

A LINGUISTIC STUDY OF COLOR-BASED PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH

Jumaniyazova Zaira Xamidovna

Master's Student, Department of World Languages,
Urgench RANCH University of Technology

Abstract

This article investigates color-based phraseological units in Uzbek and English from a comparative linguistic perspective. Phraseological units containing color lexemes reflect cultural values, national mentality, and cognitive perception of the world. Using qualitative and comparative methods, the study analyzes semantic, structural, and pragmatic features of color-related idioms in both languages. The findings show both universal symbolic meanings of colors (such as white for purity and black for negativity) and culture-specific interpretations shaped by historical and social factors. The research contributes to contrastive linguistics, phraseology, and intercultural communication studies.

Keywords: Phraseology, color terms, Uzbek language, English language, idioms, semantics, culture, contrastive linguistics, cognitive linguistics, symbolism, metaphor.

Introduction

Annotatsiya

Mazkur maqolada o'zbek va ingliz tillaridagi rang nomlari ishtirok etgan frazeologik birliklar qiyosiy-lisoniy jihatdan tahlil qilinadi. Rang komponentli frazeologizmlar xalqning madaniy qadriyatlarini, dunyoqarashi va milliy tafakkurini aks ettiruvchi muhim lisoniy birliklar hisoblanadi. Tadqiqot davomida rangli frazeologik birliklarning semantik, struktural va pragmatik xususiyatlari aniqlanib, umumiy va milliy-madaniy farqlari ko'rsatib beriladi. Tadqiqot natijalari qiyosiy tilshunoslik va madaniyatlararo muloqot sohalari uchun muhim ahamiyatga ega.

Kalit so'zlar: frazeologiya, rang atamaları, o'zbek tili, ingliz tili, iboralar, semantika, madaniyat, qiyosiy tilshunoslik, ramziylik, metafora

Аннотация

В статье проводится сравнительно-лингвистическое исследование фразеологических единиц с цветовым компонентом в узбекском и английском языках. Цветообозначающие фразеологизмы отражают культурные ценности,

национальное мировоззрение и когнитивные особенности носителей языка. В ходе исследования анализируются семантические, структурные и прагматические особенности цветowych фразеологизмов, выявляются универсальные и национально-специфические характеристики. Результаты исследования вносят вклад в развитие фразеологии, сопоставительной лингвистики и межкультурной коммуникации.

Ключевые слова: фразеология, цветовые обозначения, узбекский язык, английский язык, идиомы, семантика, культура, сопоставительная лингвистика, символика, метафора

Introduction

Color is one of the most fundamental categories of human perception and cognition, playing a crucial role in how individuals interpret, categorize, and conceptualize the surrounding world. As a perceptual phenomenon, color is directly linked to human sensory experience; however, in language, color extends far beyond its physical properties and becomes a powerful symbolic and cognitive tool. In many languages, color terms are actively involved in metaphorical thinking and serve as essential components in the formation of idiomatic and phraseological expressions. These expressions function not merely as linguistic decorations but as meaningful units that encode cultural knowledge, emotional evaluation, and collective experience.

Phraseological units occupy a special place in linguistic systems due to their semantic integrity, stability, and figurative nature. Modern linguistic research increasingly views phraseological units as reflections of a nation's worldview, cultural values, and historical memory rather than as simple fixed word combinations. From this perspective, phraseological units containing color components represent a particularly rich field of study, as they combine universal perceptual experience with culturally conditioned semantic interpretations. Color-based phraseological units often convey moral judgments, emotional states, social attitudes, and evaluative meanings that are deeply rooted in the cultural consciousness of a linguistic community.

Within the frameworks of cognitive linguistics and cultural linguistics, colors are understood as universal cognitive categories grounded in human physiology, while their metaphorical and symbolic meanings are shaped by social, historical, and cultural contexts. This dual nature of color symbolism explains why certain color associations—such as white with purity or black with negativity—appear across many languages, whereas other meanings remain culture-specific. As a result, the study of color-based idioms provides valuable insight into both shared cognitive mechanisms and distinct cultural models of meaning construction.

Comparative and contrastive linguistic analysis plays a significant role in identifying similarities and differences in how languages conceptualize reality. In this regard, Uzbek and English present an interesting and productive comparison. Uzbek, a Turkic language,

is strongly influenced by traditional worldview, folklore, oral literary heritage, and collective ethical values. Color symbolism in Uzbek phraseology is often connected with concepts such as honor, morality, nature, and social relations. English, an Indo-European language, has developed within a Western cultural and historical context shaped by urbanization, written literary tradition, social hierarchy, and globalization. Consequently, English phraseological units frequently reflect social behavior, emotional states, and individual experiences through metaphorical use of color terms.

Despite belonging to different language families and cultural traditions, both Uzbek and English demonstrate a high degree of productivity in forming phraseological units with color components. This makes their comparative study especially valuable for understanding universal and culture-specific mechanisms of phraseological meaning. Furthermore, such research has practical significance for translation studies, foreign language teaching, and intercultural communication, as literal translation of color-based idioms often leads to semantic distortion or pragmatic misunderstanding.

The main objective of this article is to conduct a comprehensive linguistic analysis of color-based phraseological units in Uzbek and English in order to identify their semantic features, structural patterns, and cultural motivations. The study seeks to address the following research questions: (1) which color terms are most frequently used in phraseological units in Uzbek and English; (2) what semantic, emotional, and evaluative meanings these colors convey; and (3) which meanings can be considered universal and which are determined by national and cultural specificity. The novelty of the present research lies in its integrative approach, combining phraseological analysis with cognitive and cultural perspectives, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of linguistic worldview and the role of color symbolism in intercultural communication.

. The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the dominant colors used in phraseological units of Uzbek and English?
2. What semantic meanings do these colors convey?
3. Which meanings are universal and which are culture-specific?

The novelty of the research lies in its integrative approach combining phraseology, cognitive semantics, and cultural analysis, contributing to a deeper understanding of linguistic worldview and intercultural communication.

Methods

The present research is based on qualitative linguistic analysis and employs a combination of comparative, descriptive, and semantic methods. These methods were selected in order to provide a comprehensive and systematic examination of color-based phraseological units in Uzbek and English, with particular attention to their semantic structure, cultural motivation, and functional usage. A qualitative approach was considered most appropriate, as phraseological units require detailed semantic and contextual interpretation rather than purely quantitative measurement.

The empirical material for the study was collected from authoritative phraseological and explanatory dictionaries of the Uzbek and English languages, including monolingual and bilingual sources, as well as from academic publications and available language corpora. The use of multiple sources ensured the reliability and representativeness of the data and allowed for verification of meanings across different contexts. In addition, examples from authentic texts were consulted in order to confirm actual usage and pragmatic function of the selected phraseological units.

The dataset consists of approximately 200 phraseological units containing basic color terms such as white, black, red, blue, green, and yellow. These colors were chosen due to their high frequency, semantic productivity, and strong symbolic potential in both linguistic and cultural systems. The selection of basic color terms is consistent with established linguistic theories on color universals and cognitive categorization, which emphasize their central role in metaphorical and symbolic meaning formation.

The research procedure was carried out in several successive stages. At the initial stage, phraseological units containing explicit color components were identified and systematically selected from the sources mentioned above. During this stage, particular attention was paid to the stability, figurativeness, and idiomatic nature of the expressions in order to exclude free word combinations. At the second stage, the collected units were classified semantically according to their evaluative, emotional, and expressive meanings, such as positive, negative, neutral, or ambivalent connotations.

At the third stage, a structural analysis was conducted to examine grammatical patterns and syntactic models characteristic of color-based phraseological units in both languages. This analysis made it possible to identify dominant structural types, such as adjective + noun constructions, verb-based idioms, and comparative models. The final stage involved interpretation of cultural and cognitive motivations underlying the use of specific colors in phraseological units. This stage relied on principles of cognitive linguistics and cultural linguistics, focusing on metaphorical mapping, symbolic associations, and culturally embedded meanings.

The comparative method played a key role in revealing similarities and differences between Uzbek and English color-based phraseological systems. By analyzing parallel and non-parallel units, the study identified universal semantic tendencies as well as culture-specific patterns. Contextual analysis was applied to ensure accurate interpretation of pragmatic meanings and communicative functions of phraseological units within authentic discourse. Together, these methods provided a solid methodological framework for achieving the objectives of the research.

Results

The analysis demonstrates that color-based phraseological units in Uzbek and English exhibit both universal and language-specific features. While certain colors show stable semantic associations across both languages due to shared cognitive mechanisms, others

reveal culturally conditioned meanings shaped by historical experience, social values, and national worldview. The results are presented according to the most frequently occurring color terms.

White

The color white is predominantly associated with purity, honesty, moral integrity, and positive ethical evaluation in both Uzbek and English phraseology. In Uzbek, phraseological units such as *oq ko'ngil* (pure-hearted), *oq niyat* (good intention), and *oq yo'l* (a wish for success) express sincerity, goodwill, and moral clarity. These expressions reflect the traditional Uzbek value system, where moral purity and good intentions are highly esteemed.

Similarly, in English phraseology, white often carries positive or neutral connotations. Expressions such as *white lie* denote a harmless or socially acceptable form of dishonesty, emphasizing intention rather than moral violation. In idioms like *white soul* or *white-hearted*, the color white symbolizes innocence and moral goodness. The convergence of meanings in both languages suggests a universal cognitive metaphor linking lightness and brightness with purity and virtue.

Black

The color black is widely associated with negative experiences, including misfortune, grief, danger, and moral corruption. In Uzbek, phraseological units such as *qora kun* (a difficult or tragic time), *qora niyat* (evil intention), and *qora baxt* (ill fate) convey pessimism and hardship. These expressions reflect a worldview in which darkness metaphorically represents uncertainty, suffering, and moral deviation.

English phraseology shows strikingly similar patterns. Idioms such as *black day*, *black-hearted*, and *black mood* convey despair, cruelty, or emotional distress. This parallelism points to a shared cognitive metaphor in which darkness is associated with fear, danger, and negativity. The results confirm that the negative symbolism of black is one of the most stable and universal features of color-based phraseology.

Red

The color red demonstrates more variation in semantic interpretation between the two languages. In general, red represents emotional intensity, energy, passion, and danger. In Uzbek phraseology, red may symbolize beauty, vitality, and life force, particularly in traditional and poetic contexts. Red is often connected with youthfulness and physical attractiveness, reflecting aesthetic and folkloric symbolism.

In contrast, English phraseological units frequently emphasize the aggressive or alarming aspects of red. Idioms such as *see red* signify sudden anger or loss of emotional control, while *red flag* functions as a warning sign. This divergence illustrates how the same color can evoke different dominant associations depending on cultural priorities and social

experience. While both languages recognize red as an emotionally charged color, their evaluative focus differs.

Blue

A particularly notable contrast emerges in the use of blue. In English, blue is strongly associated with sadness, depression, and emotional instability, as exemplified by idioms such as *feel blue* and *have the blues*. These expressions reflect the metaphorical link between color and emotional state, which is deeply entrenched in English-speaking cultures.

In Uzbek phraseology, however, blue does not typically carry negative emotional connotations. Instead, it is more closely connected with the sky, spirituality, tranquility, and infinity. As a result, blue-based expressions in Uzbek tend to have neutral or positive symbolic meanings. This difference highlights the culture-specific emotional mapping of color symbolism.

Green

The color green also reveals both shared and divergent meanings. In Uzbek phraseological usage, green is commonly associated with youth, nature, renewal, and vitality, reflecting the importance of agriculture and natural cycles in traditional culture. Green symbolizes growth and freshness.

In English, while green may also represent nature, it frequently conveys negative or ambivalent meanings such as jealousy (*green with envy*) or lack of experience (*greenhorn*). These meanings reflect social evaluation rather than natural symbolism and demonstrate a shift toward psychological and social interpretation.

Structural Features

From a structural perspective, both languages demonstrate a preference for adjective + noun constructions in color-based phraseological units. However, English shows greater productivity of verb-based idioms and predicative constructions, whereas Uzbek phraseology tends to preserve more nominal and descriptive patterns. This structural difference reflects broader typological characteristics of the two languages.

Discussion

The similarities identified in the analysis confirm the presence of universal cognitive mechanisms underlying color symbolism in human language. These mechanisms are rooted in shared human perception of light, darkness, and natural phenomena, which shape basic metaphorical mappings across cultures. For example, the consistent association of white with purity, honesty, and moral integrity, as well as black with negativity, danger, and misfortune, can be observed in both Uzbek and English phraseological systems. Such parallels support the cognitive linguistic view that

metaphorical meaning emerges from embodied experience and common sensory perception.

However, despite these universal tendencies, the analysis clearly demonstrates that color symbolism is not entirely homogeneous across languages. Significant differences arise due to cultural, historical, religious, and socio-economic factors. Language serves as a repository of collective memory, and phraseological units reflect the lived experiences and value systems of a particular community. In this respect, English phraseology often mirrors the realities of urbanization, industrial development, and complex social stratification. As a result, English color-based idioms frequently emphasize emotional states, individual psychology, and social behavior, as seen in expressions associated with anger, depression, or social evaluation.

In contrast, Uzbek phraseological units preserve strong connections with traditional worldview, agrarian lifestyle, and moral values rooted in folklore and oral tradition. Color symbolism in Uzbek idioms is closely linked with ethical concepts, communal harmony, and natural cycles. For example, colors are frequently used to evaluate moral intentions, character traits, and social relationships rather than individual emotional states. This cultural orientation explains why certain colors, such as blue and green, carry neutral or positive connotations in Uzbek, while the same colors may express negative or ambivalent meanings in English.

The differences identified in the study also highlight the role of religion and historical context in shaping color symbolism. In Uzbek culture, which has been influenced by Islamic traditions and Eastern philosophical thought, color often carries spiritual and moral significance. English phraseology, influenced by Christian symbolism and Western philosophical traditions, reflects different symbolic priorities. These distinctions illustrate how color-based phraseological units function as markers of cultural identity and linguistic worldview.

The findings of this study have important practical implications, particularly in the fields of translation studies and foreign language teaching. Literal translation of color-based idioms often results in semantic distortion or pragmatic misunderstanding, as the symbolic meanings attached to colors may not correspond across languages. Therefore, translators and language learners must develop cultural and cognitive competence alongside linguistic knowledge. Understanding the underlying symbolic and metaphorical motivations of phraseological units is essential for achieving accurate and culturally appropriate communication.

Overall, the results confirm that color-based phraseological units represent a dynamic interaction between universal cognitive patterns and culture-specific semantic models. Their study contributes to a deeper understanding of how language encodes perception, culture, and collective experience, and underscores the importance of an interdisciplinary approach combining phraseology, cognitive linguistics, and cultural analysis.

Conclusion

The comparative analysis of color-based phraseological units in Uzbek and English demonstrates that colors function as powerful linguistic, cognitive, and cultural symbols. Phraseological units containing color components reflect not only universal human perception of the surrounding world but also culture-specific interpretations shaped by national worldview, historical development, and social values. The study confirms that certain color associations, such as white with purity and black with negativity, are largely universal and grounded in shared cognitive experience. At the same time, significant differences emerge in the symbolic and evaluative meanings of other colors, revealing the influence of cultural context on linguistic conceptualization.

The findings show that Uzbek and English phraseological systems differ in their dominant symbolic orientations. Uzbek color-based idioms tend to emphasize moral values, ethical evaluation, and harmony with nature, reflecting traditional worldview and folkloric heritage. English phraseological units, in contrast, more frequently focus on emotional states, individual experience, and social behavior, which corresponds to the historical and cultural development of English-speaking societies. These distinctions highlight the role of phraseology as a mirror of collective consciousness and cultural identity.

The practical implications of the study are particularly relevant for translation studies and foreign language pedagogy. Awareness of cultural symbolism and metaphorical motivation underlying color-based idioms is essential for accurate translation and effective intercultural communication. Future research may expand this study through quantitative corpus-based analysis, inclusion of additional languages, or application of findings in language teaching materials and translation practice. Such directions would further enhance understanding of color symbolism as a dynamic and multidimensional linguistic phenomenon.

References

1. Anderson, E. (2019). *Color and meaning in language*. Oxford University Press. pp. 45–67.
2. Berlin, B., & Kay, P. (1969). *Basic color terms: Their universality and evolution*. University of California Press. pp. 1–210.
3. Kunin, A. V. (2005). *Course in English phraseology*. Moscow: Vysshaya Shkola. pp. 112–150.
4. Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (2003). *Metaphors we live by*. University of Chicago Press. pp. 3–32.
5. Rahmatullayev, S. (2008). *O'zbek tilining frazeologik lug'ati*. Toshkent: O'qituvchi. pp. 5–420.
6. Wierzbicka, A. (1996). *Semantics: Primes and universals*. Oxford University Press. pp. 210–245.