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METAPHORICAL AND SYMBOLIC FUNCTIONS OF COLORS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK PHRASEOLOGY

Language and culture are deeply interconnected, and phraseology serves as a clear reflection of this relationship. One of the most expressive elements within phraseology is the use of color terms, which frequently acquire figurative meanings. In many languages, colors go beyond describing physical appearance and are actively used to express emotions, moral evaluations, and social attitudes [Rajabaliyeva 2024: 332].

Both English and Uzbek languages possess a wide range of idiomatic expressions that include color components. For example, English phrases such as *white lie*, *black day*, and *green with envy* convey emotional and ethical meanings. Similarly, Uzbek expressions like *oq yo'l*, *qora niyat*, and *ko'k osmon* reflect ideas of goodness, misfortune, and vastness.

The main objective of this study is to analyze and compare the metaphorical meanings of colors in English and Uzbek phraseology. The research aims to identify similarities and differences, explore cultural influences, and explain how color symbolism contributes to shaping each language's worldview. The study is based on comparative and semantic analysis, supported by examples from linguistic sources and everyday usage.

Modern linguistic studies increasingly focus on the relationship between language, cognition, and culture. Phraseological units are considered especially valuable for linguistic research because they preserve collective cultural experience and reflect national ways of thinking. Researchers emphasize that phraseology contains important information about social values, emotional perception, and cultural stereotypes.

According to Rajabaliyeva, phraseological units with color components occupy a special position in language because they combine figurative meaning with emotional expressiveness [Rajabaliyeva 2024: 332]. Such expressions not only make communication more vivid but also reflect the symbolic understanding of reality within a particular culture.

In recent years, comparative studies of color symbolism have attracted growing scholarly attention. Linguists analyze how different languages interpret colors and how metaphorical meanings emerge through historical and cultural development. In this respect, comparison of English and Uzbek phraseology allows researchers to identify both universal tendencies and culturally specific features of semantic interpretation.

Although color perception is universal from a biological standpoint, its interpretation depends largely on cultural context. Colors are not only descriptive

elements but also symbolic categories that express values, beliefs, and attitudes within a specific society.

Kodirova notes that color symbolism develops through interaction between linguistic meaning and cultural tradition [Kodirova 2021: 17]. The same color may therefore acquire different metaphorical meanings depending on historical background, religious beliefs, and social practices. Phraseological expressions preserve these meanings over time and transmit them from one generation to another.

From the cognitive perspective, colors function as conceptual tools that help speakers organize abstract ideas through visual associations. Emotional states, moral evaluations, and social attitudes are frequently expressed through color metaphors because colors create immediate psychological and emotional reactions.

From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, colors help people categorize and interpret reality. Language is closely connected to human experience, and color terms play an important role in structuring thought. However, cultural traditions strongly influence these meanings. For instance, while black is commonly associated with mourning in Western cultures, white may symbolize grief in some Eastern traditions. This demonstrates the interaction between universal perception and cultural specificity.

Colors are widely used in metaphor because they evoke immediate emotional responses. They allow speakers to transfer meaning from the physical world to abstract concepts such as feelings or moral judgments. For example, in English, the phrase *to feel blue* expresses sadness, while *red* may represent anger or passion.

Phraseology studies fixed expressions such as idioms, which often rely on metaphorical meanings. Many idioms include color terms, and their meanings cannot be understood literally. Expressions like *black market*, *green with envy*, and *white lie* illustrate how symbolic meanings become embedded in language.

The use of color metaphors makes communication more vivid and expressive. It also plays an important role in shaping cultural identity and transmitting shared values.

The color white holds an important symbolic position in both English and Uzbek, although its interpretations show certain differences. In general, white is associated with purity, clarity, and positive moral qualities.

In English phraseology, white is often linked with innocence and honesty. For example, a *white wedding* reflects cultural traditions where white symbolizes purity and a new beginning. The expression *white lie* refers to a harmless lie told to avoid hurting someone, where the color reduces the negative meaning. Another example is *white collar*, which denotes office workers and reflects social classification.

In Uzbek, the color *oq* also represents goodness and sincerity, but its meaning is more deeply connected to moral and spiritual values. Expressions such as *oq niyat* (pure intention) and *oq ko'ngil* (kind-heartedness) emphasize inner purity. Unlike English, Uzbek usage does not associate white with any form of deception. The phrase *oq yo'l* expresses a sincere wish for success and blessing.

Thus, while both languages associate white with positive qualities, English tends to use it more flexibly, whereas Uzbek places stronger emphasis on ethical and spiritual meaning.

The symbolism of white in Uzbek culture is strongly connected with traditional concepts of blessing, honesty, and spiritual cleanliness. Expressions containing *oq* are widely used in everyday communication to express positive evaluation and moral approval. For example, *oq fotiha* symbolizes parental blessing and sincere wishes for success.

In English culture, white also represents innocence and purity, especially in religious and social traditions. However, English phraseology demonstrates greater semantic flexibility. Expressions such as *white lie* show that the color may soften negative meanings rather than express absolute moral purity.

According to Kodirova, phraseological units with white components usually carry positive connotations in both English and Uzbek, although their semantic nuances differ depending on cultural context [Kodirova 2021: 18]. Uzbek phraseology tends to preserve stronger ethical and spiritual associations, while English expressions often reflect social and pragmatic meanings.

Black is generally associated with negative meanings in both languages, but the nuances differ significantly. According to a scientist Sh. Ataev, the color "Black" represents death, night and darkness before our eyes [Ataev 2012: 99].

In English, black is often connected with misfortune, illegality, or social deviation. The expression *black sheep* describes a person who does not conform to group expectations. *Black day* refers to a tragic or unfortunate event, and *black market* indicates illegal activities. These meanings emphasize social and external aspects.

In Uzbek, the color *qora* is more strongly related to emotional suffering and moral judgment. Expressions such as *qora kun* describe periods of hardship, while *qora yurak* and *qora niyat* refer to evil character and bad intentions. Compared to English, Uzbek usage focuses more on internal moral evaluation.

Therefore, English tends to associate black with social negativity, while Uzbek emphasizes ethical and emotional depth.

Black symbolism demonstrates particularly strong emotional and evaluative meanings in both languages. In many cultures, black is associated with darkness, fear, uncertainty, and grief. These associations influence the formation of metaphorical meanings in phraseology.

Karabaeva points out that darker colors frequently undergo semantic transformation toward negative meanings through historical and cultural development [Karabaeva 2025: 317]. This tendency can be observed in phraseological units expressing suffering, illegality, immorality, or social rejection.

In Uzbek phraseology, *qora* often emphasizes internal moral characteristics and emotional suffering. Expressions such as *qora yurak* focus on ethical judgment and negative personality traits. In English, however, black expressions more frequently describe social deviation or external misfortune, as in *black market* or *black sheep*.

This difference demonstrates that Uzbek phraseology places greater emphasis on moral evaluation, whereas English phraseology often reflects social and institutional perspectives.

Red is a highly expressive color with a wide range of meanings in both languages. In English, red often represents strong emotions or institutional concepts. The phrase *see red* means to become extremely angry. *Red tape* refers to excessive bureaucracy, and *in the red* indicates financial loss. These expressions highlight emotional intensity and formal structures.

In Uzbek, the color *qizil* is more closely associated with beauty, vitality, and youth. Expressions such as *qizil yuz* describe a healthy and attractive appearance. At the same time, *qizil daftar* refers to official records or lists. Overall, red in Uzbek culture has more positive and life-affirming associations.

Red is one of the most emotionally intensive colors in human perception. Because of its connection with blood and fire, it is frequently associated with strong emotions, danger, passion, and vitality.

In English phraseology, red often carries meanings related to anger, warning, bureaucracy, or financial instability. Expressions such as *see red* and *in the red* illustrate emotional and institutional associations.

In Uzbek culture, however, *qizil* is traditionally connected with beauty, celebration, youth, and physical attractiveness. Phraseological expressions containing *qizil* therefore tend to preserve more positive emotional associations.

Researchers note that symbolic interpretation of red differs significantly across cultures because emotional perception is influenced by historical and social experience. This makes red one of the most culturally variable colors in phraseology.

This comparison demonstrates that English associates red primarily with emotional intensity and institutional concepts, while Uzbek focuses on aesthetic and cultural values.

Other colors also demonstrate interesting contrasts between the two languages.

In English, green is associated with envy or lack of experience, as seen in expressions like *green with envy*. Blue is linked to sadness (*feel blue*), and yellow often symbolizes cowardice.

In Uzbek, these meanings differ significantly. Blue (*ko'k*) represents the sky, peace, and homeland, carrying strong cultural and spiritual significance. Yellow (*sariq*) is associated with low value or insignificance, as in *sariq chaqa*. Green is connected with nature, youth, and renewal.

This shows that English color metaphors are mainly focused on emotional states, while Uzbek reflects natural, cultural, and spiritual concepts.

Color metaphors represent a combination of universal human perception and culturally specific interpretation. Some meanings, such as white representing purity and black representing negativity, are shared across cultures due to common human experience.

However, many symbolic meanings differ depending on cultural context. For example, red in English is associated with strong emotions and authority, while

in Uzbek it represents beauty and vitality. Similarly, blue expresses sadness in English but symbolizes the sky and spirituality in Uzbek culture.

These differences highlight how language reflects cultural values, historical experience, and collective worldview. Color metaphors serve not only as linguistic tools but also as markers of cultural identity.

Phraseological units with color components represent an important element of cultural identity. They preserve historical memory, collective experience, and traditional systems of evaluation. Through metaphorical meanings, colors become linguistic symbols that shape cultural perception of reality.

Umarqulova emphasizes that color phraseology reflects not only emotional expressiveness but also national mentality and worldview [Umarqulova 2024: 145]. Such expressions demonstrate how speakers interpret morality, beauty, emotions, and social relations through symbolic language.

Comparative analysis of English and Uzbek phraseology shows that language is deeply influenced by cultural context. Although certain symbolic meanings may appear universal, their semantic development depends largely on social traditions and historical experience.

The analysis demonstrates that color symbolism plays a significant role in both English and Uzbek phraseology. While some meanings are universal, many are shaped by cultural traditions and social values. Uzbek expressions tend to emphasize moral and spiritual aspects, whereas English idioms more often reflect emotional and social dimensions. Understanding these differences is important for intercultural communication, translation, and language learning, as it allows for deeper insight into the cultural meanings embedded in language.

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