

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.

Key words: *pleonasm, redundancy, semantic head, semantic dependant.*

Introduction

A number of linguists have been considering the phenomenon of pleonasms as faulty and unnecessary. If a pleonasm is to be considered a stylistic device, a figure of speech in rhetoric where it has been used extensively (Dupriez, 1991, p.345; Booij and van Marle, 2005, p.120), it should not be taken as a fault. However, not all instances of pleonasms are used stylistically. There are numerous cases when they are only stiff expressions used in speech or writing as clichés, e.g. *earlier in time, green in colour, grow in size, ask a question, never before, new invention, past memories*, etc. Such instances actually prompt a few questions like whether they have to be understood as faulty, whether they have to be avoided in speech and writing, and especially how they should be treated in translation. Therefore, **the aim** of the present paper is to investigate semantic pleonasms and their translations from English to Lithuanian. The object of the research is semantic pleonasms which are also in a way clichés. The parallel corpus from *Dabartinės lietuvių kalbos tekstynas* has been used to pick out the semantic pleonasms and their translations necessary for the research. Only the written language examples have been analysed in this particular study.

The major research method to be employed is contrastive analysis which allows comparing and contrasting the chosen linguistic units in two languages and listing differences and similarities between them (Fisiak, 1980; Hawkins, 1986; James, 1997; Johansson, 1994; Lado, 1957). The use of the parallel corpus allows qualitative and quantitative testing of the statements of contrastive linguistics in general (Granger, 2003) and in this particular study. An assumption is made at this point in the research that the translated variants of semantic pleonasms will be as close to the original as possible.

For research purposes, 13 commonly used expressions considered as semantic pleonasms were chosen randomly.

Nine of them were pleonastic structures with an adjectival attribute. This type is the most frequent (Ruszkowski, 2006). In total, 129 examples of the English semantic pleonasms and their translations into Lithuanian were selected from the parallel corpus of contemporary Lithuanian and analysed. The fixed expression *pleonastic phrase* was used interchangeably with the term *pleonasm* in the paper.

Theoretical Background

A pleonasm is “an expression in which for structural reasons information is explicit more than once which is not necessary for communication” (Nida and Taber, 2003, p.207). By some linguists, it is considered faulty and erroneous (Cheney, 2005, p.22; Skillin and Gay, 1974, p.407) or at least odd and anomalous (Cruse, 2006, p.128; Leech, 2008, p.22). Some authors even go so far to consider the phenomenon as “a sign of stupidity” (Kumar, 2010, p.126) or absurdity (Anderson, 1998, p.290). However, the implication that the information provided by the modifying element in such expressions is inessential, unnecessary and does not add any specific explications is clear nearly in every description of the phenomenon (Nida and Taber, 2003, p. 207; Murphy and Koskela, 2010, p.121). The terms *semantic head* and *semantic dependant* are used; the former refers to the element which governs the relations in the pleonastic combination and the latter refers to the element which has to bring some new information not covered by the head (Cruse, 2011, pp.188–189).

Not all expressions considered as pleonasms are true or complete pleonasms. The combinations in which both elements have the same or nearly the same meaning are considered as pleonasms (Hughes, 1984, p.21). And sometimes the semantic dependant adds some new information not contained in the semantic head. According to Cruse, “the combination must yield more information (in a broad sense) than either of the combined items on its own” (2011, p.188). The change in the meaning of the pleonastic phrase caused by the information carried by the

semantic dependant might be very insignificant; then a phrase should not be considered as faulty and, therefore, there is no need to consider whether it has to be avoided. When the meanings of the two elements coincide and no new information is added by the semantic dependant, the combination is a proper pleonasm (Whately, 2010, p.303). Thus, it might be assumed that pleonasms on the whole are of different degrees of pleonastic character, i.e. some are more pleonastic than others. For example, the pleonasm *free gift* could be considered more pleonastic than *old custom* because the information conveyed by the elements in the former is completely superfluous or overlapping; meanwhile, *old* in *old custom* adds a certain amount of new information since it is possible to think of customs as very old or not so old.

Another point to be discussed is the prevalence of pleonastic phrases in a language. A few such phrases are quite well established in English and already used as clichés. It is important to see whether the phrases considered as pleonastic in one language are translated as pleonasms into another and whether the translators are influenced by original expressions to follow the two-word structure when translating.

The term *pleonasm* is often used in the same context as the term *redundancy* which broadly speaking refers to the presence of an unnecessary feature “in order to identify a linguistic unit” (Crystal, 2003, p.390). In fact, there are a few more terms concerning very similar linguistic phenomena like *tautology* (needless repetition) which is very often interchangeably used with the term *pleonasm*; *verbosity* (use of excessive words); *circumlocution* (use of indirect language); *prolixity* (wordiness); etc. What all these phenomena have in common is the characteristic feature of repetition, wordiness, saying the unnecessary. What is more, the term *redundancy* is the superordinate term encompassing the other ones in its meaning.

Cruse states that pleonasms can be avoided or cured; however, there is no implication that they should (2011, p.188; 1986, p.105). Though it is possible to avoid pleonasms, to do without them, to speak in a concise way, it is a well established feature of a language which has to be treated as its unique trait especially when translating fiction. What concerns technical or another kind of translation, translators are left to decide on their own whether to follow the structural pattern of the original and produce a similar pleonasm in the target language or to render the meaning in the best possible and most concise way avoiding redundancy. However, no cross-register differences were taken into consideration in this particular study, thus, opening space for further research.

The Selected Pleonastic Phrases

The chosen phrases were different in their structure. Nine pleonastic phrases were nouns modified by adjectives, e.g. *new invention*, *past memories/ history*, *serious danger*, *final conclusion*, *ultimate goal*, *good luck*, *component part*, *dark night*, and *personal opinion*. In all the cases, the modifier — the semantic dependant, i.e. the adjective, does not provide any particular or additional information and is in reality superfluous.

In the phrase *new invention*, the semantic head *invention* already has in its meaning the characteristic of being new and original; therefore, the word *new* used as a modifier is unnecessary and even redundant. The adjective *new* is gradable and inventions might possibly be very new and not so very new. Yet, older inventions are not inventions anymore unless we think of any possible object or thing as an invention.

The noun *memories* refers to something one remembers from the past (Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, subsequently CALD); therefore, the phrase *past memories* is superfluous and could be deciphered as *past things one remembers from the past*. It is quite difficult to imagine that memories could refer to something from non-past. On the other hand, it is quite logical that memories can be old and not so old. A similar phrase *past history* is of stronger pleonastic character than *past memories* because history always refers to past events and perhaps there is no history which is not about past.

The phrase *serious danger* presupposes that there might be a danger which is not so serious. The noun *danger* refers to *the possibility that something bad will happen* (CALD) and it may be assumed that the possibility of danger may be different: great or not so great.

What the meanings of these three phrases *new invention*, *past memories*, and *serious danger* have in common is the fact the adjectives used are gradable which in a way justifies their use in the aforementioned phrases.

It is possible to assume that the phrase *dark night* considered as a pleonasm is similar to *serious danger*, *new invention* and the like because the adjective modifying the noun is also gradable. However, presumably even though cloudy nights may be moon-lit and, therefore, not so dark as the cloudy nights or nights with the young moon instead of the full moon, the nights are supposed to be dark in general. The very word *night* refers to *the part of every 24-hour period when it is dark because there is very little light from the sun* (CALD). This fact presupposes that the pleonasm *dark night* is stronger than, for example, *serious danger*.

The phrases *final conclusion*, *ultimate goal*, and *good luck* may also be grouped together.

In the phrase *final conclusion*, the noun refers to *the final part of something* (CALD), and it is not necessary to repeat that it is final since there are no conclusions which are not final. Of course, it is possible to make a conclusion somewhere in the middle of the process; however, even those suggest a certain kind of end. Yet, it is possible to doubt whether the phrase *final conclusion* is as strongly pleonastic since it is easy to think of non-final, intermediate conclusions.

The phrase *ultimate goal* is more or less similar to the phrase *final conclusion* in its nature. The adjective *ultimate* is synonymous to *final*, which again may suggest that there can possibly be some other non-final and non-ultimate goals, but, for example, some intermediate or secondary goals.

The phrase *good luck* is quite, though not completely, similar to the two phrases discussed above. The noun *luck*

refers to *the force that causes things, especially good things, to happen to you by chance* (CALD) and already encompasses the concept of *good* in its meaning. However, it can be opposed to the phrase *bad luck* which in a way justifies the use of the adjective *good* in the phrase *good luck*.

The use of the adjectives *final* and *ultimate* in the pleonastic phrases *final conclusion* and *ultimate goal* suggests that there may be close-to-final and close-to-ultimate rather than just final and ultimate conclusions and goals but there are no completely opposite antonymous phrases like in *good luck vs bad luck*.

Two other phrases *component part* and *personal opinion* are different from the ones described above as the adjectives modifying the nouns are not gradable and there are no adjectives with the antonymous meaning.

The noun *part* already encompasses in its meaning the feature of a *component* which can be justified by at least one of the definitions of this noun: *a manufactured object assembled with others to make a machine; a component* (Oxford Dictionaries, subsequently OD). In reality, there are no parts which are not components; therefore, the adjective is redundant and unnecessary.

The phrase *personal opinion* seems to be of stronger pleonastic character. The noun *opinion* in a way encompasses the meaning *personal* as depicted in at least one of the most authoritative and popular dictionaries: *your ideas or beliefs about a particular subject* (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, subsequently LDCE). However, there might be different opinions other than personal ones, e.g. *expert opinion, public opinion*, etc. On the other hand, even an expert opinion is clearly a personal opinion, while a public opinion is perhaps only coinciding personal opinions.

Two more pleonasms selected for the current research are phrases with the verb as a governing element: *ask a question* and *repeat again*.

The phrase *ask a question* is strongly pleonastic since the verb *ask* as defined as *to put a question to someone, or to request an answer from someone* (CALD) which shows that the noun *a question* is superfluous. However, it is possible to use the verb in other expressions like *ask for help, ask for advice, ask for a dinner (=invite)*, etc. Therefore, the noun is used in the phrase for the clarification purposes.

Two more selected phrases considered as pleonasms have the adverb as a governing element.

The phrase *never before* is again of stronger pleonastic character. However, even though the adverb *never* is defined as *at no time in the past or future; not ever* (OD) which encompasses the earlier period of time, the adverb *before* has an implication of the period of time earlier rather than later.

A number of examples were analysed with the phrase including the adverb *totally*. In fact, any adjective or adverb used together with *totally* has more or less the same meaning, i.e. *completely, absolutely* (CALD, LDCE, OD), e.g. *totally bald, totally different, totally new, totally silent, totally uninteresting*, etc. Therefore, the phrases with the

adverbs *completely* and *absolutely* are very similar in meaning to the phrases with the adverb *totally*, e.g. *totally different, completely different, and absolutely different*. All of these adverbs would only add the strengthening effect, but generally are *empty* in their meaning. A totally bald man is not balder than just a bald man and a totally different plan is not more different than just a different plan. Therefore, it might be stated that phrases with the adverbs *totally, completely, and absolutely* are very strong pleonasms.

The last phrase analysed in the paper is *may/ might/ can/ could + possibly*. The discussed modal verbs all express a certain degree of possibility and, therefore, the adverb *possibly* which only adds the meaning of uncertainty to the phrase is redundant.

It can be stated at this point in the research that pleonasms are considered as strong or proper if the words in the phrase are superfluous in a way that they do not add anything to the meaning at all. The pleonasms considered as weaker are those phrases where the modifying word, the semantic dependant, gives a certain shade of meaning and slightly changes or clarifies the meaning of the governing word; however, the change or clarification of the meaning is very insignificant.

Analysis of the Pleonasms and Their Translations from English to Lithuanian

The examples of the pleonasms with the noun as a semantic head were unexpectedly few in number in the parallel corpus of contemporary Lithuanian. The majority of them were translated into Lithuanian word for word; i.e. the translator aimed at following the structure of the phrase without paying too much attention to the fact that perhaps the phrase is redundant, superfluous, and the modifying word does not add too much to the meaning, e.g.

- (1) ... *Plato draws his **final conclusion** that any changing or intermingling within the three classes must be injustice ...* (Popper, K.).

... *Platonas prieina savo **galutinę išvadą**, kad bet kokia apykaita tarp trijų klasių ar jų maišymasis yra ne-teisingumas ...*“ (Šliogeris, A.¹).

- (2) *As you begin practising Love Letters, you may not always experience **past memories** and feelings* (Bolles, R. N.).

„Pradėjusius rašyti Meilės Laišką jus ne visada užplūs **praeities prisiminimai**“ (Bilinskienė, V.).

- (3) *Strongly as I feel in these matters, I must insist, however, that my criticism of the theory of sovereignty does not depend on these more **personal opinions*** (Popper, K.).

„Tačiau turiu primygtinai pabrėžti, kad manoji suverenumo teorijos kritika nepriklauso nuo šios labiau **asmeninės nuomonės**“ (Šliogeris, A.).

- (4) *There are also **serious dangers** and pitfalls where people can easily get trapped, in connection with*

¹ Translator (here and further on in the brackets following the translated examples into Lithuanian unless not identified)

consumption, living standard, work and personal satisfaction (Schuh, M., et al.).

„Yra nemažai **rimtų pavoju** ir spąstu, susijusių su vartojimu, gyvenimo standartu, profesiniu ir asmeniniu pasitenkinimu, į kuriuos žmonės gali pakliūti“.

- (5) The **ultimate goal** of Aum Shinrikyo, according to its own discourse, was to survive the coming apocalypse, ... (Castells, M.).

„Aum Shinrikyo **galutinis tikslas** – kaip jie patys jį formuluoja – išgyventi artėjančią apokalipsę, ...“ (Droblytė, P.).

- (6) But the **night** was **dark** (Golding, W.).

„Tačiau buvo **tamsi naktis**“ (Dantaitė, A.).

- (7) Langdon sensed he would need more than **good luck** (Brown, D.).

„Lengdonas nujautė, kad šią akimirka jam reikia šio to daugiau nei **geros sėkmės**“ (Kaunelis, D.).

- (8) Whereas protection of the consumer requires that all producers involved in the production process should be made liable, in so far as their finished product, **component part** or any raw material supplied by them was defective (EU directive).

„Kadangi vartotojų apsauga reikalauja, kad visi gamybos procese dalyvaujantys gamintojai būtų atsakingi už savo tiekiamų gatavų gaminių, **sudedamųjų dalių** ar tiekiamų žaliavų trūkumus“ (authentic translation).

All the presented examples show literal translation of the pleonasms. However, it is possible that Lithuanian equivalents like *galutinė išvada*, *asmeninė nuomonė*, *rimtas pavojus*, *galutinis tikslas*, *tamsi naktis*, ar *sudedamoji dalis* are so naturally established in Lithuanian that they have become clichés and the translators do not think about the real meaning they convey.

However, pleonasms *ultimate goal* and *good luck* demonstrated more diverse translations. In fact, *ultimate goal* was translated into Lithuanian either as *galutinis tikslas* or as *aukščiausias tikslas*. Out of 769 sentences with the noun *tikslas* in the monolingual corpus of contemporary Lithuanian (belles-lettres style), 20 had the phrase *galutinis tikslas* and only 5 had *aukščiausias tikslas*, which shows that the former is a more established and commonly used phrase than the latter. However, in one of the examples the translator omitted the adjective *ultimate* when translating the phrase *ultimate goal*.

- (9) However, the Team is of the opinion that this plan amounts mostly to a list of **ultimate, long-term goals**, ... (EUA evaluation report, Vytautas Magnus University).

„Tačiau, vertinimo ekspertų nuomone, šis planas labiau orientuotas į **ilgalaičių tikslų** išvardijimą, ...“

The translator seems to have thought of the redundant meanings of the words *ultimate* and *goal* and omitted the adjective on purpose. His/ her reason perhaps was that another adjective, *long-term*, was used close to the noun *goal* and, therefore, the phrase did not seem incomplete. Otherwise, why would he do that especially when the

adjectives *ultimate* and *long-term* are not synonymous and in no way connected?

The pleonasm *good luck* was translated even more diversely (apart from the word for word translation) as shown in the examples presented in the corpus.

- (10) The bottom was slippery, made doubly treacherous by a stratum of coins thrown for **good luck** (Brown, D.).

„Dugnias, jau ir taip slidus, buvo dar klastingesnis vos ne dėl ištisinio sluoksnio monetų, kurias **dėl laimės ir sėkmės** metė lankytojai į fontano rezervuarą“ (Kaunelis, D.).

- (11) ... and whenever these guardians of yours — who are ignorant of these matters — unite bride and bridegroom in the wrong manner, the children will have neither good natures nor **good luck** (Popper, C.).

„Jeigu jūsų sargybiniai, nežinodami šio dėsniu, nelaiku suporuos jaunikius su nuotakomis, gims negabūs ir **iš prigimties nelaimingi** vaikai“ (Šliogeris, A.).

- (12) **Good luck**, and if you find a job, congratulations (Bolles, R. N.).

„**Sėkmės!** Sveikinu, jei jums pavyks“ (Bilinskienė, V.).

Examples (10 and 11) show that the translators deviated from the original meaning of the phrase *good luck*. The best Lithuanian equivalent perhaps is *sėkmė* (like in Example 12), but the translators more often chose a different way, other than word for word translation, to render the meaning. This only shows that word for word translation *gera sėkmė* is not an established expression and forces translators to have a second thought when dealing with the phrase. This is also proven by the fact that no examples of the phrase *gera sėkmė* were found in the monolingual corpus of contemporary Lithuanian which is an interesting fact calling for a different kind of cross-linguistic research.

What concerns the pleonasm *ask a question*, 36 examples in English and their translated variants were selected from the corpus. The phrase was mainly translated as either only the verb *klausti* or the phrase *užduoti/ pateikti/ kelti/ sugalvoti klausimą*, e.g.

- (13) May I **ask** you **a question**, Ms. Vetra? (Brown, D.).

„— Ar galiu jūsų **paklausti**, ponios Vetra?“ (Kaunelis, D.).

- (14) You **ask** them one simple **question** (Bolles, R. N.).

„**Užduokite** paprastą **klausimą**“ (Bilinskienė, V.).

- (15) Father, Chartrand said, may I **ask** you **a strange question**? (Brown, D.).

„— Tėve, — paprašė Šartranas, — ar galėčiau **pateikti** jums vieną keistą **klausimą**?“ (Kaunelis, D.).

- (16) Langdon had been **asking** himself that **question** all morning (Brown, D.).

„Lengdonas visą rytą **kėlė** sau šį **klausimą**“ (Kaunelis, D.).

Only once was the phrase under consideration translated into Lithuanian word for word:

(17) *He still had not asked the question that had come into his mind the first* (Orwell, G.).

„Jis vis dar nepaklausė to klausimo, kuris atėjo galvon pats pirmas“ (Čepliejus, V.).

On the other hand, in this particular example the structure of the sentence allows such translation, which is perhaps not the worst one.

More than a half of the examples of the phrase *ask a question* were translated only by the verb *paklausti* in corresponding forms. What is more interesting is that there were a few examples in the corpus where the phrase was translated as *kažko paklausti* which seems to be quite an established phrase in Lithuanian. However, the number of occurrences of the phrase *kažko paklausti* in its imperative form on the corpus (belles-lettres style only) was not significant, only some 9 examples out of 862, which makes only about 1%. Therefore, it can be stated that such a cliché is uncommon in Lithuanian.

The examples with the pleonasm *never before* which is also of a stronger pleonastic character were quite abundant in the parallel corpus of contemporary Lithuanian. The Lithuanian word for word translation of this phrase is *niekada anksčiau* or *niekuomet anksčiau*, and about 20% of all the examples were translated like this.

(18) *I was noting these things and enjoying them as a child might, when it entered my mind as it had never done before* (Bronte, Ch.).

„Aš stebėjau visa tai ir džiaugiausi kaip tikras vaikas, bet staiga kaip niekad anksčiau mane pervėrė mintis“ (Kazlauskaitė, M., Subatavičius, J.).

(19) *Never before has it been as obvious as it is at this moment* (Brown, D.).

„Niekomet anksčiau ji nebuvo tokia akivaizdi kaip šių akimirka“ (Kaunelis, D.).

However, the majority of translated variants were *niekada/ niekad/ niekados/ niekuomet*.

(20) *She never did so before* (Bronte, Ch.).

— „Ji šitaip niekados nesielgdavo“ (Kazlauskaitė, M., Subatavičius, J.).

In a few cases, the translator used the phrase *dar niekada* which only demonstrates that he/ she was influenced by a two-word structure in English and tried to follow the pattern when translating, e.g.

(21) *They had never had an assembly as late before* (Golding, W.).

„Jie dar niekada taip vėlai nebuvo susirinkę“ (Dantaitė, A.).

The rest of the cases show the tendency of a different translation where the adverb *niekada* is omitted and a descriptive translation is used or there is some translation transformation employed.

More diverse translations of this pleonasm allow stating that even though the phrase is quite well established and commonly used in Lithuanian, translators try to avoid the

redundancy carried with it and look for other more satisfying variants of translation.

The English pleonasm *may/ might/ could possibly* does not possess any word for word equivalent in Lithuanian. Though *tikriausiai galėtų* could be considered as its closest equivalent, it is not commonly used, at least according to the data in the parallel corpus of contemporary Lithuanian. No such cases were detected in the parallel corpus. All the 27 analysed examples were translated using the verb *galėti* in the corresponding forms, e.g.

(22) *There was only one meaning that the episode could possibly have* (Orwell, G.).

„Šis epizodas galėjo turėti tik vieną prasmę“ (Čepliejus, V.).

This demonstrates that either no such pleonasm exists in Lithuanian or it is not very pervasive.

A phrase *totally + adjective/ adverb*, which is a true pleonasm as decided above, was mainly translated as *visiškai/ visai + adjective/ adverb* (10 cases out of 11), e.g.

(23) *The design was totally symmetrical* (Brown, D.).

„Jo dizainas visiškai simetriškas“ (Kaunelis, D.).

(24) *Thoughts which came of their own accord but seemed totally uninteresting began to flit through his mind* (Orwell, G.).

„Galvoje pačios savaime ėmė lėkti mintys, bet jos jam atrodė visai neįdomios“ (Čepliejus, V.).

Only once was a different translation variant given, e.g.

(25) *The room went totally silent again* (Brown, D.).

„Kambarį vėl užvaldė mirtina tyla“ (Kaunelis, D.).

Therefore, it might be stated that the word for word translation of the phrase *totally + adjective/ adverb* is as commonly used in written texts of Lithuanian as in English.

Conclusions

Pleonasm is commonly used in both languages; however, as there are no or very few suggestions as to whether they should be avoided, translators seem to be influenced by the structure of the phrase and most often follow the English pattern, i.e. they translate word for word. Though limited in the number of examples and, therefore, tentative, the results of this particular study allow stating that the pleonastic expressions whose word for word translation is unnatural in the target language or there is no possible close equivalent seem to be translated differently without too much attention to the syntactic structure in English.

There is space for further research in pleonasm, though. Firstly, in a broader research, a prototypical approach could be applied to decide upon the degree of pleonastic character of such phrases which should perhaps coincide in English and Lithuanian. Secondly, analysis of the use of pleonasm across different registers could provide some interesting facts about the prevalence of pleonastic expressions. The major drawback to this particular study is the moderate-to-poor availability of items in the parallel corpus of contemporary Lithuanian since in one or two

cases the analysis had to be made on the basis of only two to four examples which can lead to dangerous over-generalisations and provide unreliable results. On the other hand, this might also show low prevalence of pleonasm in Lithuanian. However, further research would help get more reliable results.

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Ramunė Kasperavičienė

Semantiniai pleonazmai anglų ir lietuvių kalbose ir jų vertimas

Santrauka

Straipsnyje nagrinėjami anglų kalbos semantiniai pleonazmai ir jų vertimas į lietuvių kalbą. Pleonazmas dažnai laikomas klaida arba keistu absurdišku reiškiniu. Tačiau vertėjams dažnai daro įtaką originalo kalbos pleonazmų sintaksinė struktūra; jie dažnai verčiami pažodžiui, ypač jei vertimo kalboje taip pat išgalėjęs ir vartojamas panašus pleonazmas. Tik retais atvejais tokios frazės verčiamos kitokiu būdu ir tai tik tada, kai pažodinis vertimas skamba nenatūraliai. Todėl daroma prielaida, kad didžioji dauguma (nors ir ne visi) pleonazmų sutampa dviejose analizuojamose kalbose. Be to, nemaža dalis pleonazmų jau tapę klišėmis, o tai tik dar labiau paskatina vertėjus laikytis originalo struktūros, tuo pačiu ir semantinio turinio. Pagrindinis tyrimo metodas – gretinamoji analizė, paremta lygiagrečiojo anglų-lietuvių kalbų teksto pavyzdžiais. Rezultatai rodo, kad vertėjai linke pirmiau galvoti apie sintaksinę struktūrą, o ne semantinio turinio, kuris dažnai perteklinis, perteikimą. Straipsnyje taip pat atkreipiamas dėmesys į perteklinės informacijos kiekį pleonastinėse struktūrose, tai gali paskatinti naujiems kitokio pobūdžio pleonazmų tyrimams.

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