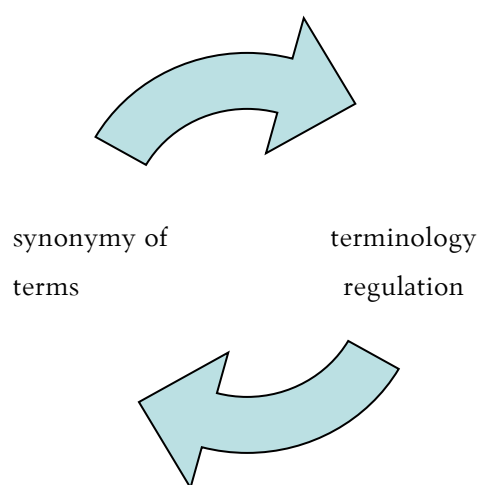ASTA MITKEVIČIENĖ

IS SYNONYMY OF TERMS AN IMPERFECTION?

Summary

The article investigates the systemic synonymy of Lithuanian terms in the context of terminology regulation. With reference to the most important works in the area of Lithuanian terminology as well as terminography data, it examines the evaluation of synonymy of terms, relation between synonymy and terminology regulation and reevaluates the concept of valid synonymy of terms.

Terms without synonyms have been considered to be only an aspiration in Lithuanian terminology for almost half a century. In the classical works of Lithuanian terminology (S. Keinys (1980), K. Gaivenis (2002)) mononymy is included neither in the requirements for terms nor in the principles of normalization of terms.

The article proposes that synonymy of terms and terminology regulation are linked in bidirectional mutual way: synonymous terms are both a tool for and a consequence of normalization of terms and application of principles of normalization of terms (eg. as preference for native origin terms, economy, systematicity etc.) increases synonymy of terms to a certain extent.

synonymy of
terms

terminology
regulation

The article comes to a conclusion that although synonymy of terms should be avoided and regulated due to pragmatic reasons, it is not accurate to regard it only as an imperfection.

Synonymy of terms is not a homogenous phenomenon as the causes for the occurrence of synonymous terms, their nature, communicative situation and context differ. Linguistic, cognitive and communicative dimensions of terms are interrelated in the synonymy of terms, therefore valid synonymy should not be limited only (as is quite common in Lithuanian terminology) to two types of synonyms whose opposition is based on the expression (origin and length) or linked only to the primary stage of terminology and new concepts.

The article also separately explores synonymous terms of different linguistic motivation and demonstrates that these synonyms can be both a consequence and means of regulation of terms and a result of different conceptualization and classification of concepts. Therefore it is impossible to conclude that only one synonymous term should be used.

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