MOTIVATION FEATURES OF FORMATION OF PLANT NAMES IN ENGLISH LINGUACULTURE

Latipjonova Malikakhon Odiljon qizi
The second year post-graduate student
at Andijan state institute of foreign languages
akilam96@mail.ru

Annotation: A good knowledge of various aspects connected with plants is necessary to investigate the semantic motivation of plant names. One of the prerequisites is an appropriate knowledge of botany, involving in particular the identification of plants and their typical features, such as general appearance, shape and appearance of leaves, color and shape of flowers, fragrance, blossoming period and potential healing properties. Another key factor is the study of the usage of plants, which include healing properties, alleged magical properties, customs associated with plants, beliefs and legends.

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As is generally known, etymology is the settlement of the origin of words. The essence of etymological research is both a reconstruction of the original form of the word (its root), and its original - etymological - meaning. Let us quote here the sentence written by Wiesław Borys, author of the first full Polish etymological dictionary: *"The task of etymological research is to reproduce the original motivation of the given word (indication of its immediate derivative basis), to detect and explain its structure, to indicate word-formation morphemes and to reproduce its supposed primary meaning and explain its further semantic development"*. Thus, the etymology includes, besides reaching the original form, the presentation of its semantic motivation and the semantic development of the given word. None of these elements of reconstruction can dominate and none can be omitted either. Franciszek Sławski, eminent Polish Slavicist, even claims that *"the reconstruction of the motivation should be considered as the basic goal of etymology"*.

In the case of plant names, especially non-scientific ones, this new meaning is frequently based on connotative properties, associated with particular genera or species of plants. This motivation should be expanded to include affective and evaluative factors with reference to historical and dialectal phytonyms. A good knowledge of various aspects connected with plants is needed to investigate the semantic motivation of plant names. One of the prerequisites is an appropriate

cognizance of botany, involving in particular the identification of plants and their typical features, such as general appearance, shape and appearance of leaves, colour and shape of flowers, fragrance, blossoming period and potential healing properties. Another key factor is learning about the usage of plants in the countryside. This may include healing properties, alleged magical properties, customs associated with plants, beliefs and legends. It is related to the researcher's knowledge of how a plant was perceived and used in the past (including antiquity), because one can often encounter old names. Only a proper erudition connected with all these aspects can guarantee a correct reconstruction of the semantic motivation of plant names. According to scholars, properties of plants which are the most important for a human being can be classified into three groups:

- Environmental characteristics (including the blossoming period, as the most significant for the development of the plant, and harvest time),
- Physical properties,
- Functional properties (usage of the plant).

Researchers studying dialectal plant names, such as, underline the belief in extraordinary - evil or good - powers of selected plants and legends associated with them play an important role in the process of naming plants. This includes religious references and superstitions, but various symbolic connotations are important too.

Semantic motivations for plant names

Taking into consideration the above-mentioned criteria of semantic classification of names enumerated by researchers studying historical and dialectal plant names, we can present the following general motivational mechanisms to establish the basis of the semantic motivation of names in the process of nomination:

- the appearance of the plant;
- the place of its occurrence;
- the properties of the plant;
- its usage;
- other motivations typical of a specific genus or species.

Each of these factors can influence plant names It is obvious that each of these general motivations involves a range of detailed ones (Waniakowa 2012: 67-68). It should also be noted that a large number of phytonyms refer to at least two properties of "given" species, for instance to the appearance and the place of occurrence, especially since many of the names are two-word compounds. Metaphorical plant names, which are also abundant in botanical nomenclature, represent a separate issue. They comprise secondary names, so in each case the basis for the metaphor, for example, its primary motivation, should be deciphered. Secondary names also include names transformed due to an association with another name; this process is often linked to folk etymology. Another group comprises names that have evolved from

other plant species based on some similarity; and another group is associated with beliefs and legends, but in this case a certain feature of the plant (i.e. given species) constitutes the motivational basis, too.

Thus we can present four main factors conditioning the semantic classification of plant names, which are the following:

- the appearance of plants,
- the properties of plants,
- the place of occurrence of plants,
- the usage of plants.

The majority of these main motivations are composed of many particular elements. Plant names connected with the appearance of plants hide a multitude of detailed motivations, for instance: the colour of flowers, the appearance of inflorescences, the shape of flowers, characteristic infructescence, specific seeds (for example, their colour), characteristic leaves, the shape of leaves, the size of leaves, the colour of leaves, the arrangement of leaves, the shape of the root, the appearance of whole plants and the physical similarity to other plants. It is worth remembering that some species have many names connected with the appearance in different stages of vegetation because they change their look.

Plant names associated with the properties of plants are also very diversified. For example, phytonyms connected with sounds made by plants (for example, *rustling, scraping*), specific tactile impressions made by plants (for example, *hair, thorns*), characteristic features of flowers, characteristic fruits, specific features of the whole plant, healing properties (for example, *pain-killing, stanching blood, healing wounds*),specific vegetative properties (for example, *speed of mellowing*), blossoming time, harvest time, smell, chemical reactions caused by plants (for example, *the ability to make foam*), characteristic properties of juice, specific taste, negative properties (for example, *poisonous, intoxicant*), positive properties (for example, *honey-yielding, milk-producing*), supposed magical powers (for example, apotropaic), positive powers (*legends and beliefs*) as well as properties characteristic to other species.

The names associated with the usage of plants are significantly less diversified. This group involves names connected with assignment of a species for fodder, names associated with using a species as a medicine and names connected with applying given species in the household. All the above-mentioned features of plants can be the basis of motivation for their names. This is why there are so many (dialectal and historical) names for one species in every language. Each species can have many names motivated by its various features; a given name depends on the feature that was considered as the most important by people who named the species in a given time and place.

Names that were not motivated by semantic shift, but were in English introduced by translation from another language – these names may have originated by semantic shift, but because they did not result from the English language I did not include them in my final list. In this category are also included names which come from a non-English metaphorical shift but can be considered transparent to an English speaker and plant names from Old English and Middle English, not transparent to the average English speaker.

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