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Phytonymic Units as Linguoculturological Markers in Abdulla Qodiriy's O'tkan Kunlar

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Abstract

This article examines phytonymic metaphorical units in Abdulla Qodiriy's O'tkan kunlar as linguocultural markers. Selected examples show how root, seed, lineage, and flower imagery encode social conflict, group continuity, female modesty, and Uzbek cultural worldview.

Key words: phytonym, linguoculturology, metaphor, Uzbek literary discourse, cultural semantics.

Introduction

In modern linguistics, literary language is studied not only as an aesthetic form of expression but also as a cultural code that preserves collective memory, value systems, and national worldview. Words that seem ordinary in everyday communication may become culturally marked signs in literary discourse. This is especially visible in the use of phytonyms, that is, names of plants and plant-related elements, including root, seed, flower, branch, tree, fruit, and related lexical images.

The relevance of this study is determined by the fact that phytonymic units often go beyond direct botanical nomination. In literary texts, they can express social evaluation, moral judgement, emotional condition, and ethnocultural experience. Cognitive linguistics explains this process through metaphorical mapping: abstract domains are interpreted through concrete experience (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Cultural linguistics, in turn, shows that key words and symbolic images reveal how a community conceptualizes human life, social relations, and values (Wierzbicka, 1997).

Abdulla Qodiriy's O'tkan kunlar is one of the central works of Uzbek literary discourse conveying colorful meanings through combination of the words as phraseological unit. The novel reflects not only personal love and tragic destiny but also political conflict, social hierarchy, moral responsibility, and the cultural atmosphere of nineteenth-century Turkestan. For this reason, plant-related metaphors in the novel are not decorative details; they function as linguoculturological signs. The aim of the article is to analyze selected phytonymic and seed-based metaphorical units in O'tkan kunlar and to reveal their cultural-semantic functions.

Methodology

The research is based on a qualitative descriptive method. The primary source is Abdulla Qodiriy's O'tkan kunlar, published in the Ziyouz electronic library edition (Qodiriy, 2008). The selected units were identified through close reading of the novel and were chosen according to three criteria: the presence of a plant or seed-related lexical image, metaphorical or phraseological meaning, and linguacultural relevance.

The analysis combines semantic, cognitive, and linguoculturological interpretation. First, the direct lexical meaning of each unit is considered. Second, its contextual function in the novel is explained. Third, the cultural meanings connected with Uzbek social experience, traditional worldview, gender representation, and political conflict are interpreted. This approach is consistent with phraseological and cultural-semantic studies, which regard fixed and semi-fixed expressions as carriers of national-cultural information (Newmark, 1988; Rahmatullayev, 1978).

Findings and Discussion

The selected data show that Qodiriy uses phytonymic imagery mainly in two semantic directions: social-political conflict and aesthetic-psychological characterization. The five most representative examples are presented below.

Table 1. Linguocultural Functions of Selected Expressions

No.	Unit and source	English meaning	Linguocultural function
1	*tomir yoymoq* (Qodiriy, 2008)	to spread roots	Harmful forces becoming deeply established in society.
2	*adovat urug'ini sochmoq* (Qodiriy, 2008)	to sow the seed of hatred	Intentional spread of conflict among people.
3	*adovat tuxumini sochmoq* (Qodiriy, 2008)	to scatter the seed of enmity	Production of hostility and social division.
4	*tuxumini quritmoq* (Qodiriy, 2008)	to dry up/destroy the seed	Elimination of lineage or group continuity.
5	*gul kabi yopiq* (Qodiriy, 2008)	closed like a flower	Feminine modesty, silence, delicacy, and inner emotion.

The metaphor of rootedness. The expression tomir yoymoq literally means "to spread roots." In the novel, it is used to describe destructive and quarrelsome elements that become rooted in society and pull ordinary people toward danger (Qodiriy, 2008). The root image is significant because root normally represents stability, continuity, and life. And as an image of the tree, it is the main source that keeps the truck to stand and the source of suppling energy the whole parts of it. Qodiriy transforms this positive biological model into a negative social metaphor: harmful forces grow invisibly but deeply. In Uzbek cultural thinking, a rooted phenomenon is difficult to remove; therefore, the phrase expresses not a temporary problem but a structural social danger. It means that basically the enemy stands in the close distant to us a main phenomenon of life, but they in reality their focus is to destroy us.

Sowing hatred as an agrarian-political metaphor. The unit adovat urug'ini sochmoq, "to sow the seed of hatred," is one of the strongest phytonymic metaphors in the novel (Qodiriy, 2008). It conceptualizes hostility as a seed that can be deliberately planted among people. This metaphor reflects an agrarian worldview: every future result begins with a seed. In the political context of the novel, hatred does not appear naturally; it is produced by leaders who benefit from division. The expression therefore performs an evaluative function and condemns social manipulation.

Seed imagery and the production of conflict. The expression adovat tuxumini sochmoq is semantically close to adovat urug'ini sochmoq (Qodiriy, 2008). Although tuxum may also mean "egg," in the cultural context it functions as a beginning, source, or reproductive image. It suggests that hostility has a generative origin and may multiply if it is scattered among people. This example demonstrates that Qodiriy's political language is grounded in folk conceptual models: social conflict is described as something planted, scattered, grown, and later harvested in the form of tragedy. Above in the second example we have seen nearly the same phraseological unit to this one, but author use synonym units actively instead of repeating the word twice.

Lineage, seed, and collective continuity. The expression tuxumini quritmoq, used in the phrase connected with Qipchoq identity, means to destroy the seed, lineage, or continuation of a group (Qodiriy, 2008). This is not a neutral botanical image; it is a strong ethnosocial metaphor. The "seed" represents ancestry, reproduction, tribal continuity, and collective existence. The phrase reveals the cruelty of political conflict, because the intended object is not only one individual but an entire social group. In linguoculturological terms, the expression connects plant/seed symbolism with genealogy and historical survival.

Flower imagery and feminine modesty. The expression gul kabi yopiq, "closed like a flower," is used in the description of Kumush (Qodiriy, 2008). The flower image is common in Uzbek and Oriental literary traditions, where

it is associated with beauty, tenderness, youth, and emotional delicacy. However, the adjective "closed" adds another cultural layer: modesty, silence, inner restraint, and the socially expected reserve of a young woman. In this context, the phytonym does not simply beautify the heroine; it encodes a culturally shaped model of femininity.

The comparative importance of these examples lies in their conceptual productivity. In English, expressions such as to take root and to sow the seeds of hatred also exist, which shows that some plant metaphors are universal. However, their Uzbek literary use is culturally specific because Qodiriy connects them with the social history, intergroup rivalry, family honour, and the moral psychology of traditional society. Translation of such units should therefore preserve both the image and its cultural explanation whenever possible (Newmark, 1988).

Conclusion

The analysis shows that phytonymic and seed-based metaphorical units in O'tkan kunlar function as linguoculturological markers. They reveal how Uzbek literary discourse uses plant imagery to conceptualize social danger, political manipulation, ethnic continuity, feminine beauty, and emotional restraint. Units such as tomir yoymoq and adovat urug'ini sochmoq represent social processes as biological growth, while gul kabi yopiq reflects the cultural aesthetics of modest femininity.

From a practical perspective, these units should be treated carefully in translation and literary analysis. Literal translation can preserve the lexical image, but it may not fully transmit the cultural meaning. Therefore, translators and researchers should combine semantic translation with contextual explanation. In language teaching, such examples can be used to develop students' awareness of metaphor, phraseology, and national worldview. Future research may compare Qodiriy's phytonymic imagery with similar plant-based metaphors in English, Indonesian, or other literary traditions.

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