

Valter Tauli, *Standard Estonian Grammar. Part II. Syntax*, Uppsala 1983 (*Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Studia Uralica et Altaica Upsaliensia* 14). 359 pp.

Although the syntactic structure of Estonian has been investigated for quite a long time, relatively few complete treatments of Estonian syntax have been published up to now. There can be no doubt that the most outstanding of these is Valter Tauli's «Eesti Grammatika II. Lauseõpetus» (Uppsala 1980). The book «Standard Estonian Grammar. Part II. Syntax» under review here is the English version of that work, the main difference from the Estonian original being that it contains fewer text examples.

The book being reviewed consists of chapters: I. Introduction (19–26), II. The forms of the predicate verb (27–35), III. Subordinating syntagms (36–235), IV. Minor and elliptic sentences (236–238), V. Complex sentence (239–276), VI. Co-ordinate syntagms (277–305), VII. Interrogative sentence (306–322), VIII. Pronouns as substitutes (323–330), IX. Context-sensitive variants (331–339), X. Recton (340–348). A short survey of the use of punctuation marks has been omitted and the treatment of context-sensitive variants is somewhat shorter than in the Estonian version.

Tauli is of the opinion that the verb is the central element or the base of the sentence and that the subject is a modifier of the verb as are the object and the adverbial. Although such a standpoint is far from exclusive in present-day Estonian syntax, it is, nevertheless, fairly widespread. Thus, for instance, H. Rätsep, who has published a detailed study of the simple sentence in Estonian, also accepts this view (H. Rätsep, *Eesti keele lihtlausete tüübid*, Tallinn 1978). However, in distinction from Rätsep, for whom the basic unit of syntactic structure is the sentence pattern, Tauli operates with the syntagm. For Tauli the sentence is a combination of syntagms and he does not see any need for a longer structural unit in describing sentence structure.

Whether this is really so is, of course, open to debate. The present reviewer does not intend to argue the matter because there has possibly been too much discussion of theoretical problems already,

whereas many concrete linguistic phenomena have not yet been examined. Tauli does not aspire to theoretical heights and probably this is very reason why he has managed to describe such a multitude of linguistic facts as would do credit even to any collective of research workers.

In his Introduction Tauli gives a brief exposition of the concept of the syntagm and a general account of sentence patterns, the prosodic features of the sentence, and of the types of word order.

Part II describes the forms of the predicate verb: person, tense, mood, voice, and also some rarer compound forms, e. g. *saama + MA (Publik saab nautima seda teost* 'The public will enjoy this work'), some modal syntagms fulfilling the function of a finite verb, e. g. *hakkama + MA (Randa hakkas suplejaid tulema* 'To the beach began to arrive bathers'). The description is quite concise, the manner of presentation here and throughout is the same: text examples are followed by a short commentary on the conditions of occurrence, meaning, word order, etc. of the form or construction being described.

The longest chapter of the book, Part III, consists of a description of subordinating syntagms. The chapter is subdivided into eleven sections: A. Verb syntagms, B. Noun syntagms, C. Verbal noun and participial syntagms, D. Particle syntagms, E. Local expression + modifier, F. Adjective/adverb/pre-/postpositional syntagms + modifier, G. General modifiers, H. Sentence modifiers, I. Absolute modifiers, J. Exceptional syntagms, K. Quotation.

In the part devoted to verb syntagms one also finds the definitions of the principal members of the sentence — the subject, predicate and adverbial, which differ to some extent from the traditional definitions. Tauli does not acknowledge the existence of the *da*-infinitive subject, object or predicate, evidently regarding them as adverbials. According to Tauli there is only an impersonal passive in Estonia. He considers the nominative modifier of a passive predicate verb to be the object even when the verb agrees with the latter

(*Enam kui pooled olid magama pandud — teadis poiss rääkida* 'More than half (of them) had been put to sleep — the boy knew for sure /to tell/'). The partitive modifier of the verb in the sentence *Ka selliseid inimesi peab olema* 'There have to be such people too' is regarded by Tauli in accordance with tradition as a partitive subject and not as an object or a borderline case between the object and the subject, as has been sometimes thought. However, the author himself admits that he has not been able exhaustively to ascertain the occurrence of the partitive subject.

As concerns the choice of the case in which the object stands, Tauli maintains that the total object, i. e. the object in the nominative or singular genitive (*Antsule kingiti raamat* 'Ants was presented with a book', *Ta kandis nõud söögituppa* 'She carried the dishes into the dining room', *Ta avas aeglaselt toa ukse* 'He slowly opened the door of the room'), occurs if at the same time one expresses the resultativeness of the action (result or aim) and the referent expressed by the lexeme of the object is conceived as a whole. Otherwise there occurs the partitive object (*Kuulsin teie häält* 'I heard your voice'). Thus Tauli regards the opposition of the total and the partitive object as an asymmetric opposition in which the total object is a marked category while the partitive object is unmarked. This appears to be true. Nevertheless, the statement that in the total object the referent expressed by the lexeme of the object is conceived as a whole, would seem to be too general. Actually it conveys as little as, for instance, the statement that the object expresses the grammatical goal of the verb. Both of these statements are in need of fuller exposition and this is obviously quite a complicated matter.

Part IV deals with the minor and elliptic sentences. According to Tauli the minor sentence is a sentence which as a rule lacks the predicate verb (*Südamlik tänu raamatu eest* 'Cordial thanks for the book'), while the elliptic sentence is one where a member of a syntagm necessary from the viewpoint of the syntactic structure is omitted (*Igal talul /on/ oma komme* 'Ever farm /has/ its own custom'). The material presented here is more of

an introduction to than a description of the pertinent concepts.

Part V of the book describes the complex sentence. This is done more thoroughly and in a radically different manner than in earlier Estonian grammars. Up to now it has been usual in Estonian syntax to consider as subject, object, predicative and adverbial clauses, in addition to clauses that occupy the position of the corresponding sentence part (*Ta oli kuulnud, et siin on soe* 'He had heard that it is warm here'), also all those clauses that refer back to pronouns in the position of the corresponding part of the sentence, whatever the connector used to begin the subordinate clause and even if the pronoun is a personal pronoun. Tauli, however, regards only such sentences of the latter type as subject, object, predicative and adverbial clauses as refer to the pronoun *see* and begin with the conjunctions *et, kui et, kui, kuni, nagu* (*See oli hea, et ta teise ilma läks* 'It was a good thing that he went into the other world'), his criterion evidently being that the pronoun *see* can be omitted without a change in the meaning of the sentence. Still, it would have been more relevant to emphasize the fact that the subordinate clauses with the antecedent pronoun *see* and beginning with the connectors given above are bound modifiers of the predicate verb, i. e. they actually modify the predicate verb itself and not so much the pronoun, the latter being merely a correlate of such a sentence (as a whole). The treatment of the relationship between the demonstrative pronoun and the subordinate clause as a head-modifier relationship leads in effect to the dispersion of functionally similar kinds of subordinate clauses in different places.

The treatment of several adverbial clauses as verb modifying clauses (*Kiigi me tahaks, me ei saaks* 'Although we would like to, we would not be able to', etc.) is debatable.

Under the influence of Indo-European syntax Tauli has introduced the concept of the relative clause into Estonian syntax. According to him the relative clause is a modifying clause whose pronominal or adverbial connector refers back to a word of a syntagm in the preceding head clause or the whole clause (*Seeal võis olla*



*asjaolusid, millest see maal ei kõnelnud* 'There could have been circumstances that the painting did not reveal /tell of/', *Ta töötas palju, mistõttu oli alati väsinud* 'He worked a lot owing to which he was constantly tired').

Part VI deals with co-ordinate syntagms. It is good that the contracted and the compound sentence are considered together. Still, it is slightly disturbing that the boundary separating the contracted sentence from the compound sentence has been drawn on the basis of a simplified treatment of the sentence. Tauli finds that only those compound syntagms should be regarded as compound sentences, the members of which are predicate verbs and where a common non-repeated modifier is lacking. This means that one should consider the sentences *Kirjutam ja loen* 'I write and read' and *Ma kirjutam ja ma loen* 'I write and I read' to be compound sentences, but not the sentence *Ma kirjutam ja loen* 'I write and read'.

In Part VII we find the first more complete exposition of the interrogative sentence ever included in an Estonian grammar. Here Tauli distinguishes two kinds of interrogative sentence: the explanation question and the yes-or-no question. The explanation question usually refers to a referent expressed by the base word in the base sentence (*Kes kirjutas eile aruande?* 'Who wrote the report yes-

terday?' — *Ants kirjutas eile aruande* 'Ants wrote the report yesterday'). The yes-or-no question assumes the answer *jaa/jah* or *ei*, the question referring to a whole base sentence or to a word which in an interrogative sentence is marked by stress (*Kas Ants kirjutas eile aruande?* 'Did Ants write the report yesterday?'). Explanation questions are usually known as special questions and yes-or-no questions also as general questions. For some reason, however, Tauli has used the two terms to denote two subtypes of explanation questions. Part VII also comprises a description of the content and form (including word order) of various kinds of interrogative sentences.

Part VIII examines the usage of some pronouns (*see, ta/tema*, the reflexive pronouns *enda/enese, oma*, the reciprocal pronouns *üksteise/teineteise*, and the indefinite pronouns *mõlema, kumbki, mõni/mõnd, mitu* and *palju*).

Various ways of expressing the same meaning are discussed in Part IX.

The rection (government) of more than 500 words (verbs, adjectives and substantives) is dealt with in Part X.

In a short introductory review such as the present one it is impossible to do full justice to the merits of Tauli's book. Its publication is undoubtedly a notable event in Finno-Ugristics.

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