



LINGUOCULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LEXEME 'GUL' (FLOWER) IN UZBEK LITERATURE

Elmirzaeva Zarina Obidin qizi

Master Student of Asian University of Technologies;

Karshi, Kashkadarya

Tel: +998 90 477 86 26

sharofovnurislom6@gmail.com

Abstract

This article explores the linguocultural characteristics of the lexeme “gul” (“flower”) in Uzbek literature. It analyzes its semantic, metaphorical, and aesthetic functions as represented in folk oral creativity, classical poetry, and modern literature. Through this analysis, it reveals how national mentality, value systems, and aesthetic views are reflected. The study also provides examples of idiomatic expressions and poetic metaphors based on the lexeme “gul” and discusses their linguocultural features.

Keywords: Flower, linguoculture, image, literary representation, national worldview, semantics, metaphor.

Introduction

In Uzbek language and literature, the lexeme “gul” is one of the most frequently used symbols with a wide semantic range. It is closely associated with deep concepts such as aesthetic perception, beauty, love, purity, hope, and vitality. From folk art to classical and modern literary works, the symbol of the flower resonates with national consciousness. Particularly in Uzbek poetry, “gul” not only symbolizes outer beauty but also reflects inner spiritual purity and emotional experiences.

Literature Review

According to Nazarov, artistic devices in the Uzbek language—especially metaphors and epithets—clearly reflect the people’s aesthetic views, system of values, and cultural thinking. In his work "Lexical-Semantic Features of Artistic

Devices in the Uzbek Language", he emphasizes that the symbol of the “flower” carries significant poetic weight in Uzbek poetry and is used as a symbol of beauty, delicacy, and spiritual purity. Nazarov particularly highlights the semantic consistency of the flower image between folk oral creativity and classical literature [1].

A’zamova states that in modern Uzbek literary language, figurative expressions play a crucial role in shaping the emotional and aesthetic direction of artistic texts. According to her, expressions related to flowers—such as “gul yuzli” (flower-faced), “guldek ochilgan” (blossomed like a flower), and “gul og‘zidan so‘z sochgan” (words pouring from a flower’s mouth)—form a metaphorical image system in the language. A’zamova argues that the stability of these expressions is due to their cultural roots and active use in spoken language [2].

In his research titled "Traditional Images and Their Artistic Functions in Uzbek Poetry", Karimov B. O‘. points out that the flower image is repeatedly used in poetic texts as a symbolic representation of time, love, dreams, and life. He believes that the “flower-nightingale” image pair has been deeply and artistically developed in Uzbek poetry to express themes such as devotion, passionate love, and the pursuit of union. According to Karimov, these symbols are integrated representations of national poetic thinking [3].

In her work "National-Cultural Characteristics of Stable Collocations in the Uzbek Language", Mirzaeva offers deep reflections on the cultural and spiritual roots of phraseological units containing the component “gul” (flower). She concludes that expressions related to “gul”—such as “guldek yashamoq” (to live like a flower), “gulday qiz” (a girl like a flower), and “gul ochildi” (a flower has blossomed)—reflect the Uzbek people's traditional and consistent attitude toward life, beauty, and human relationships.

Methodology and empirical analysis

The semantic definition of the word “gul” (flower) in its primary (denotative) sense refers to the fragrant, beautiful part of a plant made up of its petals. However, analysis within a linguocultural context goes beyond this. It encompasses symbolic, emotional, and poetic meanings.



In classical literature, the most prominent artistic function of the flower image is its use as a symbol of femininity, love, longing, and reunion. For instance, Alisher Navoi in his “Lison ut-Tayr” writes:

> In the flower garden, the nightingale’s lament never ceases,
The heart burns in the fire of love and keeps burning.

In these lines, “gul” represents love, while the “bulbul” (nightingale) is the image of a lover consumed by passion. Such poetic pairings occur across all periods of Uzbek literature, and the “gul” concept consistently serves as an emotional centerpiece.

In folk oral creativity, “gul” is often interpreted as a symbol of life, youth, and happiness. For example, the proverb “Yigitlik guldir, vaqtida ter” (“Youth is like a flower, pluck it in its time”) conveys the idea of fleeting beauty and temporary joy. The phrase “Gulday yashamoq” (“To live like a flower”) reflects the idea of enjoying life and living a prosperous, fulfilling existence.

Furthermore, the “gul” concept actively lives on in stable metaphoric expressions, such as:

“gul yuzli” (flower-faced / beautiful),

“guli rayhon” (fragrant, eloquent),

“guldek orasta” (neat and tidy).

In these phrases, “gul” conveys both internal and external human qualities. These expressions are particularly associated with women’s behavior, temperament, and appearance.

In modern literature, the flower concept has acquired new layers of meaning. For example, in Aydin Hamzayeva’s poem:

> My words fall like summer rain,
Let the flower blossom in my heart’s spring.

In this verse, the symbolic and lyrical power of the flower is preserved, but now it manifests as an aesthetic reflection of the poet’s inner emotional state.

The psycholinguistic power of the flower image is also noteworthy—it becomes embedded in the consciousness from childhood, functioning as a visual means to express internal emotions. In children’s literature, titles like “Flower Girl” or “Conversation with a Flower” serve to convey moral lessons and instill cultural values into young minds.



Additionally, to show the cross-cultural dimension of the flower image, comparisons with other languages can be made. For example, the English phrase “She is a blooming flower” is semantically and poetically very close to the Uzbek expression “Guldek ochilgan” (Blossomed like a flower). This indicates that the “gul” concept is a universal aesthetic symbol.

Results

In Uzbek literary texts, the use of the word “gul” (flower) often appears as an independent image, as well as in contextual and semantic connection with other artistic symbols. In particular, a deep spiritual-philosophical layer is created through the unity of contrasting and harmonious images such as “gul-bulbul” (flower-nightingale), “gul-barg” (flower-leaf), “gul-nayza” (flower-spear). This, in turn, enriches the aesthetic scope of the literary language and broadens linguistic-cultural understanding.

In the “gul-bulbul” image, “gul” is interpreted more as spiritual beauty, a sacred purpose, an object aspiring for union. This is a highly lyrical image widely used in Uzbek and Persian-Tajik classical poetry, where the flower is always calm, charming, and unique; the nightingale, by contrast, is depicted as passionate, anguished, and devoted lover. Particularly in Navoi’s poetry, these images are constantly related, becoming symbols of love, devotion, and spiritual perfection.

The next linguistic-cultural context is the harmonious combination of “gul” with Quranic, religious-philosophical images. In Sufi literature, “gul” is expressed as a symbol representing the divine beauty of God, the desire to unite with Him. For example, in the poems of Sufi poets like Hafez Shirazi or Ahmad Yassawi, the “gul” is the earthly manifestation of divine beauty, through which the aspiration to understand and reach the Truth is expressed. In such religious-spiritual contexts, “gul” strengthens the connection between this world and the hereafter, physical beauty and spiritual purity, the external and internal.

In Uzbek folk epics, too, “gul” often appears as an object that drives the plot. For example, in the fairy tale “Gul va Navro‘z” (“The Flower and Navruz”), the flower is associated precisely with a female figure, and finding, protecting, and returning it depicts a path of love, loyalty, and devotion. Here, the flower is not only beauty but also a symbol of sacredness and source of happiness. Similarly, in ancient epics



like “G‘oro‘g‘li” and “Ravshan,” “gul” emerges as a symbol of the female image, happiness, honor, and dignity.

In modern Uzbek literature, the psychological and social scope of the “gul” image has expanded further. In works with an educational spirit, the flower becomes a symbol of moral purity, values, and motherly love. In the stories and narratives of writers like Tohir Malik and Erkin Azam, the “gul” image is not merely a simple depiction but serves as a means influencing character, psyche, and even the development of events. This indicates that the lexeme “gul” has evolved into a dynamic image harmonized with the times.

It is important to emphasize that the formation of the word “gul” and its transformation into stable metaphors in the Uzbek language is a direct product of the national mentality and value system. In the aesthetic ideal of the Uzbek people, qualities such as beauty, elegance, purity, and honesty are encoded through the image of the flower. This makes the linguistic-cultural analysis of this lexeme an important subject not only for linguistics but also for folk psychology, cultural studies, and historical reflection.

Thus, the characteristics of the use of the “gul” image in Uzbek literature stand out with a wide range of semantic integrity, cultural layering, and artistic formation possibilities. It is not only a literary-aesthetic tool but also a mirror reflecting national culture.

In the historical-cultural consciousness of the Uzbek people, the symbol of “gul” has deeply rooted not only in literary but also in ceremonial and social value systems. In particular, in popular holidays and ceremonies, the element of “gul” occupies a special place. The celebration of Navruz, flower festivals, and spring customs involve the use of the flower image, symbolizing harmony between humans and nature and praising vitality and beauty, thereby gaining symbolic and aesthetic meaning.

This, in turn, demonstrates the close connection of the “gul” image in literary texts with the collective values of the people’s consciousness.

In Uzbek literature, the concept of “gul” is often used as an expressive means of the female image. From this perspective, the gender scope of “gul” requires special analysis. The beauty, delicacy, loyalty, and purity of the female figure are all aesthetically, emotionally, and poetically expressed through the flower metaphor. For instance, in Abdulla Qahhor’s story “Og‘riq gul” (“The Painful Flower”), the



image of the flower is not only external beauty but also a symbol expressing the woman's inner spiritual state. Here, the flower is interpreted as a sign of loyalty, affection, faith, and human purity.

In modern poetry, the concept of “gul” is increasingly related to personal experience, individual feelings, and psychological states. This is especially noticeable in the late 20th and early 21st century literature. In the works of poets such as Halima Khudoyberdiyeva, Zulfiya, and Orzigul Khayitova, new connotations of the flower image connected with the female psyche have emerged. Now, the “gul” is not only a symbol of female beauty but also represents her spiritual suffering, motherhood, feminine dignity, and social position. This deepens the socio-philosophical approach to the “gul” image.

Also, the metaphorical use of “gul” as an artistic means connected with the stages of human life is widespread in Uzbek literature. For example, the phrase “gullar ochilmoqda” (“flowers are blooming”) symbolizes the entrance of youth into life, while “guli so‘ldi” (“its flower has withered”) denotes a person who has aged, weakened, and lost interest in life. Thus, the flower becomes one of the poetic signs of the life cycle.

Epithets and metaphorical associations used with “gul” in the Uzbek literary language—such as “gul yuzli” (“flower-faced”), “guldasta qalb” (“flower bouquet heart”), “gullar og‘zidagi so‘z” (“words on the flowers’ lips”)—demonstrate the Uzbek people’s cultural level of understanding beauty through words, their poetic thinking, and the language’s figurative potential.

Another notable point is that the “gul” concept has retained its poetic function throughout the evolution of literary language. While in classical poetry the shape of the “gul” was mostly combined with Sufi symbols and rhetorical devices typical of Arabic-Persian poetic heritage, in modern prose it has become a means to express spiritual suffering, loneliness, life quests, and inner truths. This process confirms the organic development of Uzbek language’s artistic capabilities and literary thought.

Moreover, there is an understanding of the “gul” image in the historical and civilizational context within literature. The rarity of the “gul” image in early Turkic written monuments and its increasing integration into Uzbek literary thought through Persian poetics in later periods can be emphasized. This highlights the



Turkic-Persian synthetic nature of Uzbek literature and deepens the place of the “gul” image in the artistic heritage.

Conclusion and discussion

The lexeme “gul” (flower) is one of the concepts with a broad semantic, linguistic-poetic, and cultural scope in Uzbek literature and culture. It has continuously renewed itself from folk oral creativity to modern artistic texts while maintaining its poetic function. Through “gul,” values such as beauty, love, desire, vitality, affection, purity, and refined manners are expressed. Beyond being a lexical unit, it is a semantic center that reflects the national aesthetic mindset and therefore requires deep linguistic-cultural study.

References

1. Nazarov, Sh. (2001). Lexical and semantic features of artistic means of expression in the Uzbek language. Tashkent: Fan Publishing House.
2. A'zamova, Z. (2019). Figurative expressions in the modern Uzbek literary language. Tashkent: TSPU Publishing House.
3. Karimov, B. U. (2020). Traditional images in Uzbek poetry and their artistic functions. Tashkent: Muharrir.
4. Mirzaeva, M. (2008). National and cultural features of stable phrases in the Uzbek language. Tashkent: Fan Publishing House.
5. Yunusova, G. (2022). Research on poetic images in literary studies. Tashkent: Istiqlol.