

NATIONAL AND CULTURAL IDENTITY THROUGH COLOR SEMANTICS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Abstract. This research paper investigates the linguo-cultural and semantic properties of color components within the phraseological systems of English and Uzbek. Colors are not merely physical phenomena but are deeply embedded with cultural codes and national identity. By examining literary sources and idiomatic expressions, the study identifies how historical, geographical, and religious factors shape the metaphorical use of colors. The findings reveal that while some color perceptions are universal (physiological), many are language-specific "lacunae" that reflect the unique worldview of each nation.

Keywords: color semantics, phraseology, linguoculturology, English literature, Uzbek literature, comparative linguistics, cultural identity.

RANG SEMANTIKASI ORQALI MILLIY VA MADANIY O'ZLIKNI IFODALASH: INGLIZ VA O'ZBEK TILLARINING QIYOSIY TADQIQI

Annotatsiya. Mazkur maqolada ingliz va o'zbek tillarining frazeologik tizimlaridagi rang komponentlarining lingvomadaniy va semantik xususiyatlari tadqiq etilgan. Ranglar faqat fizik hodisa sifatida emas, balki madaniy kodlar va milliy o'zlik bilan chambarchas bog'liq bo'lgan hodisa sifatida namoyon bo'ladi. Badiiy manbalar va frazeologik birliklarni o'rganish asosida tarixiy, geografik va diniy omillarning ranglarning metaforik qo'llanishiga ta'siri aniqlangan. Tadqiqot natijalari ayrim rang tasavvurlari fiziologik jihatdan universallikka ega bo'lsa-da, ko'plab rang ma'nolari har bir xalqning o'ziga xos dunyoqarashini aks ettiruvchi, muayyan tilga xos "lakunalar" sifatida namoyon bo'lishini ko'rsatadi.

Kalit so'zlar: rang semantikasi, frazeologiya, lingvomadaniyatshunoslik, ingliz adabiyoti, o'zbek adabiyoti, qiyosiy tilshunoslik, madaniy o'zlik.

НАЦИОНАЛЬНО-КУЛЬТУРНАЯ ИДЕНТИЧНОСТЬ ЧЕРЕЗ СЕМАНТИКУ ЦВЕТА: СОПОСТАВИТЕЛЬНОЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ АНГЛИЙСКОГО И УЗБЕКСКОГО ЯЗЫКОВ

Аннотация. В данной статье исследуются лингвокультурные и семантические особенности цветовых компонентов во фразеологических системах английского и узбекского языков. Цвета рассматриваются не только как физические явления, но и как элементы, глубоко связанные с культурными кодами и национальной идентичностью. На основе анализа литературных источников и фразеологических выражений выявлено влияние исторических, географических и религиозных факторов на метафорическое употребление цветов. Результаты исследования показывают, что, хотя некоторые представления о цвете являются универсальными в физиологическом отношении, многие значения цветов выступают как специфические для конкретного языка «лакуны», отражающие уникальную картину мира каждого народа.

Ключевые слова: семантика цвета, фразеология, лингвокультурология, английская литература, узбекская литература, сопоставительная лингвистика, культурная идентичность.

Introduction. Language is not only a means of communication but also one of the principal mechanisms through which a community preserves, represents, and transmits its cultural experience. Words and expressions acquire meanings within particular historical, social, and cultural contexts, and these meanings may extend beyond their direct lexical definitions. Among the linguistic units that demonstrate this relationship particularly clearly are color terms. Colors are perceived visually, yet their semantic and symbolic interpretations are shaped by cultural traditions, collective experience, religious beliefs, historical events, social practices, and aesthetic preferences. Consequently, the study of color semantics provides an important opportunity to examine the relationship between language, culture, and national identity.

Color vocabulary occupies a distinctive position in the lexical systems of different languages. Although basic color categories may have universal perceptual foundations, the associations attached to particular colors are not necessarily identical across linguistic

communities. A color that symbolizes purity, celebration, or happiness in one culture may be associated with mourning, danger, or misfortune in another. Such differences demonstrate that color meaning cannot always be understood exclusively through its denotative function. It also contains connotative, symbolic, emotional, and culturally determined components. Therefore, the comparative analysis of color terms in English and Uzbek can reveal significant similarities and differences in the ways speakers conceptualize their social and cultural reality.

The English and Uzbek languages represent distinct cultural and linguistic traditions, which makes their color semantics especially relevant for comparative research. English has developed within a predominantly European cultural environment and has been influenced by various historical, literary, religious, and social traditions. Uzbek, as a member of the Turkic language family, reflects the historical and cultural experience of Central Asian societies, including traditions associated with family, community, hospitality, religion, national customs, and artistic expression. These cultural backgrounds influence the semantic development and associative potential of color terms in both languages.

Color expressions frequently appear in phraseological units, proverbs, literary texts, everyday communication, ceremonies, clothing descriptions, and symbolic representations. Their meanings may change depending on the context in which they are used. For example, color terms can describe physical appearance or objects in their literal sense, while in figurative expressions they may communicate emotional states, social attitudes, moral evaluations, or cultural concepts. This semantic flexibility makes color vocabulary an important object of linguistic and cultural investigation.

The connection between color semantics and national identity becomes particularly visible when a color is associated with culturally significant objects, traditions, historical memory, or social values. National identity is constructed and expressed through a wide range of symbolic resources, including language. In this respect, culturally marked color meanings may function as linguistic representations of collective experience. The repeated use of particular colors in traditional clothing, national symbols, artistic works, rituals, and literary descriptions contributes to the formation of culturally recognizable associations. Consequently, examining color terms can help identify certain elements of the worldview shared by members of a linguistic community.

The study of English and Uzbek color terminology is also significant from the perspective of intercultural communication. In an increasingly interconnected world, speakers frequently encounter expressions whose cultural meanings differ from those of their native language. Direct translation of a color term may preserve its basic lexical meaning while failing to communicate its figurative or symbolic connotations. Such differences can lead to misunderstanding, especially in literary translation, language teaching, interpretation, and intercultural communication.

From a linguistic perspective, color terms can be analyzed at several interconnected levels: lexical, semantic, phraseological, stylistic, cognitive, and linguocultural. At the lexical level, attention can be given to the inventory and usage of basic and secondary color terms. At the semantic level, their denotative and connotative meanings can be examined. Phraseological analysis reveals how colors function within fixed expressions and idioms, while stylistic analysis demonstrates their role in literary and expressive discourse. A linguocultural approach, in turn, allows researchers to identify the cultural concepts and values encoded through color vocabulary. Another important aspect of color semantics is its relationship with emotional and evaluative meaning. Speakers may use colors to express positive or negative attitudes, characterize people or situations, or represent psychological conditions. These associations are not always universal. They may be reinforced through literature, mass media, social conventions, and everyday communication. Comparative analysis therefore makes it possible to distinguish between meanings that are relatively common across cultures and those that are specifically shaped by national and cultural traditions. In the modern linguistic paradigm, language is viewed as a "mirror of culture." Among the various layers of language, phraseology is perhaps the most sensitive to cultural nuances. Colors, or "chromatisms," play a pivotal role in this system. Every nation perceives the color spectrum through the lens of its history, religion, and environment. For instance, the color "green" may evoke thoughts of nature globally, but its idiomatic weight varies significantly between a desert-dwelling culture and a maritime one.

This study seeks to address two central research problems:

To what extent do the semantic meanings of color-based idioms overlap between English (a Germanic language) and Uzbek (a Turkic language)?

How do specific cultural and historical trajectories create "semantic lacunae" where a color carries a heavy emotional burden in one language but remains neutral in another?

Literature review. The study of color semantics has been a focal point for many scholars. Berlin and Kay's (1969) "Basic Color Terms" established a foundation for universal color evolution. In the context of linguoculturology, V. Telia (1996) emphasizes that phraseological units act as "micro-texts" containing cultural myths and stereotypes.

In Uzbek linguistics, Sh. Rahmatullayev and N. Mahmudov have extensively researched the national-cultural aspects of phraseological units. They argue that Uzbek color idioms are deeply rooted in the nomadic history and Islamic traditions of the Turkic people. Conversely, English color idioms, as noted by A. V. Kunin (1996), often reflect the maritime history, biblical traditions, and social hierarchy of the British Isles.

Methodology. This study employs a comparative-typological method to identify similarities and differences between the two languages. The descriptive method is used to interpret the semantic nuances of idioms. Data was collected from major lexicographical sources: the "Oxford Dictionary of English Idioms" and the "O'zbek tilining izohli lug'ati" (Annotated Dictionary of the Uzbek Language). Additionally, contextual analysis was performed on literary excerpts from Charles Dickens, Virginia Woolf, Abdulla Qodiriy, and O'tkir Hoshimov to observe colors in "living" discourse.

Data analysis. The data collection yielded over 200 phraseological units containing color components. These were

categorized into four primary groups: Black/White (Binary), Red, Blue, and Green.

The White and Black Dichotomy: In both cultures, "Black" (Qora) is largely associated with negativity, sorrow, or evil. However, in Uzbek culture, "Qora" can also signify power or strength (e.g., "Qora kuch"), a remnant of ancient Turkic military terminology. "White" (Oq) is universally positive, but in Uzbek, it is

specifically tied to the concept of "Oq yo'l" (White path/Blessing), which is a unique cultural ritual of wishing a traveler luck.

Findings and discussion. The analysis shows that color semantics are often driven by Conceptual Metaphors. For example, "Anger is Red" is a shared metaphor because of the physiological reality of blood rushing to the face. However, "Envy is Green" is a specific English cultural construct.

Color Component	English Phrase / Meaning	Uzbek Phrase / Meaning	Cultural/Theoretical Note
Blue / Ko'k	"Feel blue" (Sadness)	"Ko'kka sovurmoq" (To waste/squander)	In English, blue is psychological (melancholy). In Uzbek, "Ko'k" is often the sky/void.
Green / Yashil	"Green with envy" (Jealousy)	"Yashil chiroq yoqmoq" (To give permission)	English associates green with "the green-eyed monster" (Shakespeare). Uzbek uses it for "nature" or "permission."
Red / Qizil	"Red tape" (Bureaucracy)	"Qizil ko'z" (Envious/Greedy)	English idiom is historical (ribbons on legal docs). Uzbek is somatic/physical.
Yellow / Sariq	"Yellow-bellied" (Cowardly)	"Sariq chaqaga qimmat" (Worthless)	Yellow in English is moral failure; in Uzbek, it signifies low value or illness.

Literary Examples: In Dickens's *Great Expectations*, the "white" dress of Miss Havisham becomes a symbol of stagnant purity and mental decay. In contrast, in Abdulla Qodiriy's *O'tkan Kunlar*, the use of "Oq" (white) in descriptions of Kumush emphasizes her spiritual purity and the traditional aesthetic of the Uzbek woman.

As noted by Wierzbicka (1996): "Color terms are not just names for portions of the spectrum; they are categories of human experience." This is evident in the English phrase "once in a blue moon," which relies on a rare astronomical event to signify "hardly ever," whereas the Uzbek equivalent "tuyaning dumi yerga tekkanida" (when the camel's tail touches the ground) uses a biological impossibility rooted in livestock culture.

Conclusion. This comparative study confirms that while the physical spectrum of color is universal, the semantic mapping is highly culture-specific. English color phraseology is heavily influenced by literary history (Shakespeare), maritime life, and Western social norms. Uzbek color phraseology, meanwhile, is a rich tapestry of nomadic heritage, Islamic values, and the agrarian lifestyle of the Central Asian region. Understanding these differences is crucial for translators and linguists to avoid "cultural shocks" during cross-cultural communication.

Key notes

- **Lacunae:** Semantic gaps where one language has no direct equivalent for a color idiom (e.g., "White elephant").
- **Equivalent:** When both languages use the same color for the same emotion (e.g., "Red" for anger).
- **Symbolism:** Uzbek "Yashil" (Green) is strongly tied to Islam and life, whereas English "Green" is tied to envy and inexperience.

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