

Let me go back to the beginnings, which gives me a nice opportunity to think back to times when I started out in linguistics. Feri was a member of the Research Institute for Linguistics in the early 70s when I was an undergraduate student. Although I think he wasn't a member of the Linguistics department at ELTE, he taught some seminars -- I specifically remember one on Presuppositions, which I attended with Mari Heller, Kati Rohonci, perhaps Enikő Bollobás, and certainly others. It was an excellent seminar, but I believe Feri's main contribution to the education of my generation, students as well as young researchers, came in informal channels. For one thing, he repeatedly invited us to his home on Gellérthegy, where we had good discussions and were welcome to browse his library and to borrow stuff. I have to remind you that before the internet appeared in our lives, the regular way and indeed the only way to learn about ongoing research was to receive a xerox copy of a manuscript from the author, or from a friend of the author, or from a friend of a friend of the author. The library of the Academy did a heroic and creative bartering job to acquire the main journals and books even in esoteric fields like formal semantics, but what appeared in those publications obviously represented work done a couple years earlier (not to mention the fact that that the publications themselves reached that library with some additional delay). Although this was in ancient times, you all will realize that even back then, you didn't have much of a fighting chance if you were two or three years behind what people were thinking about. Before my generation became friends of, or friends of friends of prominent linguists in Western Europe or the US, it was Feri's personal library that connected us to research that wasn't yet published or was perhaps published in working papers or conference proceedings. Feri's friends, who probably included everybody doing interesting work in theoretical linguistics, send him papers way beyond the areas that Feri himself was active in. And Feri invited us to poke around and borrow what we wanted.

When I joined the institute after graduation, I was officially a member of the Department of General Linguistics, headed by Ferenc Bakos. The other members were Feri himself, Ilona Molnár, Janusz Banczerowski, and me. Our desks were in the same office, a lovely room of the old townhall building where the institute was housed at that time. It was a friendly and collegial group. We didn't have big communal scholarly discussions, but we shared our ongoing research with each other and did our best to give useful comments. Ilona Molnár and Ferenc Bakos poked Feri, for his own good, for not being sufficiently Marxist, and Feri poked them back for thinking that he ought to be a Marxist. I miss them all, along with Feri.