



THE HISTORY OF STUDYING FLORA-FAUNA COMPONENT IDIOMS IN UZBEK LINGUISTICS

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ABSTRACT

This article outlines the historical development of research on flora- and fauna-component idioms within Uzbek linguistics, from the foundational explanatory phraseological and paremiological dictionaries of the late Soviet period through general Turkological treatments of phraseology to the recent emergence of dedicated comparative English-Uzbek studies. The article situates Uzbek scholarship within the broader Turkic-linguistic context, drawing a parallel with the recently documented trajectory of Azerbaijani onomastic phraseology, and identifies zoonym-component research and diachronic study as areas that remain comparatively underdeveloped in the available literature.

Introduction. Research on flora- and fauna-component idioms in Uzbek linguistics has developed along a trajectory that both parallels and, in certain respects, lags behind the equivalent trajectory in English and broader Turkic scholarship. This article traces that trajectory in three stages: the foundational lexicographic stage, the general Turkological stage in which Uzbek phraseology was situated within a broader Turkic-linguistic framework, and the recent stage of dedicated comparative English-Uzbek research. The article closes by identifying gaps that remain in the current literature.

The Foundational Lexicographic Stage. The documentary basis for the study of Uzbek phraseology, including phraseology built on plant and animal names, was established by Sh. Rahmatullaev's *O'zbek tilining izohli frazeologik lug'ati* (Explanatory Phraseological Dictionary of the Uzbek Language), published in 1978, which remains the primary



lexicographic source cited in current comparative research on Uzbek phraseology [Khalibekova, 2020: 560]. This was complemented by Sh. Shomaqsudov's O'zbek xalq maqollarining izohli lug'ati (Explanatory Dictionary of Uzbek Folk Proverbs), published in 1990, which extended the documentary base from phraseological units proper to the closely related paremiological material in which flora- and fauna-based imagery is likewise pervasive [Khalibekova, 2020: 560]. Together, these two dictionaries continue to serve as the principal data sources for continuous-sampling studies of Uzbek phytonymic phraseology conducted to the present day.

The General Turkological Stage. Following this lexicographic foundation, Uzbek phraseology, including its flora- and fauna-component layer, came to be situated within broader treatments of Turkic phraseology as a whole rather than studied as an independent national tradition. G. Mahmudova's Phraseology of Turkic Languages examined phraseological units containing plant names across the Turkic language family collectively, terming them phytphraseologisms and noting that they form a minority relative to somatic phraseological units and zoophraseologisms; the author explained this relative scarcity by reference to the historically central role of livestock, particularly camels, horses and sheep, in the life of Kipchak-speaking peoples, a factor that favoured the productivity of zoonym-based rather than phytonym-based phraseology in this language group [Mirzayeva, 2021: 41]. M. Mirzaliyeva's Phraseology of Turkic Languages proposed a six-criterion classificatory framework, based on scope, formation principle, semantic structure, semantic junction, lexical structure and stylistic characteristics, that was likewise developed for Turkic material in general rather than for Uzbek specifically [Mirzayeva, 2021: 41]. A. Gurbanov's foundational work on Azerbaijani onomastics, though centred on Azerbaijani, exemplifies the broader taxonomic approach applied across Turkic onomastics during this period, and explicitly acknowledged that Turkological onomastics as a whole lacked a clear classification of phytonyms at the time of writing [Mirzayeva, 2021: 41].

The Stage of Dedicated Comparative Research. A distinctly Uzbek-focused, comparative strand of research emerged more recently. Khalibekova's study of the semantic features of English and Uzbek phraseological units with the phytonym component applied continuous sampling from Rahmatullaev's and Shomaqsudov's dictionaries alongside English lexicographic sources, identifying seventy-five Uzbek phytonym-based units against more than seventy English units and establishing a detailed comparative breakdown by component and by connotative orientation [Khalibekova, 2020: 559–562]. This is, on the evidence of the available literature, one of the first studies to treat English-Uzbek phytonymic phraseology as a dedicated comparative object in its own right, rather than as a subordinate illustration within a general Turkological account.

A closely related development occurred in Azerbaijani linguistics at almost the same time. Mirzayeva's comparative study of English, Azerbaijani and Russian phytonymic phraseology explicitly noted that Azerbaijani onomastic phraseology had not previously been studied either



in general terms or in comparison with English and other languages, and that insufficient attention had been paid to the national-cultural specificity of onomastic phraseology in Azerbaijani scholarship prior to that work [Mirzayeva, 2021: 40]. Although concerned with Azerbaijani rather than Uzbek material, this study illustrates a closely parallel gap and a closely parallel remedy within a sister Turkic-language tradition, and its methodological apparatus, including the distinction between species and type names and the quantitative benchmarking of individual phytonyms such as rose and apple, is directly applicable to further Uzbek-focused research [Mirzayeva, 2021: 41–43].

Remaining Gaps. Two gaps stand out in the trajectory traced above. First, while Mahmudova's Turkological account explains why zoonym-based phraseology is comparatively more productive than phytonym-based phraseology in Turkic languages generally, dedicated comparative studies of English-Uzbek zoonymic phraseology, analogous to Khalibekova's treatment of the phytonym component, do not appear to be as well represented in the available literature as phytonym-focused research. Second, the diachronic, etymological dimension of Uzbek flora- and fauna-based idioms, that is, the historical process by which particular figurative meanings became attached to particular plant and animal names, remains comparatively unexplored in the sources reviewed here, which are predominantly synchronic in orientation.

Conclusion. The study of flora- and fauna-component idioms in Uzbek linguistics has moved from a foundational lexicographic stage, represented by Rahmatullaev's and Shomaqsudov's dictionaries, through a general Turkological stage in which Uzbek material was treated as part of a broader Turkic-language phenomenon, to a recent stage of dedicated English-Uzbek comparative research exemplified by Khalibekova's study. This trajectory closely parallels developments in neighbouring Azerbaijani scholarship. Zoonym-focused comparative research and diachronic investigation of the historical motivation behind individual Uzbek phytonymic and zoonymic expressions remain the most evident directions for further work.

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