

THE USAGE OF PLANTS IN POEMS

¹ Djalilova Zarnigor Bahodirovna,

***Abstract:** Poetry has always been literary genre which beautifully expresses human feelings, beliefs, attitude and love in verse. Words used in daily life change and gain additional meaning. In literary world of poems, flowers along with plants are widely used to characterize human qualities, physical appearance and human nature. They help to paint clear image of people, mostly women to help the reader visualize them. Identification of women with plants, especially flowers is realized through connection between their colour, smell, fragrance, size and form. Different stylistic devices like metaphor, simile, epithet and personification come to help to realize image description. In this article we will analyze some English and Uzbek poems where authors utilize plants to depict people and their feelings.*

***Keywords:** phytonym, flora, metaphor, simile, resemblance, identification*

Introduction

Every language in the world has onomastic units with nominative, communicative and stylistic functions that are represented by phytonyms (flowers and plants) in the language and speech of the people. They show the integration of linguistics with the natural sciences, the connection between society and nature. While linguistics focuses on the study of linguistic units representing plant varieties -phytonyms- as agricultural linguistic units, the literature world pays a great deal of interest in the symbolic, metaphorical expression of flowers and trees. It is often observed in the literature that phytonyms are represented in the human image, poetic expression and evaluation of personality traits. In addition to vividly revealing lexical-semantic features of phytonyms in non-relative language systems, it is important to understand how language evolves as a social phenomenon in relation to the culture and lifestyles of peoples. In this work we will analyze some English and Uzbek poems where phytonyms are used to express people's physical and emotional state or feature. The main focus will be given to the analysis of plants, flowers which characterize women and their beauty.

II.Literature review

Significant investigations about English phytonyms were done by T.Haber, H.W.Klug, D.Hooke, D.Herman and S.Moss. In these works phytonyms have been studied diachronically and synchronically in terms of internal structure, word formation, nomination, semantic structure as well as their place in lexical system of the language has been identified. Information about phytonyms can also be observed in written sources inherited from our ancestors. For instance, in Zahiriddin Muhammad Bobur's "Boburnoma" the definitions of 247 plant names were identified. Historical-etymologic features of some trees and fruit in Uzbek language were observed in the works of T.Numonov, Y.Eshonqulov, B.Bafoyev while trees and fruit names were investigated in terms of botany and lexicographics in the researches of S.Sahobiddinov, Q.Zokirov and H.Jamolkhonov.

III.Analysis

The main feature that flowers and plants are characterized by is their sensitivity which can give a clear explanation why they are depicted to describe women in poetry. Being of different type, size, form, colour, quality and smell, all flowers are very sensitive to the physical environment they are surrounded by as well as women do. In poetry flowers are mostly used as metaphors, epithets or similes where the transference of meaning from one word to another can be denoted. This can be best exemplified by Francis Thompson's "Daisy". Writing about his love in youth the poet describes how he walked in the nature talking to his beloved in the pastures, telling about the beauty of nature, and likened her to the flowers in the nature.

She listened with big-lipped surprise,

¹A Teacher of English Literature Department,
Bukhara State University, 998904111180
affa88@mail.ru

Breast-deep 'mid flower and spine:
Her skin was like a grape whose veins
Run snow instead of wine².

As the poet is depicting his love of his early adolescence years, his sweetheart is supposed to be young girl. To create an image of his beloved the poet realizes two lexical meanings, breast and mid-flower, simultaneously. The notion of “mid-flower” arouses in the mind relative quality of form as being round along with specific picture of a flower which hasn't fully blossomed. Breast is identified as mid-flower and it serves to describe the shape of an image. Identification of two lexical meanings is achieved though there is no true similarity of meanings. Metaphor above is embodied in predicative word-combination which makes identification more observable. In the next lines of the work another stylistic device-simile is used to describe appearance.

Her skin is like a grape whose veins
Run snow instead of wine.

Although “skin” and “grape” belong to different object groups, Thompson uses concept “grape” to indicate some features of the concept “skin” such as being soft, fresh and young. The quality of human skin as skin of wine grape is determined by a lot of outer affects, the main of which are sun and temperature. Different from table grapes, wine grapes have thicker skin which gives aroma to wine. It also contains tannins which gives colour to the wine. However, as constant exposure to light in the form of ultraviolet rays dries out grapes, it also affects the quality and appearance of the grape skin. Distinct changes can be observed in color and texture of the skin. Dermatologist Dr. Keira L. Barr states texture and quality of dried skin becomes wrinkled, flaccid and shriveled which we call raisin. Human skin is the same as the grape. Premature wrinkles turn into permanent deep ones and skin loses its elasticity³. *In the simile the two concept “skin” and “grape»* are brought together and the feature intensified is more inherent to the characterizing concept (grape) rather than characterized concept (skin). Moreover, characterized object, skin is seen in a totally new light through the author's conception of beauty. When poet says “whose veins run snow instead of wine”, he denotes even skin of his beloved

Oh, there were flowers in Storrington
On the turf and on the spray;
But the sweetest flower on Sussex hills
Was the Daisy-flower that day!

In the next stanzas of the poem, poet refers to his beloved, Daisy, as a flower. It is obvious that Daisy is the name of her beloved. Why did the author chose the name of the flower Daisy to call his love by. It carries symbolic meaning. Firstly, as we read the whole poem we come across with a lot of flowers and plants in this poem. Author carefully uses them to create picture of nature that he spent his childhood in. That's why he prefers to name the girl by flower's name. Secondly, we look at etymology of the word, we can see that the word “daisy” comes from Anglo-Saxon word and means “day's eye”. The flower earned this name because it blossoms in dawn and closes in the evening. The time that it blossoms again hints to the author's childhood, the morning of his life, as well as to young beloved. Thirdly, the daisy flower symbolizes innocence and purity which best characterizes his girl friend. Poet tells that among all flowers his Daisy was the sweetest flower.

The next resemblance is expressed by rose. Rose, as a symbol, has a rich and ancient history. According to historical data roses existed even earlier than people. From ancient Greek and Roman period until present days, rose has always been considered as symbol of beauty, women and love. As it is believed rose got its romantic connections from Egypt, where Cleopatra used rose petals to cover her room to seduce Mark Antony. As Nicola Harrison states in her “Brief history of English rose” in courtly love, which was depicted in the literature from 12th to 14th century, rose symbolized beloved lady or the prize of her love itself. Especially a great resemblance can be observed in 13th century masterwork of Guillaume de Lorris, a French poet whose epic poem inspired a lot of English poets to write imitation of the work. The imagination of perfect female body and a rose share similar characteristics such as face colour and adorable smell which lets poets widely use it as metaphor, simile or epithet in poems.

The fairest things have fleetest end,
Their scent survives their close:
But the rose's scent is bitterness
To him that loved the rose.

In the lines above we can observe a full metaphor where the identification of a girl is realized by a rose. The use of definite article “the” before “rose” makes it obvious that it is not general concept, but expression of specific person, author's beloved in this case. Undoubtedly, rose is queen of beauty and it has the most elegant and delicate floral fragrance. Resemblance between the girl's and rose's essence was masterly used to denote how elegant she smells.

² Poemhuner.com

³Keira L.B.Like a fine wine- Is your skin a raisin or a grape? retrieved from pinkfortitude.com

Another example can be observed in Joshua Sylvester's work where he said a "Sweet mouth that sends a musky-rosed breath"(No title, line 1), a rose gives off fragrance which reminds one of a beauty's sweet breath. In Edmund Spenser's "Amoretti" (Sonnet 81) a rose depicts the colour of beloved face, to be concrete her cheeks.

Fayre is my love, when her fayre golden heares,
with the loose wynd ye waving chance to marke:
fayre when the rose in her red cheekes appears,
or in her eyes the fyre of love does sparke⁴.

The line "Fair when the rose in her red cheeks appears" highlights that the rose's colour exactly matches girl's red cheeks. This kind of depiction can be observed in many works of English poets. In the next example we have resemblance between rose and lips ("Kissed Desire" by William Drummond).

Though I with strange desire
To kiss those rosy lips am set on fire,
Yet will I cease to crave
Sweet touches in such store⁵,

In one word "rosy", the three facial expressions of the lips are expressed. Firstly, it denotes lips colour being red. Secondly, tenderness and smoothness of a rose perfectly describes girl's flawless skin. And finally, it again points at similar essence of rose that reminds beloved lady.

Rose has always been a great inspiration for poets of almost all times, hence it started to gain its symbolic meaning of a female. Several instances can be brought where a rose represents a whole image of a woman or a girl. In William Wordsworth's Strange Fits of Passion Have I Known, the mysterious Lucy is compared to a rose. Here the "fresh rose" highlights how young and pure she is.

When she I loved looked every day
Fresh as a rose in June,
I to her cottage bent my way,
Beneath an evening-moon⁶.

In the simile "Fresh as a rose in June" William Wordsworth describes his beloved not just as a rose but as a rose that blossoms in the beginning of summer. Most one-time bloom roses like Species roses and Old Garden roses will bloom most heavily in June. In order to properly bloom, roses need at least six hours of full sunlight per day. In places like Great Britain, cloudy conditions may persist until June, delaying the beginning of rose blooming season. It is important the roses get full morning sun since it will dry moisture that can lead to fungal disease.

"A red, red rose" is a poem composed by Scotland's national poet, Robert Burns.

O my Love is like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June;
O my Love is like the melody
That's why sweetly played in tune.

This poem also describes some quality a person has by conducted that meaning through varying flora world. Saying the beloved is like a rose "newly sprung in June" emphasizes her beauty and youth. We can see that in the poem the time blossoming time of the rose, June, is underlined again as in the previous example of William Wordsworth's. We can interpret resemblance given in the first two lines in two ways. "red rose" can be different, saying that the speaker's love for her is like a new rose implies that this is a new relationship, with all the freshness and excitement of a developing romance. Of course, a rose can only be "newly sprung" for a short time; June ends after thirty days, and flowers fade quickly. If the speaker's love is just like a new rose, maybe it won't last very long. The speaker begins with an image of the beloved that emphasizes her youth and beauty, suggesting a love that is enthusiastic but likely to fade with time. The speaker tells the reader that this love "like a red, red rose". Roses are most beautiful when "newly sprung" –but this is a beauty that, by definition, cannot last. Newness ends quickly, and all flowers eventually fade-they cannot be "red, red" forever. If "my Love" refers to the beloved, then comparing

⁴ www.genius.com

⁵ www.poetryfoundation.org

⁶ www.poemhunter.com

her to a rose acknowledges that she is beautiful will fade over time. Or if “my Love” refers to the speaker’s feelings for her, then it seems that the speaker’s feelings may also fade over time.

William Blake who wrote beautiful poems also used flower at the centers of his works for example “Pretty Rose Tree” from “Songs of Experience” published in the late 18th century described the period between late 18th and early 19th century with its harsh realities.

A flower was offered to me ,
Such a flower as May never bore ,
But I said , I’ve a pretty rose tree’.
And I passed the sweet flower o’er.
Then I went to my pretty rose tree,
To tend her by day and by night ;
But my rose turned away with jealousy,
A her thorns were my only delight

“A flower” which appears in the first line refers to a girl, so the poet was introduced, he didn’t have any intention for it, he didn’t look for it, but was offered. However, poet doesn’t deny that this flower’s beauty was more striking than nature. It can be felt from the positive commentary given in the second line:”Such a flower as May never bore”. As it is known May is a time for different plants and flowers to bloom. But this “flower” wasn’t just as others, it had superior beauty and charm. Word choice is also of special importance. It speaks about the level of importance of these plants to him. The poet uses “a flower” generally one blooming plant and doesn’t give any specific feature apart from its impressiveness. The reason is author himself isn’t familiar with “a flower”, he doesn’t know her well. On the other side he had strong commitment for his “ rose tree”. Though “a flower” was no doubt pretty, it couldn’t compare to a complete “tree” which consists of “roses”(several flowers). The choice of specific type of flower, roses, tells the reader more about the features of the poet’s true love. Obviously, with its incomparable fragrance and beauty rose is a queen of flowers ever. And here, we have the whole tree, mature female who earned poet’s love. Though the poet stayed committed to the rose tree in spite of his temptation to “a flower” and didn’t accept it, she was jealous and turned away. What made her angry? The rose could feel offended by Blake’s returning to her only after describing the beauty of “a flower”. We can see that “rose tree” appears only in the second stanza whereas in the first one we read about “a flower”. So, rose turned away, but even her thorns (anger and jealousy) are delight for the poet. Black frequently uses the image rose referring to a female. Another poem “Sick Rose” from “Song of experience” can prove it.

O Rose thou art sick.
The invisible worm,
That flies in the night
In the howling storm:
Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy,
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy⁷

Being addressed with capital letters, “Rose” is an example of full metaphor which refers to woman image. In religious verse rose was chosen as symbol for Virgin Mary. Being free of sin, she was referred as “rose without thorns” (Harrison N. 2016). When Black says “O Rose you are sick”, he actually refers to virginity of a women. In Black’s times, when religious had a great influence on society, virginity of women was very important for their reputation. When a worm with his dark secret love comes into her bed, he destroys her life destroying her virginity.

In Uzbek poetry flowers are also commonly used to describe female beauty. In the example below Mashrab, one of the 17th century Uzbek poets, masterly realized identification of a girl and four flowers and a tree simultaneously in two lines.

Ul lolayu rayhonu suman, toza qizil gul,
(She is tulip, mint, jasmine, newly blossome(unique)red flower)

⁷ www.poemhunter.com

Chun sarv qadin bukladi shamshod eshiginda.⁸

As I.R.Galperin says in metaphors embodied by a predicative word-combination like in the example above identification can be observed clearly. Mashrab says “She is tulip, mint, jasmine and newly blossomed red flower”. In the territories of Uzbekistan tulip can be found up the hills and mountains. However, it cannot be observed in big quantities, among millions of lollipops rarely one can find it. That is why this flower is also referred as “mountain princess” among Uzbeks. Mashrab seems to hint to her uniqueness. “Mint” is valued as “paradise flower” among Uzbek people. It is used both in the kitchen and flower bouquets. Because of its refreshing smell which is different from any other flowers, Uzbeks wear it to their ears (qulog’iga taqadi). Identification between a girl and mint is of their smell. “Suman” (jasmine) is also comes as “yosuman” in other ghazals (type of verse) of Mashrab. In Uzbek language dictionary, the word is defined as climbing plant with white, sometimes yellow flowers. Not only the flower jasmine is beautiful but it also has lovely smell. Author tends to highlight how sweet his beloved smells. The next identification which comes as “toza qizil gul” can be interpreted in different ways. It is clear that “qizil gul” is “red flower”, but when it comes to the word “toza” which means “fresh, clean” if translated directly, can be understood in different ways. “Toza” can give the meaning of “original, unique of its type and quality” (Uzbek word “asl”). It also can be understood as “fresh, just blossomed”. In the former meaning girl can be defined to be unique of its type while in the latter meaning she can be resembled to a newly blossomed red flower. In the second line “sarv”, a straight-growing coniferous evergreen tree, is resembled to the beautiful figure with flat back.

Mashrab mainly used flowers to describe female beauty, especially face. If the flowers red flower, jasmine, mint mentioned above mostly realized identification of smell, in the next lines we can see masterly use of the same flowers for depicting colour of the different parts of face.

Ikki ruxsoring qizil guldurmu yo bargi suman,

Donai rayhon qaro xolu xating sahni chaman,⁹

The first line is given in the form of question: “Are your two faces red flower or petals of jasmine?” Being given in predicative word-combination, metaphor is easily observed. When poet asks: “Are your two faces red flower?”, he means the red colour of cheeks. And when he asks: “or petals of jasmine”, he refers to the white face skin of the girl. In the second line he expresses the colour of birthmark which is on the face of the girl. “Donai rayhon”, “small piece of mint”, comes as attributive word before birthmark. Since mint can be of two type green and black (actually the colour is dark purple, but Uzbek people call it black), Mashrab is connecting the similarity between the colour of mint and birthmark.

In Uzbek poetry resemblance between rose’s and girls’ perfume can be frequently observed in present day poems too. For example, Iqbol Mirzo’s (famous contemporary Uzbek poet) uses the same kind of resemblance in his poem “Aylanay”

Ko’z munchog’ing qo’yma asti, dildorim, Don’t leave your amulet

Ay, aylanay, noziknihol qaddingdan. Oh, I adore you sprout body

Kuzagimni xushbo’y etgan bahorim, You are my spring that flavors

Ay, aylanay, atirgulim, atringdan.¹⁰ Oh, my rose I adore your perfume¹¹

In the last lines we can see that the author is calling his beloved “rose” because of the marvelous scent that it has. Roses attract attention with their floral fragrance which stays at the prior place of their features. Let’s have a look at some lines from the poem “Sog’indim” (I missed) by Muhammad Yusuf where identification tulip and cheeks are given in terms of colour. It should be mentioned that in Uzbek culture tulip is associated with only its natural colour of red though we can see other cultivated types with different colours.

Yashirib ne qildim sizlardan, Why do I need to hide from

Lola yonoq, hilol yuzlardan, _____ girls with tulip cheeks, moon faces

⁸ Mashrab. Agar oshiqligim aytsam-Toshkent: O’zbekiston.-2013, 17p

⁹ Mashrab. Agar oshiqligim aytsam-Toshkent: O’zbekiston.-2013, 231.

¹⁰ Iqbol M., Sizni kuylayman-Toshkent: Yoshlar.-2018, 59

¹¹ Suggested translation by author

To'ydim tillobarmoq qizlardn, that I am tired from aristocrats
Qo'li qadoqlarni sog'indim. I missed the ordinary ones¹²

IV. Discussion

The perception of female beauty in Europe differs from the one in Asia in terms of face color. In European culture as well as in English, women with fair skin have been recognized as beauty idols for many years whereas in Asian culture girls with flushed cheeks were found more beautiful. For this very reasons when English poets glorify women skin they use flower and plants which are white such as lily or grape in example mentioned above. When they describe cheeks they mostly use rose for resemblance. However it should be noted that the rosy cheeks seem to be not natural, but make up which is used from ancient time in Europe. On the other hand, Uzbek poets always associate it with flowers of red colour such as tulip, lollypop, rose and red flower. Different from Britain which is in Europe with mostly gloomy and cloudy days, Uzbekistan is located in Central Asia where almost all days of the year are sunny. From spring to autumn people slightly get sun burnt. It especially influences young people's face. Red cheeks indicate good health as well. Moreover, red cheeks speak about specific Uzbek culture concerning girls, sense of shyness. According to Uzbek culture, the main objective in upbringing a daughter in family is to teach her good manners. Good manners for Uzbek girls are different from those of boys. Boys are taught to be courageous, brave, independent and strong willed, while girls are taught to be more obedient to their parents first, later to their husbands; smart and devoted to their families since upbringing children will mainly lie on their shoulders and the most important one have a sense of shyness ("ibo-hayo"). Shyness is key factor that Uzbek girls are characterized by. Red cheeks are sign of shyness which in its place speak about good behavior of them. The poet uses "tulip" to describe the colour of cheeks of girls. Through this epithet author gives properties of girls' face, as flushed with the aim of showing individual perception and evaluation of it.

Mint, being used only in cooking in English culture, doesn't appear in poems as they are not seen flower bouquets. However in Uzbek culture it is mostly recognized as decorative flower rather than herb in the kitchen. There are a lot of association of its refreshing smell to girls, its shape and height to hair, its colour to birthmarks which can be seen from the examples given prior.

V. Conclusion

We can conclude that people, being one part of nature, cannot imagine their existence apart from other parts of nature. They closely associate themselves with different plants and this appears in their language. As above analysis, one can understand that without doubt flora can symbolize various human appearances, character, emotions and, even, their attitudes. While expressing themselves through flora the choice of flower is quite dependent on poet's cultural believes, the geographical location and climate of his country as well.

Reference

1. Haber T. Canine Terms in Popular Names of Plants // American Speech. – vol. 38, No.1, 1963.– pp. 28-41
2. Harrison N., Brief history of English rose., May 2016, Retrived from history extra
3. Iqbol M., Sizni kuylayman-Toshkent: Yoshlar, 2018.-191b.
4. Mashrab. Agar oshiqligim aytsam-Toshkent: O'zbekiston, 2013.-248 b
5. Xolmanova Z.B. "Boburnoma" leksikasi tadqiqi: Filol.fan.d-ri... diss. Avtoref. –Toshkent, 2009
6. Sahobiddinov S.S., Zokirov Q., Jamolxonov H. O'zbek botanika terminologiyasi masalalari. – Toshkent, 1966; Ko'rsatilgan mualliflar. Botanikadan ruscha-o'zbekcha ensiklopedik terminologiyasining tarkib topishi va rivojlanishi tarixidan. – Toshkent, 1967
7. www.genius.com
8. www.pinkfortitude.com
9. www.poemfoundation.org
10. www.poemhunter.com

¹² Suggested translation by author