HOW A SEEMINGLY SIMPLE RULE FOR WRITING SYMBOLIC NAMES BECOMES DIFFICULT

Summary

Linguistic publications pay insufficient attention to orthography and punctuation of symbolic names. They have mostly been analysed as names of legal persons, which are unique in that they tend to function not only in coherent texts. Functioning as public signs, trademarks, advertising objects, in lists and similar texts they are characterised by different writing tendencies only partly coinciding with the writing of symbolic names in a coherent text. Thus, a rule regulating only writting in a coherent text cannot be sufficient at least for this group of symbolic names. In discussion of symbolic names of legal persons it is necessary to mention other possibilities of writing. However, these are not analysed and defined in detail in linguistic publications; thus, due to lack of clarity, some confusion in usage has arisen.

As the functions of capitalisation and quotation marks have become unstable, a favourable medium has emerged for applying the tendencies of writing names characteristic to the English language. The records of the Register of Legal Entities, which clearly show the impact of the English language, demonstrate more factors contributing to foreign orthography: shortcomings of the rule on writing non–Lithuanian symbolic names; insufficient clarity in drawing the line between levels of orthography and punctuation and in writing names in non-coherent texts, including areas as specific as the Register of Legal Entities; absence of the norm and lack of rules for language users on writing symbolic names.

Usage also unveils phenomena that are not considered at all in language standardisation works. These are names emerging out of interaction of languages. Even though there is no norm formulated for writing them, it could be established by using the records of the Register of Legal Entities as a reference point. Such constructs are made based on the principle of quotation: in some cases, a Lithuanian element is included in a non-Lithuanian combination; in other cases, on the contrary, a non–Lithuanian component, usually a symbolic name, is included in a combination constructed on the basis of Lithuanian syntax. Since the rule is missing, there is a tendency not to distinguish the symbolic name comprising another symbolic name neither as a symbolic name nor as an element foreign to the Lithuanian language. This is against the general tendency of the Lithuanian language and its standardisation principle not to use unadapted foreign words and to treat those used in the written language as quotations in a broad sense. It is negotiable to what extent such a violation can be justified by the field of using proper names.

In general, the analysis of the use of symbolic names shows the need both for practical rules and decisions related to codification. Solutions are needed in individual cases, such as formalising multilingual names, as well as in the complex ones, such as clearer formulation of the functions of certain signs (capitals, writing in uppercase letters, quotation marks, prints), their interaction and relation to the levels of orthography and punctuation, constitution of the norm for writing symbolic names in non-coherent texts, and also adjusting the norm for their writing in coherent texts. In addition, usage demonstrates insufficient definition of the concept of a symbolic name and the relation between a symbolic name and a quotation.

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