

**COGNITIVE-SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF COLOR COMPONENT IDIOMS IN  
ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES**

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**Abstract**

This article explores the cognitive-semantic features of color-component idioms in English and Uzbek. It aims to identify how cultural perception, metaphorical thinking, and linguistic worldview shape the meaning of color expressions. Comparative analysis reveals that both languages use colors not only as descriptors of physical qualities but also as symbolic reflections of human emotions, moral values, and national identity.

**Keywords**

color idioms; cognitive semantics; cultural linguistics; metaphorical meaning; color symbolism; national worldview; cognitive metaphor; linguistic cognition.

**Introduction**

Language is considered the most important indicator of human cognition. In particular, color-component idioms reflect the worldview, cultural values, and emotional perception of a nation. Colors represent a system of concepts that have developed in human consciousness through centuries of experience and cultural heritage.

In both English and Uzbek, color idioms carry numerous figurative meanings, such as “to be in the red” (to be in debt), “green with envy” (to be jealous), “oq ko‘ngil” (pure-hearted), and “qora kun” (hard times). Such expressions are the result of metaphorical thinking in language.

According to **Xakimova Sadoqat (2021)**, “Color expressions are linguistic units that reflect the national mentality; through them, the way people perceive and feel the world is revealed.” (Xakimova, 2021). Therefore, cognitive-semantic analysis is crucial for uncovering the conceptual meanings underlying each color expression.

**Methods**

This study is based on cognitive-semantic analysis, comparison, and semantic mapping methods. The main goal is to identify color-component idioms in English and Uzbek, analyze their meanings, cultural foundations, and metaphorical structures.

As sources, the Oxford Dictionary of Idioms for English and the Collection of Uzbek Folk Proverbs for Uzbek were used. More than fifty idioms related to the colors “white, black, red, green, and blue” were analyzed in both languages.

Based on the cognitive approach, the metaphorical model of each idiom was determined, and their semantic networks were classified as follows:

- Color → emotional state (emotion)
- Color → moral evaluation (morality)
- Color → social status (status)
- Color → cultural symbol (symbolism)
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**Results**

The results of the study revealed that color-component idioms in English and Uzbek not only denote colors but also serve as strong semantic markers expressing national and cultural

worldviews. In both languages, colors function as symbolic reflections of human thought and emotion.

### **1. General semantic networks of color components**

The most active color terms in both English and Uzbek are black, white, red, blue, green, yellow and their Uzbek equivalents qora, oq, qizil, ko'k, yashil, sariq. Each participates in expressing various cognitive concepts. For example, English idioms such as black mood, black market, and black sheep convey notions of “negativity, illegality, and social exclusion.” Similarly, Uzbek idioms like qora kun (hard times), qora niyat (evil intention), and qora yurak (cruel-hearted) express “misfortune, evil, and hardship.”

These similarities confirm the universality of human cognition: colors are often used as conceptual metaphors for emotional and moral states. However, there are national differences: in Uzbek, qora (black) often symbolizes material or social hardship, while in English it conveys moral or psychological evil.

### **2. The “White / Oq” concept**

In both languages, white represents purity, cleanliness, and goodness. The English idiom white lie refers to a harmless or well-intentioned lie, while in Uzbek oq yo'l tilayman (I wish you a good journey) and oq yuz bilan chiqmoq (to succeed honorably) reinforce ideas of goodness, honesty, and blessing.

According to **Xakimova (2021)**, “The concept of white in the Uzbek worldview symbolizes sacredness and purity of intention.” (p. 56).

### **3. The “Red / Qizil” concept**

Red often conveys emotion, vitality, and danger. English idioms such as red line (a limit, taboo) and see red (to become angry) highlight its emotional intensity. Uzbek expressions like qizil yuz bilan chiqmoq (to feel embarrassed) and qizil olovdek (as red as fire) express energy, courage, and shame. Proverbs such as “If the day sets red, marry your daughter; if the dawn rises red, repair your roof” link color symbolism with social experience and nature's cycles.

### **4. The “Blue / Ko'k” concept**

The blue concept shows notable semantic differences between the two languages. In English, blue mood (sadness) and once in a blue moon (very rarely) refer to emotional dullness or unusual events. In Uzbek, however, ko'k symbolizes hope, the sky, and freedom. Proverbs like “Mehnat bilan yer ko'karar” (The land turns green through labor) and “Ko'kka boqqan yiqilar” (He who stares at the sky will fall) reflect this. Hence, in Uzbek, ko'k represents a cognitive metaphor of vitality and positive growth.

### **5. The “Green / Yashil” concept**

English idioms such as green with envy (jealous) and green light (permission) reveal emotional and permissive associations. Uzbek proverbs like “Yashil tilim bo'lmasa, yayrar edim elimda” associate green with nature, labor, abundance, and peace — reflecting the agricultural worldview of Uzbek culture.

### **6. Conceptualization of human virtues through colors**

The analysis shows that in Uzbek proverbs, colors frequently convey **moral qualities**: white – goodness, black – evil, blue – hope, green – prosperity, red – vitality.

In English, these colors mainly express **psychological and emotional states**, as in black mood, green-eyed monster, blue feelings. These differences arise from distinct historical, religious, and social experiences. As **Xakimova (2021)** notes, “The color components of the Uzbek language embody the nation's spirituality, religious values, and social mentality; colors act as metaphorical tools that expand the semantic core of words.” (p. 59).

### **7. Cognitive-metaphorical models**

Based on the results, the following common metaphorical models were identified:

- Goodness – WHITE, Evil – BLACK
- Hope – BLUE, Misfortune – BLACK
- Prosperity – GREEN, Anger – RED
- Purity – WHITE, Illegality – BLACK

Most of these models are present in English as well, but their **cognitive foundations are shaped by national cultural experience**. For example, in Uzbek, expressions like oq niyat (pure intention), oq non (pure bread), and oq sut (mother's milk) represent motherhood, honesty, and labor, whereas in English, white wedding and white dove symbolize purity and peace.

The analysis of color idioms shows that language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a **mirror of national cognitive thought**. While Uzbek idioms are more influenced by religious and agrarian traditions, English idioms are shaped by industrial and emotional contexts. Thus, the study of color-component idioms represents a significant aspect of intercultural semantics.

### Discussion

From a cognitive linguistic perspective, color words function as conceptual metaphors in human cognition. For instance, the model “Black = evil, danger” appears in English idioms such as black magic and black day, while in Uzbek, expressions like qora yurak (black-hearted) and qora niyat (evil intention) convey the same concept.

However, some colors differ in cultural interpretation: white symbolizes purity and innocence in English (white wedding), whereas in Uzbek it expresses goodness and blessing (oq yo‘l, oq fotiha). As **Xakimova Sadoqat (2021)** explains, “The semantic field of color components is shaped by each nation’s historical experience and psychological stereotypes.” Therefore, color components as cognitive concepts are closely tied to cultural experience.

The analysis reveals that English color idioms primarily reflect **personal emotional states**, whereas Uzbek color idioms emphasize **social and moral values**.

### Conclusion

Color-component idioms are essential cognitive units that demonstrate how each nation perceives the world. Though English and Uzbek color idioms share semantic and cultural similarities, their ways of expressing meaning differ.

This study shows that:

Color idioms reflect the mentality and worldview of a people;

Cognitive-semantic analysis helps uncover the deep conceptual meanings of colors;

The works of **Xakimova Sadoqat** serve as a valuable scientific foundation for understanding the national and cultural features of color expressions.

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