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Metalinguistic Labelling in John Florio's *A Worlde of Wordes* (1598)

Angela Andreani

This essay aims to contribute a historical linguistics and lexicographical perspective on John Florio as an observer of language and linguistic phenomena by focussing on the usage labels he employed in the first edition of his Italian-English dictionary *A Worlde of Wordes* (1598, WW henceforth). Although usage labels are a common feature in modern dictionaries, to indicate restrictions in the use of a word, or limitations to particular contexts or registers, they were not widespread in early modern lexicography. An analysis of Florio's practice aims therefore to shed light on aspects of the history of metalinguistic labelling as a lexicographical practice, and on the development of the metalanguage used to discuss languages and linguistic phenomena in the early modern period. The underlying argument is that the analysis of labelling practices can advance our understanding of ideas about language,¹ and as an author known for his linguistic skill, John Florio is a particularly interesting test case. This research, part of a project on the history of the metalanguage of English linguistics in the period 1500-1700,² focusses therefore on the labels that describe word usages and meanings in WW by providing a taxonomic analysis of the phrases and conventions used by Florio. The aim is to explore the lexicographer's conceptualisation of register variation and of the semantic and pragmatic dimensions of lexis.

¹ Cfr. CORMIER 2008; McLELLAND 2024; ZIMONT 2020.

² The research leading to these results has received funding from MUR, PRIN2022 project "MetaLing Corpus: Creating a corpus of English linguistics metalanguage from the 16th to the 18th century", ref.: 202233C93X, funded by the European Union under the programme NextGenerationEU. The project (Oct 2023–Feb 2025) is being carried out by two units: one from the University of Milan (Principal Investigator Angela Andreani, Research fellow: Vahid Asadi) and one from the University of Insubria (Head of unit Daniel Russo).

Sections 1 and 2 briefly present the metalinguistic functions of usage labels in a historical perspective, introduce Florio's dictionary and situate it in the context of the MetaLing Corpus Project. Section 3 discusses the methodological approach adopted in this study. Sections 4-6 turn to Florio's labelling practices to analyse the linguistic dimensions that he was especially concerned to label, and, focussing on the linguistic forms of labels, how he conveyed his knowledge of English and Italian to the readers of WW.

1. Dictionary labels and Florio's dictionary

Usage labels are commonly found in modern dictionaries to indicate dialectal words, particular connotations, or limitations on the use of a word, such as usages restricted to particular contexts or registers. Labels may appear in the form of abbreviations such as "vulg.", "inf." and "fam."; complete words, such as "dialectal", "slang", and "obsolete"; or longer phrases, such as "chiefly American" (or British, or other varieties of English). Crucially, a usage label will provide essential information on how to use a word, "guiding an individual language user in making an appropriate choice between alternatives" when available, or indicating that its usage is restricted to specific domains (JANSSEN et al. 2003, 300). A usage label will therefore function as a metalinguistic device.

When Florio published his WW, lexicographical labelling was neither widespread nor standardised. Embryonic practices have been observed amongst seventeenth-century French-English and Dutch-French lexicographers (CORMIER 2008; ZIMONT 2020), but Florio's dictionary belongs to an earlier period and a different lexicographical tradition. It was the largest dictionary of English and another vernacular published in England in the sixteenth century, and its models were dictionaries of Latin and Greek (CONSIDINE 2022, 302). Although the immediate predecessor of WW, and the first Italian-English dictionary, was William Thomas' *Principal Rules of the Italian Grammer*, published in 1550 (STEIN 1985, 380), Florio's definitions were indebted to Thomas Thomas' *Dictionarium* (STARNES 1937, 1007–1009). Florio's sources were 72 works and authors listed in the preface of WW,³ amongst which John Considine identified the ones used for the construction of his draft list of headwords (CONSIDINE 2022, 306).

³ Counted by STEIN 1985, 380.

The definitions we find in Florio's dictionary range from mere translations to lists of possible equivalents in English, and they often provide information as to the form, meaning and use of words in terms of grammatical, semantic or pragmatic analyses. Indeed, Florio had a keen interest in dimensions of variation, as he expressed in the letter to the reader, noting the variety "not onely of matters, but of dialects" (FLORIO 1598, sig. b1). The abundance of regionalisms recorded in *WW* has been remarked upon by various scholars, including D.J. O'Connor and Gabriele Stein (O'CONNOR 1972, 52; STEIN 1985, 398). John Considine defined Florio's "openness to variation" highlighting his "inclusive presentation" of the vocabularies of different topolects (CONSIDINE 2022, 307, 309). Warren Boutcher pointed out the "emphasis on contemporary, spoken usage" and Florio's particular engagement with Lombardo-Venetian culture throughout his works (BOUTCHER 1997, 49–50 and 81). In her study of the dialogues of the *Firste Fruits*, Donatella Montini drew attention to Florio's concern with the diastratic and diaphasic dimensions: "viene scelto con cura il registro da utilizzare nel caso in cui a parlare sia un gentiluomo o un mercante, una donna o un servo [...]" (MONTINI 2011, 84).

As he recorded registers and regionalisms, Florio experimented with the expressive means of English to create a metalanguage that could effectively convey the nuances of semantic and pragmatic variation for his readers. Taking usage labels as significant evidence to study the early modern conceptualisation of lexis and meaning, and thereby explore ideas about language in history, this paper will be especially concerned with Florio's labelling practice in order to understand the principles underlying the selection and presentation of metalinguistic information. As has been seen, Florio's dictionary is situated in a very rich lexicographical tradition. The extent to which his labelling practice was innovative, or not, is therefore undoubtedly an important research question, but given the scope of this paper and the wide-ranging sources that inform Florio's practice, the exploration of its models is reserved to a future study. In the following section, before turning to the analysis of the metalanguage of *WW*, I will situate this work in the context of the MetaLing Corpus Project.

2. *WW* in the MetaLing Corpus Project

The goal of the MetaLing Corpus Project has been to create a corpus of texts including language-related discussions in order to study the de-

velopment of terminology and explore epistemic transfer across texts and genres in a period predating the establishment of philology and linguistics as academic disciplines. As a pilot study, we compiled a small corpus containing texts dealing specifically with language variation. Source selection has relied on R.C. Alston's monumental *A Bibliography of the English Language from the Invention of Printing to the Year 1800*, since it provides unrivalled coverage of authors and sources. The phenomena of "language variation" and "sociolinguistic variation" are covered in volume 9, entitled *English dialects, Scottish Dialects: Cant and Vulgar English*. However, as may be imagined, a multifaceted concept such as language variation is not only discussed in sources ostensibly devoted to it, nor is it always discussed explicitly. This is one of the challenges posed by the study of the metalanguage of linguistics in a historical perspective (ANDREANI and RUSSO 2023).

Florio's *WW* is a case in point. In spite of its renowned concern with diatopic variation, it is not an obvious source for the study of variation in English, since at the centre of this work are Italian and its varieties.⁴ However, the metalanguage used by Florio is English, and his definitions provide a wealth of information as to how languages could have been discussed amongst educated circles in England and Italy through the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as there is evidence of the dictionary's enduring fortune and international readership (CONSIDINE 2022, 311–312).

For these reasons, Florio's dictionary must be considered a significant source to explore the development of a metalanguage to describe languages, and especially varieties and variation. Focussing on the metalinguistic devices adopted by Florio, I will address the following questions: what was Florio especially concerned to label? To what extent was his practice systematic? And how did he communicate this knowledge to his readers?

3. Methodology

The analysis starts from the idea of understanding Florio's metalinguistic labelling in broad terms—in other words, not limited to the labelling of phenomena related to language variation—and then to ex-

⁴ Florio's dictionary is catalogued in volume XII, part 2, of Alston's *Bibliography*, dedicated to Romance languages.

amine to what extent his practice displays awareness of and records variation.

The method has been philological, based on close reading, in order to obtain as varied and exhaustive an inventory of metalinguistic labels as possible, aiming to include also those that may be, to borrow Thomas Kohnen's phrase, "unpredictable manifestations" of metalanguage (KOHNE 2007, 141).

In discussing the methodological challenges of researching speech acts in the history of English, Thomas Kohnen advocates for microanalysis as a necessary premise for corpus-based investigations, since it is "virtually impossible to create a complete catalogue of all the different manifestations of a speech act in the history of the English language" and "Researchers have to put up with a more or less eclectic analysis of supposedly "typical" forms which they assume to be frequent in a historical corpus" (IBID., 139).

An inventory of all the "typical", hidden or unpredictable manifestations of metalinguistic labels in historical texts is similarly challenging, since we cannot expect that Florio and his contemporaries would make use of the typical labels of modern lexicography, nor display the same terminology and practices (such as the presentation of usage notes in the paratextual apparatus of a dictionary). Therefore, following Kohnen, the study of the text has been based on microanalysis.

In order to identify the different "manifestations" of metalinguistic labelling, such as labels proper, other types of cues and typographical conventions, I have analysed systematically a number of entries around the midpoint of the dictionary (in the alphabetical ranges I and L). Following this phase, I have run keyword searches onto the whole text, which is digitised in the Oxford Text Archive (OTA),⁵ applying what may be termed an "onomasiological-oriented corpus-based collocate method" to an individual text⁶, in order to retrieve unpredictable metalinguistic labels.

The analysis of the data has then focussed on a) the type of labels used by Florio, i.e. whether metalinguistic information is singled out by typographical symbols, abbreviations, or textually; and b) his labelling practice, i.e. what is recorded, such as grammatical categories,

⁵ Direct citations from WW are from the Douce copy preserved at the Weston Library, Bodleian Libraries, Oxford.

⁶ ANDREANI and RUSSO 2023, 166.

word use, word origin, or other type of metalinguistic information, adopting the classification presented in Janssen et al. (JANSSEN et al. 2003). The distinction between the two levels of analysis is informed by the approach adopted by Monique Cormier in her study of the usage labels in Abel Boyer's *The Royal Dictionary* (CORMIER 2008).

The aim has been to record all occurrences of labels that was possible to identify in order to analyse the results quantitatively as well as in qualitative terms. However, quantitative analyses have their limits. In a systematic analysis of the macro- and micro-structure of Florio's WW, Gabriele Stein found that Florio is not consistent in his treatment of entries and definitions (STEIN 1985, 378–409). Additionally, Florio does not label everything, as pointed out by V. Spampinato in a study of unlabelled Neapolitanisms in WW and in *Queen Anna's New World of Words* (SPAMPINATO 1924, 116–124). This implies that quantitative findings will not be conclusive and might not always be informative.

4. Results: Florio's labels and his practice

4.1. Type of labels

As to the type of labels, the results are relatively uncomplicated. Florio uses textual labels, rather than abbreviations, and he does not use typographical symbols. Although they are very few in number, abbreviations are interesting and deserve mention. The only entries in which they occur are the following:

1. Il, an article masc. singuler, the, namely with nounes. Also a pronoun primitive of the dative and accusative cases, him the same, it, with verbs.
2. Le, the fem. article plur. the, a pronoun of the Dat. and Accusative cases, to him, him. Also of the Ablative from him.

The abbreviations are 'fem.', 'plur.', 'Dat.', 'Accusat.', 'Ablat.', 'masc.'. Although some of them are now standard labels in dictionaries, the significance of their adoption by Florio should not be underestimated. In fact, it may be pointed out that the first attestation of the label "fem." dates to 1573, and the first recorded use of the label "masc." is attributed to Florio himself by the lexicographers of the *Oxford English Dictionary*.⁷

⁷ *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. «masc. (adj.), sense 1», March 2024, <<https://doi.org/10.1017/OED/entry/101701>>.

As regards textual labels, or “guide phrases”,⁸ the examples presented below were identified through analysis of the alphabetical ranges selected for close reading (bold mine):

3. Imbarberescare, to teach any creature to do anything, [...], **the worde is taken from** those that teach Barberie horses.
4. Incaluato, become bald, **an allusion taken from** the trees, when they loose their leaues.
5. Ingeniculo, a figure among the stars **now called** Hercules.
6. Lanzi, dutch men, **because in dutch they are called** lanceknights, muffs.
7. Lanzo, **taken in mockerie for** a high dutch man or lanceknight.
8. Lubrico, [...] Also quick-siluer, **according to** the alchimists **phrases**.

The examples show that Florio resorts to nominal, verbal and prepositional phrases, in which the significant elements may be summarised as the mention of a language of origin (“dutch”), of specific nouns or verbs (‘word’, ‘phrase’, ‘mockery’, ‘allusion’ and ‘call’), the adverb “now”, the phrasal verb “taken from” and the preposition “according to”.

These textual labels provided an initial set of “guide phrases”, or collocations, to be used to retrieve more examples of usage in context. For instance, I searched for the preposition “according to”, which occurs 31 times in relevant contexts (93 occurrences overall); for the phrasal verb “taken from”, 12 times (17 total occurrences); for the adverb “now”, 6 times in contexts marking diachronic variation; and the phrase “in mockery” overall 16 times (considering also the variants “of mockery” and “immockery”). A search for the word ‘jest’ returned 6 occurrences in which the term was used as a metalinguistic label, in the forms “in iest” and “iestingly”. A search for the words ‘call’ and ‘word’ returned hits too numerous to be analysed manually (over 1,000 and 365 respectively), and could be studied more efficiently applying corpus linguistics approaches.

Drawing from Florio’s famous remarks on dialects in the Dedication,⁹ I ran a second series of searches for ‘Venetian’, ‘Lombard’, ‘Neapolitan’, which helped identify an additional guide phrase, or “metalinguistic collocation”:

org/10.1093/OED/9709841675> (last accessed 13 August 2024).

⁸ As termed by CORMIER 2008, 155.

⁹ “How shall we, naie how may we ayme at the Venetian, at the Romane, at the Lombard, at the Neapolitane, at so manie, and so much differing Dialects, and Idiomies, as be vsed and spoken in Italie, besides the Florentine?” (FLORIO 1598, sig. a4).

9. Ghiozzi, a kind of meat **so called** in Lombardie.
10. Sargo, a kind of fish **so called in** Rome, in latine Sargus.

A full text search revealed that the adverbial phrase “so called” is used in different functions by Florio to mark variation, especially diatopic and diastratic, etymology and literary use, as shown in the examples below:

11. Brina, a must or a hoarefrost, a nipping frost, a breame, **so called by** Chaucer.
12. Cornetto, a fish **so called in** Genoa.
13. Giuncata, a kinde of fresh cheese and creame, **so called bicause** it is brought to market vpon rushes.
14. Serpicélla, a kind of crossing of bookes or reckonings **so called among** marchants.
15. Trochéo, a foote in a verse consisting of two feete, the first a long syllable and the last a short, **so called of** swiftnes in running, and because it was fit for dancing.

What begins to emerge through the examples considered is Florio’s “openness to variation” (CONSIDINE 2022, 307), which will be analysed in the next section concerned with the underlying structure of Florio’s labelling practice.

4.2. Labelling practice

The examples retrieved were recorded in a database to assist in assessing the type of metalinguistic knowledge labelled by Florio, as well as the wording of his labels. The following list summarises what was labelled in WW:

- Class, gender and number of function words.
- Tense and mood of verbs.
- Word origin (borrowing, derivation, extension, coinages).
- Polysemy and homonymy.
- Specialised terminology.
- Literary terms.
- Diachronic variation.
- Diatopic variation.
- Diastratic variation.
- Diaphasic variation.

In addition to these, spelling variants and cross-referencing may be added, signalled by the preposition “as” and the imperative “looke” in metalinguistic function, as illustrated in the following examples:

1. Incozzare, Looke Accozzare.
2. Linguace, as Linguacciuto.

The occurrences of both, however, are too numerous to complete an exhaustive manual overview of the hits, and may be analysed more efficiently employing corpus methods.

Finally, a category of labels identified by Gabriele Stein (“lexicographical devices” in her terminology), but which escaped my attention, was used by Florio to distinguish at a semantic level between literal and figurative uses. The labels are “properly”, to mark the literal sense of a word, and “metaphorically” or “by a metaphor” (STEIN 1985, 395). Two examples are provided here:

3. Artiglij, the talents, clawes or pounces of birdes or haukes. By a metaphor the bands of loue.
4. Garzo, a thorne, a thistle, but properly the teazell to dresse clothes with.

Chart 1 summarises the distribution of the labels I was able to identify and count:

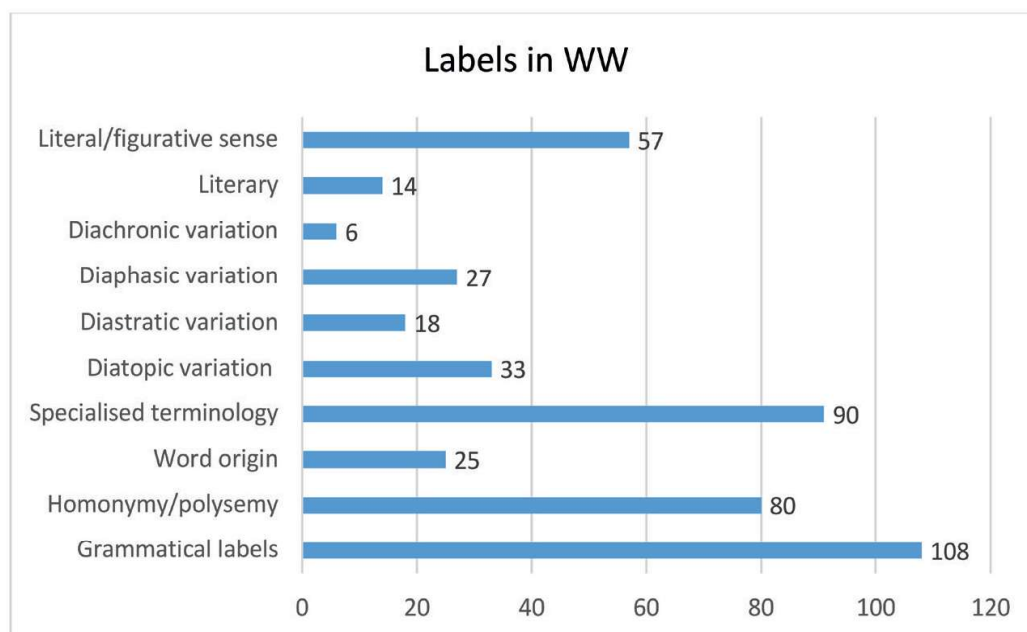


Chart 1. Labels in WW.

As may be seen, labels may refer to the formal aspects of a word or to its meaning (cfr. JANSSEN et al. 2003, 299). Florio's system comprises ten types of labels, including two formal labels (grammatical and ety-

mological, the latter indicated as “word origin” in the chart), and eight meaning labels. Grammatical labels include all the labels that mark type, genre and number of closed-class words, as well as those marking the tense and mood of verbs. Meaning labels record a variety of dimensions that range from the social to the geographical, as well as lexical ambiguity as a result of homonymy and polysemy.

The largest category, as may be seen, is the one of specialised terminology, although, as already stated, quantitative data has its limits. For instance, the count of Florio’s labelling of homonymy and polysemy is only an estimate for reasons that will become clear in the following section. It should also be noted that the figures reflect the usage of labels, and not the actual examples of dialectal or specialised lexis recorded by Florio, since, as has been seen, he did not label everything systematically. As a consequence, quantitative data should not be taken at face value, and we cannot conclude that *WW* records more instances of specialised terminology rather than dialectally marked words. Rather, what the data may tentatively suggest is that Florio had more (or better) sources for specialised vocabularies than for Italian dialects, or that he attributed more importance to certain labels over others.

The examples in the section that follows will illustrate Florio’s practice in context.

5. Florio’s labels and his metalanguage

5.1. Formal labels: grammar and etymology

Grammatical labels are the most frequent, even though the grammatical category is not systematically marked in the entries for adverbs and adverbial phrases, prepositions, nor in those for pronouns, but it is always marked for articles, where gender and number labels are also provided. Compare the examples below:

1. Ce, an aduerbe of place, there, in that place. Also a pronoun primitive of the Dative, Accusative, and Ablative cases, to vs, vs, from vs.
2. In, the preposition, in.
3. Lo, an article masculine of the singular number used before vowels, the: a pronoun when it is joined with a verb, it, the same, that, or him.
4. Per, for, by, through, to, ready to, for to, in with, by reason of, what between.
5. Te, thee, thee-selfe, to thee, to thee selfe. Also from thee.

Additionally, as noted by Gabriele Stein, word-classes are occasionally identified for prepositions and interjections, whereas open-class words are never labelled (STEIN 1985, 387). She observed the special treatment devoted to irregular verbs, remarked by Florio himself in the address to the reader, which explicates the principle regarding the micro-structure of verbs: "I haue in all verbes of the first coniugation onely set downe the Infinitiue moode, except it be of fower irregular verbes, [...] by those fewe onely one may frame all the persons of all the tences of all the verbes in the Italian toong" (FLORIO 1598, sig. b1v), as reflected in the following examples:

6. Vado, [...]. Also the first person singular of the present tence of the Indicatiue mood of the verbe Andare, I go, Looke Andare.
7. Vanno, [...]. Also they go, being the thirde person plurall of the presentence of the Indicatiue moode of the verbe Andare.

Florio records word origin marking instances of derivation, borrowings and onomatopoeic coinages, as illustrated by the examples:

8. Imbarberescare, to teach any creature to do anything, [...], the worde is taken from those that teach Barberie horses.
9. Petone, something about a fullers mill. Vsed also for the herbe Tabacco, but it is taken from the French.
10. Rombolare, to throw or cast in a sling. Also to make a whorring or rumbling noise, taken from the noise that a stone maketh separating the ayre with violence [...]

The metalinguistic label most frequently used to mark word origin is the phrasal verb "taken from"; followed by the phrase "so called because/of". Florio applies the label "taken from" also to mark lexicalisations that would be more accurately categorised as semantic shifts, as in the following example, an instance of figurative extension:

11. Incaluato, become bald, an allusion taken from the trees, when they loose their leaues.

Hence "taken from" may function as a meaning label as well as a formal label.

5.2. Lexical ambiguity: homonymy and polysemy

Example 2 in the preceding section provides another example of guide phrase that is worth examining in depth. In the entry, Florio records two senses for the word "petone". The first, about which Florio himself seems to be uncertain, appears to be related to a component or a mech-

anism in a fuller's mill¹⁰; it may be an instance of unmarked regionalism or specialist lexis. The second sense is introduced by the metalinguistic label "Vsed also for", whose pragmatic function is to signal a case of homonymy. The label occurs with significant frequency in *WW* (63), and even more frequent are occurrences of "also" alone (too many to be analysed manually), which suggests that Florio recorded homonymy systematically. It is not clear whether he distinguished homonymy and polysemy, however; see the following examples:

1. Acanto, neare, by, ioyning vnto. Also the herbe Bearefoote, Brank vrsin or Beares breech.
2. Infula, an ornament which priests in old time did weare on their heads, vsed also for a bishops mitre. Also a labell hanging on each side of a mitre.
3. Robore, an oke, vsed also for strength and hardines of bodie and minde, force, courage, or stoutnes.

In the first example, the words are 'accanto' (near) and 'acànto' (the name of the plant, alternative pronunciation with main stress on the first syllable). Whereas the words are not homographs in contemporary Italian, they could be in Florio's Italian, thus creating for him a case of homonymy, signalled by the label "also". Entries 2 and 3 are instead instances of semantic extension, seemingly metonymic and metaphorical, that result in polysemy.

5.3. Specialised terminology

Florio covers it extensively, including a variety of trades, arts, crafts and professions. According to Gabriele Stein, he was "the first lexicographer to draw attention to the fashionable jargon in these fields" (STEIN 1985, 401). Some examples are listed below:

1. Assafetida, a kinde of lothsome liquor so called of the Apothecaries
2. Astragalo, a hucklebone. Also the neckbone. Also a kind of word in building. Also the herbe Peasearthnut.
3. Calcimia, a word vsed of alchymists for calcination. Also a kinde or part of [...].

¹⁰ This sense is not recorded in the historical dictionaries of Italian consulted through the website of the Accademia della Crusca at: <<https://accademiadellacrusca.it/it/contenuti/dizionari/6225>> (last accessed 22 October 2024); *Grande Dizionario della Lingua Italiana*; *Tesoro della Lingua Italiana delle Origini* (TLIO); Tommaseo-Bellini; *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca*.

4. Catoccio, a piece of waste paper to put any thing in. Also a kinde of yonike worke in building so called among masons.
5. Codicillo, a codicill, a booke, a libell. It is a word vused by lawyers.
6. Giacénte, iacent, a word of armorie.
7. Parango, a span measure or shaftsman as drapers call it in London.
8. Passata, a passado, a word in fencing.

Note the homonymy labels in examples 2, 3 and 4, and the overlapping diastratic and diatopic dimensions in example 7. Florio's interest in specialised vocabularies is not surprising. As shown by John Considine, the developments of lexicography in Renaissance Europe can be linked to the period's rising curiosity about languages and language varieties (CONSIDINE 2017). The several glossaries and dictionaries of specialised words, hard words, ancient words, topolects and poorly documented varieties published between the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries reflect these intellectual trends, to which Florio was evidently receptive.

Chart 2 shows the fields labelled explicitly by Florio:

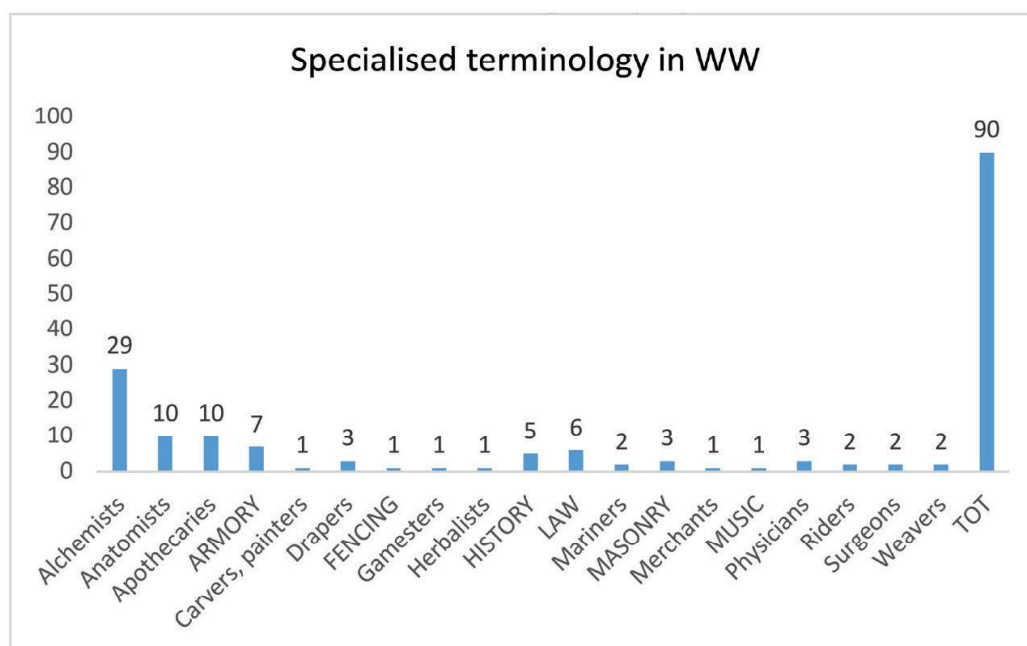


Chart 2. Specialised terminology in WW.

In the chart, the distinction between upper-case and lower-case font reflects a distinction present in *WW*, where some labels present the name of the field or trade in the abstract sense (eg. “a word of lawe” or “a word vused in musicke”, both upper-case in the chart), whereas others name the category of workers and professionals (eg. “so called

among masons")¹¹. The number of entries devoted to the vocabulary of alchemy is interesting. The occurrences reveal that most words refer to either quicksilver (i.e. mercury, 13 entries), or gold (9 entries), as Florio himself remarked with a touch of irony:

9. Chiara del'vuouo, [...] Also according to Alchimists quicke siluer.
10. Inimico, [...] Also quick-siluer, according to Alchimists phrases.
11. Notte, night. Also quick-siluer, according to alchimists phrases.
12. Occidénte, [...] Also quick-siluer, according to Alchimists secret phrases.
13. Vecchiezza, [...] Also quick-siluer, according to Alchimists phrase.
14. Volante, [...] Also quick-siluer according to Alchimists new phrases.
15. Volatile, [...] &c. Also quick-siluer according to Chimists new fantasticall phrases.

If we combine the terms specific to the medical fields (anatomists, apothecaries, physicians and surgeons), they almost equal the entries related to alchemy.

As far as metalinguistic labels are concerned, the most common guide phrases in the examples collected are "according to", the verb 'call' and the noun 'word'. The verb 'call' is most frequently used as an active verb whose subject are the group of workers using that specific jargon, or as a passive, in the variants "called/so called of". The noun 'word' is used in the phrases "a word of/in", "a word used in/of", "by which word [...] understand". Interestingly, the label "according to" occurs almost invariably (with only 5 exceptions) in entries concerning the vocabulary of alchemists.

¹¹ An additional field is that of riding and horsemanship, not included in this survey because these entries are not strictly labelled, but rather attributed to their source, Federico Grisone, called "Grison". See for instance the entry for 'incastrato': "[...] it is taken in Grison when the rowle in the mouth or bit of a horse is set close or well ioined to the other partes, as if it were of one piece". and "Sfettonare, is by Grison taken for the opening or cutting of the frush of the horse away [...]". These were erroneously considered to be dialect words by STEIN (1985, 399), who might have taken the surname to indicate the dialect of the Grisons canton, in Switzerland. Indeed, in WW there is a dialectally marked entry for this variety: "Vlzollo, Vlzolo, a kid so called among the Grisons". However, in this case the metalinguistic collocation is "so called among", in use to label varieties spoken by specific groups of people, whereas the form "taken in/by Grison" is more likely a citation of Federico Grisone's treatise on the *Arte del Cauallcare*, cited by Florio amongst his sources in the dedication (sig. a4).

5.4. Diatopic, diastratic and diaphasic labelling

I was able to detect 33 marked occurrences of diatopic variation, so perhaps fewer than expected, although we know that Florio did not mark dialect words consistently (SPAMPANATO 1924, 116–118). Some examples include:

1. Berlingaccio, the thursdaye before shrouesunday, when euery man giues himselfe to sport: so called in Florence.
2. Cerillo, a kinde of daintie wine so called in Rome
3. Guagnélo, a Lombard word for Vangélo, the Gospell.

The guide phrases are “so called” and collocations of the term ‘word’ in combination with an adjective defining provenance. As already pointed out, variation is marked in English too, although I have found very few instances of explicit labels; two are shown in the examples below, others will be discussed later:

4. Ciurma, the common rascalitie of gallie slaues, a base route. The mariners call it in English ghing.
5. Parango, a span measure or shaftsman as drapers call it in London.

Another significant category labelled by Florio is diastratic variation. Most of the vocabulary recorded as spoken by a particular social group belongs to the Italian cryptoelect of vagabonds and thieves. Cryptoelects, or canting, as it was known in England, were probably the chief sociolinguistic varieties recorded in the early modern period, with dozens of works (treatises, glossaries, dialogues) in multiple editions and re-editions published in England alone.¹² The first records of a cryptoelect variety can be dated to fourteenth-century Germany and the first Italian wordlists of the language of thieves and vagabonds were compiled in the second half of the fifteenth century (CONSIDINE 2017, 34 and 43–44). By the publication of *WW*, in other words, catalogues of cryptoelects may be considered an “enduring genre” in early modern Europe, which indicates Florio’s acumen as a lexicographer.

The majority of cryptoelect terms recorded by Florio refers to money or objects related to it; there are then words for dogs, words related to riding, to garments, and for prostitutes:

6. Asti, or Cucchi, monie in rogues language, or pedlers french.
7. Guido, a dog or a cur in gibrish or rogues language.

¹² For context see CONSIDINE 2017, who makes a convincing case for the development of the genre, see especially p. 34 and ff.

8. Monélle, a roguish or fustian word, a word in pedlers French, signifying wenches, strumpets or whores.
9. Scórza di san Pietro, a cloke in rogues language or pedlers french.

This dimension of variation is marked with the labels “rogues language”, “pedlers french” or “gibrish”. Florio’s interest in recording variants may be noticed once again in examples 7 and 8, where he provides lists of English synonyms to translate the Italian lemmas.

One final significant category labelled by Florio is that of usages restricted to specific contexts and connotations, identifying diaphasic variation. Florio displays a special interest in humorous and jocular usages, as in the following examples:

10. Arcifanfano, a supreme ruler, director, or find-fault taken in mockerie.
11. Barbanicchi, a word in iest taken for the common base people.
12. Culatorio, a woord of mockerie, as wee would say arserie.
13. Donna Beatrice, Dame Bettrice, it is taken in mockerie, and ironically, for an idle huswife.
14. Garamuffola, a word immockerie for Gramatica, as we say for Philosophie, foolelophie.
15. Stefano, hath bin vsed in iest for a mans bellie, panch, crauer, mawe, or gut. Also a garland, a coronet, or chaplet.

A small group of labels in this category marks familiar, domestic language:

16. Babbo, the first word children call their fathers by; as we say dad.
17. Mamma, a teate, a pap, a dug, an vdder, a breast. Also the word that children vse to call their mother by as we say Mam, or my Mother.
18. Nanna, a word that women vse to still their children with, as we say lullabie. [...]
19. Pappo, a word vsed by children, as dad or dadie or bab.

If jocular usages are marked succinctly by means of labels indicating the possible connotations for the words (i.e. ‘iest’ and ‘mockery’), the labels for domestic usages are longer, relative clauses or passives indicating the group of people using the word. As may be seen, in examples 17 and 19, Florio records variation in English too; the terms may be diaphasic, diatopic or diastratic variants representing topolects or idiolects, heard by Florio in use amongst different families, favoured by different family members, or in families of different socio-cultural backgrounds.

Indeed, variation in English is recorded throughout the dictionary by means of equivalents, variants and synonyms, which are listed sep-

arated by commas and by the use of the disjunctive conjunction “or”. In all the examples discussed, we can also observe Florio’s meaningful use of punctuation, indicating that the comma could also perform a metalinguistic labelling function.¹³ Florio’s own inclination to record an extensive range of English synonyms has not gone unnoticed (CONSIDINE 2022, 310; STEIN 1985, 388); as O’Connor remarked, his norms were “consistently quantitative” (O’CONNOR 1972, 52), and Florio himself declared his own enthusiasm for the copy of English equivalents “If in these rankes the English out-number the Italian, congratulate the copie and varietie of our sweete-mother-toong” (FLORIO 1598, sig. a5).

6. Classification of meaning labels in WW

Focussing on meaning labels, the table below presents an inventory of their manifestations as retrieved through this study. This part of the analysis aims to add a further element to our understanding of the communicative function of the labels chosen by Florio and to establish to what extent he was consistent. The analysis is informed by the classification of labels into “group” and “register” labels, which Janssen et al. define as reflecting “a difference between characterizing a word as used by a group of speakers in a specific domain, and guiding an individual language user in making an appropriate choice between alternatives” (JANSSEN et al. 2003, 302).

Class (Janssen et al. 2003)	Subclass (Janssen et al. 2003)	Florio’s labels	Florio’s metalanguage
Group labels	FIELD	Specialised terminology	according to [people], so called of/among [people], word (used) of/in [trade/people]
		Literary	used of/by, named by [author]
	GEOGRAPHICAL	Diatopic variation	so called in, a [topolect] word
	TEMPORAL	Diachronic variation	now called, anciently taken, not used nowadays
	-	Diastratic variation	in [cryptoelect] language, a [cryptoelect] word

¹³ I am grateful to Marco Bagli for this point.

Class (Janssen et al. 2003)	Subclass (Janssen et al. 2003)	Florio's labels	Florio's metalanguage
Register labels	FIGURATIVE	Literal/figurative sense	properly, metaphorically/by a metaphor
	-	Diaphasic variation	in/of mockerie, in iest a word used by [people], a word that [people] use

Tab. 1. Classification of meaning labels in *WW*.

In the table, literary terms are considered a particular type of specialised terminology and classified in the *FIELD* subclass. Janssen et al. do not identify a subclass that could straightforwardly be matched with the type of diastatic variation recorded by Florio, *cryptolects*. The language of vagabonds identifies a variety spoken by a (marginalised) social group identified by their lifestyle, rather than occupation, although in a sense “vagabonding”, “rogueing” and “thieving” may be considered “occupations” and thereby be included in the subclass *FIELD*.

If there is a neat correspondence between the *FIGURATIVE* subclass and Florio's literal/figurative sense labels, Janssen et al. choose not to give any explicit sub-classification of register labels (JANSSEN et al. 2003, 312). The distinction between group and register labels, however, helps establish finer distinctions between different types of diaphasic variation marked by Florio. In fact, variation marked by the labels ‘mockery’ and ‘jest’ is clearly an instance of jocular register, whereas domestic diaphasic variation, that may be labelled as ‘familiar’ register in a modern dictionary (examples 16-19 in section 5.d above), is labelled by Florio referring to the group of people who use the words in question (children, mothers), and is linguistically more similar to the labels for specialised terminology (see for instance example 5 in section 5.c and the examples below). This may tentatively indicate that Florio did not think in terms of familiar register but rather saw this as a type of “specialised” vocabulary spoken by a particular group of people, i.e. family members:

1. Calcimia, **a word vsed of alchimists** for calcination. (*Compare with* “Pappo, a word vsed by children, as dad or dadie or bab”.)
2. Prominentia, the extending or iutting of a thing out or ouer. [...], **by which word the Anatomists vnderstand** what portion soeuer doth notably surmount the parts circumiacent in thicknes, like as a hill in the plaine.

3. Scaloni, **a word that heraulds vse** in armorie as we say piles. Also great steps of a ladder or staires. (*Compare with* "Nanna, a word that women vse to still their children with, as we say lullabie. [...]".)

Looking closely at Florio's metalanguage, we can discern the following:

- a) In field labels and register labels marking diaphasic variation of the familiar register he uses constructions which refer explicitly to the speaker or group of speakers using that particular variety; these may be adverbial and prepositional phrases (according to [people], so called of/among [people]), relative clauses (a word that [people] use) and passive constructions (word used of/in [trade/people], named by [author], a word used by [people]).
- b) In geographical and diastratic labels he uses constructions which give an explicit indication of the language variety in question (topolect or cryptolect), or, for geographical labels, the area where it is spoken; these tend to be nominal phrases, but the adverbial phrase (so called in) is also used frequently to mark diatopic variation.
- c) Figurative uses and diaphasic variation marking jocular vocabulary makes use of brief one word labels or phrases which are formally more similar to the ones that users of modern dictionaries may be more accustomed to (e.g. metaphorically).

Conclusion

Research on usage labels can throw light on a range of aspects connected with the codification and circulation of linguistic knowledge—exploring what was labelled and how helps us understand more about the study of language and linguistic thought in history. A study of the labelling practices in Florio's *WW* can illuminate aspects of relevance for both the history of lexicography and of the metalanguage of linguistics.

First, as regards Florio's conceptualisation of lexis and meaning, the examples in section 5.b indicate that he noticed that words could have multiple senses, even though he did not clearly distinguish between homonymy and polysemy, nor did he contemplate separating different senses as different entries in the dictionary.

As has been seen, then, Florio did not label everything systematically, so quantitative data should not be taken at face value. What can be tentatively concluded based on the figures in Charts 1 and 2, is that

he may have been more aware of specialised uses or uses restricted to specific (professional) contexts, than he was of dialectal forms or register variation. Such “inclination” to perceive occupational variation over other types of variation might have been influenced by the existence on the market of a plethora of glossaries, dictionaries and collections of field-specific vocabularies.

Further, as has emerged through the classification of his meaning labels in Table 1, Florio appears to have interpreted types of register variation in terms of usages by specific groups of people. Indeed, the taxonomic analysis of meaning labels has revealed that group labels are more numerous than register labels. Looking more closely at Florio’s metalanguage, he resorted systematically to phrases, relative clauses and passives as group labels, whereas he reserved brief one-word labels to two types of register variation, jocular and figurative/literal senses. In this sense, diaphasic labels of the familiar register are atypical as register labels, since they appear in the form of relative clauses and passives including explicit mention of the speakers using those particular words, similarly to group labels (with the exception of diachronic variation, cfr. Table 1). This suggests that in Florio’s conceptualisation, the familiar register was seen as a type of “specialised” vocabulary spoken by a particular group of people (i.e. family members), rather than a register restricted to particular contexts.

To conclude, if we consider the total number of labels identified in Chart 1 above (459) over the total number of entries counted in WW (43,517 entries),¹⁴ it appears that metalinguistic labels were used marginally by Florio. This is hardly surprising, since usage labels were not widespread in sixteenth century lexicography. Yet, Florio’s labels were complex, and the range of what he labelled is noteworthy. Further research will help assess whether his practice was innovative and to what extent it may have been indebted to his wide-ranging sources and models.

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