

Peter Grzybek Memorial Archive of Slavic Studies Publications

Emmerich Kelih

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This archive makes available to the Slavic Studies community the extensive bibliography and full-text copies of publications collected by Peter Grzybek and his colleagues over some 20 years as part of their work on the Quantitative Text Analysis (QuanTa) project at the University of Graz, Austria, which he initiated and directed. The present online version of this material is dedicated to his memory; for further details of QuanTa see Kelih & Schmidt in this volume.

Peter did not suffer from bibliomania in the usual sense of the word. He was, however, an enthusiastic miner of the research literature on quantitative text analysis in general and as applied to Slavic Studies in particular, and was prepared to go as deeply as necessary into that literature to establish the current state of discussion in whatever topic had captured his attention. This taught him the important lesson, familiar to current academic researchers in all disciplines, that the search of burgeoning technical literatures must end at some point to forestall exhaustion - or, as he himself put it, “nicht schon wieder ein neues Faß aufmachen!” ('Let's not tap yet another barrel'). The distribution of material included in the archive reflects this outlook in that there is no clearly discernible single focus within the general subject domain, but rather an accumulation of literature on topics which interested Peter over many years.

There are 1890 entries, of which 1640 have associated full-text, online-accessible PDFs, many of them scanned from hard copies. In selecting what to scan, the focus was on materials that are now difficult to obtain in their original physical format either on account of their relatively early date of publication or of restricted representation in academic libraries. Though, as noted, there is no single focus in the distribution, various topic concentrations are discernible. The clearest of these are works on word length and on modelling of word length distributions (cf. Grzybek 2006). These relate mainly to the Slavic languages, primarily Russian, Polish, Czech and Serbo-Croatian, but also include German and English. Another is work on grapheme and phoneme frequencies. Peter and his colleagues, mainly Ján Mačutek and Emmerich Kelih, have themselves published extensively in this area; a comprehensive monograph was in preparation when Peter passed away, and it remains unpublished (cf. Grzybek/Kelih/Mačutek 2020). The archive also contains many older publications relating to phoneme distribution (phonotactics) in the tradition of the Prague school of (linguistic) structuralism, which will be of interest from both theoretical and empirical points of view.

One of Peter's many scientific passions was the history of quantitative linguistics and quantitative approaches to text analysis. The interlibrary exchange service staff at the University of Graz know Peter very well, since he used the service extensively to track down and obtain now-obscure publications from libraries all over the world. He refused to accept that any given item 'could not be found' or was 'unavailable via the exchange service', and was known to contact libraries directly until his objective was achieved. Peter's disposition to hunt for apparently peripheral publications is represented in the online archive mainly via Russian works on quantitative approaches to text analysis and quantitative linguistics, on which see further Grzybek & Kelih (2005). Russian philology at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries can be regarded as a prototypical laboratory for quantitative approaches, without sharp demarcation of literary studies from linguistics and productive of many innovative ideas and methodologies.

The archive also contains some examples of German work on quantitative text analysis, mainly in the form of older papers by Wilhelm Fucks (1902-1990), a pioneer of German quantitative linguistics and quantitative text, music and painting analysis, whose works are scattered among many different journals.

Finally, the archive includes work, mainly by German and Russian scholars, on a topic that fascinated Peter: the rhythm of repetitive structures in language, text, music, paintings, and film.

And so, Peter, this archive commemorates and perpetuates the wide-ranging contributions you made to the discipline you loved.

References

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Acknowledgments

The design and creation of the archive was generously supported by the patience, precision, and steadfastness of numerous volunteers. In particular we would like to mention Veronika Schmid (formerly Koch), Nino Auer, Bianca Sieberer and Karolina Wieserová.