

THE NATIONAL-CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF FLORA CODE SIMILES DESCRIBING WOMEN IN UZBEK AND KOREAN LANGUAGES

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Annotation: This article explores similes related to flora, including trees, flowers, and fruits, in the Uzbek and Korean languages. The study analyzes the different associations and connotations of these similes in the minds of the Uzbek and Korean peoples. The article also examines the similarities and differences in the mentality and culture of these nations through their use of flora-based similes to describe women. The key elements analyzed include tree-based, flower-based, and fruit-based similes and how they are employed to depict the beauty, delicacy, and value of women.

Keywords: simile, flora, linguocultural, connotation, association, tree, flower, fruit.

Introduction:

For humans, one of the oldest methods of understanding and interpreting the world is through metaphorical expressions. Metaphors are not simply a way of naming reality, but a tool for evaluating the surrounding world. They reflect human behaviors, natural phenomena, and various situations in everyday life in a figurative form. Through metaphorical expressions, objects or ideas can be vividly and clearly imagined without the need for lengthy explanations.

Among the types of metaphorical expressions, simile and metaphor are the most widely used. While a metaphor is a hidden metaphorical expression, a simile is a metaphorical expression that explicitly shows similarity using certain markers (‘같은[gatin]’, ‘처럼[chorom]’, ‘같이[gachi]’) [10, 1].

Simile has a long history, and its inclusion in scientific discourse can be traced back to Aristotle's *Poetics*. Aristotle defined metaphor as "a word that has been transferred from one kind to another or compared, not belonging to the original object" [1, 686]. "In fact, metaphor is just an abbreviated form of simile," he explained.

As seen, simile is one of the oldest methods of comprehending the outer world, reflecting the initial thought patterns and concepts of a specific culture. Through similes, we can capture the feelings and perceptions of our ancestors from a particular time period. It is worth noting that simile, not only a way of understanding the external world, also serves as one of the most effective methods of studying both language and culture.

According to data, individuals use similes an average of six times every minute during daily communication [11, 167], which indicates the significance of similes in both language and culture.

The biomorph code in culture is linked to living beings in the surrounding world, reflecting human perceptions of the world of animals or plants, which exist at the intersection of two realms. This cultural code is often related to existing stereotypes [3, 14]. In Uzbek and Korean languages, one of the most common cultural codes used in fixed similes is the biomorph code. This code primarily involves flora and fauna-related similes.

In the linguistic and cultural context of Uzbek and Korean languages, the flora group, which is assessed as a biomorph code, predominantly includes similes related to trees, flowers, and fruits. These flora-based similes primarily carry positive connotations, as humans have traditionally maintained a positive relationship with nature.

Flora-based similes are widely used to describe the beauty, delicacy, and worth of women. As such, the beauty of women is often compared to flowers, seedlings, lilies, chrysanthemums, apples, pomegranates, cherries, and peaches.

In Uzbek and Korean languages, flora-based similes used to describe women can be classified into the following types:

1. Tree-based similes
2. Flower-based similes
3. Fruit-based similes

Tree-Based Similes. In Korea, trees have long played an important role in various rituals dedicated to enhancing soil fertility, cultivating crops, and increasing animal populations. In particular, in South Korea, a ritual for a bountiful harvest is held when the peach tree blossoms, where offerings of rice cakes are made to the spirits. Old trees growing on mountains or hills were considered sacred, and cutting them was strictly prohibited. In rituals related to shamanism, the shaman tree served as a symbolic guide. Thus, in the Korean people's associations, a tree is seen as a symbol of the path connecting humans to the otherworld.

The concept of "tree" generates various associative chains in different cultures. For example, when thinking of a tree, Uzbeks may imagine the plane tree, poplar, mulberry, or willow, while Turks may think of the mulberry (söğüt), cypress (çam), and Russians may associate it with the oak, birch, and ash. Koreans, in turn, are likely to envision pine trees, bamboo, zelkova, birch, ash, and willows [5, 164].

In Uzbek culture, certain practices are rooted in tree worship and related myths. For instance, planting a tree when a child is born, cutting down a dead tree from the garden, burying a child's first haircut under a fruit tree, throwing nails under a tree, making cradles from fruit trees or willow wood, venerating long-lived trees like the plane, walnut, mulberry, willow, poplar, and cypress, and having barren or childless women hug trees are all customs tied to tree cults and mythology [2, 4].

Willow Tree: In Korean traditions, it is believed that the willow has magical powers that invigorate nature and increase soil fertility. The willow is a symbol of femininity and loyalty. Additionally, the image of two intertwined willow branches serves as a symbol of eternal love:

"Like the willow tree in his palace, he must be with her for life." 늘 그의 궁에 자리한 버드나무처럼 평생 그와 함께 하자는 반려의 의미였다. (Kim Chaeha, *The Partner of the Death*).

"The willow tree in Dongho's mind represented a person who lives with loyalty, so I couldn't stop my heart from running to him." 동호가 저 버드나무처럼 성실하게 살아오는 사람이라고 생각하니 그에게로 달리는 마음을 건잡을 수 없었다 (청년문예작품집).

In Uzbek, the term "willow" is often used metaphorically to describe a girl's slender figure, as in: "In my view, the world seemed filled with an amazing light, and I embraced the girl's waist, which was as thin as a willow" (O. Yoqubov, *Where Are You, Moriko?*).

In addition to willow, Uzbek language uses other similes to describe a woman's graceful physique, such as "as slim as a sambit," "as straight as a cypress," and "as elegant as a shamshod."

Flower-Based Similes. Flowers are symbols of delicacy, beauty, and refinement, and they also serve as a medium that brings people closer together. Over the centuries, flowers have become a symbol of human passions, admired for their beauty, colors, shapes, and fragrances. In every culture, there is a unique foundation for forming linguistic imagery that combines these natural beauties with an aesthetic sense.

In many linguistic cultures, the "flower" is regarded as a symbol of beauty and femininity. However, in Eastern mythologies, flowers are also interpreted as representations of an unstable woman who changes her form. It is believed that a woman, under the influence of diabolical forces, transforms into a flower to seduce men, leading them into secluded places where they meet their downfall [8, 116].

Flora-Based Similes. The beautiful forms of the material world, such as flowers, saplings, tulips, and violets, symbolize human qualities and express the idea that humans, like these delicate creations, are beautiful, fragile, and precious beings [7, 80]. Since humans understand the world through comparison, it is no surprise that elements of the objective world serve as the main vehicles for such comparisons. For example, in Japan, the jellyfish symbolizes beauty, while in Uzbekistan, the flower is a symbol of beauty and charm. A few examples:

- "My wife, like a flower, withered away." (Iymona, *Trials of Destiny*). In Korean linguistic culture, the flower is also a symbol of beauty, with beautiful women often compared to flowers:

- "You must be happy to have such a beautiful daughter, like a flower." (Standard Korean Dictionary). In Uzbek, the *atirgul* (rose) simile is primarily used to describe women's beauty:

- "My bride is as beautiful as a rose." (T. Sodiqova, *The Magic of Living*). In Korean linguistic culture, the rose metaphor is often associated with life, death, and love. Examples include:

- "Life is noble like a deer and beautiful like a rose." (Lee Soonwon, *No Name - Solitude, Self-Awareness, and Aesthetic Restraint*)

- "Perhaps you thought death was as beautiful as a rose." (Silyeon, *Noeun*)

The *tulip* symbolizes purity, beauty, elegance, and great happiness, typically linked to spring. In Uzbek, the *lola* (tulip) metaphor is used to express beauty and maturity:

- "Always be as beautiful as a tulip, Shahnoz. I picked it myself." (D. Rahmat, *In Search of the Tulip*). In Korean, the tulip metaphor is used to describe beauty, especially in relation to a person's outer appearance:

- "The bride Okdam was as beautiful as a tulip and fragrant like a lilac." (Lee Taejoon, *Short Story Collection*)

The *g'uncha* (bud) metaphor is used in both Uzbek and Korean cultures to compare a woman's lips or to describe young, delicate, or vulnerable people:

- "You are still like a bud, so delicate." (D. Polvon, *I Love You So Much*)

- "Young-ok, like a flower bud, was enduring a fierce interrogation in a police station."
(Ko Myeongsoo, *My Flower Garden*)

Fruit-Based Similes. In both Uzbek and Korean cultures, fruit names like apple, pomegranate, cherry, peach, and apricot serve as symbolic models with positive connotations. These metaphors help express qualities of usefulness, edibility, and health, which in turn foster a positive perception of them. The symbolic attributes of these fruits, such as their shape, color, and form, may also serve as standards in the evaluation of other things.

The *apple* is a symbol of beauty and health in many cultures. It is often associated with love, youth, and eternal vitality in folklore, myths, and legends. "Apple motifs are common in many cultures' folklore, and in Uzbek folk songs, the apple symbol is not only a representation of love and beauty but also conveys deeper meanings like fertility, choosing a lover, and other layers of meaning" [12]. The apple metaphor is frequently used to describe a woman's face, particularly her cheeks:

- "Her eyebrows connected, her cheeks were like apples, her lips were like a bud, and I stared at her graceful figure, only noticing her serious eyes." (Obid, *Meeting the Devil*). In Korean culture, the apple metaphor is used to describe beautiful faces:

- "Yonghee's apple-like beautiful face had a scar." (Yonghee)

In Uzbek, sometimes a woman's beautiful chest is also metaphorically compared to an apple.

Anor (Pomegranate). In the ancient myths of the world's peoples, the pomegranate is referred to as "the king of fruits," symbolizing sovereignty, power, love, and loyalty. Additionally, the pomegranate is a symbol of fertility, love, and numerous children. The comparisons associated with the pomegranate are formed based on its color, shape, and parts. Therefore, the pomegranate's bright red color is compared to a red face:

- One couldn't say that she was an old woman in her fifties.
- Her face was as red as a pomegranate (T. Murod, *People Walking in the Moonlight*).

In Korean linguoculture, the pomegranate's red color is compared to a red face and red lips. Pay attention to the examples:

대낮 같으면 영신의 얼굴이 석류처럼 발개진 것을 볼 수 있었으리라 (심훈, 상록수).

"If it had been daytime, one could have seen Yongsin's face turning red like a pomegranate" (Sim Hun, *The Evergreen Tree*).

새까만 눈동자와 석류처럼 붉은 입술, 눈처럼 하얀 피부의 조선 소녀 이란!(이상원, 란 이야기).

"With dark eyes and lips as red as a pomegranate, the Korean girl Iran, with her skin as white as snow!" (Lee Sang Won, *The Story of Ran*).

Additionally, in Korean culture, the beauty of a person's life is compared to a pomegranate:

최선을 다하는 삶은 석류처럼 아름답다 (강판권, 미술관에 사는 나무들)

"A life lived with utmost effort is as beautiful as a pomegranate" (Kang Pan Gyeon, *The Trees Living in the Art Museum*).

In Uzbek linguoculture, the shape of the pomegranate is used as a positive reference when describing a woman's breasts: Azimjon furtively glanced at the girl's beautiful shoulders and pomegranate-shaped bust (B. Mirzo, *Oybahor and Dinara*).

Gilos (Cherry). The positive connotation of the comparison to cherries is especially used to describe red lips. For example: "Her lips, as red as cherries, were cut with passion, and her 'mini' skirt fluttered as she hesitated whether to step forward or not" (R. Ummatov, *Conversations*).

The flora-related metaphors in both cultures are significant because each nation's unique flora plays an important role. Uzbek varieties of cherries (black cherries, red cherries, yellow cherries) do not exist in Korea. In Korea, black cherries are called "cherry" in Korean, and the smaller, bright red Korean cherry known as "engdu" is cultivated in the humid climate of Korea. Korean girls' lips are often compared to this engdu:

아주 예쁜 여자의 입술을 앵두 같다고도 합니다. 앵두 같은 입술을 '앵구'라고 합니다. 앵두 같은 입술이 아주 아름다워 앵구는 미인을 뜻하기도 합니다 (강판권, 나무열전). "Very beautiful women's lips are sometimes said to resemble engdu cherries. Lips like engdu cherries are called 'eng-gu.' Lips like engdu cherries are considered so beautiful that the term 'eng-gu' also means a beautiful woman" (Kang Pan Gyeon, *The Biography of the Tree*).

Shaftoli (Peach). In the cultural perceptions of beauty in both Uzbek and Korean societies, the peach is also used as an ideal. In Uzbek linguoculture, the peach is used to describe a woman's lips and breasts. The cultural norm expressed here is that the warmth of the lips is

compared to heat, and the shape of the breasts is associated with roundness and softness. This can be supported by the following examples:

"However... the moment he saw his still unmarried lover, he described how he kissed her warm lips, her peach-like lips firmly attached to his" (A. Abdullayev, *Impressions*).

"In reality, Oltinoy's waist was as slender as a needle and obedient, and her breasts, now fully developed, were round, soft, and firm, like a peach" (O. Yoqubov, *The Place of Justice*).

In Korean, the color of the peach or peach flower is often used as an ideal for describing a woman's face or cheeks: 처녀도 추운 듯 힐끗 보다가 두 눈의 시선이 마주치자 처녀의 얼굴이 복사꽃같이 붉어졌다 (주요섭, 미완성). "When the girl seemed cold and glanced sideways, her face turned as pink as a peach blossom" (Ju Yo Seob, *Incomplete*).

O'rik (Apricot) Furthermore, in Korean linguoculture, apricot flowers are used as a standard for a beautiful, clear, and bright face: 그의 말은 환한 살구꽃 같은 그의 얼굴과 잘도 조화되는 듯했다. (이원수, 살구꽃 같은 동행). "His words seemed to harmonize perfectly with his face, which was as bright as an apricot flower" (Lee Won Su, *The Companion Like Apricot Flowers*).

Another distinct national and ethnic metaphor not found in other cultures is the comparison of love to the sweet taste of an apricot.

Sweet Love Story Like an Apricot. "A sweet love story like an apricot. The drama 'I'm going crazy. Because of you' will be aired" (www.daum.net). In this phrase, the sweet love story is compared to the taste of an apricot, and the drama portrays the intense emotions of love.

National-Ethnic and Anthropological Characteristics. In different cultures, the concept of beauty is often linked to eye colors that are not necessarily the same, but rather represent different hues. In Russia, blue is associated with beauty, in England, green, and in Uzbekistan, black eyes are considered an essential part of national appearance and beauty [4, 15]. Therefore, in Uzbek linguoculture, the comparison of a beautiful, alluring eye to a round, black grape—charos—is a traditional way of expressing beauty. For example: His charos-like black eyes were guarded by long lashes like a spear (M. Haratqulov, *Ko'kko'l*).

In Korean linguoculture, there is also the tradition of comparing black eyes to grapes. In this case, attention is paid not only to the color (blackness) of the grape but also to its softness. In Korea's humid climate, a large, black, and soft variety of grape is cultivated. The comparison

object here is precisely this variety of grape and its individual grains, known as 포도알 (podoal).

As mentioned above, the comparison to charos-like eyes primarily expresses the shape and color of the eyes. The cultural content inferred from these comparisons is that beautiful eyes are characterized by being round, relatively large, and black. The lexeme *charos* serves to express stereotypical ideas about beautiful eyes. It appears that, according to Uzbek mentality, beautiful eyes are round and black. Therefore, these comparisons not only describe the shape and color of the eyes but also express a positive evaluation of them, reflecting the cultural values of the people.

Conclusion. In the majority of flora-based comparisons in Uzbek and Korean linguocultures, the beauty of women is described. A woman's beautiful face is often compared to a flower, a lily, or a bud. In the unique flora of the Korean peninsula, flowers such as 수국꽃 (sugukkot) hydrangea and 백합꽃 (bekkapkkot) water lilies also serve as comparison objects when describing beautiful faces.

In both Uzbek and Korean languages, fruits such as apples, pomegranates, cherries, grapes, peaches, and apricots are widely used as metaphors to describe the beauty of women, especially their faces, cheeks, lips, and eyes. Furthermore, when the properties of fruits—such as their shape, color, taste, softness, or hardness—serve as the basis for comparison, certain differences are also observed. For instance, in Uzbek, the round shape and hardness of fruits like apples, pomegranates, and peaches are used to describe women's breasts in a positive light. In contrast, in Korean, the color of apricots and peaches is used to describe the faces or cheeks of women.

The national-ethnic and anthropological features of the Uzbek and Korean peoples are particularly evident in the depiction of eye shapes. For Uzbeks, large, round, and black eyes (like charos or pearls) are considered the norm for national appearance. One of the anthropological characteristics of Koreans is their narrow-shaped eyes. Thus, according to the Korean stereotype, the ideal shape for beautiful eyes is 초승달 (chosingdal), meaning the crescent moon.

Overall, studying flora-based comparisons reveals the national worldview, cultural values, mentality, and unique life experiences of speakers of each language.

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