Grammatical Category of Evidentiality and its Expression in Lithuanian

Saulė Petronienė

Abstract. Of all the Indo-European languages only Lithuanian has sustained the old usage of participles which is motivated by the structural features of old simple sentences. Nevertheless, in the course of time the use of participles has become more restricted and their modal function which is specific, uncharacteristic and untypical of other languages has been fading away. Participles perform the function of the category of evidentiality in the Lithuanian language. The participial narration (the same as the indicative mood) employs all the four tenses. Nevertheless, the past simple tense is the most frequent one. This is a specific (though declining) feature of Lithuanian which is contrasted with the indicative mood and is defined as a member of the paradigm of morphological category of mood (modus relativus) in all Lithuanian grammars and by some authors of scientific articles. However, modus relativus should not be regarded as the morphological category of mood. Modus relativus and modus indicativus are synonymous categories as there is not a single case in modern Lithuanian where modus relativus could not be interchanged or substituted by modus indicativus. The English language has no specific means to express the grammatical category of evidentiality; nevertheless, the information is not lost while translating from Lithuanian to English. However, some nuances which are felt in the original are forfeited in the translation.