

Terje Mathiasen, A short grammar of Lithuanian, Slavica Publishers, Inc., 1996, pp. 256.

The book under review has been written by a non-native specialist in Lithuanian grammar. Linguists specializing in Baltic linguistics have received a book that is a good, up-to-date text suitable for introducing students of linguistics to Lithuanian. It came at a time when Lithuania was celebrating the 450th birthday of the first book in Lithuanian by Martynas Mažvydas, *Catechismus Prasty Szadei* (a Lutheran catechism with a primer and a hymnal).

This book is a continuation of the Baltic tradition in Norway, the beginning of which dates back to 1895, when a young Norwegian, Olaf Broch (1867–1961), returning from Hungary, spent some time in the country-side district to the south of Vilnius, where his attention was drawn to the contacts of Belorussian and Lithuanian. 60 years later, on the basis of the material collected, Olaf Broch, encouraged and helped by his pupil, Christian S. Stang, published a study on the now nearly extinct Lithuanian dialect spoken in the districts of Žirmūnai and Bastūnai (Belorus, the district of Varanov). This is how the Baltic tradition in Norway started. Today it is being actively continued and fostered by Christian S. Stang's pupil, Terje Mathiasen. This versatile scholar has already published many interesting articles on the phonology, morphology of the Baltic languages and their relations with the neighbouring languages. It is thanks to him that Lithuanian and Latvian philologists are being invited to teach at the University of Oslo. Together with other linguists, he is now preparing a Norwegian-Lithuanian and Lithuanian-Norwegian dictionary. But to get back to the grammar under review. This grammar is the outcome of the author's experience as a teacher of Lithuanian at the University of Oslo. It has been written, as the author says, „primarily for students of Lithuanian as a foreign language at university level, but can also be used by others“ (p. 17). It contains the most essential information necessary for the understanding of the mechanism of modern literary Lithuanian, to the exclusion of a systematic historical perspective.

The grammar is a good summary of the available information on the phonology, morphology, and syntax of present-day Lithuanian. It is based on a corpus of examples as found in the dictionary, with supplementary data obtained from

informants. As the scope of the book is very wide, most of the problems of Lithuanian had to be dealt with in a rather laconic manner, so any exhaustive analysis would be beside the point. For this reason the review is restricted to a brief description of the book's contents, intermingled with general remarks and a few critical notes on selected items.

The book consists of a foreword, an introduction, fourteen chapters, reference literature and an index.

The introduction is a brief description of the place of Lithuanian in the Indo-European family of languages. The author points out that although Lithuanian is related to the Slavic languages, the similarities between Baltic and Slavic should not be exaggerated: Lithuanian is clearly a distinct language, not identified with any of the Slavic languages, a point sometimes ignored in works on general linguistics. Together with Latvian (and extinct Prussian), Lithuanian constitutes a separate branch of the Indo-European family.

The first chapter deals with the phonology of Lithuanian. It presents a summary of the phonological features of both consonants and vowels. Phonologically, Lithuanian consonants are grouped into 22 pairs according to the distinctive feature [+ 1-palatalized]. Besides, there is another relevant binary opposition in the system of consonants, viz. that of *voiced* vs. *unvoiced*.

In describing the phonological aspects of the sounds, the author resorts to other familiar languages, especially to Russian, English and German, a didactic feature that contributes to greater understanding of the problem. Another didactic feature peculiar to the book is the translation of the Lithuanian words discussed into English. Apart from the consonants and vowels, the author pays considerable attention to suprasegmentals (stress, quantity and tone).

A comparatively detailed analysis is given to stress movements. Stress movements, which is characteristic of both nominal and verbal systems, are accounted for in terms of de Saussure's Law. The author admits, however, that in „today's Lithuanian de Saussure's Law is not automatically implemented in all cases where it might be expected to operate from a historical point of view“ (p. 35).

Chapter 2 is devoted to the noun, its grammatical categories (gender, number, case), and word-formation. As regards gender, the author

seems to adhere to the view that nouns have an inherent gender, a statement which deserves special comment. The term „inherent“ means „belonging by nature or essential character of something“. In view of this, can we regard gender in Lithuanian as „inherent“? As is known, originally Indo-European gender was based on the opposition between animate and inanimate, a distinction obviously rooted in extra-linguistic experience. The further distinction within the animate between the masculine and the feminine arose later. Semantic motivation was lost very early, the category of gender has in most cases become a formal category, a means of distributing words among the different types of declension, more or less independent of their material content. A similar situation can be observed in Lithuanian inanimate nouns, whose gender distinctions can be said to be based on animate noun gender distinctions. Cf.

lokys ‘a male bear’ vs. lokė ‘a female bear’
 kablys ‘a hook’ vs. duobė ‘a pit’. But: dėdė ‘uncle’ (masculine)

If this can be regarded as a motivation, then gender in Lithuanian *is* motivated.

A rather extensive treatment is given to case and declensional types and accentuation, associated with them. The author does not ignore reflexive nouns, whose declension causes difficulty even to native speakers.

A peculiarity of Lithuanian is the close interdependence of inflexion and word-formation. The two processes are treated in the book conjointly for each part of speech. Chapter 2, which is devoted to the noun, includes a brief description of derivation (suffixation) and composition (prefixation). For reasons of space and the intricacy of the topic the formation of compound nouns is restricted to the analysis of a few examples. As Lithuanian compound nouns are extremely numerous and constitute a continuously expanding category, it is disappointing that the topic has been dealt with so briefly. On the other hand, the term ‘non-prefixal compound nouns’ does not seem to be very appropriate since it suggests that the other member of the privative opposition, ‘prefixal compound nouns’, has simply been ignored for reasons other than limitations of space.

Chapter 3 deals with the adjective, its accentuation, degrees of comparison. The author gives a separate grammatical analysis to the indefinite

and definite forms of the adjective. Similar to the description of the noun, the description of the adjective is rigorously concise.

Chapter 4 is concerned with the pronoun. The following classes of the pronoun are distinguished (personal, possessive, reciprocal, demonstrative, interrogative and relative, indefinite, negative and ‘other’ pronouns). The first five groups represent traditional classes of the pronoun, while the others are the division of what was traditionally referred to as indefinite pronouns. It is a pity that little attention is paid to the functional aspects of the pronoun. So, for instance, indefinite pronouns could be divided into assertive and non-assertive. Assertive pronouns such as *kažkas*, *kažkoks*, *kai kas*, etc. have factual meanings and typically occur in positive declarative sentences, while non-assertive ones (e.g. *kas nors*, *koks nors*) are associated with non-factual meanings and typically occur in interrogative and negative sentences. Another point concerns the cohesive function of the pronouns, a subject that could have contributed to greater understanding of the place of the pronoun in the grammatical system of Lithuanian.

Chapter 5 is a short survey of numerals. One can hardly find any omissions in the coverage of the numeral, except perhaps the process of lexicalization involving cardinal numerals. Cf. *Rašau antrą skyrių* ‘I am writing a/the second chapter’.

Chapter 6, which is devoted to the verb, is the longest in the book. It includes the description of the grammatical categories of the Lithuanian verb (number, person, gender, tense, aspect, mood and voice). Relatively much space is given to the category of tense – simple and compound tense-forms, their formation, accentuation, the phonological and morphological aspects of the principal forms, the inceptive and progressive forms, the relationship of aspect and tense, mood, modality, voice, reflexive verbs, transitivity/intransitivity, non-finite forms, verb formation, and verb particles. All this grammatical information is very neatly presented, which is very praiseworthy considering the intricacy of the material. As the Lithuanian verbal forms taken as a whole constitute a system which differs from the English verb system, it might have been interesting and useful to make a few references to the so-called areas of conflict (the tenses, the mood, the aspect). A useful addition to the description of the verb is a section of modality.

Unfortunately, the description of modality is based on modality in English, a sudden change of direction (from English to Lithuanian) cannot but puzzle the reader. A similar direction of analysis can be observed in the description of the passive voice, where the author concentrates his attention on the possible ways of rendering the English passive in Lithuanian. On the other hand, the analysis of the functions of the passive is up-to-date: it is accounted for in terms of functional sentence perspective, a feature that sets this grammar apart from other grammars of Lithuanian. A considerable amount of space is given to the non-finite forms of the verb: the infinitive, the gerund, and the participle. What is really puzzling about the section is the inclusion of the verbal noun in the sphere of non-finite forms. The verbal noun is a noun and cannot be attributed to non-finites. The author seems to have followed certain specialists in English grammar who do not always make a distinction between the gerund and the verbal noun. So, for instance, the -ing form of the verbal noun in the following sentence is sometimes wrongly regarded as a verbal noun: *The teacher's indoctrinating of the children disturbed their parents*. Cf. *The teacher's indoctrination of the children disturbed their parents*.

Chapter 7 is concerned with the adverb, its morphology, accentuation, syntax and semantics. Here the reader will be surprised to find a section on negation, a subject that hardly has relevance to the adverb.

Chapter 8 discusses the case in Lithuanian. In describing the case, the author could not help but touch upon the realization of the processes of being and becoming, e.g. *Jis yra/bus/buvo gydytojas/gydytoju* 'He is/will be/was a physician'. It is a pity the author did not deem it necessary to account for the functional peculiarities of the said structures (the use of the nominative and the instrumental), the more so because, as the author says in the foreword, „The present volume is primarily a synchronic, prescriptive (normative), not a descriptive grammar“ (p. 17). Another critical remark concerns the realization of the subject in Lithuanian. As is well known, typically the subject is expressed by a noun or its substitute in the nominative case. Such constructions are referred to as personal, while constructions in which the subject is expressed by a noun or its substitute in the dative case as impersonal, e.g. *Man atrodo, kad...* 'It seems to me that...'. This is

a traditional approach. Semantically such subjects play the role of Recipient *Experiencer*, which is associated with mental processes – the process of cognition and effectivity. Depending on the systemic peculiarities of the language, the role of experiencer is realized differently in the surface structure: in English, for instance, it is realized by nominative forms; in Lithuanian, it is realized either by nominative or dative forms. Cf.

John likes playing football.

Džonas mėgsta žaisti futbolo. vs. *Džonui patinka žaisti futbolo.*

In view of this, we can hardly treat such sentences as impersonal. It is time we 'rehabilitated' such sentences and attribute them to personal ones.

Chapter 9 deals with prepositions. As the author puts it, the chapter is „a natural continuation of the immediately preceding chapter Case“ (p. 198). Prepositions discussed are grouped according to their meanings: 1) prepositions of place; 2) prepositions of time; 3) prepositions of purpose; 4) prepositions of comparison; 5) prepositions of cause; 6) prepositions of other meanings. The exposition of the material is clear, laconic and to the point. The illustrations are simple, not overburdened with unnecessary lexical material.

Chapter 10 discusses the expression of time in Lithuanian. It will be obvious that the subject has little relevance to grammar; it is concerned with lexis. The criticism, however, does not minimize the importance of the subject: the subject is of great importance to the learner of Lithuanian, but it is not part of a descriptive grammar; it is part of a communicative grammar.

Chapter 11 deals with conjunctions. It lists the most common conjunctions of Standard Lithuanian. The chapter includes both coordinate and subordinate conjunctions. It is a pity the author has confined himself to a mere listing of the conjunctions: limitations of space must have prevented the author from illustrating the conjunctions discussed.

Chapters 12 to 14 are devoted to the practical aspects of Lithuanian syntax (the syntactic structure of the sentence, sentence-types, the compound sentence, agreement, and word order). It is a truism to say that syntax presents the greatest difficulty to an analyst. One such difficulty concerns the definition of the sentence. The author defines the sentence as „a prosodically complete speech unit of a specific structure expressing a relatively complete thought“ (p. 210). He, ho-

wever, admits that this is „only one of many possible definitions of the notion „sentence“ (p. 210). While we agree with the author, we would like to say that the said definition does not present an improvement on the existing definitions of the sentence: it does not reveal the nature of the sentence – the sentence is a communicative unit, a unit that conveys our experience of the world that surrounds us. To serve as a unit of communication, the sentence must have an appropriate structure, viz. a subject-predicate structure, which enables the speaker to relate the object of communication to the situation of speech. If predication is the content of the sentence, intonation is its form. Considering the said aspects, the sentence can be defined as a communicative unit consisting of words united by predicativity and intonation. Another disputable area concerns the parsing of the sentence. As is well known, parsing, when carried out in traditional terms, is an art. When not based on rigorous procedures, syntactic analysis is often a matter of subjective interpretation.

New thinking is particularly obvious in the treatment of agreement and word order. The chapter on agreement, which captures new tendencies in Lithuanian, is a valuable addition to the book. As regards word order, the author, following other linguists, rejects the old myth about „free“ word order in Lithuanian: the chapter, which presents a well-documented analysis, gives support to the idea that word order in Lithuanian is largely determined by the communicative value of a sentence constituent.

Despite the critical remarks made concerning the author's treatment of some of the grammatical points, there is no doubt that this book is a good comprehensive description of Standard Lithuanian: it presents facts about Lithuanian in a clear and accessible way. As it is written in English, it will prove indispensable to those who wish to familiarize themselves with the fundamentals of Lithuanian grammar. Those who are interested in specific problems of Lithuanian grammar or wish to gain a deeper insight into its mechanism will avail themselves of the rich bibliography at the back of the book.

Algirdas Sabaliauskas, Laimutis Valeika

Aleksas Girdenis, Taip šneka tirkšliškiai. Šiaurės žemaičių telšiškių tarmės tekstai su komentarais, Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla, 1996, 331 p.

Kalbos istoriniai tyrimai neįmanomi be išsamių dialektologinių studijų, kurioms svarbiausia sąlyga yra autentiški tarmių tekstai, paskelbti kuo tikslesne ir subtilesne fonetine rašyba. Šiaurės žemaičių telšiškių tarmės tekstai „Taip šneka tirkšliškiai“ – vienas iš pirmųjų tokio pobūdžio darbų lietuvių kalbotyroje.

Skirtingai nuo anksčiau išleistų ir dabar leidžiamų lietuvių kalbos tarmių tekstų¹, kurie pateikiami supaprastinta fonetine transkripcija, nauja yra tai, kad Tirkšlių žmonių dialogai ir pasakojimai užrašyti modifikuota tradicine kopenhagine fonetine rašyba. Modifikacijų esmė yra ta, kad jos leidžia kuo tiksliau ir adekvačiau perteikti kalbos savybes. Nauji transkripcijos dalykai yra pagrindinių intonacijos kontūrų ženklai, rašomi po kiekvienos sintagmos centrinio žodžio, taip pat visų klausa suvokiamų garsų variacijų fiksavimas. Frazės intonacijos simboliais žymimas jos kilimas (antikadencija \uparrow / J), tono ir intensyvumo kritimas (kadencija: $\downarrow \backslash$), tų požymių kilimas–kritimas ($\uparrow \backslash$), intonacijos tąsumas ($J \backslash$), staigus tono šuolis aukštyn (\uparrow) arba žemyn (\downarrow). Tekstuose fiksuoja-

¹ G. Gerullis, *Litauische Dialektstudien*, Leipzig, 1930; *Lietuvių kalbos tarmės: Chrestomatija*, Red. E. Grinaveckienė, K. Morkūnas, Vilnius, 1970; *Šutų šnektos tekstai (Rytų aukštaičių vilniškių tarmė) Mokymo priemonė lituanistams*, Sudaryt. ir red. komis. pirm. A. Girdenis, Vilnius, 1977; *Luokės šnektos tekstai: Mokymo priemonė lituanistams*, Sudaryt. ir red. komis. pirm. A. Girdenis, Vilnius, 1978; J. Petrauskas, A. Vidugiris, *Lazūnų tarmės tekstai*, Vilnius, 1978; V. Grinaveckis, *Pietų žemaičių tekstai, I: Raseiniškiai*, Vilnius, 1984; *II: Varniškiečiai*, Vilnius, 1986; Ž. Urbanavičiūtė-Markevičienė, V. Grinaveckis, *Lietuvių tarmės, II: Vakarų, pietų aukštaičių ir rytų aukštaičių vilniškių tekstai*, Vilnius, 1992; *III: Rytų aukštaičių ir vakarų žemaičių tekstai*, Vilnius, 1993; *Lietuvių kalbos tarmių tekstai, I: Balatna (Varanavas)*, Parengė E. Grinaveckienė, red. V. Vitkauskas, Vilnius, 1994, ir kt.