anticipate the extensive work on the Italian passive by the Romance scholar Schmitt Jensen, and that deserve a prominent place in the historiography of the notion of *Aktionsart*.

The second section brings together six contributions that, with the focus more on the synchronic perspective, examine various syntactic, semantic and pragmatic topics – topics also studied by Erling, such as modality (e.g. the deontic modality in political discourse), deixis (cf. the articles on the ‘deictic’ relative clauses in Italian and French) and, not least, diamesic and diatopic variation.

In the article, **Language, culture and society: Modality, face and societal logic**, Per Durst-Andersen, on the basis of his cognitive-semiotic theory of ‘Linguistic Supertypes’, discusses the alethic and deontic modes reflected by Western individualism and Eastern collectivism, respectively. He proposes a third variant, the Russian one, which by aspectual means strictly distinguishes between the two modes and does not reflect the first and second but the third person, i.e. the situation. Anders Andersen, in **Mood without modality: An outline of an ‘amodal’ approach to the Italian subjunctive**, proposes a new polysemous approach to the subjunctive, based on the distinction between so-called ‘States-of-Affairs’ and propositions rather than on modal interpretations. Analysing the use of the subjunctive in complement clauses, he shows how this distinction is able to explain a wider range of uses than monosemous approaches (e.g. the realis/irrealis dichotomy). In his article, **Di che cosa parliamo quando siamo infedeli? Alcune puntualizzazioni sulle valenze di rinvio: anafora, catafora ed esofora** (What do we talk about when we are unfaithful? A closer look at the referential valencies: anaphora, cataphora and exophora), Iørn Korzen gives us a complete picture of the referential skeleton of a text, focusing on the concept of ‘unfaithful references’, i.e. the cases in which the head of a noun phrase anaphor differs from its antecedent. The analysis of three different corpora reveals a higher frequency of ‘unfaithful references’ in argumentative and narrative texts than in technical texts, where semantic precision is of utmost importance. Emilia Calaresu, with the contribution **Indicare, rappresentare e dislocare. La Deixis am Phantasma di Karl Bühler e i modi del Discorso Riportato** (Pointing, Representing and Dislocating. Karl Bühler’s *Deixis am Phantasma* and the Modes of Reported Speech), deals with the referential systems of the text, too. The author explores the notion of ‘phantasmatic deixis’ introduced by German linguist Karl Bühler, discussing how the three types of ‘imaginatively oriented’ deixis identified by Bühler relate, in a more or less systematic way, to direct, indirect and free indirect speech. In his article on **Il dinamismo linguistico dell’italiano tra norma e adattamento ai mezzi di comunicazione** (The linguistic dynamism of Italian between norm and adaptation to the media), Fabio Ruggiano gets to the heart of a topic that, as mentioned above, is particularly dear to Erling: namely, diasystemic variation – in particular, diamesic variation. The author underlines that the linguistic reality of speakers is modelled by the norm described in the grammars, based on writing, but also by the rules imposed by the various means of communication. In her contribution, **I colori della lingua di una semicolta siciliana** (The Sicilian illiterate Carolina Drago and the colours of language), Luisa Amenta instead presents us with a concrete example of diatopic and diaphasic variation. In her analysis of the autobiographical diary of the Sicilian peasant woman Carolina Drago, who mainly employs dialect and ‘Italiano regionale popolare’, the author shows how this ‘hidden’ Italian can indeed anticipate innovative trends.

Four contributions by Italianist colleagues within literary studies follow. Recall that Erling, as a true philologist, has subjected a wide range of different texts to his linguistic analyses, including political speeches, medical jargon, e-mail correspondence, gestural language, and also literary works. Mention should be made, among others, of articles such as ‘Goldoni and l’uso *medio*’, ‘Time and Temporality in Leopardi’s *Canti*’ and ‘The Reflection of Spoken Language in Pirandello’s Novels’.

Fully in tune with the title of this volume is the quotation in the title of Pia Schwarz Lausten’s contribution, **“Il monocolor non esiste”**: Postcolonial ekphrasis in Igiaba Scego’s novel *La linea del colore. Il grand tour di Lafanu Brown*. Lausten shows us how ekphrasis, that is, verbal descriptions of works of art – real or imagined, not only current, but also Renaissance and Baroque – contributes to Scego’s political project of rewriting the colonial and postcolonial history of Italy, still characterised by an often discriminatory historiography, from the perspective of Italians “of a different colour”. Paola Polito’s article, **Ricorrenze olfattive nel Trionfo della morte di Gabriele**

d'Annunzio (Olfactory recurrences in Gabriele d'Annunzio's *Triumph of Death*), turns attention from the chromatic area to the olfactory area, highlighting its importance in the work of d'Annunzio and other authors, but reinserting the chromatic area with an elegant transition from the scent of violets to the colour violet in d'Annunzio's work. Pepe Persiani, with his contribution **Divertirsi con la lingua: Il Doge di Aldo Palazzeschi** (Having fun with the language: *Il Doge* by Aldo Palazzeschi), offers us a detailed analysis of Palazzeschi's "passion for syntax", discussing the reasons for the many grammatical and stylistic oddities in *Il Doge*, such as the very long periods and recurring anacoluthes, often reproached by critics. Leonardo Cecchini concludes the literary section with the article **Un'anima in bicicletta. Lettura di Ultima preghiera di Giorgio Caproni** (A soul on a bicycle. A reading of Giorgio Caproni's *Ultima preghiera*), which starts from the experience of 'a-contextual' textual analysis, in class with the students, to arrive at a masterly opening of the love poem for his mother: a meticulous formal examination of both typical and idiosyncratic details, expanded and then integrated in the contextualisation within Caproni's *opera omnia*.

The last three articles of the miscellany deal instead with didactics, another area that has always been at Erling's heart. For forty years, in fact, Erling has been committed to conveying his enthusiasm for the structures and uses of language to his students – students with very different prerequisites and inclinations, sometimes even refractory to the beauty of grammar, whom Erling, however, often manages to bring around. His teaching commitment and his grammatical knowledge is being put to good use as he is currently writing – whenever his many other activities allow him to do so – an Italian grammar for Danish students.

Fabio Rossi, in **La didattica e la zona grigia della grammatica italiana** (Didactics and the grey area of Italian grammar), explores the grey areas of traditional grammar, which treat the same linguistic phenomena in a very heterogeneous way, and often divergent from the interpretations of the common speaker. Using, among other things, the website of DICO (*Dubbi sull'Italiano Consulenza Online*), the author criticises school grammars for not taking variation and usage into account as a counterweight to normativity. In his article, **The grammatical and discursive competencies in written French in upper secondary and tertiary education**, Jan Lindschouw explores the grammar and discourse skills of Danish learners of French as an L2 in the transition from secondary school to university. The study reveals various challenges in grammatical competence caused by the negative transfer from Danish and English and suggests a revision of the examination module at secondary school and an increased focus on the writing skills of university students. Elena Pistolesi and Rosa Pugliese, in **Numeri per argomentare: strategie di dispositio nelle produzioni scritte degli studenti universitari** (Arguments by enumeration: strategies of *dispositio* in university students' writing tasks), also deal with writing difficulties, not in relation to the learning of a foreign language, but instead to the argumentative structuring of the text and, more precisely, to the more or less successful use by students of 'numerical discourse markers', such as *firstly*, *secondly*, etc. We recall that Erling shares with the two authors an interest in numbers, albeit in the field of contrastive phraseology rather than didactics.

In conclusion, the editors of this Festschrift, Anders Andersen, Hanne Jansen and Kirsten Jeppesen Kragh, would like to express their heartfelt thanks not only to the authors of the articles collected here – which indeed give proof of the title *The Many Colours of Philology* – but also to Erling's other colleagues and friends who contributed to the realisation of the volume in the referencing and proofreading stages: Lorenzo Cigana, Silvio Cruschina, Birgitte Grundtvig, Lars Heltoft, Elizaveta Khachatryan, Alexandra Kratschmer and Anna Wegener. Heartfelt thanks also go to the Department of English, Germanic and Romance Studies at the University of Copenhagen for their financial and practical support, as well as to Globe magazine, which did not hesitate to publish this Italian/English volume. It only remains for us to extend, together with the volume, our sincerest and warmest wishes to our dear and unmistakable hapax, philologist and humanist, Erling Strudsholm!

Helle, Sophus (2022): 'What Is Philology? From Crises of Reading to Comparative Reflections'.
Poetics Today, 43(4): 611-627. doi 10.1215/03335372-10017681