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Een onderzoek naar de regels van volksnaamgeving, getoetst aan enkele vogelnamen in Zuidnederlandse dialecten

Summary

In this article we want to reveal how an important part of the natural world is categorized in the language-system of a dialect speaking community. Through describing the systems of rules that underlie the naming of animals and plants by speakers of Southern Dutch dialects, we will form propositions about natural language categorization.

The rules of naming of flora and fauna in a non-scientific context, the so-called ethnobiological nomenclature, have often been looked at in all kinds of primitive societies from New Guinea to the Amazon (for example Berlin 1992), but they were quite seldom a topic of interest in studies of Western European dialects, where we can find the last remains of another pre-technological society. By describing the folk names of coherent groups of animals and plants, we will encounter prototypicality and metaphor, and we will investigate the categorization of plants and animals and the conceptualization of notions. We will sum up first all folk names of, for instance, all thrushes that live in the relevant area. Then we will decide, depending on those folk names, which thrush is prototypical, in the sense of Geeraerts 1982, 1986 and 1989 and which are on the outside of the notion 'thrush'. By repeating this various times in different domains of fauna or flora, we will reveal recurrent patterns.

Research data consist mainly of the data that are gathered in behalf of three projects of lexicography: the dictionaries of the dialects of Brabant, Limburg and Flanders, that cover all of the Southern Dutch language-area, in the countries Belgium, the Netherlands and a small part of France. These projects are worked on at the universities of Nijmegen, Ghent and Louvain. In those three projects we are momentarily editing parts about animal and plant names in the various dialects; data are mainly gathered by written inquiries, supplemented with already published monotopic dictionaries.

Folk names of animals and plants can be either complex or simplex, i.e. they can be a compound or not. In our research data the song thrush for example is called *lijster* quite often, whereas the mistle thrush is called *lijster* only a few times; its folk names are compounds with *lijster*, for example *balklijster* or *kweklijster*. For the notion 'song thrush' people can use the simplex word, which can mean 'song thrush' or 'thrush in general', for the notion 'mistle thrush' this simplex word would not be explicit enough.