

THE ROLE OF COLORS IN LINGUISTICS

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**Abstract**

Colors in language serve not only as descriptors of physical objects but also as important cultural and symbolic markers reflecting national traditions, social life, and history. This study examines the semantic and symbolic meanings of color terms in Uzbek and Arabic, highlighting both universal and culture-specific features. Analysis reveals that primary colors—white, black, red, and green—carry similar symbolic meanings across the two languages, though their lexical-semantic fields and idiomatic usage differ. The research also explores cognitive, etymological, and pragmatic aspects of color terms, including their metaphorical, historical, and religious connotations. Findings demonstrate that the semantic and symbolic functions of colors are deeply intertwined with ethnolinguistic, cultural, and historical contexts, providing valuable insights for comparative linguistics, translation studies, and linguoculturology.

**Keywords**

Colors, Color Terms, Linguistics, Symbolism, Semantics, Uzbek Language, Arabic Language, Linguoculturology, Comparative Linguistics, Metaphor

In linguistics, words denoting colors not only serve as tools to describe objects in the material world but also play an important role as a mirror reflecting national culture, traditions, social life, and the history of a people. The symbolic meanings of color terms encapsulate each nation's worldview, ideology, and values. The semantic fields of color terms vary across languages, and these differences are crucial for revealing interlingual cultural and spiritual connections. Analysis of color terms in Arabic and Uzbek shows that they exhibit both universal and uniquely national-cultural characteristics. The aim of this study is to analyze the symbolic meanings of color terms in Uzbek and Arabic, to identify their linguoculturological features and modes of expression, and to highlight similarities and differences between the two languages.

In Uzbek, the system of color-denoting words is primarily based on Turkic terms (oq – white, qora – black, ko'k – blue, qizil – red, sariq – yellow) and some borrowed from Persian-Tajik (pushti – pink, binafsha – violet, niliy – indigo). In Arabic, color terms derive from Semitic roots and have distinct morphological structures.

In Uzbek, the color “**oq**” (**white**) conveys meanings of purity, cleanliness, happiness, and abundance. In Arabic, أبيض (**abyad – white**) carries similar meanings but can additionally signify “Western” in some contexts. In both languages, “**qora**” (**black**, أسود – **aswad**) denotes sorrow, adversity, evil, and misfortune.

The color “**qizil**” (**red**) in Uzbek is often associated with joy, celebration, and beauty, whereas in Arabic, أحمر (**ahmar – red**) carries connotations of danger, blood, and revolution. “**Yashil**” (**green**, أخضر – **axdar**) symbolizes life, renewal, and hope in both languages, but in Arabic, it also has strong religious significance within Islam.

Significant differences are observed in the use of color terms in idiomatic expressions. In Uzbek, phrases like “**ko'ngli qora**” (black-hearted) and “**yuragi oq**” (pure-hearted) are common, while in Arabic, expressions such as قلب أبيض (**qalb abyad – white heart**) and يد خضراء (**yad xadra – green hand, i.e., generous**) are frequently used.

Historical and etymological analysis in both languages shows that the semantics of color terms have been shaped under the influence of religious, historical, and cultural factors. For

example, the Arabic term **أسمر اللون (asmarul-lavni – brown)** is often used positively and signifies beauty in contemporary Arabic culture, while in Uzbek, **“bug‘doyrang” (wheat-colored)** fulfills a similar function.

Analysis of how colors are expressed in language reveals further important findings. The use and symbolic meanings of colors in Uzbek and Arabic are closely linked to psycholinguistic and ethnolinguistic factors.

In Uzbek, **“ko‘k” (blue)** symbolizes the sky and vastness, associating with freedom, independence, and boundlessness. Phrases like **“ko‘k bayroq” (blue flag)** represent independence, and **“ko‘ksini ko‘kka ko‘tarmoq”** conveys pride and satisfaction. In Arabic, **أزرق (azraq – blue)** primarily denotes water and vastness but can also symbolize protection from evil, envy, or misfortune in certain regions. For instance, **العين الزرقاء (al-ayn al-zarqa – blue eye)** is often used as a talisman against the evil eye.

Intermediate colors (gray, brown, dark red) are less frequently used than primary colors but still carry symbolic meanings. In Uzbek, **“bo‘z” (gray)** often conveys dullness, simplicity, humility, or sometimes sadness: **“bo‘zarmoq” (to fade)**, **“bo‘z bola” (youthful, innocent)**. In Arabic, **رمادي (ramadiy – gray)** expresses ambiguity, neutrality, or dullness.

In Uzbek, gradation and intensity of colors are expressed using the suffix **“-roq” (qizilroq – redder, ko‘kroq – bluer)** and adjectives such as **“to‘q” (dark)** or **“och” (light)**: e.g., **“to‘q qizil” (dark red)**, **“och yashil” (light green)**. In Arabic, color intensity is mostly indicated through morphological models or analytic constructions: e.g., **أحمر (ahmar – red)**, **حميري (humayriy – reddish)**, or **شديد الحمرة (shadīd al-humra – dark red)**, **فاتح الحمرة (fātīh al-humra – light red)**.

Cognitive aspects of color terms are also important. In Uzbek, **“qizil”** and **“qirmizi”** are distinguished: the former has a broader scope, while the latter denotes a specific shade. Similarly, in Arabic, **أحمر (ahmar – red)** has a broad range, while **قرمزي (qirmiziy – dark red)** and **وردي (vardiy – pink)** denote specific shades.

Religious and cultural contexts further shape the meaning of colors. In Uzbek culture, phrases like **“oq fotiha”** or **“oq yo‘l”** are used in well-wishing and prayers. In Arabic culture, **green** is significant: **الراية الخضراء (al-rāya al-khadrā’ – green flag)** symbolizes Islam, and **الجسر الأخضر (al-jisr al-akhdar – green bridge)** signifies success and assistance.

Colors also play an important role in metaphorical thinking. Uzbek expressions such as **“qora kun” (dark day)**, **“oq ko‘ngil” (pure-hearted person)**, **“ko‘k dunyo” (vast world)** are common metaphors. In Arabic, expressions like **أيام سوداء (ayyām sawda’ – dark days)**, **قلب أبيض (qalb abyad – white heart)**, **لمع الأخضر (lama al-akhdar – green light, i.e., hope)** are widely used.

Historically, some Uzbek color terms (e.g., **“al,” “zangori”**) are borrowed from Persian-Tajik, while others are Turkic in origin (**“qizil,” “sariq”**). In Arabic, color terms are predominantly Semitic, although Persian loanwords like **فیروزج (firuzaj – turquoise)** and **زعفراني (zafarānī – saffron)** are also present.

Pragmatically, colors in both languages are used to convey positive or negative evaluations. In Uzbek, verbs like **“qoralamoq” (to portray negatively)** and **“oqlamoq” (to protect or justify)** are examples; in Arabic, expressions like **سوّد وجهه (sawwada wajhahu – blackened his face, i.e., shamed him)** and **بيّض الله وجهه (bayyadha Allahu wajhahu – Allah brightened his face, i.e., honored him)** serve similar functions.

In the context of modern globalization, new meanings of color terms are emerging in both languages. For example, **“yashil texnologiya” (green technology)**, **“yashil iqtisodiyot” (green economy)** in Uzbek, and **الإقتصاد الأخضر (al-iqtisād al-akhdar – green economy)** in Arabic, or **“ko‘k energiya” (blue energy)** and **الطاقة الزرقاء (al-tāqa al-zarqā’ – blue energy)**, illustrate new semantic developments.

Analysis of the symbolic meanings of color terms in Uzbek and Arabic shows that color semantics embodies both universal and national-cultural aspects. Primary colors (white, black, red, green) share similar symbolic meanings in both languages, but their lexical-semantic fields and structures exhibit significant differences.

The symbolic meanings of colors are closely linked to the culture, history, and ethnopsychology of each people. In Uzbek, symbolic meanings are often associated with nature, traditions, and lifestyle, whereas in Arabic, religious, climatic, and historical factors exert a stronger influence.

The findings of this study can be applied in comparative linguistics, translation studies, and linguoculturology. Future research may further enrich the study by investigating the cognitive-pragmatic features of color terms in Uzbek and Arabic and analyzing their stylistic functions in literary texts.

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