

THE CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF IDIOMS WITH COLOR COMPONENTS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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ABSTRACT. This article presents a conceptual analysis of English and Uzbek idioms containing color components. It explores the role of color-related lexical units in shaping the national worldview, cultural archetypes, and collective mentality. The study compares idioms involving core color concepts such as “white/oq,” “black/qora,” “red/qizil,” “blue/ko‘k,” and “green/yashil,” examining their semantic, connotative, and pragmatic features. The research also highlights the metaphorical nature of colors, their function in forming conceptual domains, and cross-cultural similarities and differences. Findings indicate that color components in both languages reflect universal semantic codes and psychological perceptions while also developing culturally specific layers of meaning influenced by national traditions, historical experiences, and cultural identity.

KEYWORDS: color concept, proverb, English language, Uzbek language, conceptual analysis, comparative linguistics, metaphor, national mentality, color symbolism, semantics, connotation, cultural worldview.

INTRODUCTION

The color imagery embedded in language represents one of the most ancient layers of human cognition. Colors are not merely a physiological process of perceiving the external world; they also constitute a significant part of a people’s cultural memory, history, worldview, values, and social consciousness. Therefore, idioms containing color components serve two functions as phraseological units: they convey semantic meaning and express conceptual models.

Colors often function as primary metaphorical means in visualizing abstract concepts. Since the English and Uzbek peoples differ in historical, geographical, religious, and social development, the interpretation of colors naturally varies. For instance, in English, white symbolizes purity, goodness, and innocence, and additionally extends semantically to meanings like permission, privilege, and harmlessness (e.g., white lie). In Uzbek, oq mainly signifies purity, goodness, and virtue. Similarly, in English, blue symbolizes sadness or depression, whereas in Uzbek, ko‘k represents the sky, purity, and elevation.

Thus, idioms containing color components should not be analyzed merely semantically but through a **conceptual-metaphorical approach**. This approach reveals the role of colors in national cognition, their symbolic meaning, cultural universality, and national specificity. In this study, English and Uzbek idioms with color components are analyzed through the lens of conceptual metaphor theory, cognitive lexicology, and ethnolinguistics. Idioms are classified according to conceptual relations such as color–category, color–emotional state, color–moral value, color–social status, and color–time and nature phenomena.

METHODOLOGY

The research employed the following scientific methods:

1. **Conceptual Metaphor Theory** — According to Lakoff and Johnson’s theory, linguistic units are manifestations of cognitive models in human thought. Colors serve as key means of conceptualizing abstract notions, and idioms are analyzed based on which concepts colors express.
2. **Cognitive-Semantic Analysis** — Idioms with color words were examined in terms of semantic extension, figurative meaning, connotation, and imagery.
3. **Comparative-Typological Analysis** — English and Uzbek idioms were compared from semantic, functional, and conceptual perspectives to identify similarities and differences.
4. **Ethnolinguistic Analysis** — The historical and cultural foundations of colors and their role in national worldview were studied.
5. **Corpus-Based Observation** — Data were drawn from the British National Corpus (BNC), the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), and the Uzbek National Corpus.
6. **Interpretative-Pragmatic Analysis** — The pragmatic function of idioms in discourse, the speaker’s intention, and emotional impact were examined.

A total of 150 English and Uzbek idioms containing color components were analyzed.

RESULTS

1. Colors as Key Concepts

The comparative analysis revealed that color components in English and Uzbek proverbs and idioms represent the following key concepts:

Color	English Meaning	Uzbek Meaning	Observation
White Oq	Purity, goodness, / justice, innocence, permission, harmlessness	Purity, goodness, virtue	“White lie” (positive semantic extension)
Black Qora	Evil, misfortune, illegality, trouble (often negative)	Misfortune, hardship, evil	“Black humor” in English has a mildly positive connotation; in Uzbek, “qora hazil” is negative
Red Qizil	Danger, debt, passion, emphasis	Celebration, beauty, joy	“In the red” = debt (English); “qizil gulday” = beautiful (Uzbek)
Blue Ko‘k	Sadness, depression	Sky, purity, elevation	English “blue” = sadness; Uzbek “ko‘k” = spiritual elevation
Green Yashil	Youth, inexperience, ecology	Blessing, fertility, nature	Both link “green” to nature, but with different emotional tones

These findings confirm that the conceptual role of colors is closely tied to cultural characteristics.

2. The Concept of White

In English: Innocence and permission

Examples: White lie — a harmless lie; White day — a good day; White wedding — traditional wedding.

In Uzbek: Goodness and purity

Examples: Oq yo‘l tilayman — “I wish you success”; Oq yuvib, oq tarab — “to defend someone’s honor”; Oqning o‘zi oq — “goodness always reveals itself.”

Difference: In English, white symbolizes social convention and permission; in Uzbek, it is associated with religious and moral purity.

3. The Concept of Black

In English: Illegality, danger, obligation

Examples: Black market — illegal trade; Blackmail — extortion; Black mood — depression.

In Uzbek: Misfortune and evil

Examples: Qora kunlar o‘tar — “hard times will pass”; Qora qismat — “unfortunate fate”; Qora niyat — “evil intention.”

Interesting contrast: Black humor in English is culturally accepted satire; qora hazil in Uzbek is seen negatively.

4. The Concept of Red

In English: Danger and debt

Examples: Red alert — danger signal; In the red — in debt; Paint the town red — to celebrate wildly.

In Uzbek: Joy and festivity

Examples: Qizil yuz — blushing from joy or shyness; Qizil gulday — as beautiful as a red flower; Qizil bayram — grand celebration.

Conclusion: In English, red is an alarming or emotional color; in Uzbek, it connotes vitality and beauty.

5. The Concept of Blue

In English: Sadness and melancholy

Examples: Feeling blue — being depressed; Blue Monday — a gloomy day; Once in a blue moon — very rarely.

In Uzbek: Sky, peace, and freedom

Examples: Ko‘k yuzida bulut yo‘q — “clear sky” (peace); Ko‘k bayroq — “blue flag,” symbol of freedom; Ko‘kka ko‘tarilmoq — “to be highly esteemed.”

Explanation: The English metaphor originates from 17th-century maritime culture; in Uzbek, ko‘k stems from ancient Turkic cosmology symbolizing the heavens.

6. The Concept of Green

In English: Newness, inexperience, environmental awareness

Examples: Greenhorn — novice; Green light — permission; Go green — adopt eco-friendly behavior.

In Uzbek: Prosperity and fertility

Examples: Yashil dunyo — peaceful, prosperous life; Yashil bog‘ — fertile garden.

DISCUSSION

The study reveals several key differences in how national cognition shapes the conceptualization of color idioms:

1. **Influence of religious and national values:** In English, colors develop from social practices; in Uzbek, especially white, they carry strong moral and religious meanings.
2. **Historical and cultural experience:** The English blue-sadness metaphor derives from seafaring culture; the Uzbek ko‘k symbolizes the sky and spiritual elevation rooted in ancient Turkic beliefs.

3. **Conceptual rather than aesthetic function:** Colors in idioms always serve to express abstract concepts.
4. **Simultaneous universality and specificity:** Black day and qora kun share meaning, but feeling blue lacks a color equivalent in Uzbek.
5. **Pragmatic challenges in translation:** Color meanings often resist direct translation. For instance, Once in a blue moon → “very rarely” (no color in Uzbek); Oq yo‘l → “good luck” (no color in English).

Thus, the conceptual mapping of colors differs across cultures. In both English and Uzbek idioms, colors act as powerful conceptual metaphors expressing emotional states, moral judgments, social positions, danger, natural phenomena, and time. However, the imagery evoked by colors varies greatly due to differing historical, cultural, and religious influences.

The main difference is that in English, color metaphors are primarily **social-emotional**, while in Uzbek, they are **moral-religious**. Therefore, in translation, teaching, language learning, and intercultural communication, it is essential to account for the pragmatic and conceptual meanings of color components.

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