On Semantic Pleonasms in English and their Translation in Lithuanian

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Abstract. Pleonasms are sometimes considered as faulty and erroneous or at least odd and absurd; yet, translators are often influenced by the structure of a pleonastic combination in the source language and translate them word for word which frequently results in a similar pleonasm in the target language. Rarely is the phrase translated in a different way which happens when the literal translation is unnatural in the target language. Therefore, an assumption is made that not all pleonasms coincide in the two languages. Besides, a number of semantic pleonasms have become clichés which again is the stimulus for translators to follow the structural pattern of the original. Thus, the aim of the present paper is to analyse semantic pleonasms in English and their translations in Lithuanian.

The major method employed in the study is contrastive analysis based on the items selected from the parallel corpus. The results reveal the tendency of translators to think first of the syntactic structure of an expression rather than of the semantic content which is often regarded as redundant. The paper also touches upon the degree of redundancy of information in the pleonastic phrases and may call for a different kind of approach — the prototype theory — towards pleonasms in future.