



THE METAPHORICAL EXPRESSIVE POTENTIAL
OF FLOWER NAMES IN UZBEK LITERARY
LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the metaphorical expressive potential of flower names in Uzbek literary language, with particular attention to their function in creating artistic imagery and expressing abstract human concepts. Flower names constitute an important layer of natural-world vocabulary and possess significant metaphorical potential because their physical, sensory, aesthetic, and cultural characteristics can be transferred to human beings, emotions, social phenomena, and existential concepts.

Metaphor is one of the most productive mechanisms through which language transforms concrete experience into abstract conceptual meaning. In literary language, metaphor allows an author to describe an unfamiliar, complex, or emotionally difficult phenomenon through a more concrete and perceptible image. Uzbek literary language demonstrates extensive use of metaphorical expressions based on natural phenomena, plants, animals, colors, objects, and human physical characteristics. Among these sources, flower names occupy a particularly significant position because they combine visual attractiveness, fragrance, delicacy, seasonal development, and cultural associations. These characteristics provide a broad semantic basis for metaphorical transfer.

The metaphorical mechanism therefore involves the selection of one or more characteristics of the source object and their projection onto a different target. This process is closely connected with the semantic structure of lexical units and their contextual development.



According to Mirtojiev (1984), semantic development may involve the emergence of additional meanings through relationships and associations between concepts. The metaphorical potential of flower names can be classified according to the following principal characteristics:

Source characteristic of flower	Metaphorical target	Expressive meaning
Beauty	Person or object	attractiveness, admiration
Freshness	Human age or condition	youth, vitality
Fragrance	Memory or emotion	affection, nostalgia
Delicacy	Human character	tenderness, modesty
Bright color	Person or emotional state	vitality, passion
Blooming	Human life	development, happiness
Fading	Human existence	aging, loss, transience

The table demonstrates that metaphorical transfer is based on recognizable semantic relationships. The flower itself is not necessarily the direct metaphorical target; rather, one of its characteristic features becomes the basis for conceptualizing another phenomenon.

Anthropomorphic Metaphor. One of the most productive forms of floral metaphor is the transfer of flower characteristics to human beings. In this type of metaphor, a person is conceptualized through the image of a flower. The most common basis for this transfer is physical beauty.

The lexeme *gul* is particularly productive in this regard. When a person, especially a young woman or beloved individual, is metaphorically referred to as a *gul*, the expression emphasizes attractiveness, delicacy, youth, and aesthetic value. The metaphor does not simply replace the word “beautiful”; rather, it creates a more vivid and emotionally charged image.

The metaphorical model can be represented as: **GUL → BEAUTIFUL HUMAN BEING**

Lola may metaphorically describe a young and attractive person, particularly when its color and brightness are foregrounded. Binafsha may be used metaphorically to suggest modesty and delicacy, while nilufar may evoke purity and tranquility. Anthropomorphic metaphor is therefore based on the conceptualization of human qualities through natural objects. It allows the author to avoid direct description and instead construct an aesthetically rich image.

Aesthetic Metaphor. Aesthetic metaphor represents another important direction in the use of flower names. Flowers are culturally associated with beauty, harmony, and visual pleasure. Consequently, their names can metaphorically characterize not only people but also places, objects, events, and abstract concepts.



For example, a beautiful garden, a young person's appearance, or a particularly attractive landscape may be conceptualized through floral imagery. The metaphorical use of gul in such contexts transforms a general aesthetic evaluation into a concrete visual image. The expressive strength of aesthetic metaphor derives from semantic condensation. Instead of describing an object through several adjectives, the author may use a single flower name whose semantic structure already contains associations of beauty, freshness, and attractiveness.

Emotional Metaphor. Flower names also have considerable potential for expressing emotions. Emotional metaphor emerges when characteristics of flowers are transferred to psychological or interpersonal experiences.

Atirgul, for instance, is particularly suitable for metaphorical representations of love and affection. Its beauty and fragrance provide semantic characteristics that can be transferred to romantic experience. The metaphorical relationship may therefore be represented as:
ATIRGUL → LOVE/AFFECTION

Similarly, a fresh and blooming flower may represent happiness, while a faded flower may metaphorically represent sadness or emotional loss. The emotional metaphor is effective because it combines sensory perception with psychological experience. The reader does not merely understand an emotion intellectually; instead, the emotion is conceptualized through a concrete sensory image.

Temporal Metaphor: Blooming and Fading. The life cycle of a flower provides one of the strongest foundations for temporal metaphor. Flowers bloom for a limited period and eventually fade. This natural process can be transferred to human life and interpreted as a metaphor for youth, maturity, aging, and mortality.

The metaphorical model may be expressed as:

BLOOMING FLOWER → YOUTH/LIFE

FADING FLOWER → AGING/DECLINE

This model creates a conceptual relationship between natural time and human time. A blooming flower may represent the most active and beautiful stage of life, while a fading flower can suggest the inevitable passage of time. Such metaphorical transfer gives floral vocabulary philosophical significance. The flower becomes more than an object of natural description; it becomes a linguistic representation of human existence. The temporal metaphor is especially effective because the reader is familiar with the physical process of flowering and fading. The poet can therefore rely on shared experience rather than explicitly explaining the abstract concept of transience.

Conclusion. The analysis demonstrates that flower names possess substantial metaphorical expressive potential in Uzbek literary language. Their metaphorical productivity is determined by the combination of physical, sensory, aesthetic, temporal, emotional, and cultural characteristics associated with flowers. The most productive direction of metaphorical transfer is the conceptualization of human beings through floral images. Flower names, particularly



those associated with fragrance and beauty, can represent love, affection, happiness, longing, and sadness. Their ability to transform concrete natural characteristics into abstract human meanings allows writers and poets to create vivid, emotionally powerful, and culturally meaningful images. Further research may investigate floral metaphors in a corpus of modern Uzbek poetry and compare their metaphorical productivity across different poets, periods, and literary genres.

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