

Valter Tauli, *Introduction to a Theory of Language Planning* (= *Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Studia Philologiae Scandinavicae Upsaliensia* 6), Uppsala 1968. 227 pp.

Language planning and practical linguistics have been the essential themes of V. Tauli's scientific activity for decades. His work in this field has been connected with a serious theoretical interest in the very nature of human language.

Tauli's first book on language planning was published in 1938. That book dealt with the theory of language planning and with practical and concrete questions of Estonian language planning. Thirty years later two monographs were added: an English edition on methods and theory of language planning and a more practical version in Estonian.¹

Both of these books deserve serious consideration. The English edition acquaints the international public with the achievements of language planning and free linguistic creative work in Estonia. The Estonian variant devotes much attention to various specific problems of Estonian.

V. Tauli's erudition and skilful theorizing in connection with his simplicity of formulation make the English book readable for every linguist. But some theoretical standpoints of this book call for clarification and discussion.

V. Tauli proceeds from a natural and sound view on language: language is an instrument and at the same time a social institution — an instrument of communication for society. From this point of view the problem of language evaluation is discussed.

The concrete problems of language complexity evaluation in respect of communicative effectiveness are (as pointed out by V. Tauli in many connections) really disputable. For example, V. Tauli argues repeatedly that one of the main sources of language complexity is morphemic alternation (Estonian grade alternation included as a special very

complicated case). But there are other languages, e.g. Hungarian, where morpheme alternations are regular enough but the morphological system of the language is nevertheless very memory-consuming. Hence it appears rather doubtful whether an indisputable hierarchy of language unexpediences can be established even for one subsystem of language.

Without doubt, Tauli's theoretical views are up-to-date. He dares to discuss even such ideas as have long been regarded as "unscientific", e.g. the problem of sound symbolism.

With regard to the question about the role of language planning within linguistics, Tauli's position seems to be rather close to Jespersen's view that theoretical linguistics is the means and language planning the end (p. 16 ff.). Such a practical appreciation underestimates the cognitional value of science.

V. Tauli argues very convincingly in favour of organized language standardization and normalization. At the same time he warns against dilettantes in this field. If qualified scholars do not participate actively in language planning projects, then more energetic fighters may easily gain the key position in the field, as has occasionally happened even in some European countries with long traditions of language standardization.

V. Tauli reiterates the idea that man is free to alter and to improve his language and to coin new words artificially. It is especially the latter view and the experience of J. Aavik (and his followers) in coining new words for Literary Estonian which need thorough presentation for foreign readers. This is because up to now even respectable books on general linguistics do not believe in such a possibility or refer to it as curious (although obviously the coinage of trade marks — on paper or by computers — does not differ in principle from the coinage of everyday words; and the use of trade marks or labels for new commodities is very close to the use of ordinary words).

¹ In both of these books there are many problems and much material in common. In our reviews we have sought to restrict ourselves to clearly theoretical problems in the present review of the English edition, while treating more concrete Estonian matters in the following review.

It should be noted, however, that from Tauli's book one may possibly infer that Aavik was successful in introducing into modern Literary Estonian not only artificial words but many artificial grammatical forms as well. It should be borne in mind that the bulk of Aavik's extreme experiments in this direction have left no traces in the language (e.g. his propagation of an analytic genitive rendered by means of the preposition *no*, his abstract derivative suffixes like *-neip* or *-tulg*; cf. pp. 56 and 112). The only grammatical form successfully introduced by Aavik was the synthetic *i*-superlative which Tauli does not appreciate too highly (cf. p. 48 and Keelekorralduse alused, Stockholm 1968, p. 69).

V. Tauli's attitude towards his own theory is very modest: he declares that his theory is only one possible language planning theory which does not exclude other possibilities. Such a tolerance is maintained throughout the book. The difficulties in choosing between conflicting principles and the incompatibility of principles (clarity, economy or shortness of forms, beauty) are undoubtedly among the reasons for this tolerance. There are some statements in the discussion of these principles (p. 29 ff.) which show how difficult it is to take into consideration even only one basic principle (clarity or economy). Thus, numerous syntactic ambiguities in all languages do not satisfy the principle that expression must be unequivocal. Obviously syntactic and logical ambiguities belong to the inevitable conditions of language functioning and they trouble only philosophers and logicians (and, of course, narrow-minded grammarians, cf. p. 66 ff.). For this and other reasons the principle that each meaning should have only one expression and each expression should denote only one meaning must be rejected as theoretically groundless and practically impossible.

Principle C 4 demands: the greater the possibility for semantic confusion, the greater must be the difference in expression. Once again, it is not possible in practice to follow this advice: the derivatives from one stem may obviously sound similar enough.

It is difficult to test the precision of a

language. Tauli recommends for this purpose a method of translation and back-translation: the closer the back-translated text will be to the original text, the more precise is the mediator language. Such a test is suitable for technical texts and for testing technical terms, but in the case of ordinary everyday language the difference between the original and the back-translated text may be due not only to the impreciseness of the mediator language, but also to the lexical and grammatical variety of both languages.

It must be emphasized that the purposes of language planning and its efforts must be proportional to the needs of regulating the phenomenon in question. Some pedantic Literary Estonian rules that lack a serious function are clearly not worth the time and labour they involve (the rules of capitalization, the rules governing the separate or fused writing of words).

Tauli discusses the aesthetic principles (p. 33 ff.) and their relations to language economy. It is noteworthy that he does not touch upon the ethical principles in language planning and language policy. A language policy which proceeds purely from economy may in multinational countries come into severe conflict with basic human rights. Too narrow an understanding of social utility may result in social injustice.

In the treatment of the problems of morphology many valuable suggestions are made in connection with the cases of vacillating usage (plural, gender, article, accusative). It is regrettable that Estonian grammarians have not yet understood these principles in the case of the conditional mood in Estonian.

In Tauli's theoretical conception logical and rationalistic constructions play an important role. Otherwise it would be impossible to construct an entirely new theory. One of Tauli's ideals is a perfect and economical artificial language. But in discussing the problems of artificially created international languages (p. 167 ff.), he does not ignore the actual situation. So one can agree with Tauli that nowadays English serves as the main interlanguage in the fields of science, technology, etc. The construction of enough "natural" interlanguage does not seem to be a feasible task at least in the foreseeable

future: as the investigations of B. Mandelbrot show, artificial languages (including even Esperanto) have excessively unusual statistical characteristics (such as correlations between word length and frequency in texts) if compared with natural languages.

Tauli's attitude to language standardization and normalization is negative (p. 153 ff.). One may ask whether such a position does not contradict the very sense and meaning of language planning? Freedom of linguistic usage must be guaranteed, the traditions must not be suppressed (Tauli obviously underestimates the positive role of traditions in the linguistic life of society), but effective and economical communication is not possible without some degree of language standardization. This is true especially in the case of new languages. How such standardization must be carried out, is not clear. Voting committees are surely not the best solution (here we agree entirely with Tauli).

Tauli favours strictly phonemic orthography (p. 127 ff., cf. Keelekorralduse alused, p. 160 ff.) In the last years we know no more quite surely what is "phonemic". But even from the position of traditional views of phonemics and phonemic orthography, one may have doubts whether it is reasonable to follow the rigid demand of phonemic orthography: when the phonemic status of an expression changes, its graphemic status must in principle change likewise (p. 129). There are too many counterarguments. Even in Estonian, which Tauli regards as a paragon of this principle, there are pronunciation problems, which must not be reflected in orthography. For instance, the pronunciation variants of such forms as *kärbsed*, *andsin*, *hoidsin*, etc. which are pronounced with mediae or fortes stops before *s*: the first pronunciation is traditional and morphophonologically regular, the latter — a regular and growing phonetic tendency, which may be stated by means of an optional pronunciation rule; a change in orthography would result in one more orthographic morpheme alternant. The orthography cannot reflect all competing pronunciations in literary or colloquial language: the principle of the invariability of a morpheme is of real

importance, indeed, as has been pointed out by Tauli, too (p. 131). Regularity in the relations of pronunciation and spelling is much more substantial than strict correspondence (cf. from this standpoint the problems of English, too).

Hence many theoretical postulates are not irreproachable in practice. Too often the reservation must be repeated that one or another question has not been sufficiently investigated.

Tauli has a number of valuable observations on the tendencies observable in different languages. Among them are many which concern Estonian linguistics or which may be applied in resolving Estonian language planning problems. (We shall discuss some of them in the following review.)

V. Tauli finds that the German diminutive suffixes *-chen* and *-lein* come near to the ideal of free stylistic variants (p. 113; cf. Keelekorralduse alused, p. 145). The Estonian adverbial suffixes *-mini* and *-malt* are just as close to this ideal; in most cases they alternate freely and the restrictions on their use seem to be of a phonetic character: in short words both suffixes may be used (cf., e. g. *hõlpsamalt* ~ *hõlpsamini* 'more easily', *kiiremalt* ~ *kiiremini* 'more quickly'; sometimes there is a slight difference in meaning, e. g. in the case of *varemalt* 'previously' and *varemini* 'earlier; previously'); in longer words the monosyllabic suffix *-malt* is preferred (*aeglasemalt* 'more slowly', *piinavamalt* 'more agonizingly', *kuratlikumalt* 'more devilishly, more fiendishly', etc.).

Only a few inaccuracies could be noticed in the book, e. g. *Karelian pro Finnish* (the Karelians use the Finnish literary language, cf. p. 143). But it should be noted that this book, which propagates the rational use of language as a means of communication, has itself made use of what is perhaps the most complicated and tortuous system of references and notes imaginable. This makes its reading irksome and much valuable information in the references gets lost.

The addressee of the book remains somewhat obscure. The book is not meant for the layman but it is in some details too popular for the professional linguist. Yet without doubt it should be read by all

who are interested in the problems of language planning, both in countries with established traditions of language planning and in those where language planning has no firm tradition.

It is interesting to compare the edition under discussion with Tauli's first book in this field, which was published in Estonian in 1938.²

In the early version of Tauli's language planning theory there was much philosophizing about language ideals and the evolution of languages towards perfection or decay. These obscure terms, however, did not contribute to clarification of the problems of language planning. In the new book the author admits the impossibility of evaluating languages as a whole and suggests the evaluation of concrete linguistic features from the viewpoint of communicative efficiency. This more flexible and realistic position in the new book is without doubt a more reliable one.

² V. Tauli, *Oigekeelsuse ja keelekorralduse põhimõtted ja meetodid* (= Akadeemilise Emakeele Seltsi Toimetised, nr. 17), Tartu 1938.

Valter Tauli, Keelekorralduse alused, Stockholm 1968. 218 pp.

The Estonian version of Tauli's language planning theory is from the theoretical standpoint less interesting than the English edition. Thus, it does not take the place of the more theoretical English book even for Estonian practical linguists. Self-evidently, the concrete Estonian material in the book under discussion needs to be considered in full extent by those who regulate language norms in Literary Estonian.

The theoretical introduction of the book is not at all superficial, it is popular in a good sense and wholly satisfactory in extent. The problem of the relations of the spoken colloquial language and the literary language (p. 17 ff.) is of particular importance in Estonian language planning work (cf., e.g. the colloquial imperative forms with *ärme* 'let us not' or the forms of the conditional mood without personal endings which are not legalized).

Very interesting is the treatment of quantity contrasts in Estonian (p. 44 ff.).

In the early version V. Tauli sometimes attempted to label or to settle all linguistic problems from vacillating, tentative (e.g. in the case of the Estonian *hea* ~ *hää*, *pea* ~ *pää* problem) and inconsistent standpoints. In the new book a more tolerant attitude towards other possible standpoints is obvious also when concrete problems are dealt with.

V. Tauli has always regarded the revolutionary work of J. Aavik with great sympathy whereas J. Veski's monumental but traditional work in language planning and terminology creation has been somewhat overshadowed. The same happens once again in Tauli's new book.

It is obviously not easy to write a theoretical book on a wide range of practical problems. The creation of an abstract theory of language improvement appears to be as staggering a task as writing abstractly about writing itself.

V. Tauli has written a good abstract book on this subject. But the best book on language planning problems still remains to be written.

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Indeed, the distinction between the second and third degrees of quantity does not play too important a role in the actual functioning of the spoken or the written language. Nevertheless this distinction is present in large parts of the morpho-phonological system. Therefore, the regulation (not too rigid) of these quantity degree alternations is necessary. In his discussion of foreign sounds (p. 46 ff.) in Estonian Tauli states that only the voiceless foreign phonemes *f* and *š* have been adopted by the Estonian phonemic system, while the voiced foreign sounds (resp. phonemes) *b*, *d*, *g*, *z*, *ž* cannot be assimilated because there is no place for them in the system of phonological oppositions of Estonian. Up to now the orthoepic norms of Estonian do not take into account this clear state of affairs, demanding a voiced pronunciation in the case of *z* and *ž* (but not in the case of *b*, *d*, *g* in foreign words).

The Estonian derivational suffix *-na* is