

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ROMANIAN COMMON NAMES GIVEN TO LOWER PLANTS

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Abstract

This paper represents an investigation in a particular field of the Romanian popular botanical names, that of the vernacular names given to lower plants (algae, bryophytes -mosses and liverworts-, lichens and fungi). The aim is to explain and exemplify the main characteristics of this popular nomenclature: the empirical dimension (defined by the popular denominative patterns and by the empirical categorization of the natural world), the denominative variability (according to the region in which is being used, different names are used for the same lower plant), the denominative imprecision (meaning several common names for a particular plant and one name for several plants) and the cultural individuality (the common names reflect the cultural environment of the community that created them). This nomenclature, based on pre-scientific principles (mainly on observation), is the sign of a primitive science and constitutes an assembly of distinctions and classifications which are made in the natural world. Therefore, it is obvious that the common plant names of lower plants are a mark of the originality, creativity and particular culture of a linguistic community.

Key words: folk plant names, nomenclature, lower plants