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A COGNITIVE ANALYSIS OF POLISH FOLK PLANT NAMES

ABSTRACT: The article proposes a cognitive analysis of selected Polish folk plant names. In cognitive linguistics meanings are identified with conceptual representations construed in certain ways, and multiple alternate construals of one referent may be associated with various phonological forms. For example, *twardziec* and *rannik*, two folk names of yarrow (*Achillea millefolium* L.), illustrate two different construals of the referent, since the names evoke two different concepts associated with the plant: the former name alludes to hardness (cf. Polish *twardy* ‘hard’), and the latter – to the fact that yarrow was used for healing wounds (cf. Polish *rana* ‘wound’). Since the conceptual representations depend crucially on the cognitive faculties of the conceptualizer, analyses of representations encoded in plant names offer insights into mental realm of the speaker. The study attempts to reconstruct the conceptualizations behind Polish plant names and reveal the ways in which the members of the folk community understood and experienced the world of plants. The main theoretical framework used throughout the study is derived from Langacker’s Cognitive Grammar.

KEYWORDS: Polish folk culture, cognitive grammar, construal

1. Introduction

As generally known, one way of exploring the cultural worldview of a community is to explore their language. This statement may serve as a useful guideline for analyzing the semantics of words and expressions circulating within a community of speakers, resulting in lexicographic research based on linguistic data. Yet the statement also suggests another perspective: it is possible to place speakers in the center of research and to explore what linguistic data reveal about their ways of experiencing the world. In our study¹ we adopt the latter perspective and, hence, the primary goal of this article is to reveal the way of thinking and experiencing plants in Polish folk community reflected in plant names.

The majority of Polish folk names were recorded in the 19th and the 20th century, and in most cases they differ significantly from the common names in “mainstream” vernacular Polish and Polish scientific terminology. On the one hand, one plant may be known under several (sometimes more than ten) alternate names (synonymy). On the other hand, one name may refer to several plants (polysemy). Moreover, names vary in terms of phonology, morphology, geographic and historical distribution. This makes it extremely challenging for a modern researcher to match a name with its real-world referent. The abundance of names results from the great importance of plants for the folk community (of predominantly agricultural character). Plants constituted the environment, were the basis of nutrition, livelihood, as well as crucial elements of rituals, magic practices, and folk medicine.

For our purposes, the research of semantic motivation of plant names is particularly important, because the motivation plays a key role in naming processes. Semantics-based classifications have been proposed by several Polish linguists, including Pawłowski (1974), Tokarski (1993), Pelcowa (2001), Waniakowa (2012), Dębowiak and Waniakowa (2019). The linguists point out the names may be motivated by plant’s appearance and properties, habitat, the time of flowering, ripening, or harvesting, as well as practical, ritual, and medicinal functions. Religion and traditional beliefs, especially ones involving magic, play a significant role, too. It is worth emphasizing that “the semantics-based classification of names is interlaced with metaphor-based classification” (Waniakowa 2012, p. 68), as well as classifications based on metonymy.

¹ Hubert Kowalewski is responsible for the methodology, the general theoretical orientation of the study, and the analysis of the data (50% contribution). Katarzyna Prorok is responsible for the selection and the analysis of the data (50% contribution). We would like to express our gratitude to Adam Głaz and Maruszka Meinard for their invaluable comments about the draft of this article.

The data for the following analysis have been derived from *Słownik stereotypów i symboli ludowych* (The Dictionary of Folk Stereotypes and Symbols; Bartmiński 2017–2022; henceforth: SSiSL), because it includes not only a full set of names of the plants important for the folk users, but also the motivation of the names². This manner of presenting the data results from the fact that the dictionary is designed to provide “a synthetic presentation of traditional worldview reflected in folk language, culture, beliefs, and rituals” (Bartmiński 2017, p. 7). The analysis of motivation serves a practical purpose here: the names are data necessary for reconstructing folk conceptual imagery. By discovering motivation, the analyst strives to discover properties ascribed to the mental object by the conceptualizing subject (participants of folk culture), which results in reconstructing the linguistic worldview. Even when the conceptualizations are “naive,” intuitive, and incompatible with scientific knowledge, they reflect the properties of objects, which the subject considered significant at a given moment.

Undoubtedly, the abundance of folk names helps to investigate the folk view of nature, as demonstrated in the seven published volumes of SSiSL devoted to plants. Yet folk names reveal not only folk knowledge about plants, but also hint at the processes of conceptualization performed by the name users. The tools developed by cognitive linguists make it possible to explore these aspects of plant names in greater detail. In the next sections we turn to Ronald Langacker’s Cognitive Grammar (CG, cf. e.g., Langacker 1987, 2008) and use the theoretical framework to analyze selected names described in SSiSL. Our goal is not to create a new classification of folk plant names, since this task has been successfully undertaken by other linguists. Instead, we will attempt to reveal what the motivation behind names tells us about the name users and their way of experiencing the world³. It should be emphasized that the material for our analysis has been selected with this goal in mind, and therefore it does not do justice to the abundance and variety of data collected in SSiSL.

² SSiSL serves as a rich source to lexicographic data documented in various printed publications (folk texts of various genres, ethnographic records, dictionaries, and other scientific publications on folk language and culture), as well as more spontaneous narrations collected during fieldwork interviews and archived in the Jerzy Bartmiński Ethnolinguistic Laboratory (at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin). All sources used in SSiSL are accompanied by detailed bibliographic information that we will omit here due to limited space.

³ Importantly, it is often difficult to propose a single motivation for a given plant name. Where possible, we rely on the explanations offered by consultants (bearers of folk culture), but obviously the consultants were not expert on diachronic linguistics, and relied on “common-sense” folk etymologies instead. This is not a fatal problem for our study, since we are generally more interested in what “naive” folk imagery reveals about conceptual mechanisms rather than in historical sources of the names. Nonetheless, it should be borne in mind that different consultants may offer different “stories” about the origin of the names.

Cognitive Grammar

Our guiding assumption throughout this article is that names given to plants reflect conceptual construals. In Cognitive Grammar, the term *construal* pertains to a specific manner in which the referent is conceptually depicted. For instance, we propose that various folk names of the dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale* F.H. Wiggers) correspond to various conceptual depictions emphasizing different aspects of the plant. Thus, *zimkowã salãta* (lit. ‘spring salad’) alludes to the fact that the leaves were consumed during pre-harvest season; *krówny mlecz* (cf. Polish *krowa* ‘cow’ and *mleko* ‘milk’) is motivated by the fact that dandelions were used as fodder to cows; *maslak* and *maselnik* (cf. Polish *masło* ‘butter’) hint at the belief that the milk-like liquid in the plant’s stem increased cow’s milk production and the quality of butter; *dętki* (roughly translatable as ‘blowers’; cf. Polish *dąć* ‘to blow’) signals that the dandelion stems were used as makeshift musical instruments.

Construals can be characterized in terms of several dimensions. Langacker (2008, chap. 3) enumerates four main dimensions – specificity, focusing, prominence, and perspective – some of which are further subdivided into more specific parameters. Specificity is “the level of precision and detail at which a situation is characterized” (Langacker 2008, p. 55). When a dandelion is referred to as *a plant*, the construal behind the word is characterized by low specificity, and specificity increases when it is characterized as *a dandelion* or *a ripe dandelion tarnished by mild spring wind*.

Focusing “includes the selection of conceptual content for linguistic presentation” (Langacker 2008, p. 57). In Cognitive Grammar, linguistic meanings are construed against the so-called domains structuring and organizing conceptualizer’s world knowledge. Linguistic meaning arises in the process of selecting a certain portion of a domain and highlighting it in a particular way. Thus, various aspects of the dandelion evoked by the above-mentioned names select different portions of the domain [PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS]: *zimkowã salãta* highlights the similarity to salad in terms of edibility, *krówny mlecz* highlights dandelion’s usability as cow fodder, *dętki* highlights possibility of using the stems as musical instruments, etc. The process of highlighting specific portions of domains is termed profiling.

Perspective, another dimension of construal in Langacker’s Cognitive Grammar, embraces several parameters, including (but not limited to) vantage point, viewing arrangement, and grounding. Vantage point is the location of the conceptualizer relative to the object of conception. As we will demonstrate, some aspects of vantage point, like the default distance between a plant and its observer, affect construals behind plant names, especially when the names are

motivated by perceptible properties. Viewing arrangement reflects the degree to which various elements of the construal are within the direct focus of speaker's attention. A THEATER METAPHOR is useful for capturing this parameter (cf. Langacker 1990; Langacker 2008, p. 77). The theater stage corresponds to the focus of attention, typically occupied by the concept evoked explicitly in the name. The conceptualizer apprehends the object of conceptualization from the offstage area. When the conceptualizer's attention is focused entirely on the stage region and the conceptualizer remains entirely offstage, the onstage object is construed with maximal objectivity and the conceptualizer with maximal subjectivity. Yet the conceptualizer may also "enter" the stage in one way or another, so that aspects of the conceptualizer's mental realm come into the focus of attention. The focused aspects become the object of conception or more technically: they become more objectively construed. Another parameter of perspective relevant for our study is grounding, i.e., the way in which the construal relates to various facets of the usage event, like the speaker, the hearer, the time and place of the usage event, etc. The facets are known collectively as the ground. Personal pronouns evoke the ground explicitly in their construals. For example, the referent of the personal pronoun *I* is one element of the ground, i.e., the speaker.

Many folk plant names are motivated by metonymies and metaphors. Within the Cognitive Grammar framework, metonymies are defined in terms of a profile shift from the vehicle⁴ concept (evoked in the name) to the target concept (the intended referent) (cf. e.g., Langacker 1991, p. 456; Langacker 2008, p. 69). For instance, in the case of *dętki*, the original profile of the word (which could be tentatively labeled as DEVICES FOR BLOWING) shifts to the concept DANDELION. The profile shift takes place within a single domain organizing knowledge about practical applications of the plant. Metaphor, in turn, involves blending of the semantic content from two different domains, which gives rise to a novel semantic structure⁵ (Langacker 2008, p. 36).

2. Names motivated by perceptible properties

While the plant names analyzed in this study may be grouped according to various criteria, the most straightforward and intuitive criterion is the domain against which the plant concept is construed. Polish folk plant names frequently

⁴ The terms *vehicle* and *target* in the context of conceptual metonymy were proposed by Radden and Kövecses (1999).

⁵ As far as metaphor is concerned, Langacker clearly leans towards the Conceptual Blending approach (Fauconnier, Turner 2002). For a comparison of theoretical frameworks used in cognitive linguistics to analyze metonymies, see Kowalewski (2022).

evoke domains related to perceptible properties of the referents, like [VISIBLE PROPERTIES]⁶, [OLFACTORY PROPERTIES], etc. In principle, the simplest case of motivation based on a perceptible property of a plant involves an objective construal of the referent evoking a distinctive feature of the referent. One example is *twardziec* (yarrow, *Achillea millefolium* L.). The construal alludes to the hardness of the stem (cf. Polish *twardy* ‘hard’), notably greater than in the case of other plants. The construal is highly objective in that an inherent property of the stem is in the onstage region of the construal, and the conceptual contribution of the name user is minimal. Two types of objectivity and subjectivity are worth distinguishing at this juncture. As already mentioned, the conceptualizer is always a part of the viewing arrangement, if only because the conceptualization needs to be entertained by someone. Moreover, the motivation behind plant names also reveals aspects of human experience in the world. For instance, the name *twardziec* alludes to the tactile sensation experienced by the conceptualizer while touching the plant. This makes the construal subjective in a broad sense of the term, pertaining to the dependence of the conceptualization on the conceptualizing subject. Nonetheless, in a narrow technical sense the terms *subjective* and *objective* pertain to a particular aspect of viewing arrangement, i.e., the presence or absence from the onstage region corresponding to the focus of attention. For this reason, it is possible to talk about the construal behind *twardziec* being subjective (i.e., subject-dependent) in the broad sense and largely objective (i.e., involving the onstage presence of the referent) in a narrow technical sense.

Langacker’s objectivity (in the narrow sense) does not presuppose a “view from nowhere”; on the contrary, even when the contribution of the conceptualizer is minimal, a vantage point is always inherent in the construal. One general point is that vantage point is by default anthropocentric, so perceptible properties motivating plant names are perceptible to unaided human senses in optimal circumstances. Yet specifics of the vantage point may affect motivation in subtle ways. For example, *krzyżowe ziele* (lit. ‘cross herb,’ St. John’s wort, *Hypericum* L.) evokes the cross-like arrangement of leaves viewed from above the plant. The arrangement is less noticeable when the plant is viewed from a different angle, so the construal behind the name implies a very specific alignment of the conceptualizer relative to the plant. Moreover, the distance inherent in vantage point tends to be correlated with the degree of specificity of a construal. In typical circumstances, viewing a plant from a smaller distance reveals more details, which may be then evoked in the construal⁷. Examples illustrating high specificity

⁶ We label domains with [SMALL CAPS IN SQUARE BRACKETS] to distinguish them from concepts labeled with SMALL CAPITALS.

⁷ Obviously, this correlation is not necessarily true for less typical scenarios. For instance, an observation aided by a telescope may reveal details of extremely distant objects.

are *pięczęłek* (lit. 'five-veins,' broadleaf plantain, *Plantago major* L.), alluding to the number of veins on the leaf, and *zawojek*, also known as *zawojec* (Turk's cap lily, *Lilium martagon* L.), whose name alludes to the curvature on the plant's petals (cf. Polish *zawijać* 'to coil'). The construals have a clear metonymic component, since a part of the plant is used to evoke the entire referent. The degree of specificity and the details of the vantage point largely determine which parts of the plants are available as potential vehicles of metonymies. The construals behind *pięczęłek*, *zawojek*, and *zawojec* are highly specific, as the focus of attention is on small parts of the plants discernible from a close distance. Examples of this sort may be juxtaposed with *wronie gniazdo* (lit. 'crow nest,' mistletoe, *Viscum album* L.), evoking the overall similarity of mistletoe to crow's nest. The height at which mistletoe usually grows results in a much greater viewing distance during typical observations, from which fewer details are observed. This favors a less specific construal, where the overall shape, rather than details of the plant, is in the focus of attention.

It is worth noting that the term *vantage point* should be understood broadly enough to cover all types of perceptual experience. For example, the tactile experience motivating the name *twardziec* demonstrates that tactile (rather than visual) experience can be the source of motivation. *Szeleszczuchy* (straw flower, *Helichrysum arenarium* (L.) Moench), *skrzypiec* (field horsetail, *Equisetum arvense* L.), and *trzesklina* (willow, *Salix* L.) illustrate that names may also be motivated by sounds associated with the referents (cf. Polish *szeleścić* 'to rustle,' *skrzypieć* 'to creak,' *trzeszczeć* 'to crackle'). *Goryczka* (centaury, *Centaureum erythraea* Rafn) and *kwasnica* (cranberry, *Vaccinium oxycoccos* L.) are motivated by the taste of edible parts (cf. Polish *gorycz* 'bitterness' and *kwaśny* 'sour'). *Cytrynowka* (lemon balm, *Melissa officinalis* L.) is motivated by the fragrance resembling that of a lemon (cf. Polish *cytryna* 'lemon').

A highly objective construal seems to be the most straightforward strategy for coining a plant name. Nonetheless, while many plants are profiled against the domain of perceptual experience of some sort, numerous construals of this kind are markedly subjective. In general, conceptualizers tend to construe iconic, metonymic, metaphoric, and functional cross-domain links between plants and other concepts. In such cases, the construal of the referent tends to be more subjective, because elements associated with the plant become more prominent in the onstage region at the expense of the plant itself. Iconic associations in the domain of perceptibles are based on similarities in observable properties between the referent and the onstage concept. One example is *kaczeniec* (marsh-marigold, *Caltha palustris* L.) evoking the concept DUCK (cf. Polish *kaczka* 'duck'), possibly motivated by the color of flowers resembling the color of ducklings and proximity to

water⁸. The same holds true for names based on non-visual similarities, like in the case of “olfactory iconicity” in the already mentioned *cytrynówka* (lemon balm, *Melissa officinalis* L.).

A notable degree of subjectivity can be found in construal exploiting functional cross-domain links. In such construals, perceptible properties are associated with additional semantic content recruited from other domains⁹. Functional mappings frequently ascribe healing properties to plants on the basis of the plants’ appearance. A case in point is *wątrobne ziele* (lit. ‘liver herb;’ hepatica, *Hepatica nobilis* Mill.; cf. Greco-Latin *hepar* ‘liver,’ Kreiner 1963, p. 99), also known as *wątrobnica* (cf. Polish *wątroba* ‘liver’). Arguably, the plant’s leaves resemble liver in shape and hepatica was also used to treat liver ailments. If both the shape of the leaf and the medicinal use are taken as the sources of motivation behind the name, the construal evokes semantic content from two domains: [VISUAL PROPERTIES] and [MEDICINAL USE], but does not involve metaphoric identification of the concepts HEPATICA and LIVER. Thus, functional cross-domain mappings appear to share properties of metaphors and metonymies without instantiating either. They resemble metonymies in that they involve profile shifts without the blending of semantic content, and they resemble metaphors in that they operate across different domains. Formally, the name *wątrobne ziele* profiles a herb (cf. Polish *ziele* ‘herb’) and classifies it by means of the adjective *wątrobne*. The two names of hepatica differ with respect to the degree of objectivity of the construal. *Wątrobne ziele* evoked the concept HERB explicitly, so that the concept of the plant enjoys onstage presence and significant objectivity. *Wątrobnica*, on the other hand, does not explicitly evoke the concept of a plant. Instead, it only evokes the concept LIVER, so that the referent is “pushed off” the onstage region, and is construed more subjectively.

Apart from functional cross-domain mappings, more familiar metaphoric cross-domain mappings can also be found. For example, several folk names of sedum (*Sedum* L.) evoke the impression of “greasy” leaves and depict the referent as a non-plant: *tlusty mąż* (lit. ‘fat/fatty man’), *masny Maciek* (lit. ‘fat/fatty Matthew’), *tlusta kura* (lit. ‘fat/fatty hen’), *wronie sadło* (lit. ‘crow fat’), *wronie masło* (lit. ‘crow butter’), *kanie sadło* (lit. ‘kite fat’), *kanie masło* (lit. ‘kite butter’), *mydło*

⁸ “Kaczeńce to żółte, tak jak kaczkі żółte; na wodzie to sobie rośnie i takie małe kacuszki so żółte, i kaczkі siedzo na wodzie, i może od tego *kaczeńce*.” (“March-marigolds are yellow, yellow like ducks; it grows on water and little ducklings are yellow, and they sit in water, and maybe that’s why *kaczeńce*.”) (cf. SSiSL, vol. 2 iss. 3, p. 110)

⁹ Intuitively, it seems likely that users first observe a perceptible property of a plant and then associate the property with the content of a non-perceptual domain. However, on the basis of available data it is impossible to determine whether the domain of perceptible properties is indeed primary and the other domain subsidiary or vice versa.

wronie (lit. ‘crow soap’). Names of this sort are best analyzed as metaphoric, since the plant is construed as an object from the source domain, e.g., *thusta kura* depicts the plant as a hen rather than a plant. Just like in the case of functional mappings, the onstage region is typically occupied by concepts other than the plant itself, so the actual referent is construed subjectively and remains offstage.

In construals with greater scope of conception, when a greater portion of the domain [VISIBLE ENTITIES] is used for profiling, a construal may feature an observable object related to the plant rather than its observable property. Metonymy is perhaps the most obvious strategy for motivating this kind of the names. *Podleśnik* (windflower, *Anemone nemorosa* L.) and *borowina* (heather, *Calluna vulgaris* (L.) Hull) are good illustrations of the metonymy LOCATION FOR THE PLANT; the names suggest that windflowers grow near forests (cf. Polish *pod* ‘under/next to’ and *las* ‘forest’) and heather grows near coniferous forests (cf. Polish *bór* ‘coniferous forest’). Here, the scope of the construal is greater than in the case of names motivated by perceptible properties, because the conception of the plant goes beyond the perceptual knowledge about the plant. Instead, the scope of conception includes entities from the plant’s surrounding. A slightly different motivation strategy can be observed in *czervec* (anise, *Pimpinella saxifraga* L.) and *kwiczoł* (rowan, *Sorbus aucuparia* L.). Anise shares its folk name with the insect known in English as Polish cochineal (*Porphyrophora polonica*) believed to live in the roots of the plant. *Kwiczoł*, in turn, is the name of both rowan and fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*), a bird feeding on rowan fruit. Other metonymic names go beyond the observable and exploit more abstract associations between concepts. For instance, *wisielec* (lit. ‘hangman’; belladonna, *Atropa belladonna* L.) alludes to the belief that the plant grows under gallows where a hanged man’s semen falls.

A similar mechanism lies behind the names motivated by encyclopedic knowledge about the life cycle, albeit here the analogy of visual perception becomes more metaphoric. The life-cycle construals involve the apprehension of plants’ development through time rather than their location in physical space. Names motivated by life cycle may evoke the time of year associated with a salient event during plant’s development, usually blossoming. Here, metonymy is a typical motivation strategy as well. One way of referring to a time of year is to evoke a season. Thus, *pozimka* (wild strawberry, *Fragaria* L.) portrays the plant as growing after winter (cf. Polish *po* ‘after’ and *zima* ‘winter’). Yet “calendric” names are also common. For instance, *majówka*, also known as *majownicka* (lily-of-the-valley, *Convallaria majalis* L.), and *maj*, also known as *maje*, *maiczki*, *maiczek*, *majka*, *majówka* (dandelion, *Taraxacum officinale* F.H. Wiggers), allude the month of May (cf. Polish *maj*), i.e., the blossoming time. Another type of calendric reference evokes the saint’s day around which the plant blossoms. Various species

of aster (*Aster* L.) enjoys particularly many folk names of this sort, evoking saints celebrated in October and November: *jadwiżki* (lit. '(little) Hedwigs'), *michałki* (lit. '(little) Michaels'), *lukasz* (lit. 'Lucas'), *marcinek* (lit. '(little) Martin'), *katarzynki* (lit. '(little) Catherines').

3. Names motivated by functional properties

Many folk names allude to various functions of the plant. Names of this sort involve construals against one of several related domains and frequently resort to the so-called event schema metonymies. Event schemas are abstract representations of processes and states, complete with participants and relations between them. Metonymic profile shifts from one element of an event schema to another account for morphological conversions in English, e.g., the metonymy INSTRUMENT FOR ACTION accounts for the conversion of the noun (*a*) *hammer* to the verb *to hammer* (cf. Dirven 1999). In the case of folk names, the basic conceptual mechanism involves singling out a salient element of a usage event and placing it in the onstage region in the focus of attention.

This mechanism is typical for plant names motivated by alleged curative properties, where the concept of the ailment is used to metonymically refer to the plant effective against the ailment. Thus, *anginka* (rosemary, *Salvia rosmarinus*) was believed to cure tonsillitis (cf. Polish *angina* 'tonsillitis'). *Łamikamień* (lit. 'break-stone'; anise, *Pimpinella saxifraga*; cf. Latin *sax-* 'stone', *frango* 'break, crush', Kreiner 1963, p. 88, 194) was used to break bladder stones. *Krwawnik*, also known as *rannik* (yarrow, *Achillea millefolium* L.), was used for healing wounds (cf. Polish *krw* 'blood' and *rana* 'wound'). Notable names motivated by veterinary medicinal uses are *wszybój* (lit. 'lice-beat'; shepherd's purse, *Capsella bursa-pastoris* (L.) Medik.), used against lice in cattle, and *czarne ziele* (pasque flower, *Pulsatilla vulgaris* Mill.), used against an unidentified cattle ailment known as "the black disease" (cf. Polish *czarny* 'black' and *ziele* 'herb'). All of the above names employ the metonymy AILMENT FOR CURE, instantiating the more general event schema metonymy PATIENT FOR INSTRUMENT. Apart from the ailments, *łamikamień* and *wszybój* also profile the action leading to the successful treatment. The former name decomposes into *łami-* and *kamień* (cf. Polish *łamać* 'to break' and *kamień* 'stone'), and the latter into *wszy-* and *bój* (cf. Polish *wszy* 'lice' and *bić* 'to beat', from which the nominal *bój* is derived). A less frequent metonymic pattern evokes an ailing animal rather than the ailment itself, like in *świńskie bagno* (marsh Labrador tea, *Ledum palustre* L.) used against swine diseases (cf. Polish *świnia* 'swine'), or the cause of the ailment, like in *wężownik błotny* (lit. 'mud snaker'; adder's-tongue ferns, *Ophioglossum vulgatum* L.)

used against snake bites (cf. Polish *wąż* ‘snake’). Names motivated by curative functions frequently involve the already mentioned functional mappings from the domain of perceptible properties. Apart from the already mentioned *wątrobnica* (*Hepatica nobilis* Mill.), a good illustration is *twardostój* (lit. ‘hard-stand;’ common chicory, *Cichorium intybus* L.), whose upright rigid stem led the users to believe that the plant was effective against rickets.

Another type of functional motivation alludes to edibility of the plant. Some names of this type employ the event schema metonymy PRODUCT FOR MATERIAL. For instance, *sėrowe zelė* (lit. ‘(quark) cheese herb;’ lemon balm, *Melissa officinalis* L.) was used as spice for quark cheese, and the seed of *mącznik* (lamb’s quarters, *Chenopodium album* L.) was added to bread during famine (cf. Polish *mąka* ‘flour’). While the metonymy PRODUCT FOR MATERIAL is perhaps the most intuitive, some metonymic names associate a plant with the consumer rather than the food product. Examples include *świnio trawa* (lit. ‘swine grass;’ silverweed, *Potentilla anserina* L.) and *świniucha* (lamb’s quarters, *Chenopodium album* L.) used as swine fodder (cf. Polish *świnia* ‘swine’), as well as *psia pasza* (lit. ‘dog fodder;’ couch grass, *Elymus repens* L.) eaten by dogs, presumably in order to help with digestion.

Metonymic motivation may shade into metaphoric. *Chlebek* (lit. ‘(little) bread;’ rye, *Secale cereale* L.) can still be considered as an instance of the metonymy PRODUCT FOR MATERIAL, since BREAD and RYE are associated via a contiguity relation and the profile shift takes place within the same domain. Yet *ptasi chleb* (lit. ‘bird bread;’ hawthorn, *Crataegus* L.) is more adequately analyzed as a metaphor, since it depicts bird food in terms of staple human food and therefore blends the semantic content from the different domains.

Event schema metonymies appear to be the most common conceptual devices in names motivated by function. Usually, the referent is construed subjectively, i.e., the concept of the plant is placed in the offstage region outside the direct focus of attention, and a salient element of the event is construed more objectively. Notable exceptions are names with the word *ziele* ‘herb’ (e.g., *sėrowe zelė*, *Melissa officinalis* L.), which evoke the concept of herb explicitly and place it in the on-stage region.

Several names of magical plants resort to yet another strategy of motivation. These names also construe the referent subjectively by removing it from the direct focus of attention, but they place onstage an element of the ground rather than a part of the event associated with the referent. A good illustration of this mechanism are two names of common kidneyvetch (*Anthyllis vulneraria* L.): *nietubyć* (lit. ‘not-here-be’) and *mytubyć* (lit. ‘we-here-be’). The names resemble contracted spells and the plant was indeed used against witchcraft (evil forces were “not to be here”) and strangers (“we are to be here (and not they)”). The names

evoke a part of the ground, i.e., a facet of the usage event. More specifically, both names include the morpheme *tu* ‘here,’ and *mytubyć* (lit. ‘we-here-be’) also includes *my* ‘we.’ In an important sense, the ground is always present in construals, for instance when the speaker uses a grammatical tense to relate the events expressed in the sentence with respect to the time of speaking. Frequently, however, the ground is left implicit and remains outside the focus of attention. Despite the conceptualizer’s absence from the focus of attention, their presence in the overall viewing arrangement is obligatory, if only because it is the conceptualizer that construes the plant in a certain way. Yet both Polish and English (as well as many other languages) have grammatical resources for construing some facets of the ground with greater objectivity, i.e., for placing them in the onstage region in the direct focus of attention. Personal pronouns, like *we*, and deictic words, like *here*, are good illustrations of such construals. In the cases of *nietubyć* and *mytubyć*, the need for focusing on certain facets of the ground is motivated by the magical function of the plant. Common kidneyvetch was believed to have the power of repelling evil forces and strangers from the places where it was used, so the location where the spell was cast was a salient aspect of the usage event. Note, however, that this merely calls for signaling the location in the plant name, but does not automatically enforce signaling the location by means of the deictic locative *tu*. For example, the kidneyvetch could be called **nietambyć* (lit. ‘not-there-be’) to indicate that the plant works also in other places, and this hypothetical construal would convey the magical property of the plant equally effectively. The use of *tu* ‘here’ instead of *tam* ‘there’ is explained by the egocentric perspective of the speakers. While one could speculate that the name users were aware that kidneyvetch can be used somewhere else by other people, it was more relevant for them that the plant could be used by the speakers to protect their location. By the same token, the egocentric perspective explains the use of *my* ‘we’ in *mytubyć*. While the speakers may have realized that others could use the plant to keep away strangers, it was more relevant for them that the plant could keep away strangers from the speaker’s community.

4. Names motivated by religious and mythological beliefs

Many plant names allude to religious and mythological beliefs, although the term *mythology* should be understood broadly enough to include beliefs and tales with a wide variety of supernatural elements. Many names of this sort employ patterns of construal already discussed in previous sections.

For instance, *kwiat Matki Boskiej* (lit. ‘Mother of God’s flower;’ lily, *Lilium* L.) involves a metonymic association between Mary and one of her attributes, i.e., lily.

Structurally, the construal is similar to the one behind *żelazne ziele* (lit. ‘iron herb;’ *verbena*, *Verbena officinalis* L.), to which the function of breaking iron locks was attributed: generic terms *kwiat* ‘flower’ and *ziele* ‘herb’ are qualified by means of an associated concept, which serves as the reference point providing mental access to the referent of the name. The differences lie in the domains against which the referent is profiled ([FUNCTION] in *żelazne ziele* and [RELIGIOUS IMAGERY] in *kwiat Matki Boski*), and slightly different grammatical implementation of the qualifying relation: *żelazne* is an adjective profiling an atemporal relation between iron and the herb, while *Matki Boski* is the genitive case of *Matka Boska* ‘Mother of God,’ which implies a possessive relation between the flower and Mary. Yet since the possession is also an atemporal relation, the conceptual differences are minimal in this respect.

Another familiar naming strategy involves metaphor, exemplified by two folk names of common corn-cockle (*Agrostemma githago* L.): *diabeł* (lit. ‘devil’) and *złodziej* (lit. ‘thief’). Both of the names allude to the fact that corn-cockle was hard to weed out from the fields of wheat¹⁰ and consequently it was thought of as a “devilish” plant “stealing” crops. Since the concepts CORN-COCKLE, DEVIL, and THIEF belong to different domains, the concepts are not merely metonymically associated, but metaphorically blended.

Another naming pattern construes names with the use of both metaphor and metonymy, resulting in a metaphonymic link between a part of the plant and an element of mythological knowledge. A good illustration is *kieliszki/kubeczki Matki Boskiej* (lit. ‘Mother of God’s (wine) glasses/cups;’ bindweed, *Convolvulus* L.), which alludes to the flowers shaped like drinking vessels. According to one tale, Mary once asked a man transporting barrels of wine for something to drink, but the man was mean and lied that he had no cup. Mary then took a bindweed flower and asked him to pour the wine inside. Conceptually, the connection between bindweed and Mary’s cups is established in two steps: the metonymy associating the entire plant with its flowers (instantiating the well-known metonymy PART FOR WHOLE) and the metaphor identifying flowers with drinking cups on the basis of the visual similarity between the two. The same chain of metaphonymic associations is illustrated by folk names of primula (*Primula* L.): *klucze św. Piotra* (lit. ‘St. Peter’s keys’) and *klucze Matki Boskiej* (lit. ‘Mother of God’s keys’). Consultants claimed that the bunch of primula flowers resembled a bundle of keys, and since the flowers bloom in early spring, they are construed metaphorically

¹⁰ “[To] satański kwiatusek; bo to tak zawali, jakby z diabłem rubiło” (“It is a devilish little flower; because it spreads so much that it seems like it works along with the devil”). (cf. SSiSL, in print)

as “opening” a new season, just like St. Peter opens the gates of heaven¹¹. Thus, the name metonymically selects a part of the plant (PART FOR WHOLE) and depicts the part metaphorically as a different object recruited from the domain of religious imagery (FLOWERS ARE ST. PETER’S KEYS).

Plant names alluding to religious and mythological knowledge construe the referent with notable subjectivity almost by definition, as the conceptualizer places elements of their religious or mythological onstage in the focus of attention. Nonetheless, as already mentioned, the construals behind the names still differ with respect to the degree of subjectivity. *Ziele św. Piotra* (lit. ‘St. Peter’s herb;’ ground-ivy, *Glechoma hederacea* L.) is conceptually portrayed as a type of herb qualified by means of a metonymy based on mythological imagery. According to one tale, when St. Peter was walking along with Jesus, he complained about pain in the side. Jesus advised him to take a bite at ground-ivy’s root, which alleviated the pain. This tale explains why ground-ivy has short, as if “bitten off;” root. While the metonymic qualification significantly contributes to the subjectivity of the entire construal (the inherent properties of the plant are outside the focus of attention), the name portrays the referent as a herb (Polish *ziele*), which amounts to a fairly objective “descriptive” construal. *Ziele św. Piotra* can be contrasted with *kubeczki Matki Boskiej* (lit. ‘Mother of God’s cups’), which employs a similar metonymic qualification based on mythological imagery, but portrays the referent metaphorically as cups rather than a herb or a plant. Consequently, the construal is markedly more subjective, since the focus of attention is shifted away from the “objective” properties of the plants towards the metaphoric blend.

5. Taboo names

Taboo names exemplify an intriguing motivation strategy absent from other types of names. Jadwiga Waniakowa notes that taboo names are an important issue in the study of semantic motivation behind folk plant names. Names of this sort usually appear in two situations: when the plant is considered to have magic properties, i.e., it is believed to have a supernatural power for creating effects either positive (e.g., apotropaic properties, the power to repel evil spirits, etc.) or negative (e.g., magically bringing about diseases), or when it is highly harmful,

¹¹ “[Bo] to podobne do pęczku małych kluczyków” (“Cause it is similar to a bundle of little keys”). Also, “kluczami Matki Boskiej odmikã zimk dwiêrze” (“Winter opens the door of spring with Mother of God’s keys”) and “bo to otwiera to ciepło, te wiosne, radość, zieleń, jak święty Pieter otwiera bramy raj” (“cause it opens this warmth, this spring, the joy, the green, like Saint Peter opens the gates of heaven”). (cf. SSiSL, vol. 2 iss. 3, p. 190)

dangerous for humans, and may even cause death. In such cases the name is not to be pronounced. It is avoided to prevent calling the evil or in order not to “offend” the beneficial plant with unnecessary invocation and not to deplete its power. The stronger the belief in the magical power of the plant, the stronger the taboo (Waniakowa 2012, p. 190–191).

The taboo name *nietota* (lit. ‘not-this_{neut}-this_{fem}’; ground pines, *Lycopodium clavatum* L.) is especially worth mentioning here¹². According to Krystyna Jabłońska, the name *nietota* was applied not only to ground pines, but also to all magic plants. This was a way to protect them from evil spirits, which could use the plant for evil ends. It was believed that if evil spirits did not know the plant name, they had no power over it (Jabłońska 1965, p. 84). Therefore, “people in the know” (e.g., healers) tried to keep it a secret and instead of using the “real” name resorted to a “pointing” name.

Formally, the name involves proximal demonstratives: the neuter demonstrative *to* and the feminine demonstrative *ta*. The feminine form of the latter is possibly explained by the fact that the Polish word *roślina* ‘plant’ is feminine, although nothing crucial hinges on this conjecture and the demonstrative could function as an anaphoric stand-in for any feminine noun. This suggests that the name *nietota* could be written out as “this is not the plant,” even though the word *roślina* ‘plant’ is ellipsed. The main strategy for producing the misleading effect is specifying the referent of the name almost entirely relative to the ground, so that no descriptive information about ground pines is provided. In the CG formalism, demonstratives function as verbal pointing gestures: the speaker is the source of “directive force” that compels the hearer to look for the intended referent (cf. Kirsner 1993; Langacker 2008, p. 284). In the case of proximal demonstratives *to* and *ta*, the referent is expected to be in a close vicinity of the speaker. Unlike in *nietubyć*, no element of the ground is explicitly placed in the onstage region and construed objectively: the construal does not place the speaker, the hearer, the place of utterance, etc. in the focus of attention, so the ground is construed subjectively. Nonetheless, the profile of the name is established in relation to the ground, since one element of the ground (the speaker) is the source of the directive force that serves to single out the referent.

Paradoxically, in the case of *nietota* demonstratives are used to mislead rather than identify. In order to achieve this goal, the two demonstratives *to* and *ta* construe two referents and deny the identity between them. The neuter demonstrative *to* singles out an object in the vicinity of the speaker. The demonstrative is highly schematic and profiles a thing in the vicinity of the speaker. While strictly

¹² Other taboo names of ground pines include *niętoła* (‘no-this’), *nicpotem* (‘nothing-after-this’), and *nicponim* (‘nothing-after-it’). More on taboos in dialects cf. Janyšková (2003), Krawczyk-Tyrpa (2001), and Waniakowa (2016).

speaking *to* is neuter, it is frequently used as a “generic” demonstrative when neither biological, nor grammatical gender of the referent is known or relevant¹³. For this reason, the neuter demonstrative is the best option for the grammatical subject of sentences introducing unknown or previously unspecified objects. In the construal in *nietota* the first demonstrative of the name profiles an unspecified object in order to deny its identity with the referent of the feminine demonstrative *ta*. This negation is expressed by the morpheme *nie* ‘not.’ The construal is sketched in Figure 1, where the acts of pointing profiled by the demonstratives are marked with the bold arrows, the objects singled out by the acts are presented as circles in the on-stage region, and the negation of identity between the two objects is expressed with the \neq sign. Since the ground pines are not explicitly evoked in the name, the referent remains offstage and is construed subjectively.

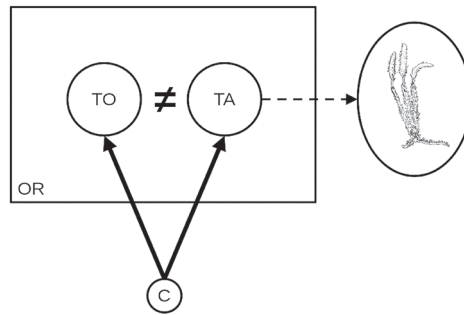


Figure 1: The construal behind *nietota* ‘ground pines’

6. Conclusion

From the point of view of cognitive linguistics, the analysis of folk plant names (just like the analysis of any other lexicographic material) opens two interrelated perspectives. From the first perspective, the plants come to the foreground and the analysis focuses on their properties: appearance, habitat, ecological relations with other organisms, etc. Viewed from this perspective, plant names are repositories of folk knowledge about the referents. From the other perspective, name users become more prominent and the analysis focuses on the choices they make in the naming process. Viewed from this perspective, names are consequences of particular ways of perceiving and thinking about plants, and they reflect particular attitudes towards nature generally (cf. Waniakowa 2021).

¹³ Moreover, the referent does not have to be physical and in close physical distance to the speaker; it merely needs to be identifiable to the speaker and the hearer in the context of ongoing discourse.

Even though the names discussed in this article instantiate various strategies of motivation, it is possible to make some general, albeit admittedly impressionistic, conclusions about the folk view on plants in Polish folk community. It is evident that members of the community paid close attention to the world of plants. They appreciated minute details (like the shape of petals and the number of veins in *zawojek* and *pięczęłek*) and noted surprising similarities (like the one between hepatica's leaves and human liver). They paid attention to the smell, the taste, and the sounds of plants. They observed plants' immediate environment and animals in the vicinity. They sometimes wove their observations into metaphors and folk tales. Their perspective was typically anthropocentric: the names reflected human vantage point and revolved around human experiences. Nonetheless, folk name users were sensitive to ecological relations between living organisms, as illustrated by the names like *kwiczoł*, linked metonymically with fieldfares, and *ptasi chleb*, depicted metaphorically as bird bread.

This is, of course, not to say that name users had no interest in practical applications. On the contrary, the richness and diversity of functional domains against which the folk conceptions were construed demonstrate that the speakers' attitude towards plants was oftentimes strictly utilitarian. Plants provided food and medicine for people and farm animals. They were used as vegetable dyes, firewood, elements of religious rituals, and makeshift musical instruments. Their curative properties were sometimes attributed to magic powers and plant magic was guarded the community against evil forces (the name-spell *mytubyć*). Such powerful plants required protection from malevolent forces, which could be achieved by obfuscating the reference with special naming techniques (like in the taboo name *nietota*).

The names discussed in this article demonstrate the richness of conceptual imagery behind folk plant names and impressive inventiveness of their creators. From a more technical point of view, one indication of the rich imagination and creativity of folk name users is the abundance of subjectively construed referents. To use the CG theatrical metaphor, in construal of this sort the "objective" properties of the referents (like shape, color, size, etc.) are removed from the stage and replaced with concepts associated with the referent via iconic, metonymic, metaphoric, and mythological associations. The referent remains in the offstage region outside the focus of attention and is evoked indirectly via the entity mentioned explicitly in the name. The referent may remain offstage for several reasons and it may be associated with the onstage elements in several ways. Instead of focusing on the referent, name users may focus on entities similar to the referent in various ways (resulting in iconic and metaphoric associations), as well as entities spatially, functionally, or causally contiguous to the referent (resulting in metonymies). Sometimes the associations are drawn against the backdrop of magical, religious, and mythological beliefs.

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STRESZCZENIE

KOGNITYWNA ANALIZA LUDOWYCH NAZW ROŚLIN

W językoznawstwie kognitywnym znaczenie utożsamiane jest z mentalną reprezentacją stworzoną (zobrazowaną) w pewien określony sposób, a różne obrazowania referenta mogą być powiązane z różnymi formami fonologicznymi. Na przykład *twardziec* i *rannik*, dwie ludowe nazwy krwawnika (*Achillea millefolium* L.), ilustrują odmienne sposoby obrazowania rośliny, ponieważ odwołują się do różnych pojęć z nią skojarzonych: pierwsza nazwa sygnalizuje twardość łodygi, a druga – wykorzystanie przy leczeniu ran. Reprezentacje są zależne od zdolności poznawczych conceptualizatora, badanie reprezentacji daje więc wgląd w sferę mentalną użytkownika. Analiza zaprezentowana w artykule ma na celu zrekonstruowanie reprezentacji mentalnych i ukazanie sposobu, w jaki użytkownicy nazw, tj. mieszkańcy wsi, postrzegali świat roślin. Przeprowadzona jest za pomocą narzędzi dostarczonych przez gramatykę kognitywną Ronalda Langackera.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: polska kultura ludowa, gramatyka kognitywna, obrazowanie

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