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Numerals in the systematic botanical names – a polyconfrontative study of phytonyms (in Dutch, English, Polish and Czech)

Before the publication of Linnaeus' systematics of plant naming in "Species Plantarum", there was practically no universal way of creating unanimous plant names.

The proposed by Linnaeus system of Latin nomination was the inspiration to introduce so called binomial nomenclature, in which the first element of the name is the genus name in the form of a noun, whereas so called specific epithet is (basically) expressed with the form of an adjective. It contributed to the creation of a common base enabling identification of particular species. At the same time the indigenous languages preserved the traditional plant names. As a result there function two parallel systems of nomination: the Latin one (to a certain degree universal) and the indigenous one.

It should be assumed that the plant names (phytonyms) in different languages may be created on the basis of a different element, as an example, in one language it can be formed basing on the characteristic feature of plant morphology (morphonym), whereas in the other one the same plant may be named after a famous person (eponym).

The contemporary rules for plant name formation are specified in the International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants, which is regularly revised (presently so called Shenzhen Code of 2018 is valid).

In my presentation I want to concentrate first of all on introducing the comparison of Latin botanical names containing in the specific epithet a numeral (or a term connected with numbers) with the traditional names in selected languages (Dutch, English, Polish and Czech). The results of the polyconfrontative research will be presented with the consideration for answering the following questions:

- is it possible to observe naming tendencies in the particular languages taking into consideration their compliance with the system of Latin botanical names,
- to what extent the botanical names exploit numerals in the process of creating the specific epithet and which of them have the greatest impact on creating the names of taxa?

keywords: botanical names, polyconfrontative studies, onomastics, numerals

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