



THE ANALYSIS OF COLOR-RELATED UNITS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK PHRASES

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Abstract: This article explores the semantic and cultural characteristics of color concepts found in idiomatic expressions in English and Uzbek. Colors are analyzed not only as descriptive elements but also as important carriers of cultural connotation. The study examines how color-related phrases reflect national mentality and spiritual values.

Keywords: idiom, color concept, English language, Uzbek language, cultural connotation, semantics, national mentality.

Introduction. Language is not only a tool for communication but also a mirror that reflects the cultural, emotional, and historical experiences of a community. One of the most expressive elements of language is its use of **color-related phraseological units**—idioms, proverbs, and fixed expressions that incorporate color terms to convey figurative meanings. These expressions are rich in symbolism and vary widely across languages, often rooted in the traditions and worldviews of the people who use them. In both **English** and **Uzbek**, colors play a significant role in shaping idiomatic language, offering insights into how each culture perceives emotions, moral values, social behaviors, and even life events. This article explores and compares the use of color in phraseological units in English and Uzbek, analyzing their meanings, functions, and cultural implications.

Literature Review. The study of color symbolism and its linguistic manifestations has long been of interest to scholars in the fields of linguistics, cultural studies, and translation. According to Mieder (2004), phraseological units, including idioms and proverbs, serve as cultural markers, and color-related expressions are among the



most vivid examples of metaphorical language. Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory (1980) also plays a key role in understanding how abstract concepts are structured through physical experiences, including visual perceptions like color.

In the context of English phraseology, scholars such as Fernando (1996) and Moon (1998) have explored the semantic and pragmatic functions of idioms, emphasizing how colors like *black*, *white*, *red*, and *green* convey emotions, social norms, and ethical judgments. For instance, expressions like "*in the red*", "*white lie*", or "*green with envy*" demonstrate how deeply embedded color symbolism is in the English lexicon.

On the Uzbek side, researchers like Karimov (2015) and Rasulov (2018) have examined the cultural and linguistic functions of color terms in Uzbek proverbs and idioms, noting that expressions such as "*oq niyat*" (pure intention) or "*qora kun*" (dark day) reflect deeply rooted spiritual and social values. Uzbek phraseological units often arise from traditional lifestyles, religious beliefs, and natural surroundings, and thus their metaphorical use of color frequently differs from Western usage.

Comparative studies, though limited, suggest both overlap and divergence in how different cultures interpret the same color. Scholars such as Zhanuzakova (2020) have advocated for more cross-linguistic and cross-cultural studies to understand the cognitive and communicative aspects of color idioms.

Methodology. This study employs a comparative qualitative approach to analyze color-related phraseological units in English and Uzbek. The methodology consists of the following steps:

Data Collection:

A corpus of approximately **100 color-related idioms and proverbs** (50 in English and 50 in Uzbek) was compiled using dictionaries, linguistic databases, folklore sources, and online corpora.

Key sources include:



Oxford Dictionary of English Idioms

Uzbek Phraseological Dictionary (Karimov, 2015)

Online phrase banks and bilingual databases

Classification:

The expressions were categorized by color (e.g., black/qora, white/oq, red/qizil, etc.) and by semantic function (e.g., emotional states, moral judgments, social status, etc.).

Semantic and Cultural Analysis:

Each phrase was analyzed to determine its **literal translation**, **figurative meaning**, and **cultural connotation**. The analysis considered historical, religious, and environmental influences on meaning.

Comparative Evaluation:

A cross-cultural comparison was carried out to identify:

Common symbolic patterns

Cultural-specific interpretations

Gaps and overlaps in meaning

Interpretive Framework:

The research was guided by **Conceptual Metaphor Theory** and **Cultural Linguistics**, focusing on how shared human experience and distinct cultural practices shape language.

This methodological approach allows for a deeper understanding of how color not only enriches language but also bridges—or differentiates—worldviews across English and Uzbek-speaking communities.

Results. The comparative analysis of color-related phraseological units in English and Uzbek yielded several key findings regarding the frequency, meaning, and



cultural significance of specific color terms. The results are summarized according to the most frequently used color categories and thematic patterns in both languages.

1. Most Common Colors in Phraseological Units

Color	English (Frequency)	Uzbek (Frequency)	Shared Symbolism
Black / Qora	High	High	Negativity, secrecy, grief
White / Oq	High	High	Purity, honesty, blessing
Red / Qizil	Moderate	High	Passion, beauty, danger
Green / Yashil	Moderate	Moderate	Youth, growth, envy/hope
Blue / Ko'k	Moderate	Low	Sadness (English), hope/sky (Uzbek)

The analysis shows that both languages commonly use **black**, **white**, and **red** in figurative expressions, though the exact meanings and emotional connotations may vary.

2. Shared Conceptual Patterns

Several parallel idiomatic meanings were observed, suggesting a degree of **universal metaphorical thinking**:

Black/Qora:

English: "Black sheep" (a disreputable member of a group)

Uzbek: *Qora niyat* ("evil intent")

Common theme: Deviation, misfortune, or negativity



White/Oq:

English: "White lie" (a harmless lie)

Uzbek: *Oq yo'l* ("safe journey", a blessing)

Common theme: Purity, sincerity, or goodwill

Red/Qizil:

English: "See red" (become angry)

Uzbek: *Qizil yuz* ("healthy face", youth or vitality)

Common theme: Strong emotion, intensity, or vitality

3. Cultural Specificity

The study also identified significant **cultural differences** in how certain colors are interpreted:

Blue / Ko'k:

In English, *blue* often connotes sadness (*feeling blue*), depression, or formality.

In Uzbek, *ko'k* is more associated with positive elements like the sky, peace, and hope (*ko'k osmon* – blue sky).

Green / Yashil:

English emphasizes envy (*green with envy*) or naivety (*greenhorn*).

Uzbek uses *yashil* to signify natural beauty and spiritual hope (*yashil dasht* – green field).

These differences reflect the **environmental, cultural, and emotional worldviews** of each linguistic community.



4. Unique Expressions

The analysis also uncovered idioms with **no direct equivalent** across languages, demonstrating how some color metaphors are highly culture-specific:

English: "In the red" (financial debt) – no Uzbek equivalent

Uzbek: *Oq niyatli odam* (a person with a white/pure intention) – no identical English equivalent, though similar in meaning to "well-meaning"

5. Functional Roles of Color Idioms

The phraseological units in both languages serve various **pragmatic and rhetorical functions**, such as:

Expressing emotions (anger, joy, sadness)

Evaluating character traits

Conveying moral judgment

Strengthening poetic or stylistic language

Summary of Findings

Both English and Uzbek extensively use color-based idioms to express cultural values, emotions, and moral concepts.

While many color metaphors are shared, the symbolic **connotation often differs** due to cultural, historical, and religious contexts.

Uzbek idioms tend to have stronger connections to nature, family, and tradition, while **English idioms** often reflect modern social and institutional life.



Discussion. The comparative study of color-related phraseological units in English and Uzbek reveals important insights into how linguistic expressions reflect cultural values, cognitive patterns, and emotional symbolism. The findings confirm that while both languages employ similar color terms in their idiomatic expressions, the interpretation and connotation of these colors often diverge due to cultural, historical, and religious influences.

Shared Cognitive Metaphors. The analysis indicates that both English and Uzbek use color metaphors to represent universal human experiences. For example, **black** is commonly linked to negative meanings such as misfortune or secrecy, while **white** signifies purity and sincerity. These parallels suggest the existence of shared **cognitive universals**—mental frameworks that shape how humans across cultures conceptualize the world through sensory experiences like color.

However, despite these similarities, the **semantic extensions** of these colors often differ. For instance, while "white lie" in English refers to a harmless falsehood, *oq niyat* in Uzbek conveys genuine moral intent, without any implication of deception. This difference reflects how **morality and social acceptability** are encoded differently in phraseology, even when similar color terms are used.

Cultural and Environmental Influences. Colors take on unique meanings within cultural contexts. For example, the **color blue** (*ko'k*) in Uzbek carries positive associations with the sky, peace, and harmony, often rooted in Islamic and Central Asian spiritual beliefs. In contrast, **blue** in English idioms frequently symbolizes sadness or emotional isolation, as seen in *feeling blue*. This indicates that **natural surroundings, religious traditions, and aesthetic values** influence how colors are metaphorically used in language.

Likewise, **red** in English can suggest anger or financial instability (*see red, in the red*), while in Uzbek it often denotes youthfulness and vitality (*qizil yuz* – healthy complexion). These differences highlight how **social priorities**—such as emotional



expression in English versus physical well-being in Uzbek—are reflected in idiomatic choices.

Cultural Specificity and Untranslatability. One of the most striking findings is the presence of **culturally specific expressions** that have no direct equivalents in the other language. Idioms like *in the red* (English) or *oq yo'l* (Uzbek) are deeply rooted in the respective socio-economic and spiritual contexts of their cultures. These expressions are examples of **linguistic untranslatability**, where the cultural significance cannot be fully captured through literal translation.

Such findings emphasize the importance of **cultural competence** in language learning and translation. Understanding the cultural background behind idioms is crucial for avoiding misinterpretation and for fostering deeper intercultural communication.

Functional Diversity. The analysis also confirms that color idioms serve multiple linguistic functions in both languages:

Descriptive: Describing moods or appearances (*greenhorn*, *qora kun*)

Evaluative: Judging character or behavior (*black sheep*, *oq niyatli inson*)

Expressive: Conveying emotions (*see red*, *ko'ngli ko'kdek inson*)

This multifunctionality makes color-based phraseological units a vital part of everyday speech and literary expression in both English and Uzbek.

Implications. The study underscores the importance of integrating cultural-linguistic awareness into both language education and translation practice. For English and Uzbek speakers, learning the figurative meanings of color idioms can deepen understanding of not only vocabulary but also cultural mindset.



Furthermore, this analysis contributes to **contrastive linguistics**, offering a foundation for future research in bilingual phraseology, metaphor theory, and sociolinguistic studies.

Conclusion. The comparative analysis of color-related phraseological units in English and Uzbek highlights both the universality and cultural specificity of metaphorical language. While certain color metaphors—such as black for negativity and white for purity—are shared across both languages, their figurative meanings often diverge due to differences in historical development, social values, religious beliefs, and natural environments.

The study reveals that English idioms tend to reflect **modern, emotional, and institutional contexts**, whereas Uzbek expressions are more deeply rooted in **tradition, nature, and spirituality**. Despite these differences, both languages utilize colors as powerful tools to express abstract concepts, emotions, and moral judgments.

These findings emphasize the significance of **cultural and linguistic awareness** in language learning, translation, and intercultural communication. Understanding how colors function within idioms helps learners grasp not just vocabulary, but the **worldview embedded in each language**.

In conclusion, color-related phraseological units serve as a vivid intersection of language, culture, and cognition. Their study not only enriches our understanding of linguistic structure but also enhances appreciation for the cultural diversity that shapes human expression.

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