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### **Symbolic Meanings of Phytonyms in the English and Ukrainian Languages**

The naming of objects and phenomena of the environment is based on people’s spiritual and cultural experience. Linguists have been interested in researching phytonyms as words that both name plants and reflect the cognitive principles of denoting flora varieties in cultures of different nations. One of the components of the national world picture is the image of a plant, which is reflected in the nation’s folklore and language. Names of plants are based on both objective characteristics and subjective perception, with some emotional attitude of native speakers, too. Symbols embody certain moral values and mental insights that have been developed by mankind for millennia. They help enrich the world of signs and meanings. Plants symbolization is present in the culture of any people, and it is one of the earliest forms of artistic developments in history. This viewpoint has been explored and illustrated by folklorists, including J.E. Cirlot [4], O.A. Kutsyk [2], A.S. Mercatante [5], J.M. Paterson [6], I.N. Podolian [3], and N.F. Zolotnitskiy [1], and it remains a highly important and interesting research domain for language learners and translators. Flower names that symbolize the ideals of beauty and ugliness, high and low, earth and divinity, female and male have a significant place in the rich variety of symbolic designations in British and Ukrainian cultures. Therefore, the present study is aimed at specifying the linguocultural peculiarities of symbolic phytonyms in English and Ukrainian comparatively.

For example, a *rose* is a complex symbol. It is ambivalent as it symbolizes heaven perfection and earth passion, time and eternity, life and death, fertility and virginity. A rose that has faded is a symbol of death and sorrow, silence and mystery. A single rose is a symbol of completion, of consummate achievement and perfection. Accruing to it are all ideas associated with these qualities: the mystic Centre, the heart, the garden of Eros, the paradise of Dante, the beloved, the emblem of Venus, and so on. More precise symbolic meanings are derived from the colour of the rose and the number of its petals. The golden rose is a symbol of absolute achievement. The blue rose is symbolic of the impossible. When the rose is round in shape, it corresponds in significance to the mandala. The seven-petalled rose alludes to the septenary pattern – that is, the Seven Directions of Space, the seven days of the week, and the seven planets. The eight-petalled rose symbolizes regeneration [4, p. 193].

In Christianity, the rose is a flower of heaven. The white rose stands for virginity, purity and chastity, Virgin Mary; the red one symbolizes charity and agony, as if developed from Christ’s blood drops. The rose’s thorns are sins, and a rose without thorns is the Mother of God who was liberated by the Immaculate Conception from consequences of the original sin.

In Ukrainian culture, the rose represents health. The white rose stands for silence; the rose bud is a heart that has not yet met love; the yellow rose is a betrayal

and doubt in sincere love. In England, the rose as a symbol has been known since the internecine feudal war of the Red and White Roses in the struggle of the dynasties of Lancaster and York.

The symbolism of the phytonym *rose* is reflected in phraseological units, comparisons, and persistent metaphors. Among the common cross-cultural symbolic meanings, the rose reflects both positive and negative shades: e.g., *no rose without a thorn* – немає троянди без колючок; *red as a rose* – як червона троянда; *not all roses* – не тільки всипаний трояндами, тобто, не все так легко. Differences in English and Ukrainian are obvious in the perception of the symbolism degree in the following examples: *to gather life's roses* – зривати квіти задоволення (generalization); *to blush like a rose* – червоніти, як мак/перець (substitution of the image); *milk and roses* – кров з молоком (demetaphorization and concretization by the colour); *to lose one's roses* – зів'янути, зачахнути (omission of the specific symbol). Ukrainian folklore has songs and expressions that are based on this flower. However, the name of the rose is frequently used in its obsolete form – *рожа*: e.g., *Моя врода, як повная рожа* – *I am beautiful as a rose* (Ukrainian song); *дівчина, як рожа* – *the girl is as like rose* (beautiful). Also, the Ukrainian phytonym is a component of lexical phrases: e.g., *гайова рожа* – *шипшина* – *briar* (thicket); *панська рожа* – *троянда* – *a rose*; *собача рожа* – *польова, дика троянда* – *a wild rose*. An *oak* stands for patriotism, triumph, and victory. Its symbolic meaning can be found in phraseological units and comparisons: e.g., *as strong as oak* – *сильний як дуб*; *mighty oaks from little acorns grow* – *могутні дуби виростають із маленьких жолудів*.

The British people also celebrate the so-called Royal Oak Day (May 29) with the oak leaf as the attribute. The tradition started with the historical fact when Charles II escaped from captivity after the Battle of Worcester, hiding under oak trees. The symbolism of the triumph came from the ancient tradition to put wreaths of oak twigs on the heads of winners.

Slavic mythology is full of legends and retellings about the oak. This tree was considered sacred and associated with the name of Perun who could take fire from it. The Slavs believed that souls of dead ancestors live in oak trees. Besides, the oak has been honoured as a tree of fertility and used to be planted to celebrate the birth of a baby in a family. Ukrainian folklore describes the oak as a strong, iron, handsome Cossack fellow. This symbolism is present in Ukrainian songs: e.g., *Ой у полі дуб зелений, / Під тим дубом вишня, / А там козак конем грає / Щоб дівчина вийшла*. In English, the phytonyms *narcissus* – *нарцис* and *daffodil* – *жовтий нарцис* are associated with Easter. The cultural meaning is also reflected in the phytonym *Easter Lily* – *Великодня лілія* [3, p. 195].

A *blackthorn* is depicted in many fairy tales throughout Europe as a tree of ill omen. This species of flowering plant in the rose family has the most sinister reputation in Celtic folklore. A long hard winter is referred to as a *blackthorn winter* – *теренова зима*. In witchcraft, the plant often represents the dark side. It is a sacred tree to the Dark, or Crone aspect of the Triple Goddess, and it represents the Waning and Dark Moons. The blackthorn is known as “the increaser and keeper of dark

secrets” [6, p. 82]. The national character of the Ukrainian phytonym *терен* represents romantic heartbreak and woman’s loneliness: e.g., *Цвіте терен, цвіте терен / Листя опадає, Хто в любові не знається, / Той горя не знає.*

A *carnation* comes from the Greek *dianthus* for “heavenly flower” of the flower of love. The carnation expresses love, fascination, and distinction. According to a Christian legend, carnations first appeared on Earth after the crucifixion of Jesus carried the Cross. The Virgin Mary shed tears at Jesus’ plight, and carnations sprang up from where her tears fell. Thus, the pink carnation became the symbol of a mother’s undying love.

The red carnation can be understood as a symbol of socialism and the labour movement. Historically, it has been used in demonstrations on the International Workers’ Day (May Day). Light red carnations represent admiration, whereas dark red ones denote deep love and affection. White carnations represent pure love and good luck, while striped carnations symbolize regret that love cannot be share. Purple carnations indicate capriciousness. However, the Ukrainians often perceive the carnation as a flower of revolution, funeral, and commemoration.

A significant number of symbolic meanings of phytonyms are culturally specific. There are connotations that are presented in both languages compared, but their number is smaller. In general, it is possible to speak about the common European basis of ancient mythology and Christianity, in which case the symbolic features are motivated by some commonality or similarity of traditions, customs, and rituals. The origin of semantic connotations in English and Ukrainian phytonyms is present in Indo-European, Slavo-Germanic and modern international traditions, folklore, pagan and Christian beliefs and rituals. Different nationally-specific components, however, are based on separate cultural and historical traditions and language factors (etymology of phytonyms, idiomatic meanings, phraseological (stable) expressions, national traditions, and folklore rituals). Symbolic differences are more typical than similarities, and this can be an interesting prospect of research in terms of linguistic peculiarities and translation of phytonyms.

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