Lithuanian Past Simple Tenses and Their Equivalents in English

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Abstract. The paper provides the analysis of Lithuanian simple past tenses, their meanings and equivalents in English. Grammatical forms determine two simple past tenses of the verb in Lithuanian: the past simple tense and the past frequentative tense. The past frequentative tense distinguishes Lithuanian from all other Indo-European languages. The specialists of historical comparative linguistics emphasize its exclusiveness, novelty, however, the origin and the ground for the overall usage is left aside. Thus, the problem of the past frequentative tense is fully covered in the paper. Moreover, some linguists suggest that there are three tenses in Lithuanian: past, present and future. They claim that there is no past frequentative tense and that its incorporation in the paradigm of tenses in Lithuanian is supported by tradition only. Furthermore, they declare that the opposition between the past simple and the past frequentative tense is the one of aspect but not of tense and claim that the past frequentative tense expresses some special meaning of iterativeness related to imperfective aspect (which is the meaning of aspect but not tense). Thus, the analysis attempts to prove that the past frequentative tense has to be included into the paradigm of tenses. The paper also focuses on the use and meanings of Lithuanian simple past tenses and provides the equivalents of them in English.

Key words: paradigm of tenses, past simple tense, past frequentative tense, aspect, iterativeness.