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Opole

Categorisation of plants in Czech phraseology

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Abstract

This article presents an analysis of phraseological units with the PLANT component as found in contemporary Czech. The focus is on the set of features attributed to individual specimens of flora which reflect patterns of categorisation with reference to, for example, physical characteristics (shape, colour, taste, scent), useful properties, and behaviour. Categorisation is understood here as one of the possible tools of organizing and interpreting reality. The concept of categorisation refers to the pre-scientific (naive) commonplace perception of the world which involves the foregrounding those features which are relevant from a human perspective and ignoring those which are insignificant.

Categorisation is understood here as one of the possible tools of organizing and interpreting reality. This concept refers to the pre-scientific (naive) commonplace perception of the world which involves foregrounding those features which are relevant from a human perspective and ignoring those which are insignificant (Habrajska 1996: 223). As Lakoff and Johnson note, “(a) categorisation is a natural way of identifying a kind of object or experience” without one universal criterion for selection of the features in question, since “(in) making a statement, we make a choice of categories because we have some reason for focusing on certain properties and downplaying others” (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 163). Categorisation serves human beings primarily as a means of understanding the world (Piekarczyk 2004: 19).

This model, as an intuitive way of organizing reality, is contrasted with a model of scientific categorisation. Maćkiewicz (1999) intro-

duces the concept of *scientific category*, i.e. *logical (classical) category*, and that of *non-scientific*, i.e. *natural category*. According to Maćkiewicz “the way of creating logical categories corresponds to the scientific pursuit of precision and explicitness of concepts,” whereas natural categories reflect “a non-scientific categorisation of the world on the basis of similarity to stereotypical models and counter models, (...) with non-scientific cognition and its anthropocentric perspective” (Maćkiewicz 1999: 51–52; translation by Ewa Gieroń-Czepczor). As Maćkiewicz claims, these two models only seemingly stand in opposition to each other; in fact, they do not compete, but complete each other and overlap.¹

Let us consider this distinction in an analysis of the noun *žito* (‘rye’), which, according to a scientific definition denotes ‘plant of the grass family = Poaceae’ (Czech *čeled’ lipnicovitých*), while folk taxonomies place rye within the category of ‘cereal’/‘corn’ (Czech *obilina*) with reference to the genus of crop plants, that is, to a natural category which is practically oriented as one grouping of plants cultivated to satisfy the basic human need for food. A dictionary of the Czech language, *Slovník spisovného jazyka českého*, offers the following definitions for the entry *žito* (‘rye’): ‘žito seté’ (‘rye’), 2. ‘obilky žita setého’ (‘rye grain’); and another dictionary, *Slovník spisovné češtiny pro školu a veřejnost*, defines the term as: 1. ‘obilina s šedavým klasem a kratšími osinami’ (‘a cereal plant with a greyish ear and short bristles), 2. ‘její zrna’ (‘its grain’).²

¹ It is worth noting that some researchers, including Grażyna Habrajska (1996), postulate that the two approaches should be distinguished from each other terminologically, with the application of the term *categorization* in relation to the common, unscientific way of experiencing reality, while a scientific description of the world which relies on “on the basis of all known features and according to a uniform criterion” should receive the name of *classification* (Habrajska 1996: 223).

² Cf. an entry found in *Słownik języka polskiego* by Witold Doroszewski (1968): “Secale, a plant of the grass family, one of the major cereal plants [...]”; its grain,” and another, from *Nowy słownik języka polskiego* (2002), “an annual cereal crop including many cultivated species [...]”; also: the grain of this plant.”

The perspective adopted here is a non-scientific perception and description of reality which, as mentioned above, is anthropocentric, i.e. based on the assumption that man is the central and fundamental entity in the world. According to Piekarczyk (2004: 14) this principle reflects “a belief which results in a vision and assessment of the world from the human point of view, with all human needs and preferences. [...] The taxonomy as found in language is much simpler than the scientific one. [...] The most significant difference, however, is the divergence of perceptions of humanity’s position in the world: from a scientific view point, man is a member of the animal world, while the linguistic world view does not position man within the animal world, but as the paragon of all life on the planet” (translation by Ewa Gieroń-Czepczor).

As a consequence, Man pays attention to those elements of reality which he finds relevant, making them ‘typical’ of a given category. With reference to plants, these most relevant characteristics can be presented in the form of certain general classes. As Tokarski (1993) suggests, they include “environmental characteristics (including flowering time as the most significant for the development of the plant), physical characteristics, and usable properties” (Tokarski 1993: 340–341, cited in: Waniakowa 2015: 166; translation by Ewa Gieroń-Czepczor).

This set of characteristics is not a closed one and variously modified by researchers. For example, Anna Wierzbicka (as cited in Piekarczyk 2004) distinguishes: appearance, growth, size and the relationship with people, while Jerzy Bartmiński (cf. Piekarczyk 2004) lists: appearance, scent, place of growth, flowering time, the relation to man, and Dorota Piekarczyk proposes: physical characteristics, flowering time, the place of growth, behaviour, the relation to man (cf. Piekarczyk 2004: 32–44).³

³ Cf. a description of the plant world by Alicja Nowakowska who distinguishes the following features: shape and appearance of a plant, scent, taste, weight, behaviour and the surroundings, usable properties, and the environment (Nowakowska 2005: 61ff).

In search of a new way of defining words (including plant names) in the Polish language which takes into account established concepts rooted in everyday language, Bartmiński (2006) calls for the application of the principle of the close contiguity of a hyperonym to the defined concept. Such an approach would place the cornflower in the category of ‘flowers’, not ‘weeds’, on the basis of an isolated defining sequence of conceptualisations: *cornflower* → *flower* → *plant* → *thing (something)* (Bartmiński 2006: 56). Below we look at definitions of ‘cornflower’ contained in dictionaries of the Polish and the Czech languages. The Polish language dictionary by Doroszewski defines ‘bławatek’ (‘cornflowers’) as ‘alternatively, chaber, modrak, *Centaurea cyanus*, a cornfield weed of the family of Compositae, annual or biennial, blooming blue’. Similarly, in *The New Dictionary of the Polish Language* (*Nowy słownik języka polskiego*) cornflower is considered a weed and discussed under the entry of CHABER: ‘bot. herb, meadow and steppe plant, whose representative is the common cornflower, a field weed with blue flowers’. An analogous description is proposed by the Czech *Slovník spisovné češtiny pro školu a veřejnost* which classifies the cornfield as a weed: ‘a plant with blue flowers on a thin stalk (field weed)’. The dictionary of literary Czech language, however, which refers to the ‘plant’ hyperonym, does not specify to which category ‘cornflower’ should be included: weeds, herbs or flowers: ‘plant with blue or purple (rarely yellow) flowers encased in an egg-shaped involucre [...]; bot. genus *Centaurea*’.

J. Bartmiński (2006) emphasises the implications that adopting this method of categorization carry for semantic description.⁴ It is essential to pay attention to different sets of attributes, i.e. “when classifying a plant as a ‘flower’, it is important to answer questions about its appearance, smell, blooming period and location; if it is placed in the

⁴ Therefore, the principle of an initial reference to the scientific taxonomy as adopted by Doroszewski is subjected to criticism: “The dilemma concerning such an approach [i.e., the selection of a hyperonym – GB] was solved in *Słownik języka polskiego*, edited by Doroszewski, by applying generally (yet inappropriately) definitions of plants on the basis of a scientific taxonomy model by providing invariably the Latin name of the plant first, followed by the definition proper according to

category of ‘weeds’, those questions should concern its environment, appearance, effect on people, and methods of control” (Bartmiński 2006: 57, translation by Ewa Gierón-Czepczor).

Below we present a preliminary part of the study on the categorization of plants as found in Czech phraseology. With reference to selected examples of plants, we will present the most important features established in language, and attributed to the individual specimens in question. These will include physical characteristics such as colour, taste, smell, as well as behavior and usability. The material for this analysis includes collocations with a PLANT com ponent as found in modern Czech.⁵

I. Physical characteristics

Physical features are those qualities which arise from human sensory experience in contact with plant specimens in nature. They are affected by the senses of sight, taste, and smell. The focus in the following sections is, on the one hand, on which plants or their parts are the carriers of certain properties, and, on the other hand, on which features are considered important in the descriptions of certain categories of vegetation.

Colour

The colours of plants occupy a special place in phraseology. Conventionalised application of colour terms in set phrases does not only

the pattern: ‘a plant of the family...’). Such practice, which compromises common meanings for the sake of elements of scientific knowledge, and omits popular imagery as expressed in everyday language, is rightly opposed by Anna Wierzbicka” (Bartmiński 2006: 54).

⁵ This material includes excerpts from the following dictionaries: (a) *Slovník české frazeologie a idiomatiky* edited by František Čermák: *Přirovnání* (1983), *Výrazy neslovesné* (1988), *Výrazy slovesné*, Vol. I and II (1994), *Výrazy větné* (2009), (b) *Wielki czesko-polski słownik frazeologiczny* edited by Teresa Zofia Orłos (2009), (c) *Česko-polský frazeologický slovník* by E. Mrhačová and M. Balowski (2009).

reflect human observation of nature, but can also be accounted for by symbolic references rooted in culture: conventionalised perceptions (stereotypes), such as the symbolism of the rose, poppy, or lily. As the corpus collected for this study suggests, colour seems an essential feature with reference to parts of plants, especially flowers, or – as they are more precisely defined in scientific taxonomy – ‘seed-bearing organs of a plant’ (Czech *květ rostliny*). As a side note, it is in everyday categorization that the term FLOWERS is used with reference to a category of plants; in scientific taxonomies, however, it is not found. In Czech phraseology a reference to the colour as an attribute of the flower can be found with plants such as *čekanka* (chicory), *fialka* (violin), *chrpa* (cornflower), *len* (linen), *lilie* (lily), *mák* (poppy), *pivoňka* (peony), *pomněnka* (forget-me-not), *růže* (rose), *šafrán* (saffron), and fruits, such as *broskev* (peach), *citrón* (lemon), *jablko* (apple), *jahody* (strawberry), *malina* (raspberry), *trnka* (blackthorn), *třešně* (cherry), *zelinka* (green unripe fruit, esp. pears and plums), and leaves: *brčál* (periwinkle), as well as dry stalks, as with *sláma* (straw), and in one case colour constitutes an encompassing feature of a cluster of plants as is the case with *les* (forest) (cf. Balowska 2015).

Let's consider individual colour terms. Red seems to be the most frequently applied one, as in: *být červený jako (vlčí) mák* (be red as a poppy FČ; ⁶ to be red like a (wolf) poppy EG-Cz), *být červený jako malina/pivoňka/růže* (blush like a rose FČ; to be red like a raspberry/peony/rose EG-Cz), *mít rty jako jahody/maliny/třešně* (have lips like cherries FČ; to have lips like strawberries/raspberries/cherries EG-Cz), *být červený/mít tváře jako (mísenské/panenské) jablíčko* (be rosy-cheeked, have cheeks like roses FČ; to be red/have a face like a (Misenske/Virgin) apple EG-Cz).

The next colour term (in terms of popularity) as attested in Czech phraseology appears to be:

⁶ Translation equivalents of citations in Czech come from dictionaries by F. Čermák (indicated as FČ), literal translations of Czech phraseologisms have been provided by Ewa Gieroń-Czepczor (EG-Cz).

- (a) blue: *mít oči (modré) jak čekanka/čekanky* (have forget-me-not eyes FČ; to have eyes as (blue) as chicory/radicchio EG-Cz), *(mít) oči (modré) jako len* (be flaxen-haired FČ; to have eyes as blue as linen (flowers) EG-Cz), *mít oči jako pomněnky* (have forget-me-not eyes FČ; to have eyes like forget-me-nots EG-Cz), *(mít) oči (modré) jako chrpy* (have eyes like forget-me-nots, have eyes like limpid pools FČ; to (have) eyes (blue) as a cornflower EG-Cz), *nebe (je) modré jako chrpa* (the sky is cornflower blue FČ; the sky (is) as blue as a cornflower EG-Cz);
- (b) followed by yellow: *být (žlutý) jako citrón* (be yellow as a canary/ /banana/Chinaman/cowslip FČ; to be (yellow) like a lemon EG-Cz), *(být) žlutý jako šafrán* (be saffron yellow FČ; (to be) yellow like saffron EG-Cz);
- (c) and its shades, e.g. its pale shade, as in: *(mít) vlasy jako len* (be flaxen-haired FČ; (to have) hair like linen EG-Cz), *mít vlasy jako sláma/slámu* (have hair the colour of straw FČ; to have hair like straw EG-Cz);
- (d) as well as the yellowish-red, e.g.: *mít vlasy jako pochcaná sláma/ /pochcanou slámu* (have hair the colour of ... straw FČ; hair like urine-soaked straw EG-Cz);
- (e) and the orange-yellowish (peach) shade as in: *být svěží jako (orosená) broskev* (be as fresh as a flower, be rosy-cheeked FČ; be as fresh (dewy) as a peach EG-Cz).

Other colour terms seem to be less frequently referred to and can be found in a modest number of conventionalised phrases:

- (a) green: *být (zelený) jako brčál* (be as green as grass FČ; to be (green) like periwinkle EG-Cz), *být (bledý) jako zelinka/zelenka* (look green about the gills, be pale as a sheet FČ; to be (pale) like a green pear (or plum) EG-Cz);
- (b) black: *mít oči jako trnky* (have eyes like sloes FČ, EG-Cz), *černý les* (dark forest FČ; black forest EG-Cz);
- (c) white: *(být) bílý jako lilie* ((be) white like a lily FČ, EG-Cz);
- (d) dark blue: *mít oči jako fialky* (have eyes like violets FČ, EG-Cz).

It should also be noted that colour as a significant feature in the description of these plants serves a wide range of different functions. While in the case of flowers it is one of the aspects of their beauty, with most fruit the reference to colour seems to serve the more practical purpose of indicating ripeness, i.e. the fact that they are edible. It should be emphasised that in collocational patterns attested for flowers such as the rose and the peony it is the red colour that is referred to as characteristic although tea and white roses, as well as white and pink peonies are common. Similarly, while white is the typical colour of the lily, pink lilies are also popular, not to mention those of other colours and shades which are grown today).⁷

T a s t e

The sense of taste plays a critical role in human life. In addition to the ability to distinguish between and memorize different flavours or deliver pleasant sensations, taste may serve a warning function: a bad taste prevents one from eating something that is a danger to health or life. The human tongue can identify four basic tastes: sour, bitter, sweet, and salty.⁸ The material for this analysis does not provide evidence for saltiness as salty plants are not to be found. Sour edible plants include lemon, apple, and sorrel. A bitter taste is the hallmark of most herbs, and this bitterness is crucial as a feature which combines

⁷ It is worth mentioning that linguistic and cultural references of colors in the Czech language, mostly green and yellow, have been discussed in detail by Irena Vaňková (2003a and b).

⁸ The latest research on recognition of flavors by the tongue, its taste buds and taste receptors, identifies the fifth basic taste called *umami*, i.e. ‘savoury’ (a name given by a Japanese researcher, Ikeda, in the early twentieth century, finally approved as one of the basic tastes under this name in 2000). It a ‘meaty’ or ‘brothy’, yet difficult to define, taste which is detected, however, due to the fact that our receptors react to glutamic acid which is naturally found in meat. [Http://www.mowimyjak.pl/styl-zycia/kuchnia/jakie-smaki-rozpoznaje-nasz-jezyk,17_35931.html](http://www.mowimyjak.pl/styl-zycia/kuchnia/jakie-smaki-rozpoznaje-nasz-jezyk,17_35931.html) [accessed 04/04/2014].

with their medicinal properties, as is the case with: *pelyněk* (sagebrush, wormwood), *zeměžluč* (centaury, *Centaurium erythraea*).

There are the following tastes:

- (a) sour taste: *tvářit se/šklebit se jako když kousne/kouše/by kousl/by kousal do citrónu* (look like (he/etc) just bit into a lemon FČ; to wince as when one is biting/into a lemon EG-Cz), *kouká/tváří se jako by kousl/kousal do štovíku* (he’s looking sour as vinegar FČ; to wince as if chewing sorrel EG-Cz), *je to kyselé jako štovík* (be as sour as vinegar FČ; it is sour like sorrel EG-Cz), *tvářit se jako by kousl do kyselého jablka* (look sour, be a sourpuss FČ; to wince as if biting into a sour apple EG-Cz);
- (b) bitter taste: *byt (hořký) jako pelyněk* (be as bitter as gall FČ; to be (bitter) as sagebrush EG-Cz), *(byt) hořký jako zeměžluč* ((be) bitter as centaury FČ, EG-Cz);
- (c) sweet with a touch: *je to jako mandle* (it melts in your mouth (like butter) FČ; it is like almonds EG-Cz), *je to jako malina* (it’s luscious, it looks a treat FČ; it is like a raspberry EG-Cz), *(to je) děvče/dívčina jako malina/jahoda* (she’s a peach (of a girl) FČ; (she is) a girl like a raspberry/strawberry EG-Cz);
- (d) ‘good’ taste: *pivo je jako křen* (a beer and a half FČ; beer is like horseradish EG-Cz).

S m e l l

Smell is an important sense for humans which enables detection and recognition of scents and protection against dangers to health or life. Additionally, smell provides pleasant sensations. Our material attests the value of fragrance in one plant only, i.e. the rose with its pleasant smell: *vonět jako růže* (be as fragrant as a rose (-garden) FČ; to smell like roses EG-Cz).

II. Behaviour

As Nowakowska in *Świat roślin w polskiej frazeologii* (2005) claims, the term *behaviour* which she applies with reference to plants

is a vague notion (2005: 77).⁹ However, we apply it here as one that appropriately captures the essential characteristic of plants, as corroborated in the material for this study, which consists of the reactions of plants to external stimuli. Observations of the influence of the environment on plant life give rise to rich imagery. The following exemplify characteristics attributed to certain species:

- (a) growing behaviour: *vinout se (k někomu) jako liána/psí víno (be entwined like the honeysuckle and the bindweed FČ; to wind (around someone) like a creeper/vines EG-Cz), vinout se jako svlačec (fawn on/suck up to someone FČ; wind like bindweed EG-Cz), zapustit někde kořeny (take root FČ; to put down roots somewhere EG-Cz), být navlečený/nabalený jako cibule (be all muffled up FČ; be wrapped up like an onion EG-Cz), nechat si/nechávat si někoho/něco (někde) na semeno (keep someone on permanently, save sth for next time FČ; to keep someone/something (somewhere) as seeds EG-Cz), zasévat/rozsévat/zasít/rozsít semeno sváru (sow the seed of discord FČ, EG-Cz), slyšet (i) trávu růst (see the cloven hoof in everything, have eyes everywhere FČ; to hear the grass grow EG-Cz);*
- (b) fruition: *dary lesa (the fruits of the forest FČ; forest gifts EG-Cz), vydat ovoce (to yield fruit EG-Cz), nést/přinášet/přinést (dobré) ovoce (bear fruit FČ; to produce good fruit EG-Cz), přinést/ přinášet (trpké/hořké) ovoce (go sour on so. FČ; to 'bring/deliver' (sour/bitter) fruit EG-Cz), sklízet ovoce/plody něčeho (harvest the fruits/reap the benefits of (one's endeavour etc) FČ; reap the fruits /berries of something (i.e. a plant) EG-Cz);*
- (c) the ease of growth: *bují/rozmáhá se/rozlézá se to jako plevel (grow rapant like weeds FČ, EG-Cz); roste to jako houby po dešti (they*

⁹ Cf. also a view on the subject by Piekarczyk, who introduces this term in her publication *Kwiaty we współczesnym językowym obrazie świata*: "behavior is probably not the most felicitous term for the above mentioned properties of plants [reacting – GB]. Yet, since the Polish language does not provide a word that would be appropriate here, I have chosen this term" (2004: 37).

spring up like mushrooms FČ; to/spring up like mushrooms after rain EG-Cz), přibývá jich jako hub po dešti (they spring up like mushrooms FČ; they spread like mushrooms after rain EG-Cz), je toho jako hub po dešti (there are something/someone galore FČ; there are as many as mushrooms after rain EG-Cz), je toho/jich jako kvítí (they are as countless as the stars/sands FČ; there are as many (of them) as flowers EG-Cz);

- (d) the place of vegetation: *být/zůstat (sám) jako hruška v poli (be left all alone (in the world) FČ; to be/stay on your own like a pear tree in a field EG-Cz), být (opuštěný) jako hruška v širém poli (be left all alone FČ; to be forsaken like a pear tree in an open field EG-Cz), to je jako nosit dříví do lesa (it's like carrying coals to Newcastle FČ; it is like carrying timber to a forest EG-Cz), pro stromy nevidět les (cannot see the wood for the trees FČ; (one) can't see the forest for the trees EG-Cz), to je (jako) džungle (it is (like) a jungle FČ, EG-Cz); být/připadat si někde jako růže mezi trním (be like a rose among thorns, be like a rose between two thorns FČ; to be/feel somewhere like a rose among the thorns EG-Cz), být/bejt (už) pod kytičkama (be pushing up daises FČ; to be (already)under the flowers EG-Cz);*
- (e) inconspicuous appearance: *(být) skromná jako fialka/fialinka (she is like a shrinking/modest (little) violet FČ; (to be) modest like a violet EG-Cz), sedět někde jako hřibek v mechu (sit somewhere like a mushroom in moss FČ, EG-Cz), obrůstat (už) mechem (get (already) overgrown with moss FČ, EG-Cz);*
- (f) immobility: *být/stát jako dub (to be/stand like an oak FČ, EG-Cz), spát jako buk/dub/pařez (be sound asleep, be dead to the world FČ; to sleep like a beech/oak/stump EG-Cz), sedět/stát (někde) jako pařez (sit/stand there looking gormless FČ; to sit/stand (somewhere) like a stump EG-Cz), (být) hloupý/tupý/blbý jako pařez (be as thick as two short planks FČ; to be silly/stupid/dumb like a stump EG-Cz), mlčet jako dub/pařez (stay buttoned up FČ; to be silent as an oak/stump EG-Cz);*

- (g) involuntary movement: *spadnout jako (zralá) hruška/slíva* (*drop like a sone* FČ; *to fall down like a (ripe) pear/plum* EG-Cz), *padali jako hniličky/(zralé) hrušky* (*they were dropping like flies, they were going down like ninepins* FČ; *(they) fell like rotten/(ripe) pears* EG-Cz), *spadnout z višně* (*to fall from a cherry tree* FČ, EG-Cz);
- (h) movement in the wind: *třást se/chvět se jako osika/(osikový) list/třtina* (*quake like an aspen leaf* FČ; *to shake/sway like an aspen tree/(aspen)leaf/cane* EG-Cz), *být jako třtina ve větru* (*be like a reed tossed in the wind* FČ; *to be like a reed in the wind* EG-Cz);
- (i) low resistance to environmental factors (flammability, brittleness etc.): *zlomit se/lámat se jako třtina* (*to break like a reed* FČ, EG-Cz), *hořet jako sláma* (*burn like tinder* FČ; *to burn like straw* EG-Cz), *být jako zvadlá/zlomená lilie* (*look all washed out* FČ; *to be like a withered/broken lily* EG-Cz), *být/bejt (taková) skleníková květinka* (*to be (such) a greenhouse flower* FČ, EG-Cz).

III. Practical application(s)

The last group of plant characteristics that have been preserved in Czech phraseology concerns the aspect of usability. Human knowledge of the application of plants, which has accumulated throughout centuries of direct observation of nature, is contained in language. On this basis, we can conclude which characteristics of plants are important from the point of view of agriculture: which species or their parts are suitable for human consumption, and which have aesthetic or therapeutic values.

There are the following practical applications:

- (a) food: *horký brambor* (*hot potato* FČ, EG-Cz), *mluví jako když má v puse horký brambor* (*(he) speaks as if he had a hot potato in his mouth* FČ, EG-Cz), *moct s někým ořechy/vořechy klátit* (*to be able to knock down nuts with someone (tall and thin like a pole)* EG-Cz), *být (pro někoho) tvrdý oříšek/bejt (pro někoho) tvrdej voříšek* (*be a hard/tough nut (for someone)* FČ; *to be a tough nut (to someone)* EG-Cz), *rozlusknot (tvrdý) oříšek/rozlusknot (tvrdý) voříšek*

- (have cracked it/a tough nut* FČ; *to crack a (hard) nut* EG-Cz), *mít tvrdou skořápkou* (*to have a hard shell* FČ, EG-Cz), *snít/slupnout/ /spolknout něco jako (jednu) malinu/rozinku/jahodu* (*gulp/wolf something down, make short work of something* FČ; *to eat/devour/ /swallow something like a raspberry/raisin/strawberry* EG-Cz), *vypadá jako by kousl do kyselého jablka* (*look sour, be a sourpuss* FČ; *looks as if biting into a sour apple* EG-Cz), *tahat za někoho kaštany z ohně* (*pull someone's chestnuts out of the fire* FČ, EG-Cz);
- (b) high nutritional value: *(být) zdravý jako tuřín/řípa/lipa/křen/hřib* (*be as fit as a fiddle, be as sound as a bell* FČ; *(to be) as healthy as a turnip/beet/lime tree/horseradish/mushroom* EG-Cz), *být jako tuřín* (*to be like a turnip* FČ, EG-Cz);
- (c) low practical value or uselessness: *je to jako z kopřiv plot* (*it is like a nettle fence* FČ, EG-Cz), *být jako hrachovina* (*to be like pea straw* EG-Cz), *být (tenký) jako lupínek* (*be wafer-thin* FČ; *to be thin like a petal* EG-Cz), *být (jako) padavka* (*be like a fart in windstrom* FČ; *to be like a fallen fruit* EG-Cz), *být (slabý) jako hnilička* (*to be as (weak as) a wild (overripe) pear* EG-Cz), *červivé jablko/jablíčko* (*bad egg* FČ; *wormy apple* EG-Cz), *mít něčeho jako plev* (*to have too much (like chaff) of something like* FČ, EG-Cz), *to je jako mlátit prázdnou slámu* (*it's like flogging a dead horse* FČ; *it's like threshing grainless straw* EG-Cz), *být/bejt čertovo kvítko* (*to be a devil's flower* EG-Cz), *být/bejt kvítko z čertovy zahrádky* (*to be a flower from the devil's garden* EG-Cz), *oddělit koukol od pšenice* (*separate the wheat from the chaff* FČ; *to separate the wheat from the tares* EG-Cz), *být někomu trnem v oku/očích* (*be a thorn in someone's flesh/side* FČ; *to be a thorn in someone's eye(s)* EG-Cz), *vytrhnout někomu trn z paty/nohy* (*take a thorn out of someone's flesh* FČ; *to pull out a thorn out of someone's foot/leg* EG-Cz), *být/sedět (někde) jako na trní* (*sit there like a hen on a hot griddle/ /gridle* FČ; *to be/sit (somewhere) like on thorns* EG-Cz), *mít někoho rád jako vosinu za krkem/v prdeli* (*like someone about as much as a kick in the balls* FČ; *to love someone like bristle under the collar/in the ass* EG-Cz);

(d) adornment: *(to je) děvče jako karafiát* ((she is) a girl like a carnation FČ, EG-Cz), *(to je) děvče jako (z růže) květ* (she's as pretty as a rose in bloom FČ; *(she is) a girl like a flower (of a rose)* EG-Cz), *být (hezká/krásná) jako růže/růžička* (be as pretty as a rose(-bud) FČ; *to be (as pretty/beautiful) as a rose* EG-Cz), *být/bejt jeden květ/být/bejt v květu* (to be a flower/to be in bloom FČ, EG-Cz);

(e) medicinal properties: *vzácná bylina* (something to be prized/cherished FČ; *a rare herb* EG-Cz).

In conclusion it should be noted that modern lexicographical description seeks to create so-called open semantic definitions which take into account a broader context of the language including any possible connotations: both conventionalised ones as well as semantic modifications and shifts which are likely to affect meaning in stylistically diverse contexts, including poetry, not infrequently in individual instances of use. Therefore such an approach should influence further stages of research in this field.

To sum up, it is worth reviewing the discussion as proposed by Maćkiewicz (1999) who poses a key question: "Is the shift from pre-scientific categories to the scientific ones a significant transition 'from chaos to order'?" Maćkowiak immediately provides a negative answer: "No, it is rather the next stage of ordering. Yet, due to a divergent objective of this ordering, different methods and criteria are applied. Accordingly, the content of the 'inherited' categories is modified, both quantitatively (some elements are removed, some others added), and qualitatively (the configuration of the items, their hierarchy and relations are modified)" (Maćkiewicz 1996: 253, translation by Ewa Gieroń-Czepczor).

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