

Title: Lexicographic Description of Russian Botanical Terms

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This presentation discusses the Russian names of plants and their parts as they are used in everyday language and in two scientific disciplines: biology and crop husbandry. In many Russian texts (e.g., in different types of “gardener’s handbooks”) these three terminological systems interact in quite an intricate way.

The explications of botanical terms in existing Russian explanatory dictionaries are inadequate in many respects. I propose here a theoretical basis for the lexicographic description of the terms under consideration and also illustrate its principles with several examples.

Analysis of the use of botanical terms in Russian texts along with linguistic experiments have shown that everyday (standard) word usage is based on a *naive taxonomy* and has little to do with biological nomenclature. Thus, most of the names of cultivated plants can refer either to the given plant as a whole or to the parts of this plant that are used by people. Most Russian dictionaries take this polysemy into account by indicating ‘plant’ as the first meaning and ‘part of this plant’ as the second meaning (this is apparently due to preference for “scientific” usage in which these words denote plants, while their edible parts are indicated periphrastically: *plody abrikosa, korni morkovi*). A good case can be made for the reverse order.

The taxonomy of crop science is closer to standard usage; however, some differences exist. In crop science, the “naive” classes of *ovoshchi, frukty* and *jagody* belong to the same taxonomic level: they are all generic terms. But their places in “naive” taxonomy are different, as can be seen by their linguistic behavior. *Ovoshchi* and *frukty* are parts of cultivated plants (while *jagody* may be parts of wild plants); these words behave like the names of artifacts. Furthermore, the singular forms *ovoshch* and *frukt* are rarely used if the speaker knows the specific name of the vegetable or fruit. There is no such restriction for the word *jagoda*.

It seems reasonable to add that a complete lexicographic description should take account of the usage of “botanical words” in different terminological systems (providing appropriate labels where necessary).

The presentation will be illustrated with general schemes of various lexicographic types of botanical terms and tentative entries for several terms.