



COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF METAPHORICAL MODELS OF THE “FLOWER” CONCEPT IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH

Ungalova Dilnoza Mirzoxid qizi,

doctoral student at SamSU,

lecturer at Oriental University.

Tel.: +99890 455-93-01;

E-mail: dilnoza.ungalova111@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-2094-6803>

Abstract. *This article examines the metaphorical models of the “flower” concept in Uzbek and English from the perspectives of cognitive linguistics, cultural linguistics and linguoculturology. The study argues that flower/gul is not merely a botanical nomination but a culturally saturated conceptual unit through which beauty, femininity, youth, delicacy, love, purity, renewal and emotional experience are represented. The research applies conceptual metaphor analysis, lexical-semantic interpretation and comparative linguocultural analysis. The findings show that Uzbek “gul” is strongly associated with poetic praise, female beauty, youth, spring and tenderness, whereas English “flower”, “rose”, “lily” and “blossom” reveal culturally specific associations with beauty, innocence, love, growth, fragility and transience.*

Keywords: *flower concept, gul, metaphorical model, conceptual metaphor, linguoculturology, Uzbek language, English language, beauty, femininity, cultural symbolism*

Annotatsiya. *Ushbu maqolada o‘zbek va ingliz tillarida “gul/flower” konseptining metaforik modellari kognitiv lingvistika, madaniy lingvistika va lingvokulturologiya nuqtayi nazaridan qiyosiy tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda “gul/flower” oddiy botanik nom emas, balki go‘zallik, ayollik, yoshlik, noziklik, muhabbat, poklik, yangilanish va emotsional tajribani ifodalovchi madaniy yuklamali konsept sifatida talqin etiladi. Maqolada konseptual metafora tahlili, leksik-semantik tahlil va qiyosiy lingvokulturologik metodlardan foydalanildi. Natijalar o‘zbek tilida “gul” poetik madh, ayol go‘zalligi, bahor va latofat bilan,*

ingliz tilida esa “flower”, “rose”, “lily”, “blossom” birliklari muhabbat, poklik, o‘shish, noziklik va o‘tkinchilik bilan bog‘lanishini ko‘rsatadi.

***Kalit so‘zlar:** gul konsepti, flower, metaforik model, konseptual metafora, lingvokulturologiya, o‘zbek tili, ingliz tili, go‘zallik, ayollik, madaniy ramz*

***Аннотация.** В статье проводится сравнительный анализ метафорических моделей концепта “flower/gul” в узбекском и английском языках с позиций когнитивной лингвистики, культурной лингвистики и лингвокультурологии. Доказывается, что “flower/gul” не ограничивается ботаническим значением, а функционирует как культурно маркированная концептуальная единица, репрезентирующая красоту, женственность, молодость, нежность, любовь, чистоту, обновление и эмоциональный опыт. В исследовании применены концептуально-метафорический, лексико-семантический и сравнительно-лингвокультурологический методы. Результаты показывают, что узбекское “gul” тесно связано с поэтическим восхвалением, женской красотой, весной и нежностью, тогда как английские “flower”, “rose”, “lily” и “blossom” актуализируют красоту, невинность, любовь, рост, хрупкость и преходящность.*

***Ключевые слова:** концепт цветка, gul, flower, метафорическая модель, концептуальная метафора, лингвокультурология, узбекский язык, английский язык, красота, женственность*

INTRODUCTION. In both Uzbek and English, the lexical field of “flower” goes far beyond botanical reference. It belongs to those culturally dense concepts in which sensory perception, emotional evaluation and social imagination intersect. In Uzbek, gul is one of the most productive aesthetic signs: it is connected with beauty, youth, spring, delicacy, belovedness and poetic admiration. In English, flower and its hyponymic-symbolic field, especially rose, lily and blossom, similarly function as metaphors of beauty, innocence, love, growth and transience. The comparative study of these metaphorical models is important because it reveals how different

languages encode similar human experiences through culturally specific symbolic forms.

The theoretical foundation of the article is based on the idea that metaphor is not merely a rhetorical ornament but a cognitive mechanism of conceptualization. Cultural Linguistics treats metaphor as one of the means through which cultural conceptualizations are organized and transmitted in language [Sharifian, 2015, p. 515–532]. In this sense, the “flower” concept may be interpreted as a cultural-conceptual metaphorical domain that helps speakers represent abstract values through a concrete and perceptible natural object. Recent work in Cultural Linguistics also stresses that cultural schemas, categories and metaphors are not isolated linguistic decorations but part of larger culturally shared systems of meaning [Polzenhagen et al., 2024, p. 360–378].

The relevance of the topic is also determined by the place of flower imagery in the representation of gendered and emotional experience. Studies on plant-based metaphors show that flowers are frequently mapped onto femininity, beauty and emotional vulnerability in different linguistic traditions [Pham, Nguyen, 2024, p. 1499–1509]. In English poetic and cultural discourse, the rose is especially productive as a sign of love and beauty, while the lily often evokes purity and innocence [Li et al., 2021, p. 3359–3368]. In Uzbek culture, gul and lola appear not only as lexical nominations but also as culturally meaningful poetic and ethnographic signs; for example, Uzbek cultural practices associated with the tulip reveal that floral imagery is embedded in collective memory, festivals, ornaments and aesthetic values [Ashirov, 2020, p. 6–16].

The purpose of this article is to compare the metaphorical models of the “flower” concept in Uzbek and English and to identify their shared semantic basis as well as their culturally specific features. The main tasks are: first, to define the linguocultural nature of the flower/gul concept; second, to identify the major metaphorical models in Uzbek and English; third, to compare the models “flower/gul as beauty”, “flower/gul as woman”, “flower/gul as youth”, “flower/gul

as delicacy”, “flower/gul as love” and “flower/gul as renewal”; fourth, to explain how these models reflect cultural values; and fifth, to show that flower imagery is a cognitive-linguocultural mechanism rather than a simple poetic decoration.

MATERIALS AND METHODS. The materials of the study consist of scholarly works on Cultural Linguistics, conceptual metaphor theory, flower symbolism, plant metaphors, Uzbek cultural imagery and English metaphorical representation. The analysis relies on sources that discuss cultural conceptualization, metaphorical mapping, floristic symbolism and comparative figurative semantics. The source base includes works by Sharifian, Polzenhagen, Rakhmatova, Ashirov, Li, Lv, Pham, Murashova, Lozenko and others.

Conceptual metaphor analysis was used to identify mappings between the source domain FLOWER and target domains such as BEAUTY, WOMAN, YOUTH, LOVE, PURITY, FRAGILITY and RENEWAL. This method is appropriate because metaphorical models are formed through systematic correspondences rather than through isolated lexical associations [Sharifian, 2015, p. 515–532]. Lexical-semantic analysis was applied to the units gul, lola, chechak, rose, lily, blossom and flower in order to distinguish their hyperonymic, hyponymic and symbolic functions. Linguocultural interpretation was used to explain how floral imagery reflects culturally specific aesthetic codes. Comparative analysis made it possible to determine both universal and nationally marked aspects of the concept.

The study also uses componential analysis: the semantic components “beauty”, “freshness”, “tenderness”, “purity”, “growth”, “fragility” and “transience” were isolated and compared across the two languages. Discourse-pragmatic analysis was applied where the metaphorical value of a floral unit depends on its cultural and communicative context. Finally, source-based analytical synthesis was used to combine theoretical claims about metaphor with language-specific observations concerning Uzbek and English floral imagery.

RESULTS. The analysis shows that the “flower/gul” concept is organized around several recurrent metaphorical models. In Uzbek, the dominant models are

“gul – go‘zallik”, “gul – ayol”, “gul – yoshlik”, “gul – noziklik”, “gul – muhabbat”, “gul – bahor” and “gul – poklik”. These models are supported by the broader Uzbek cultural tendency to associate natural beauty with human aesthetic and moral qualities. Rakhmatova notes that in Uzbek and Tajik cultural expression, plant and nature images such as gul, lola, nargis, guncha and bahor participate in the verbalization of beauty, whereas English uses images such as daisy, lily and rose [Rakhmatova, 2019a, p. 764–770]. This suggests that flowers in Uzbek are not peripheral decorative elements but part of the central vocabulary of aesthetic evaluation.

In English, the main metaphorical models are “flower – beauty”, “flower – woman”, “flower – innocence”, “flower – youth”, “flower – growth”, “flower – fragility”, “flower – transience” and “flower – renewal”. The lexemes rose, lily and blossom specialize different parts of the metaphorical field. Rose is frequently connected with love and romantic beauty, lily with purity and innocence, and blossom with growth, beginning and renewal [Li et al., 2021, p. 3359–3368]. Earlier comparative work on love metaphors in English also shows that LOVE IS A PLANT is a productive model, with expressions such as love grows and love flowered representing emotional development through plant growth [Lv, Zhang, 2012, p. 355–359].

Language	Metaphorical model	Lexical unit	Conceptual meaning	Cultural-associative layer	Source and page
Uzbek	gul – go‘zallik	gul	Beauty is conceptualized through floral freshness and aesthetic harmony	Poetic praise, aesthetic admiration	[Rakhmatova, 2019a, p. 764–770]
Uzbek	gul – ayol	gul	Female beauty is mapped through delicacy and attractiveness	Beloved woman, praise, elegance	[Rakhmatova, 2019b, p. 282–288]
Uzbek	lola – bahor/yangilanish	lola	Tulip marks spring, renewal	Lola sayli, seasonal festivity	[Ashirov, 2020, p. 6–16]

			and collective celebration		
Uzbek	gul – noziklik	gul, chechak	Tenderness and emotional delicacy are represented through flowers	Poetic softness, fragility	[Rakhmatova, 2019a, p. 764–770]
English	flower – beauty	flower	Beauty is conceptualized as blooming and visual attractiveness	Aesthetic admiration	[Li et al., 2021, p. 3359–3368]
English	rose – love	rose	Love is represented through the rose as a conventional romantic symbol	Romantic tradition, emotional attachment	[Li et al., 2021, p. 3359–3368]
English	lily – purity	lily	Purity and innocence are mapped through floral whiteness and cultural symbolism	Chastity, innocence	[Murashova, Pravikova, 2015, p. 9–16]
English	blossom – growth/renewal	blossom	Emotional and personal development is represented as blooming	Beginning, development, renewal	[Lv, Zhang, 2012, p. 355–359]

The second comparative table clarifies the shared semantic basis and cultural differences.

Uzbek metaphorical model	English metaphorical model	Shared semantic basis	Cultural difference	Supporting source
gul – go‘zallik	flower – beauty	Visual beauty and aesthetic admiration	Uzbek gul is more strongly tied to poetic praise; English flower is broader and may be more neutral	[Rakhmatova, 2019a, p. 764–770]; [Li et al., 2021, p. 3359–3368]
gul – ayol	flower – woman	Feminine beauty and delicacy	Uzbek usage often idealizes the beloved through poetic admiration; English usage may include beauty, innocence and vulnerability	[Rakhmatova, 2019b, p. 282–288]; [Pham, Nguyen, 2024, p. 1499–1509]
gul/lola – bahor	blossom – renewal	Spring, growth and rebirth	Uzbek lola is linked to seasonal	[Ashirov, 2020, p. 6–16]; [Lv,

			collective rituals; English blossom emphasizes growth and beginning	Zhang, 2012, p. 355–359]
gul – muhabbat	rose – love	Love is conceptualized through a flower	English rose is more conventionalized as romantic love; Uzbek gul may be more general and poetic	[Rakhmatova, 2019a, p. 764– 770]; [Li et al., 2021, p. 3359– 3368]
gul – poklik/noziklik	lily – purity/innocence	Moral and emotional delicacy	English lily is strongly tied to purity; Uzbek gul expresses purity more diffusely through beauty and tenderness	[Murashova, Pravikova, 2015, p. 9–16]; [Rakhmatova, 2019b, p. 282– 288]

These results demonstrate that Uzbek and English share a general conceptual tendency: a flower is used as a source domain for representing positive human qualities and emotional states. However, the internal organization of the field differs. Uzbek gul is a broad, culturally central and poetically intensive unit. It can represent beauty, woman, youth, spring, tenderness and love without requiring a specific botanical subtype. English flower is also broad, but its metaphorical field is more often differentiated through specific units such as rose, lily and blossom. Rose specializes love and beauty; lily specializes purity and innocence; blossom specializes growth and renewal.

DISCUSSION. The comparison shows that the metaphorical organization of flower/gul is based on both universal embodied experience and culture-specific symbolic elaboration. Flowers are visually attractive, delicate, fragrant, seasonal and short-lived. These physical properties make them suitable for metaphorical projection onto beauty, youth, love and fragility. At the same time, each language selects and culturally stabilizes different aspects of the floral domain. Cultural Linguistics explains this process as the connection between language and cultural conceptualization, including cultural schemas and cultural-conceptual metaphors [Sharifian, 2015, p. 515–532].

The Uzbek model “gul – ayol/go‘zallik” is especially productive because gul functions as a generalized aesthetic sign. It is not limited to one plant species; rather, it becomes a poetic measure of beauty itself. Rakhmatova’s discussion of beauty in English, Uzbek and Tajik cultures shows that natural and floral images are central to the verbalization of aesthetic judgement in Uzbek cultural expression [Rakhmatova, 2019a, p. 764–770]. In this respect, gul functions as a cultural code: to call someone gul-like is not only to describe appearance but also to activate a field of tenderness, admiration, emotional warmth and idealization.

In English, the model “flower – woman/beauty” is also present, but it is frequently distributed among more specialized lexical symbols. Rose is linked with love and romantic beauty; lily is associated with innocence and purity; blossom evokes youth and development. Studies on flower metaphors for love in English poetry show that flowers may represent both the beloved and love itself, especially through the model THE BELOVED IS A FLOWER and LOVE IS A FLOWER [Li et al., 2021, p. 3359–3368]. This is close to Uzbek poetic usage, but English often relies on conventionalized floral subtypes, whereas Uzbek gul can function as a more general symbolic hyperonym.

The models “gul – yoshlik/noziklik” and “flower – youth/fragility” also share a strong semantic basis. Youth is perceived as freshness, opening, beauty and incompleteness; fragility is connected with the physical vulnerability of petals and blossoms. Research on the metaphor WOMEN ARE PLANTS demonstrates that floral and plant imagery often maps biological delicacy, growth and vulnerability onto the representation of women [Pham, Nguyen, 2024, p. 1499–1509]. This does not mean that the metaphor is neutral in every context; it may idealize, aestheticize or restrict the female image depending on discourse. Therefore, flower metaphors should be analyzed not only as beautiful images but also as culturally shaped mechanisms of evaluation.

The models “gul – bahor/yangilanish” and “blossom – growth/renewal” reveal another shared pattern. Uzbek lola is deeply connected with spring rituals and

collective seasonal memory. Ashirov's study of the tulip in Uzbek culture shows that lola is not merely a plant name but a culturally meaningful sign associated with festivals, ornaments and the symbolic life of Uzbek communities [Ashirov, 2020, p. 6–16]. English blossom, by contrast, often emphasizes the process of opening, beginning and growth. In both cases, the flower becomes a metaphor of renewal, but Uzbek lola carries a stronger ethnographic and communal dimension, whereas English blossom is more often used as a general metaphor of development.

The symbolic contrast between rose and lily is particularly important for English. Rose generally activates love, passion and beauty, while lily is associated with purity and innocence. Murashova and Pravikova note that floral codes such as rose and lily participate in the metaphorical representation of feminine beauty and innocence in English [Murashova, Pravikova, 2015, p. 9–16]. In Uzbek, a similar distinction may exist through gul, lola, nargis, rayhon and chechak, but gul remains more semantically inclusive. This inclusiveness is one of the most important typological differences between the two languages.

The findings also confirm the relevance of cross-cultural metaphor theory. Lv and Zhang argue that love metaphors may share universal source domains such as plant, fire or journey, but languages differ in their preferred metaphorical elaborations [Lv, Zhang, 2012, p. 355–359]. The Uzbek-English comparison supports this view. Both languages use floral imagery to conceptualize love and beauty, but they differ in lexical distribution, cultural intensity and associative layering. Uzbek tends to poetic generalization through gul; English tends to semantic specialization through rose, lily and blossom.

CONCLUSION. The “flower/gul” concept in Uzbek and English is not limited to its botanical meaning. It functions as a culturally loaded metaphorical model that represents beauty, femininity, youth, delicacy, love, purity and renewal. In Uzbek, **gul** appears as a broad and highly productive cultural-aesthetic sign closely associated with poetic admiration, female beauty, youth, tenderness, spring and emotional warmth. In English, **flower** serves as a general metaphorical unit, while

specific lexical symbols such as **rose**, **lily** and **blossom** perform more differentiated semantic and cultural functions. In this system, **rose** is primarily linked with love and beauty, **lily** with purity and innocence, and **blossom** with growth, development and renewal. The shared semantic basis of Uzbek and English flower metaphors lies in the embodied perception of flowers as beautiful, delicate, fresh, fragrant, seasonal and short-lived natural objects. At the same time, the main cultural difference is that Uzbek **gul** operates as a more inclusive poetic hyperonym, whereas English floral symbolism is more strongly distributed among particular flower names. Therefore, flower metaphors should not be treated merely as decorative expressions, but as cognitive-linguocultural mechanisms that encode cultural values, emotional experience and aesthetic norms. Further research may expand the empirical basis of the topic by analyzing Uzbek classical poetry, English poetic discourse and contemporary media texts in order to determine how traditional floral metaphors are transformed in modern language use.

REFERENCES

1. Ashirov A. Tulip in the Culture of Uzbek People // The American Journal of Social Science and Education Innovations. 2020. Vol. 2. No. 04. P. 6–16. DOI: 10.37547/tajssei/volume02issue04-01.
2. Juybari M.S., Bozorgian H. Cultural Linguistics and ELT Curriculum: The Case of “Prospect” English Textbooks in Iran // International Journal of Applied Linguistics. 2020. Vol. 30. No. 3. P. 479–496. DOI: 10.1111/ijal.12301.
3. Li D. et al. The Universality and Variation of Flower Metaphors for Love in English and Chinese Poems // Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education. 2021. Vol. 12. No. 9. P. 3359–3368. DOI: 10.17762/turcomat.v12i9.5743.
4. Lozenko V. Floristic Metaphors in Latin and English Pharmaceutical Terminology // Polonia University Scientific Journal. 2021. Vol. 46. No. 3. P. 59–63. DOI: 10.23856/4608.

5. Lv Z., Zhang Y. Universality and Variation of Conceptual Metaphor of Love in Chinese and English // *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*. 2012. Vol. 2. No. 2. P. 355–359. DOI: 10.4304/tpls.2.2.355-359.
6. Murashova L.P., Pravikova L.V. Erotization as the Basis of Female Metaphor in the English Language // *Language and Culture*. 2015. No. 2(6). P. 9–16. DOI: 10.17223/24109266/6/2.
7. Pham G., Nguyen C.T.T. Perception of Women Through Conceptual Metaphor “WOMEN ARE PLANTS”: A Case Study of 20th-Century Vietnamese Literature // *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*. 2024. Vol. 14. No. 5. P. 1499–1509. DOI: 10.17507/tpls.1405.23.
8. Polzenhagen F., Wolf H.-G., Latić D. World Englishes and Cultural Linguistics: Theory and Research // *World Englishes*. 2024. Vol. 43. No. 3. P. 360–378. DOI: 10.1111/weng.12655.
9. Rakhmatova M.M. Aesthetic Judgement: Language as a Mirror to Reflect “Beauty” // *Theoretical & Applied Science*. 2019. Vol. 78. No. 10. P. 282–288. DOI: 10.15863/tas.2019.10.78.52.
10. Rakhmatova M.M. Linguistic Features of the Concept “Beauty” in English, Uzbek and Tajik National Cultures // *Theoretical & Applied Science*. 2019. Vol. 78. No. 10. P. 764–770. DOI: 10.15863/tas.2019.10.78.145.
11. Sharifian F. Cultural Linguistics and World Englishes // *World Englishes*. 2015. Vol. 34. No. 4. P. 515–532. DOI: 10.1111/weng.12156.
12. Stroińska M., Cecchetto V. Cultural Linguistics and Intercultural Communication // In: Sharifian F., Jamarani M. eds. *Language and Intercultural Communication in the New Era*. Routledge, 2013. P. 74–94. DOI: 10.4324/9780203081365-11.
13. Panferova, I. V. (2017). Conceptualization of Pragma-Functional Approach to Foreign Language Teaching. *Eastern European Scientific Journal*, (5), 79-84.

14. Kamiljanovna, Z. D., O'G'Li, A. S. J., & Jumayeva, M. B. (2022). The Analysis Of Higher Order Thinking Skills. *Science and innovation*, 1(Special Issue 2), 672-676.
15. Jumayeva, M., & Jumatova, B. (2023). Linguopragmatic features of expressions expressing feelings in Uzbek and English literary texts. *Science and innovation*, 2(C12), 166-169.