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## THE LINGUOCULTURAL SPECIFICITY OF COLOR TERMS IN THE UZBEK LANGUAGE

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### Abstract

This article examines the linguocultural specificity of color terms in the Uzbek language, focusing on their semantic, symbolic, and cultural functions. Color terminology is analyzed not merely as a means of visual categorization but as an important linguocultural code reflecting national mentality, historical experience, and collective values. The study is based on a qualitative linguocultural methodology that combines descriptive, semantic, contextual, and comparative analysis. The study confirms that color terms in Uzbek play a significant role in shaping linguistic worldview and cultural conceptualization. The results contribute to linguocultural research by systematizing the cultural semantics of Uzbek color terminology and highlighting the interaction between language, culture, and cognition.

**Keywords:** Uzbek language; color terms; linguocultural analysis; cultural semantics; symbolism; linguistic worldview; metaphorical meaning.

### Introduction

Color terms constitute an important lexical and semantic category in natural languages, reflecting not only perceptual experience but also cultural values, historical memory, and collective worldview. In modern linguistics, the study of color terminology has increasingly shifted from purely semantic descriptions to linguocultural interpretations, where color names are viewed as culturally marked linguistic units embedded in national consciousness.



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In this regard, the Uzbek language presents rich material for linguocultural analysis due to its long historical development, interaction with Turkic, Persian, and Islamic cultural traditions, and strong symbolic use of colors in folklore, literature, and everyday communication.

Previous studies in linguistics have shown that color terms often acquire metaphorical, evaluative, and symbolic meanings that go beyond their basic denotative function. However, the linguocultural specificity of Uzbek color terms has not been sufficiently systematized from a comparative and cognitive perspective.

The present study aims to analyze the linguocultural characteristics of color terms in the Uzbek language, identifying their semantic extensions, symbolic meanings, and cultural functions within linguistic usage.

## **Methods**

The present research employs a qualitative linguocultural methodology based on descriptive, semantic, and contextual analysis, which is widely applied in Uzbek linguistics for the study of culturally marked lexical units. In Uzbek linguocultural studies, language is viewed as an essential repository of national mentality, traditions, and value systems, a position consistently emphasized in the works of Shavkat Safarov and Abduaziz Hojiyev<sup>1</sup>. This methodological framework allows color terms to be analyzed not only as nominative units but also as linguocultural signs reflecting collective cultural experience.

The primary data of the study consist of Uzbek color terms extracted from explanatory and phraseological dictionaries, folklore texts, classical and modern literary works, as well as contemporary media discourse. The use of lexicographic sources is based on the principles of semantic stability and normativity described in Uzbek lexicology and lexicography<sup>2</sup>. Folklore and literary texts are included as they preserve culturally entrenched symbolic meanings of colors and reflect traditional worldview patterns.

<sup>1</sup> Хожиёв А. Ўзбек тили лексикологияси. – Тошкент : Ўқитувчи, 2002. – 192 б.

<sup>2</sup> Раҳматуллаев Ш. Ҳозирги ўзбек адабий тили. – Тошкент : Университет, 2006. – 356 б.



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Semantic analysis is applied to distinguish denotative and connotative meanings of color terms. Following the semantic approach developed in Uzbek linguistic tradition, special attention is given to figurative, evaluative, and expressive meanings that arise through metaphorization and semantic extension. This method enables the identification of secondary meanings shaped by cultural and social factors.

Contextual analysis is used to reveal the pragmatic and symbolic functions of color terms in different communicative situations. By examining their usage in phraseological units, idiomatic expressions, and culturally marked collocations, the study uncovers how meanings related to purity, power, mourning, joy, and social status are linguistically encoded. This approach corresponds to discourse-oriented studies in Uzbek linguistics, where meaning is interpreted in close connection with context and communicative intent<sup>3</sup>.

In addition, elements of cognitive linguistics are employed to interpret metaphorical and associative meanings of color terms. Uzbek scholars have emphasized that conceptual structures in language reflect culturally specific models of perception and cognition<sup>4</sup>. From this perspective, color terms are treated as conceptual units that participate in the formation of cultural metaphors and symbolic images.

Comparative analysis is also used to contrast the literal and figurative meanings of color terms, allowing for the identification of culturally specific patterns of color conceptualization in Uzbek. This method makes it possible to distinguish universal semantic tendencies from nationally marked features, which is a key principle in modern Uzbek linguocultural and comparative linguistic research<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Сафаров Ш. Лингвистик дискурс. – Самарқанд : СамДУ нашриёти, 2018. – 148 б.

<sup>4</sup> Болтабоев Ҳ. Когнитив тилшунослик асослари. – Тошкент : Фан ва технология, 2015. – 180 б.

<sup>5</sup> Дадабоев Ҳ. Ўзбек тилининг лингвомаданий хусусиятлари. – Тошкент : Фан, 2014. – 220 б.



Table 1. Linguocultural meanings of basic color terms in the Uzbek language

Color term (Uzbek)	Literal meaning	Symbolic / cultural meanings	Typical usage examples (semantic domain)
<i>oq</i> (white)	White color	Purity, honesty, blessing, moral integrity, legitimacy	Ethical values, religion, social approval
<i>qora</i> (black)	Black color <sup>6</sup>	Misfortune, grief, illegitimacy; in some contexts strength and seriousness	Negative evaluation, emotional states, social judgment
<i>qizil</i> (red)	Red color	Vitality, beauty, emotional intensity, life energy	Emotions, aesthetics, folklore imagery
<i>ko'k</i> (blue/green)	Blue / green color	Sky, spirituality, eternity, infinity (ancient Turkic worldview)	Cosmology, symbolism, cultural identity
<i>sariq</i> (yellow)	Yellow color	Weakness, illness, fading; occasionally maturity or ripeness <sup>7</sup>	Physical condition, emotional states, metaphorical descriptions

## Results

The analysis demonstrates that Uzbek color terms exhibit a high degree of linguocultural markedness and function as culturally significant lexical units rather than merely neutral indicators of visual perception. This observation corresponds with the view widely supported in Uzbek linguistics that lexical meaning is closely interconnected with cultural experience and national worldview<sup>8</sup>.

Basic color names such as *oq* (white), *qora* (black), *qizil* (red), *ko'k* (blue/green), and *sariq* (yellow) demonstrate complex semantic structures in which denotative meanings coexist with symbolic, evaluative, and metaphorical components. The findings show that *oq* is predominantly associated with purity, honesty, blessing, moral integrity, and legitimacy. Such positive connotations are deeply rooted in Uzbek cultural tradition and are frequently reflected in folklore, religious discourse, and everyday speech, where *oq* functions as a marker of moral approval and social respectability.

<sup>6</sup> Махмудов Н. Тил ва маданият. – Тошкент : Маънавият, 2007. – 160 б.

<sup>7</sup> Дадабоев Х. Ўзбек тилининг лингвомаданий хусусиятлари. – Тошкент : Фан, 2014. – 220 б.

<sup>8</sup> Махмудов Н. Тил ва маданият. – Тошкент : Маънавият, 2007. – 160 б.



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In contrast, the color term *qora* often conveys negative meanings related to misfortune, grief, illegitimacy, or social disapproval. However, the analysis also reveals context-dependent semantic shifts in which *qora* may express strength, seriousness, or intensity. This semantic ambivalence confirms that color symbolism in Uzbek is not fixed but shaped by pragmatic and cultural factors, as emphasized in semantic studies of Uzbek vocabulary.

The color term *qizil* is primarily associated with vitality, beauty, emotional intensity, and physical attractiveness. In figurative usage, it frequently symbolizes strong emotions and life energy, particularly in poetic and folkloric texts. Meanwhile, *ko'k* displays a particularly rich linguocultural background, reflecting notions of the sky, spirituality, eternity, and infinity rooted in ancient Turkic worldview. This confirms earlier observations that certain color terms preserve archaic cosmological meanings within modern Uzbek language use<sup>9</sup>.

The findings further indicate that Uzbek color terms actively participate in phraseological units, idiomatic expressions, and metaphoric constructions. In such contexts, colors function as stable cultural markers that reinforce shared values, social norms, and collective emotional attitudes. Their frequent metaphorical use demonstrates that color terms play an important role in conceptualizing abstract notions such as morality, social status, and emotional states, supporting the idea that language serves as a reflection of cultural cognition<sup>10</sup>. The results confirm that color terms in the Uzbek language function as an essential linguocultural code shaped by historical tradition, cultural values, and collective cognitive models. Their semantic richness highlights the close interaction between language, culture, and worldview in Uzbek linguistic consciousness.

<sup>9</sup> **Хожиев А.** Ўзбек тили лексикологияси. – Тошкент : Ўқитувчи, 2002. – 192 б.

<sup>10</sup> **Сафаров Ш.** Лингвистик дискурс. – Самарқанд : СамДУ нашриёти, 2018. – 148 б.



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## Discussion

The results of the study confirm that color terminology in the Uzbek language functions as an essential linguocultural code reflecting national mentality, collective memory, and cultural experience. This finding aligns with the view widely supported in Uzbek linguistics that language serves not only as a communicative system but also as a repository of cultural knowledge and value orientations<sup>11</sup>. The symbolic meanings of colors are shaped by historical traditions, religious beliefs, and social practices, which significantly influence their linguistic usage and interpretation.

The prevalence of evaluative and metaphorical meanings indicates that Uzbek color terms perform not only a nominative function but also axiological and cognitive functions. Colors such as *oq*, *qora*, and *ko'k* encode cultural judgments, moral values, and worldview categories, thereby participating in the conceptualization of abstract notions. This supports the idea, emphasized in linguocultural and semantic studies, that lexical meaning is inseparable from cultural context and national modes of thinking<sup>12</sup>.

From a linguocultural perspective, the stable symbolic associations attached to color terms demonstrate that they function as culturally marked signs rather than neutral lexical items. Their frequent occurrence in phraseological units, metaphors, and idiomatic expressions suggests that color symbolism is deeply embedded in everyday linguistic consciousness and plays an important role in shaping evaluative attitudes and social norms. This observation corresponds with discourse-oriented approaches in Uzbek linguistics, which emphasize the interaction between language, culture, and pragmatic context.

The study contributes to linguocultural research by systematizing the cultural meanings of Uzbek color terms and highlighting their role in the formation of linguistic worldview. By demonstrating how perceptual categories are transformed into symbolic and value-laden concepts, the research confirms the relevance of studying color terminology within a broader cognitive and cultural framework.

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<sup>11</sup> Нурмонов А. Ўзбек тили семантикаси. – Тошкент : Фан, 2012. – 214 б.

<sup>12</sup> Раҳматуллаев Ш. Ҳозирги ўзбек адабий тили. – Тошкент : Университет, 2006. – 356 б.



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Future research may extend the present analysis through cross-linguistic comparison with other Turkic or Indo-European languages, as well as through corpus-based approaches that allow for quantitative examination of color symbolism in contemporary Uzbek discourse. Such directions would further clarify the dynamics of color conceptualization and its evolution under modern sociocultural conditions.

### **Conclusion**

The present study has demonstrated that color terms in the Uzbek language represent a highly structured and culturally embedded lexical domain that reflects national mentality, historical experience, and collective value systems. The analysis confirms that Uzbek color terminology extends beyond its basic denotative function and operates as an essential linguocultural code through which cultural meanings, moral evaluations, and worldview concepts are linguistically expressed.

The findings reveal that basic color terms such as *oq*, *qora*, *qizil*, *ko'k*, and *sariq* possess rich symbolic, evaluative, and metaphorical meanings shaped by historical traditions, religious beliefs, and social practices. These meanings are actively realized in phraseological units, metaphoric expressions, and culturally marked collocations, indicating the close interaction between language, culture, and cognition. As a result, color terms function not only as nominative units but also as axiological and cognitive markers that contribute to the conceptualization of abstract notions such as morality, social status, emotional states, and spirituality.

The study contributes to linguocultural research by systematizing the cultural semantics of Uzbek color terms and highlighting their role in the formation of linguistic worldview. By emphasizing the culturally conditioned nature of color conceptualization, the research supports the view that color terminology should be examined within an integrative framework combining semantic, cognitive, and cultural perspectives. The results underscore the importance of color terms as a valuable source for understanding the interaction between language and culture in Uzbek linguistic tradition. Future research may further develop this line of inquiry through cross-linguistic comparisons, diachronic analysis, and corpus-



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based methods to explore the evolution and contemporary dynamics of color symbolism in the Uzbek language.

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