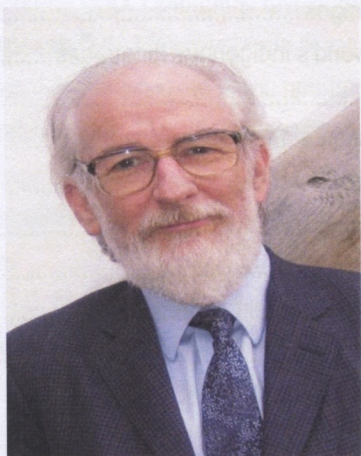


Теоретические проблемы лингвистики
Theoretical problems of linguistics

Интервью с Дэвидом Кристалом
Interview with Professor David Crystal



David Crystal



Emma Volodarskaya

Дэвид Кристал – известный британский филолог, лингвист, исследователь – англист, убежденный сторонник сохранения малых языков. Кристал работал под руководством Рэндольфа Квирка, принимая участие в исследовании современного состояния английского языка, в процессе которого были впервые использованы языковые корпусы. Дэвид Кристал является основателем Научного сообщества Уэльса; за заслуги перед отечеством был награжден Орденом Британской империи. Он много пишет об истории английского языка, его развитии и влиянии на другие языки мира, о разновидностях английского языка и их судьбах. Ученый выдвинул гипотезу, что различия между разновидностями английского языка в мировом масштабе будут изменяться как центробежно, так и центростремительно, и результатом такого развития станет снижение уровня взаимопонимания между их носителями. Последствием такого развития диалектов английского языка будет ускорение процесса оформления мирового стандартного английского языка. Кристал много внимания уделяет языку Интернета и других современных технических способов социального общения. Интересным является разработанный им поисковый механизм, функционирующий на принципах

смысловых отношений между словами, а не статистических показателей. Научные интересы Дэвида Кристала не ограничиваются теорией и практикой английского языка. Его книга «Языковая смерть» сыграла большую роль в усилении движения за сохранение исчезающих языков мира. Помимо научных трудов Кристал пишет стихи, пьесы и биографии. Дэвид Кристал гордится своей дружной семьей, члены которой не только поддерживают его творчество морально, но и активно вливают в нее много творческих идей.

Итак, Дэвид Кристал, ученый, популяризатор науки, исследователь и борец за права малых языков, – гость журнала «Вопросы филологии»:

London, 9.03.2020

E. Volodarskaya. *Dear Professor Crystal, thank you for your consent to give an interview to the Journal of Philology. My first question is about the future of linguistics. Linguistics is a research field that in one way or the other penetrates other fields of science. In the 20th century, it became more democratic – it turned its research interest towards all languages, large and small, prestigious and non-prestigious.*

What directions in the development of linguistics should we expect in the second part of the 21st century?

D. Crystal. It is so difficult to predict the future when it comes to any subject, but especially linguistics, which has travelled through so many stages in the last century. The abstractness that characterised the subject sixty years ago looks very different from the real-life applications and developments that are so noticeable today. What has always fascinated me is the way people would say 'Right, we know where we are now with the study of language', and then a new branch of research comes along.

Go back 150 years: for most people, the subject was all to do with phonetics – the study of sound changes in comparative philology, the development of the phonetic alphabet, and suchlike. The focus was on the sounds of speech, which is why, for example, we end up some time later with a profession that called itself **speech** therapy – not language therapy.

Phonetics seemed to be the whole story. But early in the 20th century we see the realisation that sounds are organised in systems, and that the functioning units in these systems (phonemes) should be the primary focus of study: phonology emerged as a separate domain of study, and many people thought that this was the whole story. But sounds function within words, so hard on the heels of phonology came the study of word structure, morphology, and this was then thought to be the whole story. The 1950s was the decade when the study of words in sentences – or the other way round, the study of sentence structure – became the whole story: syntax. Chomsky, of course, the notable name during that period.

Was there life beyond syntax? Gradually, during the 1970s, the study of meaning became increasingly centre stage: semantics. Then in the 1980s, a further dimension came to be recognised: pragmatics, the study of the choices people make when they use language in particular situations, the reasons for those choices, and the effects that the choices convey to their listeners or readers. At the same time, in parallel with these developments, we saw the emergence of new branches of the subject, such as sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and the wide-ranging world of applied linguistics. So now, looking back, it does seem that we have told the whole story of language. But there are indeed areas that are still in their infancy, and in a hundred years' time we might easily see those as having just as much a formative role in the development of linguistics as any of the previous stages. One such area is neurolinguistics, the study of how

the brain handles language. Another is the growth of new technologies that will lead computational and internet linguistics in unimaginable directions.

Then there is the basic linguistic point that a huge amount of empirical work remains to be done. Of the 6000 or so languages in the world, only a small number have been thoroughly studied. I can't put a figure to it, but most languages have received little or no systematic study – certainly not from all the points of view I just outlined. So I would hope to see a major development in the descriptive study of languages in the present century, especially of the languages that are most endangered – and of course of dialects too. But we must not forget that there is plenty to be done even in relation to a well-studied language like English. The many global varieties that have emerged over the past few decades have received only limited study – Nigerian English, Singaporean English, and so on.

E. Volodarskaya. *Your Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language is an all-embracing superb work of art. I am a happy owner of both previous editions. What changes in the language does the third edition of the Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English language reflect?*

D. Crystal. To answer this, people need to be clear about the dates of the three editions. The first was in 1997, the second in 2003, and the third in 2019. During the six years between the first two editions, there were relatively few changes, other than the need to take into account the arrival of the Internet. There was no mention of the digital world in the first edition, because in the mid-90s, the World Wide Web (1991) was still largely unknown, and few people were e-mailing or engaging in chat-room interactions. In the second edition, that situation had changed, so I included sections on e-mailing, blogging, the Web, and other developments of the time. But in 2003, the Internet as we know it today had hardly developed: there was no Facebook, no You-Tube, no Twitter, and no social media generally. If you think of all the Internet changes that have taken place between 2003 and 2019, you can see that I had to devote quite a large number of pages to the linguistic dimension of these developments.

But there is more to take account of with digital media, for virtually every aspect of English language research has to be rethought. Take the section on dictionaries, for instance: old-style lexicography, with its entries on slips of paper, has been transformed into a world, which is corpus-based, and dictionary revision

takes place online. And then you think of all the social and cultural changes that have taken place in the past fifteen years. World English has continued to grow, so all the statistics relating to different countries have to be revised. Nor is it just a matter of numbers; it is the way that people in these countries have been developing their local Englishes. We now see far more dictionaries, grammars and the like than there used to be. Most of the dictionaries of regional English on my shelves have come out since the year 2000. And World English literature has also developed remarkably since then – the poetry of the Caribbean, the novel in West Africa, short stories from Singapore. To provide a fair reflection of the global English scene, that section of the book had to be enormously expanded.

In fact, every section of the book had to be revised, as a result of the huge amount of research that has gone on in sociolinguistics and pragmatics. Some topics have experienced a radical shift in thinking – gender, for example. Once upon a time, we recognised a man and a woman, and that was that; whereas now the situation is much more complex, and it all has a linguistic as well as a social dimension. Any book that dares to call itself an encyclopedia has to show it is aware of such changes. As a result, fifty or so pages were added to this edition – which, with a page allowing up to a thousand words, well, it was like writing a new book.

E. Volodarskaya. *It is known that the King's James Bible and Shakespeare influenced the English language. What forms did that influence take?*

D. Crystal. In very different ways. The King James Bible was produced by a committee of translators who say very clearly in their Preface that the language would be conservative and linked to tradition. The KJB owes much to earlier translations, especially by Tyndale in the 16th century. Around 80% of the language in the KJB shows his influence. So we do not see much lexical innovation in the KJB, and this is a major contrast with Shakespeare.

In my book *Begat* I tried to give a precise answer to the question of linguistic influence, and found it primarily in idiom. Because the KJB became the official voice of the church, and was regularly read aloud, many of the idioms it contains – like *thorn in the flesh* and *fly in the ointment* – became part of everyday usage. But how many? It was a question that was being repeatedly asked in 2010, just as the 400th anniversary of the KJB was coming up. I had no idea! Some said very few; others said thousands. So for *Begat* I went through the whole Bible, line by line, and high-

lighted every instance of an idiom that is still being used – not just in a religious setting, of course, but in everyday life as well, in such fields as advertising. I ended up with a total of 257, which was more than I expected, and yet less than many people were expecting. And comparing other translations, it turned out that only a few of these are unique to the KJB, such as *how are the mighty fallen* and *the root of the matter*.

So it is in idioms that we see the KJB's main influence on English, along with the rhythmical power of the lines in which they occur, which has been held up as a model of stylistic excellence for centuries. There is much less to say about grammar or orthography, though there are some interesting stories to be told about spelling. For example, the fact that we have a silent *h* in *ghost* can be attributed to biblical influence. The story starts in the days of William Caxton, whose Flemish typesetters were given English manuscripts, into which they introduced some Flemish spellings, including an *h* in such words as *ghost*, *ghirl*, *ghoose* and *gheese*. In modern English these all disappeared apart from in *ghost* and its derivatives (such as *ghastly*), where we retain the *h*. The reason, I am pretty sure, is because the translations of the Bible, and especially the KJB, kept that *h* in *Holy Ghost*. If the Bible says there is an *h*, then there must be!

When we come to Shakespeare, it is a very different scenario, because he is as innovative in his use of language as he is in his characters. For example, we can see coinages that have a clearly Shakespearean ring in his many creative uses of the prefix *un-*. – Lady Macbeth asking the heavens to “unsex me here”, or in *Coriolanus* “unshout the noise”, and many more. It has often asked how many such coinages there are, but it is not possible to give a definite figure, even though people often do so. The reason is that estimates have usually been based on the ‘first recorded uses’ as listed in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. But we have to remember that Shakespeare is over-represented there, as he was taken as a primary source when that dictionary was first being compiled at the end of the 19th century. Over two thousand such uses were attributed to him, as a consequence. But in the last 20 or so years we have seen huge numbers of other plays and documents made available online which are easily searchable, and many examples thought to be Shakespearean first usages have now turned out to have been already in the language. An example is *lonely*, which for a long time was thought to be a Shakespearean coinage, but it has now been found in earlier texts. So, in answer to the question “How many words did Shakespeare invent?” the answer is “We don't know”. It is much less than a thousand now, and

it may end up being just a few hundred.

That is still a very impressive total, of course. You and I would be delighted to add just one word to the language. Shakespeare has several hundred. But more important than the innovative words, to my mind, is his stylistic range, with language being used that captures the social identity and personality of his characters. His creations sound real, and we recognise them because of the way they speak and interact. People sometimes say we can get to Shakespeare through his stories, through his plots. No. It is the subtle way in which he uses vocabulary and idiom to identify his characters that is absolutely critical. But there is a second factor, which emerges when we explore his language from a pragmatic point of view. When we look at the nature of the interaction between his characters, we see the cleverness with which their relationships are manipulated. A well-studied example is the subtle use of the pronouns *thou* versus *you*, which is such an important index of the temperament of an interaction, revealing the way people see each other.

I think actually we are just at the beginning of an answer to the question of how much influence Shakespeare had on the English language. Great progress has been made in the last decade or so. Linguists have begun to explore Shakespearean language more thoroughly than ever before, after a period of great neglect. In the 1990s, the main talking points about Shakespeare were to do with such questions as whether he was Catholic or Protestant, straight or gay, and the like. The language received very little attention. Things are different now. To take just two examples: we have the *Shakespeare's Words* website that son Ben and I produced; and Jonathan Culpeper at Lancaster University has been compiling an encyclopedia of Shakespeare's language. Also, Shakespeare in original pronunciation has become something of a movement in several parts of the world. All this has happened in the last twenty years or so.

E. Volodarskaya. *Did you participate in staging Shakespeare's plays in OP – Original Pronunciation? Have the OP plays been met positively by the audience? Did people understand actors using the OP?*

D. Crystal. Oh, they understood well! But it took a while to eliminate the misunderstandings about OP. Yes, I was involved with the company at Shakespeare's Globe in London, when they mounted their first OP production in 2004. After the Globe was completed, in 1997, they introduced all kinds of original practices, such as original movement, original music, original instruments, and original dress. But they

were scared of original pronunciation because they thought, as your question suggests, that people would not understand it. When they actually heard, they realised it was no more difficult than any modern English accent. Audiences found it a bit strange, to begin with, but they got used to it very quickly. The difference between OP and RP is not that great, for it is Early Modern English, after all, not Middle English. You can hear examples online at www.originalpronunciation.com, and can perhaps get an initial impression by comparing two versions here, the first in RP, the second in OP:

*O for a Muse of fire that would ascend / The
brightest heaven of invention*

RP / [ɔu: fə: ei mju:z ɒv 'faɪə ðæt wʊd ə'send] /
[ðə:'brɑ:tɪst hevn ɒv ɪn'venʃn]

OP / [o: fə:reɪ mju:z ɒv 'fæɪə ðæt wʊd ə'send] /
[ðə:'brɑ:tɪst hevn ɒv ɪn'venʃn]

In the audience talkback sessions after the first production of *Romeo and Juliet* there was huge enthusiasm. People said, "I got used to it by the end of the first scene". And we noticed something else: that OP reaches out to people in a way that RP does not. My favourite story here relates to when I was walking around the yard in the Globe during the interval asking people how they were finding it. I asked a group of inner-city London teenagers, and they said it was wonderful because the OP drew them in. One lad said to me that when he went to a theatre he always felt 'they speak posh, but this lot, they're speaking like us'. So, the accent reaches out, because it sounds more regional. We need to remember that traditional RP is spoken by only about 2% of the population of England. Everybody else speaks a modified version or a regional accent of some kind. And so OP, which sounds regional, makes people from these backgrounds feel warmer, as it were, and brings the play towards them in a way RP could never do. I am not denigrating RP, of course. There have been some wonderful performances in RP – think of Laurence Olivier, for example. But OP does seem to have a wider reach, and the main evidence of this is not in England at all, but in America, where OP is now very popular in several places: the Baltimore Shakespeare Factory, for example, has been producing an OP production of a Shakespeare play every year. And the reason for its American popularity, I have been told by several US directors and actors, is that OP sounds much closer to American English than RP does.

E. Volodarskaya. *Have any plays been recorded? Are they available?*

D. Crystal. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was staged in OP at Kansas University in 2011, directed by Paul Meier, and this was both audio and video recorded. You can find information about it by going to his website (he runs IDEA, the International Dialects of English Archive). I think that this is the only commercial production to date. The Globe has recorded all its productions, but these are not commercially available. You have to go to the theatre's archive department to see them. So this is a problem at the moment: there is relatively little online, apart from the dedicated OP website www.originalpronunciation.com where there are several recorded examples.

E. Volodarskaya. *I cannot even imagine that the OP may be more attractive to people than the RP is. It sounds unusual.*

D. Crystal. I would say, it is attractive in a different way. But note that OP has some benefits for second language learners as well. Think of all the languages you know: most pronounce /r/ after a vowel, as do many English accents. RP is one of the few English accents that does not - because of the way this accent developed at the end of the 18th century, when upper-class speakers wanted to make their speech different from that used by lower-class people. So, if you are learning RP, you have to learn **not** to pronounce /r/ after a vowel, whereas you do not have this problem with OP. Several second-language learners have told me that this helps to make OP easier to learn.

E. Volodarskaya. *And that is why the OP is easier for the Americans.*

D. Crystal. Yes.

E. Volodarskaya. How very interesting!

E. Volodarskaya. *Can we say today that the English language has set up a new family of English languages within the West-Germanic branch of the Indo-European family of languages?*

D. Crystal. Yes, we can. It already exists in a small way. If you mean by a new language a variety that has developed to the extent that it is not intelligible to other speakers, well, that has already happened in Papua New Guinea with Tok Pisin, which is a pidgin language, though a very developed one, including

translations of Shakespeare, the Bible, and so on. Then again, if you take accent variation as an index of intelligibility, there are several varieties around the world, where the accents have developed in directions, which would make you feel that different languages are being spoken. But intelligibility is not the only criterion: there is also the criterion of identity. If a country decides to call its way of communication a **language**, rather than a **dialect**, it can do so, if it has enough power to make everyone respect its decision. The best example of this happening in recent times is the former Yugoslavia, where thirty years ago everybody spoke dialects of Serbo-Croatian, but today they speak Croatian, Serbian, Slovenian, Montenegrin, and so on. These are now called different languages, even though relatively little language change has taken place.

English could easily develop into a broader family of languages in a similar way if territories wanted their English to be seen as linguistically distinct, and they had the power to implement their view. There are some movements around the world in that direction. For example, in Scotland, there is a mood which argues that the English spoken in several parts of the region - Scots, as it would be called (not Gaelic, which is a Celtic language), famously illustrated by the poetry of Burns - is a different language, not a just a dialect of English. Then there is the case of Black Vernacular English in the USA, which some have argued is a separate language (the name Ebonics has been used). So, there are a few trends around the world, which suggest that an English family of languages is certainly a possibility. But we need to see these trends within a broader perspective, as most varieties of global English are still very limited in the extent to which they differ from each other, and they do not have movements of this kind.

E. Volodarskaya. *The late professor Michael Krauss, whom I respect very much, had said that it was high time to turn to endangered languages, as linguistics cannot afford losing approximately 90% of its subject matter. He thought that linguistic theory should be based on the material obtained from a large number of languages. He had in mind Chomsky's Theory of Universal Grammar. Do you think linguistic theories should wait until all the data have been provided, or should linguists test their theories on at least some available material until more information comes through?*

D. Crystal. It does not really matter which language you use to motivate your theory. If there is a uni-

versal grammar, then it will manifest itself regardless of the language you happen to choose. English was as good an example of universal grammar as anything else. At the same time, one can't help thinking that if linguists had started from a different standpoint, using a language of a very different structure, the models of grammar that were developed would have a rather different character. So yes, it is very important to broaden the empirical basis of the subject by studying as many individual languages from different language families as possible. There has certainly been an imbalance: far more people have been involved in the theoretical side of linguistics than in the empirical side, though the balance has been improving since Krauss made his influential statement. Estimates such as the one he gave shows that there is still a huge amount of work to be done. The endangered languages, in particular, are the ones to worry about most, of course. The situation is slightly better than he thought in the 1990s. The *Oxford Handbook of Endangered Languages* that came out last year has given us a fresh estimate of the rate at which endangered languages are disappearing. In the 1990s, a common statement was that an endangered language was disappearing every two weeks on average; the estimate by writers in the *Handbook* is that this is more like 3 months or so.

E. Volodarskaya. *Still better.*

D. Crystal. Absolutely! But still a matter of grave concern. We do need more and more individuals working in the field with communities in order to document, and then – if a community wishes it – to revitalise their language. The documentation is still very limited, though it is improving. And the *Handbook* that I mentioned is extremely useful for the way it explores the issues surrounding documentation in a much more sophisticated way than I have read before. The process is not as straightforward as some people think: a linguist cannot just arrive in a community with a breezy 'Hello, I'm here to document your language. Aren't you lucky?' All kinds of social and emotional factors have to be taken into account. There will be disagreement over the kind of speech to be documented, who to choose as informants, how to guarantee rights over the recordings, and much more. A well-thought-out sociolinguistic perspective is essential. Most of the issues were not being well addressed in the 1990s, but we are increasingly aware of them now.

E. Volodarskaya. *Michael Krauss and his supporters have made a powerful breakthrough in this*

matter. After his famous presentation in 1992 and, especially, the publication of your book 'Language death' (2000) things began to change for the better. This was the turning point in opening the door to revitalisation of languages; otherwise, I do not think that any other language will be able to repeat in the future the success of the Hebrew language.

D. Crystal. Yes, there have been some happy success stories over the last twenty or thirty years; but when you look at the annual reports of organizations such as the Committee for Endangered Languages in the USA or the Foundation for Endangered Languages in the UK, there are no grounds for complacency. These bodies give small grants for research projects around the world, but they are still very, very, very short of money. If they had more, so much good would be done. But for this to happen, we need better Public Relations. You and I know the state of endangered languages very well, but if we carry out a street survey, we find that most people are unaware of their plight. They know about endangered animals or plants, but they do not know about endangered languages.

E. Volodarskaya. *Our Journal is a joint journal run by the Institute of Foreign Languages, the Russian Academy of Linguistics and the Institute of Linguistics of the Russian Academy of Sciences, one of the departments of which is the National Centre for the Study of the Languages of Russia. Their experience reveals that revitalisation activities for the majority of Russian minor languages become available too late. When at last textbooks came to be printed for small societies of endangered languages, there was no one who wanted to learn them, because their languages had lost their prestige long ago, and people even seemed to be ashamed of having connections with such non-prestigious languages. A very sad story. But some other minor languages show quite the opposite attitude to their languages that happened to be in trouble. The revival of the Welsh language has brought about great hope for the revitalisation of other languages in danger of extinction. Many countries have languages that are on the verge of extinction. Around 140 such languages are found in Russia. What are the main reasons for the success of the Welsh language? How can other endangered languages use this experience?*

D. Crystal. Compared with other Celtic languages the Welsh language by any standard is a story of success during the second half of the 20th century.

Welsh has done amazingly well. And it has done so for three reasons, each of which needs to be present if an endangered language is to be saved.

First, there needs to be a 'bottom-up' interest from the community. The community itself has to strongly wish their language survive/

Second, there has to be a 'top-down' interest on the part of government, both local and national, in order to ensure that the language has a public presence.

And **third**, there has to be cash, because it is quite an expensive business raising the prestige of an endangered language - in all the obvious ways, such as having street signs, making translation facilities available when you are having a public meeting, and so on.

In the case of Welsh, the community interest was there right at the very beginning with activism in the 1960s and 70s, and dramatic events such as hunger strikes by prominent Welsh language enthusiasts. The language received a significant public profile. And this eventually led to governmental recognition of this fact, and the introduction of the first Welsh Language Act in parliament, and later a second, giving a measure of protection to Welsh, and encouraging its use in various public domains, such as local government, where you would get a job only if you were bilingual or prepared to become so.

Since then a great deal has happened which has resulted in a steady increase in the proportion of people in Wales who are able to speak Welsh - around 20 per cent, according to recent estimates. Of course, within this figure there is a great deal of variability as to the level of fluency achieved. We are all familiar with the four skills of language use: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. What is unclear from the overall statistic is how it translates into these four areas. I often come across people who are very able to read and write Welsh, but able to speak it in only a limited way because they do not feel confident. Often it is the other way round: people can speak it fluently but are unhappy about writing it.

And yet, in a sense, everybody in Wales is a Welsh learner. You cannot avoid the language. It is there in street names and shop signs. If you drive down a street, you may see the instruction SLOW in both English and Welsh, and everyone is able to understand that. We could thus argue that everyone is on a career track towards ultimate Welsh fluency, and some are well along this road, though with some distance to go. The technical term for this is *semilingualism*. There is a great deal of semilingualism in Wales. I am an example of it myself. I learned Welsh when I was in primary school in Holyhead, but I left the school when I was ten, as my family moved to Liv-

erpool, so I was no longer able to develop my Welsh there. I missed out on all the learning that takes place in the teenage years, therefore. And when you reflect on the kind of learning that happens during those years - the growth in stylistic awareness (variations in formality, for instance), slang, more advanced vocabulary, even certain kinds of grammatical construction - you can get a sense of how much is missing. Then I came back to Wales, and as a linguist developed quite a good technical vocabulary in Welsh about linguistics. But there is a whole gap in my knowledge, which means I could never have a conversation, of the kind we are having now, in Welsh. On the street, I can have an informal chat in Welsh about everyday subjects, such as the weather; but I don't have in my head all the sophisticated forms of connectivity, for example, that I have in English - forms that would be needed to make an argument or give a lecture or interview, such as *to be frank*, *to be perfectly honest*, *as a matter of fact*, *notwithstanding*, and hundreds more. And a lot of people are in this position.

E. Volodarskaya. *Recently, I was asked to give a talk on the success of the Welsh language as compared to other, less successful languages, for example the Crimean Tatar language. Back in 2001 and 2002 the Journal of Philology launched the project on the sociolinguistic state of this language at the beginning of the 21st century. Our aim was to find out whether its status given by UNESCO as severely endangered was right. During the work, the researchers found out the overall desire of the community to preserve their language. People, even when they did not speak their mother tongue, would register themselves as language speakers just to make the statistics look better. Thus, of your three conditions under which a language can be revitalised, the Crimean Tatars have only one - the passion of people. The two other conditions are not available at the moment. The majority of endangered languages do not have sufficient support from the 'top', as you call it.*

D. Crystal. And that is absolutely essential. But remember that local language communities are not alone. When we talk about top-down interest, this is bigger than a local national government. It also includes international top-down interest. And that was a big development in the second half of the 20th century. The United Nations, and UNESCO in particular, became increasingly vocal about the importance of preserving endangered languages, and this has already begun to have an influence. Many countries that previously showed little or no interest in indigenous

languages in their communities have begun to do so, following the statements coming from UNESCO, and initiated teaching courses, dictionary projects, and the like. One of the things a local community therefore needs to do is draw public attention to the existence of the world mood, make local politicians aware that they are in danger of being left behind, and so on. Without that kind of support from the authorities, people do indeed get very frustrated, and we end up with hunger-strike activism of the kind we saw in Wales.

E. Volodarskaya. *This is why the Welsh language is now successful. But when we talk about international organisations being involved, we should bear in mind that the process itself started after the very 'angry' speeches of American sociolinguists working in the 90s in the field of indigenous languages, such as M. Krauss, and your own highly efficient book 'Language death'. The title of the book, the vast research information it enclosed, and the genuine emotions and concerns – all these made the problem heard, and the matter stopped being a problem of one nation – it became the urgent problem of the whole world.*

D. Crystal. I do hope my book helped. In any branch of a subject one needs two types of people, it seems to me: the primary researchers who do the hard work, and the popularisers - a term for those who assimilate that research and try to present it in a different way. It would be great if the original researchers would do these themselves, but most of them cannot simply because they are spending all their time doing the primary research! So there always needs to be a dual presentation of a particular subject. Popular science is one of the biggest areas in publishing these days. And, yes, I am quite prepared to say that my main task has been popularisation. I do my best to keep up with a subject before trying to present it to a wider public. It is difficult, because there are so many areas in linguistics that need this kind of representation - the Internet, child language acquisition, dialectology, and so on, all subjects where there is a huge amount of research, yet very few people know about the findings. We do need a cadre of popularisers who are prepared to try to understand the details of different subjects and to present them as well as they can to a wider audience.

E. Volodarskaya. *I should add here that there is no quality populariser who himself has not done the research abundantly. And some people, like yourself, never stopped doing research – all your books are the result of the research work addressed to a wider circle*

of readers, not only for academic communities. I also like the titles that you give to your books – they are telling, attractive, clever, and straightforward. One cannot just pass by them. They attract people.

D. Crystal. I am glad you think so. Yes, the title is half the battle. But I have to say that many of my titles I do not think of myself. They emerge in collaboration with other people. My wife is better at creating effective titles than I am! And sometimes it is the publisher's marketing team that suggests a title, knowing that it will appeal to its intended readership in a way a more academic title would not. My next book is coming out shortly on the nature of English conversation, and the main title is "Let's talk". That was not my idea; it was suggested by Oxford University Press. And it is a good title. So, one has to share credit there. But, you know, one has to be careful about popularisation. It is essentially a way of telling people half-truths. If you tell the whole truth, then you send up writing a text that would suit an academic journal, such as the *Journal of Linguistics*. You have to be selective, taking only certain aspects of the whole story to present to the general readership. Otherwise, readers get bogged down in details and technicality. Of course, if you stop using technical terms, you inevitably start using words that are less precise, though more meaningful to non-specialists. So, any popularisation needs to be taken with 'a pinch of salt', as they say - with a certain amount of caution, because by definition it cannot tell the whole story of its subject.

E. Volodarskaya. *Shakespeare now is a world phenomenon; his use of language is multilateral, bright, and artful. What is your opinion of his way of depicting the Welsh images in his plays?*

D. Crystal. There has been controversy over whether Shakespeare went to Wales. Some people think he did because of such lines as these, from Sonnet 33:

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye

Wait a minute! Where have you seen these mountains, Shakespeare? Not in Stratford-upon-Avon! So maybe he went to Wales, bearing in mind that there were strong Catholic connections between English and Welsh aristocratic families who lived in North Wales at that time. But even if he did not, he certainly had his ear to the ground. Living in London, he would have heard all kinds of varieties of English, and for-

eign languages, too. What we see in his plays is an awareness of language variety, unprecedented at that time in English literature. And we see a representation of Welsh in two main places: Captain Fluellen in *Henry V* and Parson Evans in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. There is a certain amount of stereotyping, as there always is when people write down a dialect they do not know intimately. His characters say *look you*, for example (meaning 'do you see?'), which is a translation from Welsh, but actually, it is not much used by Welsh speakers. I live in Wales, and hardly ever hear it, and I do not doubt it was the same in Shakespeare's time. People hear an unfamiliar usage and assume it is more general than in fact is the case.

But Wales is not alone. Stereotyping is very common in any dialect representation. People believe that Scottish people regularly exclaim with *hoots, mon* ('oh, man') and Irish people say *begorrah* ('by God') - but they do not! However, outside the country - presumably because of the way characters have been presented in literature - there is a feeling that this is how they are supposed to speak. But that is a tiny point. More important is the way the Welsh characters in Shakespeare, along with the other regional characters, add an appealing dimension to the play that is partly humorous, and, in the case of *Henry V*, partly political, demonstrating the solidarity of England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland against a common enemy - which in this case was France. The four captains in the play cannot be dismissed as humorous pastiches. In Shakespeare's time, the word *captain* was equivalent to today's *general*. They were very senior people - in the same discourse circle as the King.

E. Volodarskaya. *That is very interesting. And again, all these celtic characters make Shakespeare's plays closer to real life - flesh and blood of nation. And Shakespeare depicts them as very devoted people.*

D. Crystal. Oh, indeed! And there is no set of characters quite like them in the rest of Shakespeare, or indeed, in any other play I have read from that time.

E. Volodarskaya. *Why people keep enjoying Shakespeare's works all these four centuries is because he shows the true human life that has so many themes, facets, events, emotions, colours.*

D. Crystal. Yes, people say such things as 'all human life is in Shakespeare'. But we need to be careful. There are certain topics Shakespeare did not deal with in his works. For instance, what we today would call 'kitchen-sink' drama - a play where we might

see a husband and wife arguing over everyday matters in the kitchen. There is no real account of ordinary non-aristocratic domesticity in Shakespeare. The nearest we get is in *Merry Wives of Windsor*, where some domestic life is shown, and in *The Taming of the Shrew*. But certainly, his range is greater than anybody before or since, I think, and that, of course, is shown linguistically in his vocabulary

E. Volodarskaya. *While I was listening to you, David, admiring your professional and human attitude to linguistics and social sciences, I kept thinking on how one researcher can do the amount of work, which can only be done by huge research teams. Your "Shakespeare's Words" is very important for the translators of Shakespeare's works to different languages as it gives all the senses and forms of the bard's words, and therefore, there will be new quality translations of Shakespeare; and your Encyclopedia covers all the aspects of the language, making it useful not only for young researchers but also for experienced scholars. Your books on endangered languages not only give much information on world languages, but they also explain why the loss of one language is the loss for the whole of humanity, and they explain how languages become endangered and how to protect such languages. Your books on connections of languages and technologies are groundbreaking novelties of the present day linguistics.*

With all these enormous projects, do you have any time left for yourself?

D. Crystal. Well, the one big thing I had to do to engage in such a wide range of projects was to leave the full-time university world, which I did in 1984. I was professor of linguistic science at the University of Reading. And the reason I left was because of the cuts in universities at that time, initiated by the government of Margaret Thatcher. The bureaucratic load being imposed on me was increasing to the point where something like 80% of my time was devoted not to research and teaching, but simply to managing the courses for which I was responsible.

E. Volodarskaya. *I understand you perfectly well. We have the same.*

D. Crystal. I know. I was not comfortable with being a manager, so after many discussions I decided to leave, to become a 'freelance linguist', as it were. And that is the reason why I've been able to do so much writing. It does leave time for other things, as it offers maximum flexibility.

E. Volodarskaya. *So, it was a good decision.*

D. Crystal. Yes, but a very risky one at the time. Suddenly there was no salary! However, consultancies did soon start come in, and I had the time to take them on. The main one from 1986 into the 1990s was editing the Cambridge Encyclopedia and its associated general reference books. And the risk paid off, in that I was able to engage in so much writing. But I have to acknowledge here the help from my wife Hilary, who took on the bureaucracy needed to support any freelance situation, and with whom I have sometimes collaborated in books.

E. Volodarskaya. *I know, and you also work in some projects in collaboration with your son, Ben.*

D. Crystal. This is the beauty of freelance life. When there is a telephone call or e-mail message, which begins: "David, would you be able to...", the answer used to be "No", or "Sorry I can't, because I've got all these students to look after". After 1984, it became: "Well, maybe I can". And certainly, all the interesting Shakespeare projects that have come about over the last twenty years have been the result of a collaboration with son Ben, who first did a degree in English language studies at Lancaster, and then trained as an actor and built up his own company. It was his interest in theatre, and his growing involvement with Shakespeare that resulted in the book "Shakespeare's Words" and later the associated website.

E. Volodarskaya. *This writing of yours is tremendous as it greatly improves our understanding of Shakespeare's works.*

D. Crystal. That is good to hear. And note that part of the impact this book had was due to the generational difference. I learned Latin in school, for instance, and had an exposure to the classics that few in Ben's generation have had an opportunity to do. So, in exploring Shakespeare, my background knowledge is very different from his, and this is important if the aim is to write a glossary that will be used by a wide age range. Here is a good example: when we were writing the entries from *Titus Andronicus*, I said: "We don't need to write an entry for Goths because everybody knows who they were: people who invaded Italy, and so on". And Ben said, "Dad, Goths are young people with black eye make-up". You suddenly realise the breadth of the generation gap. The other thing is that Ben introduced a perspective into the book, which was not a linguistic approach, but a theatrical one. I

would define a word – and as far as I was concerned, that was the end of the story. But Ben would say, "No, it is just the beginning of the story. Who says that word in the play, and to whom, and about what?" He was right. Examples of usage need context. Absolutely essential! So every definition in *Shakespeare's Words*, both in the book and online (shakespeares-words.com), provides that kind of context. It makes the entries come alive. That is what collaboration is all about.

E. Volodarskaya. *Bless him for this idea – the book is very convenient, especially, for translators.*

I hope there will be better translations of his works in the future as your "Shakespeare's Words" explains every word that otherwise might be left incomprehensible. New translations will be much better thanks to this highly needed reference book. Everything is in it.

D. Crystal. I really hope so - within the parameters we set ourselves, of course - all the words in the Shakespearean canon that have some difference in meaning or use with the present day. But note that the printed book and the website, though the same in coverage, differ greatly in treatment. The book was the biggest book Penguin had produced at the time, but even so, we could illustrate only a handful of textual examples of each usage; whereas the online version is comprehensive. So, if you want to find out all the usages of *you vs thou*, you just type the words into the search box and you get the answer immediately, with all instances listed - just over 5000 for *thou* and 13,000 for *you*. The software is brilliant. And we can add to the site in a way that we could never do with the book: last year, for instance, we added a thesaurus component, and this year a page listing families of words and their derived forms, which we hope will be especially useful for teachers. Next year we plan to add an audio dimension, both in modern English and in original pronunciation.

E. Volodarskaya. *Dear Professor Crystal, thank you for the brilliant interview you have granted the Journal of Philology!*

The Journal of Philology and myself wish you and your family, Hilary and Ben, every success in your activities both in linguistics in general and in the field of minor languages, sociolinguistics, cultures and in any other activities you are interested or become interested in.

Good Luck and best Wishes!