

In chapter 9, the book deals with the sources of documentation legal translators have at their disposal. The author offers a general view of existing resources and stresses the importance of the knowledge acquired through practice and which can take a material shape and be systematically filed by translators themselves for future use. This chapter ends by giving a great deal of useful references which include electronic data bases, web sites, and newsgroups.

In her epilogue, the author sketches some future perspectives for research in the field of legal translation. She particularly focuses on the usefulness of corpus linguistics, empirical studies of translation practice, and the developing of software which takes advantage of the recurring phraseology and structures of legal text types. Finally, we have a generous catalogue of literature on this subject and

also a very generous list of reference works for the practice of legal translation between English and Spanish.

All in all, the book under review here is a very generous work where a professional and researcher lets the general public into some of the magic formulae otherwise reserved to those who dare to undertake this complex branch of translation. The author's final wish, stated in the epilogue, for the legal translator to lead a better life, is undoubtedly a guiding principle for her research, and hers is a very remarkable contribution to that cause.

References

Hatim, B. & I. Mason, *Discourse and the Translator*, London, Longman, 1990.

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Mireia LLINÀS,
Petites paraules. ¿D'on surt la gramàtica?
Barcelona: Empúries, 2001.

Petites paraules. ¿D'on surt la gramàtica? is a comprehensive overview of the basic concepts and corollaries of Generative grammar, a theoretical framework first proposed by Noam Chomsky which attempts to approach language scientifically by formulating and checking hypotheses, by predicting what language will allow and what it will not. This theory basically seeks to explain (i) adult grammatical knowledge from a global point of view, that is, including all languages in the world, and (ii) how language is acquired and develops in the human mind assuming that humans are genetically endowed to acquire an adult grammar.

The book is divided into five main chapters which, in turn, are further subdivided into more specific sections headed by an explanatory title. A great deal of useful examples are included throughout the text in order to clarify theoretical issues, as well as to lead the reader to think about his or her own linguistic knowledge. An analytic index of relevant concepts is included at the end, so that the book can be used for quick consultation.

Simplicity (but not shallowness) is a key word to define the book: the author tries to move away from specialised jargon when possible, offering plain definitions and explanations whenever a tech-

nical word cannot be avoided. This way, anyone interested in language, but not necessarily a philologist or a linguist, can follow and enjoy the reading.

As Llinàs establishes in chapter 1, the aim of the book is to explain what Generative grammar is about and how it accounts for our linguistic knowledge in an understandable way. Two basic ideas have to be taken into account by the reader to grasp the essence of Generative grammar: (i) grammar is the basis of linguistic knowledge and (ii) it is innate, inherent to human beings.

In chapter 2, the author addresses some of the central issues that shape Generative grammar, such as the idea that we are biologically prepared to learn any language in the world, since we are born with an internalised Universal Grammar. According to Generative theory, Universal Grammar consists of a series of principles and parameters. Principles are shared by all languages in the world, whereas parameters are responsible for linguistic diversity, since each language chooses its particular set. Therefore, all human beings have an innate knowledge of a set of grammatical operations which allow us to build up sentences and account for linguistic creativity, that is, the capacity of all individuals to create and interpret new sentences without having heard them before. However, grammatical operations function together with words, which are stored in the lexicon along with their phonological, morphological, semantic and syntactic properties. Grammar, which is one of the cognitive systems of the mind, is made up of different kinds of knowledge such as phonology, morphology and syntax, among others. Among these, syntax is considered to be the core of grammar, since other kinds of linguistic knowledge such as morphology depend on it. Moreover, it is responsible for the structure of language, which, in turn, constrains grammatical operations.

Chapter 3 deals with syntax, structure-dependence and the limits of language. Through a series of examples of both possible and impossible sentences, Llinàs makes the reader aware of the fact that there are certain restrictions on language: some constructions are not allowed by syntactic structure. The limits of language, then, are to be found by means of linguistic experiments, that is, by judging what sentences are possible in language and which ones are not. In order to illustrate that grammatical operations are constrained by syntactic structures, the author comments on (i) the relationship between pronouns and their reference and (ii) the existence of certain domains where certain grammatical operations are not allowed.

In this chapter, the notion of functional categories such as Determiner and Complementizer as opposed to lexical categories such as Noun and Verb is introduced. Functional categories are extremely relevant in Generative grammar: they contain grammatical information, which is essential for the good formation of sentences, and are responsible for linguistic variation across languages. The author also deals with traces, an example of empty categories, which are one of the main contributions of Generative grammar to linguistics. Traces, which are invisible and empty of phonological content, signal the syntactic position of those elements that have moved away from their original position.

In chapter 4, Llinàs concentrates on the process of language acquisition, which constitutes an important piece of evidence in favour of the existence of Universal Grammar. The logical problem of acquisition (Plato's problem) refers to the fact that children acquire a great deal of linguistic knowledge that cannot be found in the input they receive. According to Chomsky, this is a piece of evidence for claiming that human beings are by nature endowed

with Universal Grammar, an innate language acquisition device which is activated by linguistic input and which ensures that any child under normal circumstances will end up acquiring a language.

Moreover, the process of acquisition is basically similar across languages and from child to child, as the author illustrates with examples of her two daughters' linguistic productions. The same non-adult grammatical constructions were produced by both of the author's daughters at about the same age. Very interestingly, Llinàs points out that some practices which are common among parents, such as correcting children and talking to them in a simplified way, are of little use, since the child goes through a series of stages necessarily, as the process of acquisition is guided. Again, she uses some fun examples of her own children's linguistic productions to illustrate the point.

The author also comments on the fact that children's constructions cannot be regarded as mistakes, since they have

a particular grammar at each stage of acquisition, which means that, at each stage, they have a given set of grammatical operations which can result in a group of possible constructions. Therefore, children systematically produce constructions that might be different from adult grammar, but that are allowed by the set of grammar operations that build up their grammar at the particular stage of the process of acquisition they are in.

In the last chapter, which constitutes a very good summary of the book, the author makes some final remarks on the purpose of Generative grammar and its main contributions to syntactic theory and linguistics in general. On the whole, the book reads easily and provides the reader with a clear picture of a theoretical framework that could have appeared to be nearly esoteric if it were not explained in such plain and accessible language.

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