

Perspectives on the Popularisation of Natural Sciences in a Diachronic Overview

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Edited by

Eleonora Chiavetta and Silvana Sciarrino

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P U B L I S H I N G

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PREFACE

This book brings together carefully selected articles written by scholars in the field focusing on specialized knowledge. The volume presents some of the relevant findings of a National Research Project that has involved researchers from several Italian universities. The main focus of the project was to analyse discursive popularisation mainly in the context and domain of natural sciences viewed in a diachronic perspective. Scholars involved in the project have focused their studies on the creative transformation, hybridisation, and even bending of genres used to popularise scientific discourse for different communicative purposes and audiences, thus extending the conventional genre boundaries to disseminate specialized knowledge.

The book combines strands of research which are currently debated in linguistic scholarship –the issue of specialized discourse, the issue of knowledge dissemination and the issue of the versatility of genres. The book includes six in-depth studies focusing on a wide range of fields and genres.

Daniela Cesiri investigates the popularisation of terminology in Irish botany texts published during the Late Modern English (LModE) period. She analyses how the opening of botany as a scientific discipline to a public of amateurs and to their contribution in collecting and classifying samples, plays a very relevant role in shaping the popular botanical terminology. Eleonora Chiavetta also focuses on botany, and analyses the features of a very popular genre of garden literature, namely the garden notebook. The main feature of this genre is the fact that a gardening and botanical knowledge is popularised in a chatty, informal way, which combines scientific and professional competence and expertise, with personal comments and references to the author's private sphere. Two major examples of the genre are considered: the successful series of books by Mrs. C. W. Earle-*Pot-Pourri from a Surrey Garden* (1897), *More Pot-Pourri* (1899) and *A Third Pot-Pourri* (1903)–and *Country Notes* (1939) by Vita Sackville-West. Thomas Christiansen carries out an analysis of how Darwin's theory of evolution is presented or misrepresented in George William Hunter's famous high school textbook, *A Civic Biology Presented in Problems* (1914). Christiansen's corpus analysis concentrates on speaker stance, including the interpersonal functions, and particularly on the way in which ethos plays a major role in the presentation of

Darwin's theories. Gabriella Di Martino focuses her research on the plain use of scientific language in the 17th century. She compares different versions of the work by Joseph Glanvill (1636-1680), the elaborate essay *The Vanity of Dogmatizing*. When this work was attacked by the Aristotelians, Glanvill answered by issuing a revised version, *Scep̄sis scientifica*, which defended the experimental method of the Royal Society and argued for a plain use of language. Kim Grego's study is based on a corpus of British newspaper articles (1880s-2000s) dealing with Down House, Darwin's museum-house. The vicissitudes undergone by this house are used to navigate through the alternating fortunes of Darwin's theories, ideas and works in the 20th and 21st century. In this way, a novel perspective is given from which to look at the popularisation of science. Finally, Stefania Maci's research aims at disclosing in what manner and to what extent scientific knowledge is popularised by members of the medical academic community for an academic audience. With this objective, Maci analyses two Nobel Prize lectures held in 2009, by Elizabeth H. Blackburn and by Carol W. Greider, and compares them with the articles the two Nobel winners wrote, in which their discovery was scientifically described.

The editors wish to thank all the contributors of the present volume. Heartfelt thanks goes to Ms Hilary Caminer (The Open University), for her precious suggestions and supportive advice.

CHAPTER ONE

POPULAR BOTANICAL TERMINOLOGY IN IRELAND DURING THE LATE MODERN ENGLISH PERIOD: A DIACHRONIC OVERVIEW

DANIELA CESIRI

1. Introduction

The present investigation deals with popular botanical terminology in Ireland during the Late Modern English (LModE, 1720 c.-1910 c.) period. The main project¹ behind this research which has been conducted in three phases started in 2011 with the aim of studying a specific genre, i.e. botany texts written by specialists but addressed to amateurs.

The particular focus on Ireland derives from the fact that so far no linguistic study has taken into account a diachronic overview of the evolution of popular botanical terminology in texts published in Ireland. Findings from the project could constitute further contribution to the already available literature on the terminology used for the local flora in the “British Isles” (e.g., Elliston and Hatfield 2004) and in overseas countries (e.g., Masiola and Tomei 2009).

In addition, the LModE period is of particular interest because it saw the establishment of botany as a scientific discipline and also because botany became a popular activity for the middle classes who collected samples and classified them using popular terminology in English (cf. Constantine 1981).

¹This is part of a main project entitled “The Popularization of Scientific Discourse in a Diachronic Perspective”, co-financed by the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research (prot. n. 2008C7BR9H_002).

The present chapter is the third and last phase of the project and seeks to present popular botanical terminology in English as it was used at the end of the nineteenth century in Ireland as well as to compare findings from the two previous phases, published in Cesiri (2012a) and Cesiri (2013b), in order to present a diachronic overview regarding the whole period under consideration.

2. Previous Findings

Each of the three phases of the project considers a sub-period of the general LModE period in order to investigate better the evolution of the popular botanical terminology. The first phase considered the second half of the eighteenth century (henceforth “Early LModE”), the second phase considered the first half and the middle of the nineteenth century (henceforth “Mid-LModE”), while the present third, and final, phase considers texts published at the end of the nineteenth century (“Late LModE”).

The collection of texts pertaining to the sub-periods being taken into consideration was quite problematic since, unlike publications regarding England or other English-speaking areas, it was quite difficult to find the type of works required for the projects’ purposes. Indeed, as already explained in Cesiri (2012a) and Cesiri (2013b), the books needed for the study had to be volumes on botany written by specialists but for a public of amateurs whose interest focused on the semi-professional technical nature of the discipline, without any hint to the popular folklore and legends attached to the plants themselves. In addition, the texts had to deal with species found in Ireland to differentiate their terminology with that inserted in other publications generally presenting species found in the “British Isles”. These publications were not considered to provide genuine information regarding popular botanical terminology in Ireland, also in consideration of the particular linguistic situation of Ireland with English, Latin and Irish Gaelic all available to name the several species (cf. Cesiri 2012a).

The specific nature of the texts required for the study and the difficulty in tracing publications inaccessible to the public, either because they were not preserved and lost through the passing of time or because held in private collections, account for the limited number of texts traceable. Indeed, the first phase could investigate only one text for the Early LModE period (K’Eogh 1735) and three texts for the Mid-LModE period, namely Mackay (1836), Power (1845) and Dickie (1864).

For a more detailed account of the selection process for the texts, the reader can refer to the two earlier publications (Cesiri 2012a and 2013b) as this section is principally meant to summarise the findings from the first two phases which will be particularly linked to the present phase later on in the chapter. In particular, Cesiri (2012a) found that the Early LModE text employed a pre-Linnaean system of classification based on the work of other botanists or natural theologians. K'Eogh presents his readers with a tripartite terminology, in which Latin, English and Irish Gaelic are used to indicate the name of each species and genus. In addition, the terminology of the 1735 text in English shows an extensive use of what Gotti (2003: 73) defines as “nominal adjectivation”, consisting of nouns in adjectival function that specify other nouns, a use which is also very frequent in present-day scientific texts (see Hughes 1988, cit. in Gotti 2003: 74).

In the second phase of the project, Cesiri (2013b) discovered that the three Mid-LModE texts, employing a Linnaean system of classification, show the same recurrent use of nominal adjectivation, thus confirming that this phenomenon of word-formation might have become a pattern typical of that specific domain. In particular, in K'Eogh (1735) the majority of entries are constituted of one-word terms (e.g., “agrimony”, Lat. *Agrimonia*), including two terms linked by the hyphen but reported as one single word (e.g., “dog-berry tree”, Lat. *Ribes Cynosbati*), but the text also shows a frequent use of two-words terms (e.g., “manur'd flax”, Lat. *Linum Sativum*); whereas the three Mid-LModE terms show the tendency to use predominantly single terms (e.g., “Cowslip”, Lat. *Primula Veris Major*), which is probably to be interpreted as an increased preference for conciseness.

In addition, the texts of this period show a process of standardisation or even of dialect levelling in their use of English and Latin only, whereas Irish Gaelic is completely absent. A final difference between the Early LModE text and the Mid-LModE texts is their textual structure as the former also lists the remedies for which a plant or herb can be used, whereas the latter present only the plant, its physical aspect and geographical distribution. A greater uniformity is to be found in the three texts of the Mid-LModE period, thus probably showing a standardisation also in the structure of the texts as specific genre since their nature seems to develop from a popular herbal into more scientifically-oriented and professionally-organised texts (see Cesiri 2013b).

The investigation of the texts to be found for the Late LModE period, then, will seek to complete the picture presented so far in the first two phases. As already mentioned in the Introduction, the present chapter will

first describe the texts found for the end of the nineteenth century and, then, will seek to complete the diachronic overview of the evolution in popular botanical terminology in Ireland.

3. Amateur Botany and Botanists at the End of the 19th Century

The phenomenon of amateur botany became increasingly popular during the nineteenth century in England as in Ireland (cf. Constantine 1981). If the previous century saw an interest in the medical and culinary properties of herbs, the following one experienced a changed interest towards a more scientifically-oriented approach to plants collected for their beauty but also as scientific samples of local fauna. These collectors were generally men, but women were also involved; they belonged to the middle and upper middle classes and, having no field training or academic knowledge, they relied on the works of experts to guide them in their collection (cf. Constantine 1981). As the Mid-LModE and the Late LModE texts openly admit, the experts were sometimes helped by the same amateur botanists who collected unknown species and had them classified by the experts who gave them a Latin name and inserted the new sample in their books, giving open and full credit to the amateurs for the discovery and the popular name in English. This virtuous circle contributed to the dissemination of specialized knowledge through popularising works as it actively involved both specialists and amateurs in the creation and dissemination of a technical terminology for the general public (cf. Synnot 1997).

As far as the Late LModE period is particularly concerned, Praeger (1934: i) defines Ireland as “a pleasant country for the botanist” because it contained fewer varieties than England but of greater beauty and greater specificity in the species. In addition, the discovery of new, native species by the Royal Dublin Society increased the popular and professional interest in Irish botany (cf. Webb 1986). This followed a new cultural fashion of the time since non-experts with an average education participated in public debates about Darwinism, a signal that the natural sciences were opening to the public (cf. Mordavsky Caleb 2007). This ultimately extended to other disciplines, such as archaeology (see Cesiri 2012b) and botany itself. As a consequence, the period saw the publication of a greater number of books addressed to amateurs, who were actively involved in fieldwork and, thus, contributed greatly to the discovery of new species and to the creation of popular terms which were, later, given their Latinate equivalent by professional botanists (cf. Synnot 1997).

4. The Present Study: The Texts under Investigation

The texts analysed in the present chapter share, with the other texts analysed in the rest of the project, the nature of texts written by specialists to amateurs. The texts are Stewart and Corry (1888; 193, 776 words) and Chichester Hart (1898; 92, 288 words), both reportedly (see, for instance, Webb 1986 and Synnott 1997) considered significant contributions to Irish amateur botany of the Late LMod period.

Analysis of their textual organisation indicates that they show a common structure, starting with a Preface which contains thanking words and acknowledgements of the work of other experts and amateurs who helped in the collection of some samples or in the discovery of new species. An Introduction follows, occupying one third of the whole volume and containing a thorough description of the history, geology, topography and climate of Ireland (or a specific part of its territory). The following section is called, in both texts, “Sources and Contributors” with a list of names of the helpers mentioned in the Preface. The “List of Genera and Species” is finally introduced without providing any indication about the system of classification used (unlike the Mid-LModE texts), probably because all the authors follow the well-established Linnaean system, by this time considered the system of classification generally acknowledged as standard by the scientific community of botanists (cf. Stuessy 2009).

Some further remarks should be made on the actual textual structure of the texts, concerning particularly the Introduction, in which the addition of climate, geology, topography and so forth (absent in the Mid-LModE texts) provides a more professional organisation and outlook to the Late LModE volumes. At the same time it is clear that it is meant for amateurs as the language is simplified and serves to provide the amateur reader with the tools for recognising particular soils and environments in which similar species usually grow to differentiate one species from similar ones, through an exclusion process. Hence, if a sample is found growing in an unusual soil or in a climate other than the norm, the amateurs are able to recognise it as a new discovery or – more frequently – as a plant belonging to a particular species or genus but typical of that area or climate.

Finally, the volumes show a very limited use of drawings or schemes representing the main genera of the plants and their parts. They are inserted only in the initial sections of the volumes, unlike the Early LMod and Mid-LMod texts, which contain an extensive use of drawings in all their sections. This might be due to two different reasons: one might be called “editorial” as an extensive use of pictures might have increased the production costs and the final cost of the volumes, making them affordable

only for an elite of readers losing their nature of “popular” publications for the middle classes; the second reason might be called “didactic” as the authors might want to provide their readers only with schematic visual representations of the genera, leaving to them the task of recognising the species from their own field experience as well as preferring to describe in words the aspect and composition of the plants. However, no explanation for this absence of figures is provided by the authors or in the relevant literature, hence the absence of pictures could be the norm of the time for the genre and the interpretation here provided can be considered only tentative.

4. 1. Textual Structure of the Late LModE Texts

Figures 1.1. and 1.2. show sample pages from the two Late LModE texts under investigation. As the structure in which the entries are organised and presented is fundamental to this kind of text (meant to be manuals for easy consultation), a comparison between the Late LModE texts and the texts from the two previous phases will be provided in order to detect any evolution or modification in the textual organisation of the entries themselves.

First of all, we can notice that the division of the content into paragraphs is organised thematically according to the places in which the species can be found and to the type of soil in which it grows. The authors, especially Stewart and Corry (1888), also insert some reference to the place where the species was first recorded, whereas Chichester Hart (1898) adds some more precise dating; in addition, the latter seems to rely more on previous volumes as well as on previous other collectors than Stewart and Corry’s volume that quotes mainly the two authors’ “discoveries”.

If we compare the Late LModE texts to the Early LModE and to the Mid-LModE texts (shown in Figures 1.3. and 1.4.), the main differences we can notice between the three different sub-periods lie not only at the level of text structure but also at the level of content distribution and authors’ aims. Mackay (1836), representative of the three Mid-LModE texts, presents itself as one single block, whereas the Early LModE and the Late LModE texts present a division functional to the purposes of the authors, practical in both cases but meant for easier consultation of the herbs’ usage in medicine or cooking (in K’Eogh 1735) and for easier recognition of their different characteristics (in Stewart and Corry 1888 and in Chichester Hart 1898).

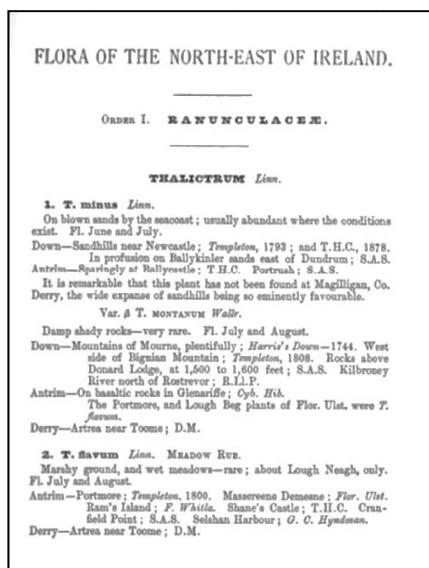


Figure 1.1. Page sample from Stewart and Corry (1888).

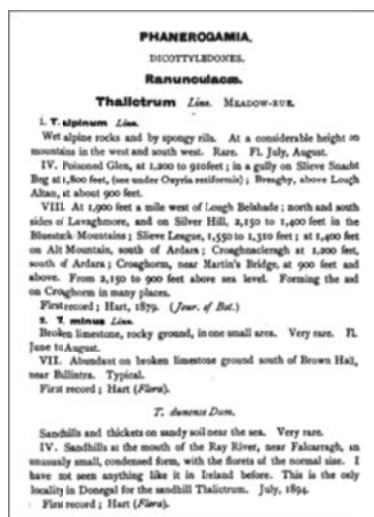


Figure 1.2. Page sample from Chichester Hart (1898).

In the Late LModE texts (as in the Mid-LModE texts) the classification of terms has a purely “scientific” purpose whereas in the Early LModE text the author shows also a linguistic-etymological interest especially in the Irish Gaelic language, completely absent in the later texts, which show a progressive standardisation of terminology.

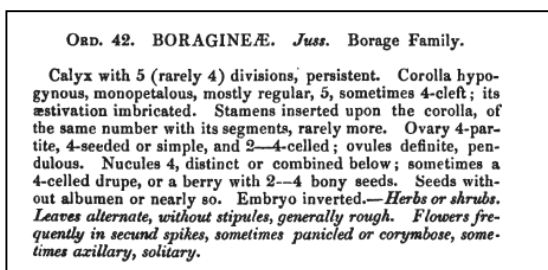


Figure 1.3. Sample entry from Mackay (1836).

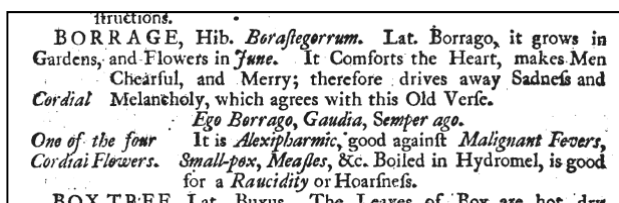


Figure 1.4. Sample entry from K'Eogh (1735).

Considering the discourse organisation of the entries, we can notice a narrative with full sentences in K'Eogh (1735) and an almost telegraphic writing style in Mackay (1836), whereas the Late LModE texts contain both these features as they describe the content in full sentences but also include passages in a telegraphic writing style especially when they describe the appearance of the plant.

The texts in all the three sub-periods make use of a specific terminology, but not a fully technical one, along with recurrence to lexis from general language, typical of publications presenting specific contents to a public of amateurs. A further distinction can be found comparing K'Eogh (1735) with the texts of the later sub-periods. The Early LModE text shows, indeed, a description of plants aimed at their employment in domestic usage (medical remedies or cooking recipes), while the later texts all show a clear popularising purpose of scientific content.

5. Research Rationale and Results

As already mentioned, this chapter aims at analysing the popular botanical terms in English as used in the Late LModE texts, looking for patterns of word-formation and comparing these results to the ones obtained in the previous phases, thus completing the diachronic overview of Irish texts published during the LModE period.

The two volumes under investigation were searched manually for a precise categorisation in the composition of the entries. This count provides an overall picture of the most recurrent word-formation patterns and is completed by a qualitative analysis of the categories thus found.

5. 1. Quantitative Analysis

Table 1.1 and Table 1.2 below illustrate the patterns in word-formation found in the two Late LModE texts in raw figures and in figures normalised to 10, 000 words, respectively. Normalised figures are provided to give a more accurate and representative frequency of occurrence in comparing the two texts, their different word count considered. The terms were divided into two separate groups. The first, labelled “Genus/Main Species”, contains terms used to refer to the main genus or species of a plant, whereas the “Sub-Species” group contains terms for the sub-species of the same plant reported for some samples but not for all.

The different terms were classified according to their word-formation pattern, hence “1 word” refers to single-word terms (e.g., “Sundew”, Lat. *Drosera*), whereas “1 word (-)” indicates two terms linked by the hyphen but considered as one single term by the authors themselves (e.g., “Skull-cap”, Lat. *Scutellaria*). The label “2 words (’s)” includes two terms linked by the “-s-genitive” (cf. Biber *et. al.* 1999: 300ff; e.g., “Shepherd’s Needle”, Lat. *Scandix*).

The other categories include: “2 words (1+2-)”, i.e. two terms of which one is composed by a hyphenated compound of two words (e.g., “Mouse-ear Chickweed”, Lat. *Oerastium*), “2 diff. words” or two separate terms (e.g., “Globe Flower”, Lat. *Troilus*); “3 words” is the category including three terms forming the name of a plant (e.g., “Dwarf Elder Danewort”, Lat. *Sambucus Ebulus*). Finally, “Phrase” includes terms composed of two or three words, composing a phrasal-like term (e.g., “Robin-run-the-hedge”, Lat. *Gallum Aparine*, or e.g., “Grass of Parnassus”, Lat. *Parnassia*).

In addition, some figures in Table 1.2 were highlighted to stress the most relevant patterns occurring in the two Late LModE terms; namely, figures in bold type indicate a significant frequency, figures in underlined

bold type indicate patterns with a lower frequency and, finally, in italicised bold type are indicated the figures with a potentially “borderline” relevance as they present a non-significant frequency in one text with respect to the other one.

Text	Genus/Main Species							Sub-Species				
	<i>1 word</i>	<i>1 word (-)</i>	<i>2 words ('s)</i>	<i>2 words (1+2 -)</i>	<i>2 diff. words</i>	<i>3 words</i>	<i>Phrase</i>	<i>1 word</i>	<i>1 word (-)</i>	<i>2 words ('s)</i>	<i>2 diff. words</i>	<i>Phrase</i>
Stewart & Corry (1888)	342	5	20	--	64	1	5	--	--	4	101	--
Chichester Hart (1898)	166	28	15	3	65	2	3	41	13	11	79	4

Table 1.1. Raw figures

Text	Genus/Main Species							Sub-Species				
	<i>1 word</i>	<i>1 word (-)</i>	<i>2 words ('s)</i>	<i>2 words (1+2 -)</i>	<i>2 diff. words</i>	<i>3 words</i>	<i>Phrase</i>	<i>1 word</i>	<i>1 word (-)</i>	<i>2 words ('s)</i>	<i>2 diff. words</i>	<i>Phrase</i>
<i>Norm. per 10,000</i>												
Stewart & Corry (1888)	17.65	0.26	1.03	--	3.30	0.05	0.26	--	--	0.21	5.21	--
Chichester Hart (1898)	17.99	3.03	1.63	0.33	7.04	0.22	0.33	4.44	1.41	1.19	8.56	0.43

Table 1.2. Figures normalised to 10, 000.

As can be seen from the tables, Stewart and Corry (1888) contains a greater number of terms constituted of single words for the “genus/main species”, followed by terms of two different words for “sub-species”. Chichester Hart (1898), on the other hand, reports a greater variety of terms with a distinct frequency for terms of one word, followed by terms of two different words, hyphenated compounds considered as one single term, and a minor presence of “s-genitives”. As for “sub-species”, in the 1898 text we have a more frequent occurrence of terms composed of two different words and one-word terms, followed by a minor occurrence of hyphenated compounds considered single terms and “s-genitives”.

The distribution of terms in the two Late LModE texts can be represented visually inTable 1.3. and Table1.4. Table 1. 4. in particular, represents the normalised figures and offers the reader greater precision in visualising the distribution of word-formation patterns, with single-word terms clearly outnumbering other patterns in both texts.

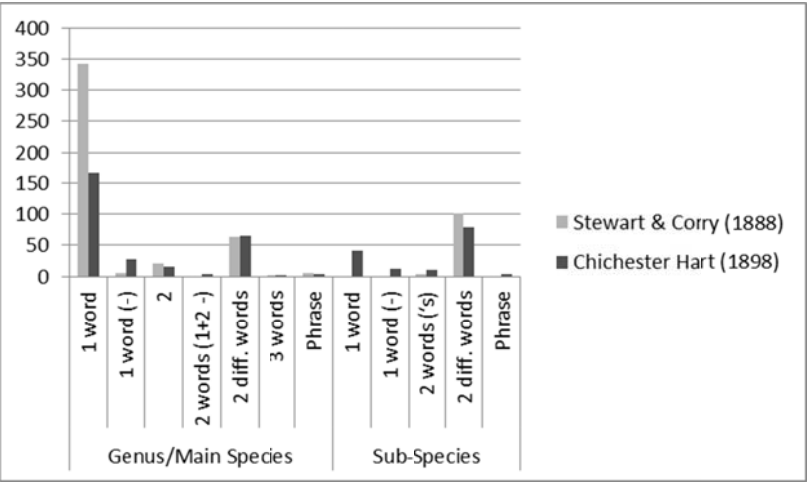


Table 1.3. Distribution of raw figures.

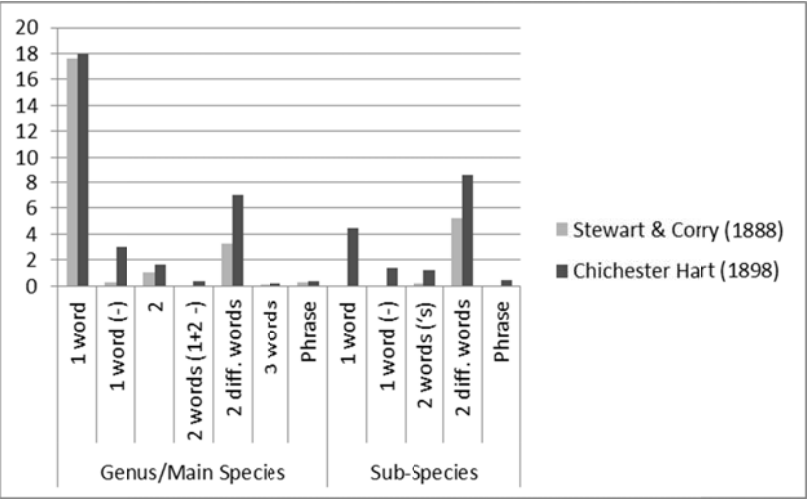


Table 1.4. Distribution of figures normalised to 10, 000.

5.2. Qualitative Analysis

This section provides examples of the different categories in the terminology of the two Late LModE texts. This qualitative analysis will focus on the word-formation patterns only, as the discourse structure and the narrative of the paragraphs explaining the plants' characteristics is not of interest to the present analysis. It might, however, constitute an interesting object of study for a future analysis considering the syntactic and stylistic evolution of this genre within the broader context of specialized discourse.

As already seen in the qualitative part of the analysis, one-word terms are the most frequent category occurring in the two texts. Examples (1) to (3) show the different sub-categories in which the single-word terms can be classified; they also show that this type of term often includes compound words (examples 1 to 3) which contain the union of two nouns (N+N) or an adjective and a noun (Adj+N), describing the aspect, the qualities or the properties of the plant. Animal-based terms are particularly frequent, as in the list in example (4).

- (1) "Simple" terms: Agrimony, Barley, Daisy, Ivy, Holly.
- (2) "Descriptive" terms: Blackthorn, Mayflower, Pondweed, Watercress, Windflower.
- (3) "Creative" terms: Goldilocks, Danesblood, Hairgrass, Selfheal, Eyebright.
- (4) "Animal-based" terms: Cowberry, Crowfoot, Hawksbeard, Hogweed, Horsetail, Toadflax, Wakerobin.

A greater use of hyphenated compounds as single words is made in Chichester Hart (1898) than in Stewart and Corry (1888), but this might be explained by his relying more on previous texts (such as Mackay 1836 and Dickie 1864) than on amateurs, the author's own fieldwork and the general public for popular terms.

Terms in examples (5) to (8) are divided according to word-formation patterns and represent the other categories found in the terminology of the Late LModE texts. Examples (5) to (7), in particular, show that the main noun in a term is usually pre-modified by either an adjective or a noun which serve to provide an almost visual representation of the variety, the characteristics or the general aspect of the plant but they might also refer to the animals or to the popular folklore connected to a particular plant. Terms in example (8) illustrate instances of those which show a more complex, phrasal-like structure than the terms in other categories. These terms also represent some extremely creative and "iconic" representation

in the word-formation processes of popular botanical terminology in the texts.

- (5) “2 diff. words”: Bastard Pimpernel, Fairy Thimble, Globe Flower, Tormenting Root.
- (6) “1 word (-)”: Cow-Wheat, Mat-Grass, Moor-Grass, Skull-Cup.
- (7) “2 words (‘s)”: Cat’s Tail, Viper’s Bugloss, Sheep’s Sorrel, St. John’s Wort, Hare’s Foot Trefoil, Our Lady’s Bedstraw, Shepherd’s Needle, Enchanter’s Nightshade, Farmer’s Plague.
- (8) “2 words (1+2)”: Ivy-leaved Crowfoot.
- (9) “Phrases”: Robin-run-the-hedge, Jack-by-the-hedge, Forget-me-not, Flower of Dunluce, Grass of Parnassus (sub-species of Poor man’s blanket).

6. A Diachronic Comparative Overview (From 1735 to 1898)

The final phase of the present chapter, as well as of the research project in general, provides an overview of the diachronic evolution of the word-formation patterns in popular botanical terms in Irish texts of the LModE period. It will be conducted by comparing results from the three sub-periods taken into consideration, namely the Early, the Mid-and the Late LModE periods, respectively.

The first “evolution” to be found in the corpus of texts investigated involves the level of their textual structure since they show a shift from the popular genre of herbals to the genre of semi-professional monographic volumes, a change brought by the different public for whom the volumes were meant. This new public was usually more educated than the one for which the 1735 text was meant and was trained to collect field samples. The public of amateurs actually demanded the latter kind of volumes for their own personal development in scientific subjects as they presented scientific reliability in a popularised form, which they could follow when collecting their own samples in the fields and woods.

As for the actual nomenclature found in the texts, considering the category of one-word terms, we can affirm that terminology remained substantially unchanged since the 1735 text but it does show a change in its frequency of occurrence, the later texts showing an increasingly greater frequency in the use of single-word terms.

Two-words terms keep their patterns over time, that is to say that the N+N and the Adj+N structures remain the preferred ones as they serve to identify concisely, but effectively, the qualities, properties and features of

the plants or the soil on which they grow, the relation to the fauna or to the local folklore. Their frequency is again the factor which changes over time as their number gradually decreases in the Late LMod texts probably because they “evolve” into single terms, especially in the form of hyphenated compounds.

Finally, a further diachronic change involves the number of alternative terms, or synonyms, provided for a species. In particular, the number of synonyms reported for a species decreases over time, hence probably testifying to a reduction in terms of lexical richness, i.e. a “lexical reduction” in the variety of plants’ popular names. In turn, this reduction might be explained as a tendency towards conciseness as well as monoreferentiality in the terminology that signals a preference for these particular lexical features typical of specialized language (cf. Gotti 2003), though in the popularised form of scientific botanical language.

7. Conclusions

To generalise the implications of the findings from the research, we might underline that changes occurring in the popularising language of botany in the LModE period parallel, and are paralleled by, changes occurring in the nature of the discipline itself during the same period. As explained at the beginning of the present chapter, the opening of botany as a scientific discipline to a public of amateurs in general, and to their contribution in collecting and classifying samples in particular, plays a fundamental role in shaping the popular botanical terminology. This is because the terms in English start to be taken from popular folklore by the amateurs or they are coined anew by the amateurs themselves on the basis of the function, place or features of the samples collected. At the same time, though, the amateurs have access to the scientific, specialized aspects of the discipline, hence they learn how to term new samples in a more professional and less intuitive way. This, however, does not diminish the creative force of some of these terms.

The increasing preference for a single-term terminology and reduction in synonyms implies also a preference for the features of conciseness and monoreferentiality typical of scientific discourse. In this nomenclature, terms not only acquire a more professional and rigorous aspect but they also become easier to remember as well as to associate to a particular plant; at the same time the species become easier to recognise and name during field work by “new generations” of amateur botanists.

The present study has also shown that along with nominal adjectivation, which was already detected as typical of the Early LModE

text, some other lexical features characterising present-day specialized discourse emerge since the “beginnings” of the discipline, even though we deal with popular terminology by and for amateurs.

Moreover, we can mention a “return” to local terms in the Late LModE texts but the authors firmly keep them in an extremely marginal position, too marginal and secondary to be quantified and categorised especially with respect to the rest of the terminology which is in a general, “standard” popular language. Indeed, the authors themselves do not indicate whether the terms are from local Irish English dialects or from dialects of English. The present author herself, after consultation of reference sources such as the OED, Wright (1898-1905) or Dolan (1998), could not ascertain the nature and origin of this very limited group of synonyms. In addition, the absence of terms in Irish Gaelic in texts from both the Mid-LMod and the Late LMod periods is also significant in that it can imply that the Gaelic revival, taking place during the two sub-periods, was propelled by the cultural and literary circles of Ireland²² but it did not involve the community of Irish amateur or professional botanists.

This can be interpreted in the light of another study conducted in Cesiri (2013a) and comparing the community of Irish amateur botanists in Ireland to that of English botanists in England during the LModE period. Findings from the study revealed that more important than local terminology was the adoption of the norms connected to and accepted by the “scientific” community of botanists and amateurs regardless of the country where they “operated”. Hence, the absence of terms in Irish Gaelic in the Mid-LMod and Late ModE texts appears to be in line with this general preference for adhering to the norms of one’s specific, “supra-national” scientific or professional community rather than to the cultural and social norms of one’s country-specific, culturally-bound local community.

² The so-called “Gaelic Revival”, or “Gaelic Revivalism”, is defined by scholars as a cultural and literary phenomenon, whose “political relevance ... is less easy to establish” (Foster 1989: 446). It is, indeed, considered a continuation of “the long tradition of Celtic antiquarianism” (Ibid.) which was adopted by the nationalist movement at the end of the nineteenth century to provide its claims to Irish national identity and sovereignty the necessary connection to the roots of the ancient Gaelic society to which patriots were constantly referring in their fight for independence from the English crown. In addition, the “Romantic” re-mediation of Gaelic myths and Celtic folklore (undergone through literature but also through the rediscovery of the Celtic language) provided modern Ireland with a “consciousness of itself” (Kiberd 2001: 407), of its past, “almost disappeared in the decade of the Great Famine” (Ibid.).

In conclusion, the study conducted and the project completed in the present chapter have shown that in the LModE period, as in the present day, the language of a specific domain is influenced by changes in the community to which it refers, as well as by changes in the related discipline, but it appears to be relatively isolated (with particular emphasis to be put on the adverb) from changes of a different nature occurring in the country where members of this community, either professionals or amateurs, are active. This appears to be valid not only for the specialized language characterising the scientific domain of botany but also for its popularised, and popularising, language.

CHAPTER TWO

PRIVATE AND NON-PRIVATE FEATURES IN GARDEN NOTES AND NOTEBOOKS:

MRS. C. W. EARLE
AND VITA SACKVILLE-WEST

ELEONORA CHIAVETTA

1. Introductory Remarks

There is a great variety of genres in British gardening literature. There are scientific and scholarly texts on horticulture and botany, as well as practical manuals on gardening matters and books on the history of gardening or on historical gardens. Various innovative genres have been introduced influenced by the cultural and social climate of the time and have become successful. Examples are botanical dialogues, didactic books written as a collection of letters, dictionaries, encyclopaedias. Hoyles (1994: 55) divides popular gardening writing into two main areas, and distinguishes discursive books from handbooks whose aim is to inform and instruct. Gardening handbooks and manuals have been written to satisfy the users' needs since the Middle Ages. The earliest known is the manuscript by "Mayster Ion Gardener" probably compiled near the middle of the fourteenth century by a master gardener working at Windsor Castle or at the Royal Palace of Westminster (Harvey 1985: 92). The author was an expert and the objectives of the text, which was probably meant as a memorandum, were practical-there are, for example, instructions on the grafting of trees and on the sowing of seeds (Hadfield 1960: 30).

The first genre of historical interest is probably the herbal-whose aim was to catalogue English plants-which was studied in England as early as the ninth century. The oldest surviving example is the Saxon work, Bald's Leechbook, dating from about A. D. 900-950 (Rhode 1922: 1-5). Although herbals were "not strictly gardening books", as Martin Hoyles observes,

since they mainly focused on the medical properties of plants, “they also had a close connection with gardening as the authors usually had gardens of their own” (1994: 55). Today, they are extremely useful sources for data about what was actually planted in gardens in the various periods (Uglow 2005: 75). Herbals are, in fact, a rather stable genre, as they have been written and published in every century up to the present day, and have given origin to other text types: Susan Kermas (2006), for example, sees a connection between herbals and advertising texts.

One of the commonest discursive genres used by gardening writers is the garden notebook, that is a book in which the authors, who may be either experts or amateurs, mainly write notes about things they have to do or have already done in the garden, but also tell the reader about their own gardens, describing changes and development over time. Since the main focus of such texts is often the life-story of the garden, this text type has been considered “a garden autobiography” (Seaton 1979). At the same time, while describing their garden, the authors also reveal something of their personality, by expressing their opinions on gardening matters, on nature, and often on life in general.

Beyond the descriptive aims of garden notebooks, an important objective of this popular non-fiction is to convey specialist knowledge with informative and educational purposes by offering advice and instruction to a wide amateur readership. What distinguishes this text-type from handbooks, is the fact that gardening and botanical knowledge is popularised by the author in a chatty, informal way, which combines scientific and professional competence and expertise with personal comments and references to the author’s private sphere. These texts seem, then, to reconcile the two areas indicated by Hoyles.

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the main features of this genre, and to evaluate its flexibility in adapting to historical and cultural changes in society. The analysis will be carried out on two case-studies, that is, the gardening notebooks written by two women writers who played an eminent role in British garden literature: *Pot-Pourri from a Surrey Garden* published by Mrs. C. W. Earle in 1897, and *Country Notes* published by Vita Sackville West in 1939. The origin of the genre and its development as well as the influences of other genres on it will also be taken into consideration. Finally, the way private and non-private matters are combined by the authors in what is ostensibly a merely practical collection of gardening notes, will be considered.