

A COMPARATIVE LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF FLOWER NAMES IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Abstract

This article analyzes the similarities and differences between flower names in English and Uzbek languages. It explores their linguistic structures, semantic meanings, and cultural symbolism. This study uses a descriptive-comparative method to analyze selected floral terms. The results show that in English, flower names are often simple nouns (e.g., rose, lily, tulip) or compound forms (sunflower, snowdrop, buttercup) and are heavily influenced by Latin and Greek origins. In contrast, in Uzbek, most flower names are either native Turkic or borrowed from Persian and Arabic, demonstrating the agglutinative nature of the Uzbek language through the common use of the suffix “-gul”. The discussion concludes that both languages use flowers as metaphors for human emotions, love, and beauty, yet each culture expresses these through its unique historical and poetic worldview.

Key words: flower names, comparative linguistics, semantics, cultural symbolism, morphology, etymology, English language, Uzbek language.

Introduction

Flowers have always played an essential role in human life — they appear in art, literature, and everyday communication. The words used to name flowers often reflect not only their physical features but also the cultural and emotional values of a people. Flowers, as universal symbols of beauty and emotion, carry unique linguistic features that reflect the worldview and traditions of each nation. The comparison highlights how language, culture, and nature are interconnected through floral terminology.

Previous linguistic research has explored these specific conceptual links. For example, Bekmanova (2024) conducted a detailed pragmatic analysis of the rose's symbolism in English literature, providing a strong foundation for comparing this key symbolic term. Building on this, this study aims to compare the flower names in English and Uzbek more broadly, focusing on their morphological structure, semantic meaning, and cultural associations. The research is based on selected examples of common and symbolic flower names.

Methods

This research was conducted using a qualitative, descriptive-comparative methodology. The analysis involved a systematic comparison of the morphological, semantic, and etymological features of the selected flower names, as well as their cultural and symbolic roles in both languages.

Data was sourced from authoritative lexicographical works, including the Oxford English Dictionary, 2024 Edition, Karimov, Sh. (2018). O‘zbek tili leksikologiyasi, and the Cambridge English Lexicon of Botany (2023). Context for cultural symbolism was derived from classical literary sources, such as Navoi, A. (15th century). Devoni Foni, and contemporary philological research like Rashidova, M. (2021).

The analysis involved:

1. **Morphological comparison:** Identifying common word-formation patterns (e.g., simple vs. compound nouns, affixation).
2. **Etymological tracing:** Investigating the origins of the names (e.g., native, borrowed, or classical).

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3. **Semantic and symbolic analysis:** Comparing the symbolic meanings attributed to the flowers in each culture.
4. **Translation equivalence assessment:** Analyzing challenges in translating floral names.

Results

The analysis identified distinct patterns in the formation, origin, and meaning of floral names in each language.

Morphological and Etymological Features

In English, flower names are often simple nouns (e.g., rose, lily, tulip) or compound forms (sunflower, snowdrop, buttercup). English frequently borrows names from Latin and Greek (e.g., chrysanthemum, narcissus, orchid), showing the influence of European botanical tradition. These English flower names mainly originate from Greek and Latin, used in scientific classification and literature. Narcissus (Greek mythology – symbol of vanity) and Chrysanthemum (Greek: chrysos – gold + anthemon – flower) are examples.

In Uzbek, most flower names are either native Turkic or borrowed from Persian and Arabic. A dominant morphological feature is the suffix “-gul” (meaning 'flower') [which] is widely used to form new names: Atirgul (rose), Lolagul (tulip), Quyoshgul (sunflower). These structures illustrate the agglutinative nature of the Uzbek language, where words are formed by adding meaningful elements. Uzbek names show Persian influence: Atirgul (from Persian attar + gul), Binafsha (from Persian benafsha), Nilufar (from Sanskrit nilotpala, blue lotus).

Semantic Comparison

Despite different linguistic origins, many flowers share core symbolic meanings. The pair Rose/Atirgul, in particular, is a prime example of a concept with deep pragmalinguistic and symbolic roots in both cultures (Bekmanova, 2024).

English	Uzbek	Symbolic Meaning
Rose	Atirgul	Love, beauty, passion
Tulip	Lola	Youth, spring, renewal
Lily	Marvaridgul	Purity, innocence
Violet	Binafsha	Modesty, tenderness
Sunflower	Quyoshgul	Faith, energy, loyalty
Daisy	Chinnigul	Simplicity, joy
Lotus	Nilufar	Spiritual enlightenment

Table 1: Comparative Symbolic Meanings of Common Flowers

Discussion

Cultural Aspects and Symbolism

The symbolism of flowers plays a key role in both cultures. In Uzbek literature, flowers often appear in classical poetry. For instance, lola (tulip) symbolizes love and melancholy, frequently mentioned in Alisher Navoi’s works. In English culture, rose is a national symbol (especially in England), representing love and honor. This aligns with the findings of Bekmanova (2024) regarding

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the deep cultural embedding of the "rose" concept. The poppy flower is a symbol of remembrance for soldiers who died in wars.

These different cultural valuations are embedded in common language. Idiomatic expressions also differ: English – “Everything’s coming up roses” (things are going well); Uzbek – “Atirgulning ham tikani bor” (Even among roses there are thorns – life is not without difficulties).

Translation and Equivalence

When translating flower names, cultural context must be considered. Some English flowers do not have Uzbek equivalents due to differences in climate and flora. Direct, literal translation often fails to convey cultural familiarity; for example, Bluebell → Ko‘k qo‘ng‘iroqgul (literal translation, not culturally familiar). In other cases, a visual equivalent may lack the symbolic weight of the original, such as Poppy → Lolaqizg‘aldoq (similar in appearance but not symbolic in Uzbek culture). Therefore, translators should use functional or cultural equivalence rather than literal translation.

Conclusion

The comparison of flower names in English and Uzbek reveals deep connections between language, culture, and nature. The results show that English flower names are characterized by Latin and Greek origins and descriptive compounds, while Uzbek names reflect Persian–Turkic morphology and strong symbolic meanings derived from a rich poetic tradition. Both languages use flowers as metaphors for human emotions, love, and beauty, yet each culture expresses these through its unique historical and poetic worldview.

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