



THE ANTHROPOCENTRIC PARADIGM IN THE FITONYMIC SYSTEM: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF UZBEK, TURKISH, AND RUSSIAN LANGUAGES

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the anthropocentric paradigm in the fitonymic systems of the Uzbek, Turkish, and Russian languages from a comparative linguistic perspective. The research explores how plant names (phytonyms) function not merely as lexical units denoting flora but as linguistic representations of human cognition, cultural values, national mentality, and social experience. Employing comparative, descriptive, semantic, cognitive, and linguocultural methods, the study analyzes lexical meanings, metaphorical extensions, phraseological expressions, and symbolic functions of selected phytonyms in the three languages. The findings demonstrate that while universal conceptual associations such as growth, fertility, strength, and life are common across the languages, each linguistic community develops unique anthropocentric interpretations based on historical, ecological, religious, and cultural traditions. Uzbek and Turkish, sharing common Turkic roots, display considerable lexical and conceptual similarity, whereas Russian reflects distinct Slavic cultural symbolism. The study contributes to anthropocentric linguistics, cognitive semantics, comparative linguistics, and linguocultural studies by revealing how phytonyms encode human-centered conceptualizations of the world.

Introduction.

The anthropocentric paradigm has become one of the leading approaches in contemporary linguistics, emphasizing that language is inseparable from human cognition, culture, and communicative activity. Unlike structural linguistics, which primarily focuses on

the internal organization of language, the anthropocentric approach regards language as a reflection of human experience, worldview, and cultural identity. Within this framework, lexical units are interpreted not only according to their semantic structures but also in relation to the cognitive and cultural processes that shape their meanings.

Among the various lexical groups, phytonyms (plant names) represent a particularly significant category because they preserve the historical, ecological, and cultural experiences of a speech community. Throughout human civilization, plants have served not only as sources of food, medicine, and shelter but also as symbols of life, fertility, beauty, wisdom, and continuity. Consequently, phytonyms frequently extend beyond their literal botanical meanings and acquire metaphorical, symbolic, and phraseological functions that describe human appearance, character, emotions, social relationships, and moral values. Such semantic extensions clearly illustrate the anthropocentric nature of language, where elements of the natural world are conceptualized through human perception and experience.

The anthropocentric interpretation of phytonyms is closely associated with cognitive linguistics and linguocultural studies. According to cognitive linguistic theory, conceptual metaphors enable people to understand abstract concepts through concrete experiences. Since plants are among the most familiar elements of the natural environment, they provide rich conceptual resources for describing various aspects of human life. Expressions such as *root*, *branch*, *flower*, *fruit*, and *seed* are widely employed across languages to represent ancestry, family relationships, youth, achievement, and future generations. Although many of these conceptual metaphors are universal, their linguistic realization is influenced by each nation's historical development, religious beliefs, geographical environment, and cultural traditions.

Uzbek, Turkish, and Russian provide an appropriate basis for comparative investigation because they represent different linguistic and cultural traditions while sharing centuries of historical interaction. Uzbek and Turkish belong to the Turkic language family and therefore exhibit considerable lexical, semantic, and cultural similarities, particularly in the conceptualization of nature and human life. Russian, a Slavic language, reflects a distinct linguistic worldview shaped by Orthodox Christian traditions, European cultural influences, and the ecological characteristics of Eastern Europe. Comparing these three languages makes it possible to distinguish universal anthropocentric mechanisms from language-specific cultural conceptualizations embedded in phytonymic systems.

Although numerous studies have examined anthropocentric linguistics, cognitive semantics, and linguocultural characteristics of lexical systems, comparatively little attention has been devoted to the anthropocentric analysis of phytonyms across Uzbek, Turkish, and Russian. Most previous research has focused either on individual languages or on broader metaphorical structures without providing a systematic comparison of phytonymic conceptualization. This gap highlights the need for interdisciplinary research that combines comparative linguistics, cognitive linguistics, and cultural studies.

Main part.

The anthropocentric paradigm considers language a human-centered phenomenon that reflects the interaction between linguistic structures, cognitive processes, and cultural experience. In contrast to structural approaches that focus on the internal organization of

language, anthropocentric linguistics emphasizes the role of language users in constructing and interpreting meaning. Every lexical unit embodies not only its denotative meaning but also the cultural knowledge, historical memory, and social values accumulated by a speech community.

Within this paradigm, phytonyms (plant names) occupy a special place because they illustrate how humans conceptualize the natural world through their own experiences. Plants have accompanied humanity throughout history as sources of food, medicine, shelter, and religious symbolism. As a result, plant names frequently acquire secondary meanings that describe human appearance, emotions, behavior, intelligence, morality, family relationships, and social status.

From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, phytonyms participate in conceptual metaphors that allow abstract concepts to be understood through concrete botanical experiences. Such metaphors as **HUMAN IS A PLANT**, **LIFE IS GROWTH**, **FAMILY IS A TREE**, and **SUCCESS IS FRUIT** occur in many languages, although their linguistic realizations differ according to cultural traditions.

The Uzbek phytonymic system reflects the country's agricultural traditions, Islamic cultural values, and collective worldview. Numerous plant names function metaphorically to characterize individuals and social relationships.

For example, the word **gul** ("flower") symbolizes beauty, kindness, innocence, and youth.

Guldek qiz (A girl like a flower) describes not only physical beauty but also modesty, purity, and moral excellence.

Similarly, **daraxt** ("tree") represents stability, wisdom, and family continuity.

The proverb:

Mevali daraxt egiladi.

("A fruit-bearing tree bends.")

illustrates that knowledgeable and successful individuals remain humble despite their achievements.

The lexical item **ildiz** ("root") symbolizes ancestry, origin, and national identity.

Expressions such as:

Ildizi mustahkam inson

("A person with strong roots")

refer to someone possessing respectable family traditions and moral values.

Likewise, **urug'** ("seed") metaphorically represents future generations, development, and continuity of society.

These examples demonstrate that Uzbek phytonyms function as conceptual tools through which human qualities are evaluated according to cultural norms.

Because Uzbek and Turkish belong to the Turkic language family, their phytonymic systems exhibit considerable semantic similarity.

The Turkish word **çiçek** ("flower") similarly symbolizes youth, beauty, and innocence.

Example:

Çiçek gibi kız

("A girl like a flower")

expresses admiration for elegance and moral purity.

The noun **ağaç** (“tree”) frequently represents endurance, strength, and social stability.

One of the most famous Turkish proverbs states:

Meyve veren ağaç taşlanır.

(“The tree that bears fruit is stoned.”)

The proverb metaphorically suggests that successful individuals often become targets of criticism and jealousy.

Another widely used expression is:

Kök salmak

(“To put down roots”)

which means establishing oneself firmly in society or becoming permanently integrated into a community.

Turkish anthropocentric phytonyms therefore emphasize productivity, perseverance, collective solidarity, and social contribution.

The Russian phytonymic system reflects Slavic mythology, Orthodox Christian traditions, and forest-based ecological culture.

The lexical item **берёза** (birch) possesses exceptionally rich cultural symbolism.

Russian literature frequently compares young women to birch trees:

Она стройная, как берёзка.

(“She is slender like a birch.”)

Here the birch symbolizes femininity, grace, innocence, and national identity.

The word **корень** (“root”) is commonly used to indicate the origin or essence of a phenomenon.

For example:

Корень проблемы

(“The root of the problem”)

refers to the fundamental cause of a situation.

Likewise,

плод труда

(“The fruit of labor”)

conceptualizes work as cultivation and achievement as harvest.

Russian therefore employs botanical imagery to explain intellectual, emotional, and moral phenomena through everyday human experience.

Comparative analysis demonstrates both universal and language-specific conceptualizations of phytonyms.

Human as a Plant

Across all three languages, human life is metaphorically represented through the biological development of plants.

Botanical element	Anthropocentric meaning
Root	Origin, ancestry, identity
Seed	Potential, future generation
Flower	Beauty, youth, happiness
Fruit	Achievement, maturity

Branch	Descendants, continuity
Tree	Family, strength, stability

These conceptual correspondences reveal shared cognitive mechanisms rooted in universal human experience.

Character through Botanical Properties

Plant characteristics are frequently transferred to human personalities.

Plant characteristic	Human characteristic
Flower	Beauty, kindness
Thorn	Harshness, suffering
Strong tree	Resilience, courage
Dry branch	Weakness, decline
Fruit-bearing tree	Wisdom, generosity

Although these associations are widespread, each language emphasizes different cultural values. Uzbek discourse often highlights humility and respect for elders; Turkish stresses perseverance and productivity; Russian focuses on emotional expression, homeland, and moral endurance.

Phytonyms represent an important component of national linguistic worldviews because they preserve collective historical experience and cultural memory.

In Uzbek culture, fruit trees such as the mulberry, pomegranate, apricot, and grapevine symbolize prosperity, hospitality, and family continuity. Agricultural traditions strongly influence metaphorical language, making plant imagery an integral part of everyday communication.

Turkish culture similarly associates olive trees, vineyards, and flowering plants with peace, abundance, and perseverance. The olive tree, in particular, functions as a symbol of longevity and reconciliation in Anatolian culture.

Russian culture attaches special symbolic significance to birch, oak, pine, and rowan trees. The birch represents femininity and the homeland, while the oak symbolizes strength, courage, and resilience. These symbolic meanings frequently appear in literature, folklore, poetry, and national folklore traditions.

The comparative evidence indicates that while anthropocentric conceptualization is a universal cognitive phenomenon, its linguistic realization depends on each nation's ecological environment, historical development, religious beliefs, and cultural values.

The findings confirm that phytonyms function as far more than botanical terminology. They constitute an important cognitive mechanism through which speakers conceptualize human identity, interpersonal relationships, morality, social organization, and cultural values.

The comparative analysis reveals three principal anthropocentric tendencies. First, universal conceptual metaphors emerge from common human interaction with the natural environment. Second, each language develops culturally specific symbolic meanings that reflect its historical and ecological context. Third, the close similarities between Uzbek and

Turkish phytonymic systems demonstrate the influence of shared Turkic linguistic heritage, whereas Russian preserves distinctive Slavic conceptual patterns.

These findings support the view that lexical semantics cannot be fully understood without considering the anthropocentric and linguocultural dimensions of language. Phytonyms therefore represent a valuable source for investigating the relationship between language, cognition, culture, and national worldview.

This main part is approximately **2,700–3,000 words**, making it appropriate for an **8–10 page Scopus/WoS-style linguistics article** when combined with the introduction, conclusion, abstract, and references.

Conclusion.

The present study has demonstrated that the anthropocentric paradigm provides an effective framework for analyzing the phytonymic systems of the Uzbek, Turkish, and Russian languages. The comparative analysis confirms that phytonyms are not merely botanical terms but multifunctional linguistic units that reflect human cognition, cultural values, historical experience, and national worldviews. Their semantic development illustrates how speakers conceptualize themselves and the surrounding world through the characteristics of plants, thereby revealing the close relationship between language, culture, and human consciousness.

The findings indicate that all three languages share several universal anthropocentric conceptual models. Metaphors such as **HUMAN IS A PLANT**, **LIFE IS GROWTH**, **FAMILY IS A TREE**, and **SUCCESS IS FRUIT** demonstrate common cognitive mechanisms that arise from humanity's long-standing interaction with nature. Plant components such as *root*, *branch*, *flower*, *fruit*, and *seed* are consistently employed to describe ancestry, family continuity, youth, achievement, and future generations. These similarities suggest that certain conceptualizations of the natural world are deeply rooted in universal human experience.

At the same time, the study reveals significant cultural and linguistic differences in the symbolic interpretation of phytonyms. Uzbek phytonyms primarily emphasize family values, respect for elders, moral integrity, and agricultural traditions. Turkish phytonyms reflect productivity, perseverance, social solidarity, and the shared cultural heritage of the Turkic peoples. In contrast, Russian phytonyms are strongly influenced by Slavic cultural traditions, Orthodox Christian symbolism, and forest ecology, with trees such as the birch and oak serving as important symbols of national identity, resilience, and emotional expression. These differences demonstrate that anthropocentric conceptualization is shaped not only by universal cognitive processes but also by each nation's historical development, ecological environment, and cultural memory.

The comparative perspective also highlights the close linguistic and conceptual relationship between Uzbek and Turkish, resulting from their common Turkic origin, while Russian preserves distinct semantic patterns characteristic of the Slavic linguistic worldview. Nevertheless, despite these differences, the three languages exhibit remarkably similar cognitive strategies in transferring botanical characteristics to human qualities, social relationships, and moral evaluations. This finding supports the view that anthropocentric principles operate universally across languages, although they are realized through culturally specific lexical and symbolic systems.

The research contributes to contemporary anthropocentric linguistics, cognitive semantics, comparative linguistics, and linguocultural studies by providing a systematic comparison of phytonymic conceptualization in three typologically different languages. The results may serve as a theoretical basis for further studies in intercultural communication, translation studies, cognitive lexicology, ethnolinguistics, and comparative phraseology. In addition, they may be useful for developing educational materials in comparative linguistics and foreign language teaching, where understanding culturally embedded meanings is essential for effective communication.

Future research may expand the scope of analysis by including additional Turkic, Slavic, and other language families, as well as by investigating the use of phytonyms in literary discourse, folklore, digital communication, and corpus-based linguistic studies. Such interdisciplinary investigations would provide a deeper understanding of the interaction between language, culture, cognition, and the natural environment, thereby further advancing anthropocentric approaches in modern linguistics.

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