


English, Uzbek, and Tajik Languages: Linguacultural Characteristics of Color Symbolism

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the comparative analysis of color symbolism in English, Uzbek, and Tajik linguacultures. It explores how color terms transcend their physical descriptions to become carriers of deep cultural, historical, and emotional meanings. Through the IMRAD structure, the research identifies universal and culture-specific aspects of color perception. The study highlights that while some colors like white and black share common symbolic grounds across these languages, others like green and blue exhibit unique national nuances rooted in religion and geography.

Key words: color symbolism, linguaculture, English, Uzbek, Tajik, comparative linguistics, cultural code, idioms.

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Introduction

Language is not merely a tool for communication but a primary vessel for cultural heritage and human cognition. Within the lexical system of any language, color terms occupy a significant position as they reflect the sensory and emotional experiences of a nation. Color symbolism is a complex linguacultural phenomenon where physical wavelengths are transformed into social and psychological codes.

In English, Uzbek, and Tajik linguacultures, colors are used to express a wide range of human conditions, social statuses, and philosophical concepts. For instance, the perception of green in the English "green with envy" differs significantly from the sacred status of green in Uzbek and Tajik cultures, where it is often associated with nature and Islam. The study of these differences is essential for cross-cultural communication and translation studies, as it prevents semantic interference and cultural misunderstandings.

Methods

The research methodology for this comparative study was designed to ensure a comprehensive extraction of both linguistic and cultural data across three distinct language families: Germanic (English), Turkic (Uzbek), and Iranian (Tajik). The following multi-stage methodological framework was employed:

1. Corpus Selection and Data Mining:

The primary source of data involved the selection of representative dictionaries, including the Oxford English Dictionary, the Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language, and the Dictionary of the Tajik Language. A corpus of over 500 lexical units, including proverbs, idioms, and metaphors containing the basic color terms (white, black, red, blue, green, yellow), was compiled. Particular attention was paid to archaic forms in Tajik and Uzbek classical literature to trace the historical evolution of color meanings.

2. Comparative-Contrastive Analysis:

This method was utilized to determine the points of convergence and divergence between the three languages. Each color term was analyzed based on its denotative (literal) and connotative (figurative) meanings. The analysis focused on identifying "absolute equivalents" (where symbolism matches in all three) and "cultural lacunae" (where a symbolic meaning exists in one language but is absent in the others).

3. Component and Contextual Analysis:

We examined how the meaning of a color lexeme changes depending on the word combination it enters. For example, the lexeme "black" was analyzed in social, economic, and

emotional contexts. This helped in identifying the "semantic density" of colors—some colors in English have more idiomatic applications in social contexts, while in Tajik and Uzbek, they are denser in poetic and ritualistic contexts.

4. Ethno-Linguistic Interpretation:

To understand "why" certain colors represent specific ideas, we applied a linguacultural interpretation. This involved studying the influence of Zoroastrianism on Tajik color perception, the impact of Islamic traditions on Uzbek color codes, and the role of maritime and medieval history on English color symbolism.

Results

The comparative analysis demonstrates that while basic colors serve as universal cognitive categories, their symbolic "filling" is highly dependent on the national-cultural picture of the world. The following table summarizes the primary symbolic functions identified in the research:

Table 1: Comparative Symbolism of Color Terms

Color	English Symbolism	Uzbek Symbolism	Tajik Symbolism
White	Purity, surrender, cowardice, harmlessness	Purity, blessing, happiness, integrity	Purity, light, divinity (Zoroastrian roots)
Black	Evil, mystery, death, illegal economy	Grief, misfortune, but also beauty (eyes/hair)	Darkness, grief, mourning, poetic beauty
Red	Danger, energy, debt, anger	Joy, marriage, vitality, protection	Passion, blood, life, traditional bridal color
Blue	Sadness (blues), aristocracy, unexpectedness	Sky, eternity, sacredness, occasionally mourning	Sky, infinity, spiritual depth, mourning
Green	Envy, inexperience, nature, ecology	Islam, nature, rebirth, youth, paradise	Nature, resurrection, Islamic identity
Yellow	Cowardice, sensationalism (journalism)	Separation, autumn, illness, longing	Paleness, longing, autumn, wisdom

Detailed findings indicate that:

White (Oq / Safed): In English, white is often neutral or functional (e.g., "white-collar"). In Uzbek and Tajik, it is heavily ritualized. The Uzbek phrase "Oq o'ltirmoq" (to sit purely/honestly) or the Tajik "Niyati safed" (pure intention) shows that white is a moral category rather than just a visual one.

Blue (Ko'k / Kabud): English "feeling blue" has no direct symbolic equivalent in Uzbek or Tajik. In contrast, the Central Asian use of blue in architecture (mosques) and its association with the "Blue Sky" (Turkic mythology) gives it a divine status that English lacks.

Green (Yashil / Sabz): In English, green represents "inexperience" (a greenhorn), which is absent in the target Eastern languages. In Tajik and Uzbek, "sabz" and "yashil" are almost exclusively positive, representing the "Sabzavot" (greenery) of life and spiritual growth.

Discussion

The discussion of these results highlights the deep-seated "cultural memory" embedded in language. The divergence in color symbolism between English and the two Central Asian languages (Uzbek and Tajik) can be explained through three primary factors: Religion, Geography, and Social History.

Religious Influence:

The Tajik and Uzbek color palettes are significantly influenced by the Islamic "Green" and the Zoroastrian "Light/White" versus "Darkness/Black" duality. In English, the religious influence on color is less prominent in modern idioms, which have become more secularized or influenced by Protestant ethics (e.g., "black and white" as clear-cut morality). The Tajik "Siyohbakht" (black-fortuned/unlucky) reflects a fatalistic view of darkness derived from ancient dualistic beliefs.

Geographical and Ecological Factors:

The English linguaculture, being an island nation, has a significant number of "blue" and "grey" associations related to the sea and mist. Uzbek and Tajik cultures, being continental and arid, place a higher value on "green" and "blue" as symbols of water, fertility, and the vast sky. This is why "green" in English can be "envy" (negative), while in Uzbek, it is almost impossible to find a negative idiom with "yashil".

Social and Historical Evolution:

English idioms often reflect the industrial and social history of the UK and USA (e.g., "red tape" from 16th-century legal documents). Uzbek and Tajik symbolism is more closely tied to the "Silk Road" traditions and classical Persian-Tajik poetry. For example, the "yellow face" in Tajik poetry is a standard metaphor for a lover suffering from separation, whereas in English, "yellow" shifted toward "cowardice" in the 19th century.

Practical Implications for Translation:

The research emphasizes that a "word-for-word" translation of color idioms is a primary

source of error. Translating "He is green" into Uzbek as "U yashil" would be nonsensical; the translator must find a functional equivalent like "U hali xom" (He is still raw/unripe). Understanding the linguacultural "aura" of the color is therefore a prerequisite for professional translation.

Conclusion

The linguacultural study of color symbolism in English, Uzbek, and Tajik languages leads to several significant conclusions. Firstly, color terms are not static; they are dynamic cultural markers that evolve with society. Secondly, while basic human emotions provide a universal framework for color (e.g., black for grief), the specific idiomatic applications are strictly national.

The research confirms that English color symbolism is more leaning towards social and psychological states, whereas Uzbek and Tajik symbolism is more ritualistic and philosophical. Understanding these distinctions is crucial for students of linguistics at the Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages, as it enhances their sociolinguistic competence. Future research should focus on the impact of globalization on these traditional color codes, as Western color associations are increasingly penetrating Eastern linguistic domains.

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