

A CONTRASTIVE IDIOMATIC ANALYSIS OF COLOR TERMS IN SPANISH AND UZBEK**Sabirova Nilufar Abdullayevna**

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Abstract: This paper presents a contrastive idiomatic analysis of color terms (chromatisms) within the phraseological systems of the Spanish and Uzbek languages. Color idioms serve as important repositories of cultural memory, cognitive framing, and historical evolution. Operating within the framework of contrastive linguistics and cognitive phraseology, this study systematically examines how primary and secondary color terms are deployed metaphorically to express emotional states, psychological conditions, social status, and abstract conceptualizations in both target languages. The results reveal that while certain universal physiological realities produce parallel somatic-color metaphors (such as redness for anger or embarrassment), distinct ecological environments, historical trajectories, Islamic and Christian traditions, and Nomadic versus Mediterranean socio-cultural paradigms have generated significant divergent idiomatic structures. This semantic divergence is vividly illustrated by specific idiomatic patterns, such as the Spanish use of purple (*morado*) for extreme satiety or anger, contrasted with the Uzbek employment of blue/green (*ko‘karmoq*) or dark-red/purple (*bo‘g‘irmoq*) for similar emotional intensities.

Keywords: Contrastive linguistics, Phraseology, Chromatisms, Color idioms, Spanish linguistics, Uzbek linguistics, Cognitive metaphor.

Introduction

Color is not merely a physical phenomenon involving the reflection of light waves; it is a profoundly structured semiotic system through which human societies categorize, interpret, and emotionalize their objective reality. In contemporary linguistics, the investigation of color terms—often referred to as chromatisms or color idioms—occupies a significant position at the intersection of cognitive linguistics, ethnolinguistics, and contrastive typology. Idiomatic expressions containing color components are rarely arbitrary; instead, they reflect the historical, psychological, and cultural stratifications of a speech community [1].

The comparative study of historically and typologically unrelated languages, such as Spanish (an Indo-European, Romance language) and Uzbek (a Turkic, Karluk language), provides an invaluable empirical basis for testing the boundaries of linguistic universality and cultural relativity. While Spanish phraseology has been heavily influenced by Greco-Roman antiquity, Christian theology, Mediterranean maritime ecology, and European historical developments [2], Uzbek phraseology is deeply rooted in Central Asian nomadic and sedentary lifestyles, Islamic traditions, Persian literary interactions, and the specific natural landscape of the region [3].

Despite these profound genealogical and cultural differences, speakers of both languages share identical anatomical and psychological systems, leading to certain universal somatic-color linkages. However, when mapping emotional and abstract domains onto color terms, the specific linguistic mechanisms deviate sharply. For instance, the physiological manifestation of extreme anger, lack of oxygen, or intense emotional distress causes facial discoloration. Where a Spanish speaker perceives this state through the lens of specific historical or visual associations—such as *ponerse morado* (literally "to turn purple")—an Uzbek speaker employs verbs like *ko‘karmoq* ("to turn blue/green") or *bo‘g‘rib ketmoq* ("to choke/swell into a dark dark-red color") [4]. This article aims to systematically catalog, categorize, and analyze these parallelisms and divergences to establish a structural-semantic matrix of color idiomatics in Spanish and Uzbek.

Methodology

This study utilizes a descriptive, comparative, and contrastive linguistic framework to isolate and analyze color-based phraseological units (PUs) in Spanish and Uzbek. The primary empirical data for Spanish was extracted from the Diccionario de la lengua española (Real Academia Española) and specialized phraseological corpora [5]. The data for Uzbek was gathered from the O‘zbek tilining izohli lug‘ati (Annotated Dictionary of the Uzbek Language) and specialized collections of Uzbek idioms and proverbs [6].

A total corpus of 240 phraseological units (120 from Spanish and 120 from Uzbek) containing core color terms—specifically black (negro / qora), white (blanco / oq), red (rojo / qizil), blue (azul / ko‘k), green (verde / yashil), and yellow (amarillo / sariq)—was assembled. The methodology consists of three distinct analytical phases:

First, a quantitative distribution analysis was executed to determine the absolute and relative frequencies of specific color terms within the phraseological systems of both languages.

Second, a component-level semantic analysis was applied to isolate the denotative and connotative meanings of each color element, establishing how the physical color attribute is metaphorically mapped onto abstract targets (e.g., emotional states, social hierarchies, moral evaluations).

Third, a contrastive structural-typological modeling technique was employed to classify the PUs into three distinct comparative categories: absolute equivalents (identical lexical components and figurative meanings), relative equivalents (differing lexical color components but identical figurative meanings), and lacunary/culture-specific idioms (units unique to one language with no direct phraseological counterpart in the other).

Results

The comparative lexical analysis demonstrates that color terms do not appear with equal frequency or identical emotional valences in Spanish and Uzbek phraseology. The quantitative mapping reveals that in both languages, the binary opposition of Black and White forms the statistical bedrock of color phraseology, accounting for over 45% of the total collected items. However, major discrepancies arise within the chromatic spectrum of Red, Blue, Green, and Purple/Violet.

In Spanish phraseology, the structural hierarchy of color utilization follows the sequence: Negro (Black) > Blanco (White) > Verde (Green) > Rojo (Red) > Azul (Blue) > Morado/Amarillo (Purple/Yellow) [7]. Conversely, the Uzbek phraseological system demonstrates a significantly different hierarchical distribution: Qora (Black) > Oq (White) > Ko‘k (Blue/Green) > Qizil (Red) > Sariq (Yellow) > Yashil (Pure Green) [8].

The most remarkable typological divergence identified during data extraction centers on the Uzbek term ko‘k. Unlike the modern Spanish division between azul (blue) and verde (green), the Uzbek ko‘k historically operates as a syncretic archaic 广泛 term covering a spectrum from sky blue to grassy green, deeply impacting its idiomatic productivity.

Furthermore, the emotional mapping of anger and physical distress shows a clear divergence in chromatic assignment:

Emotional / Physical State	Spanish Phraseological Model	Uzbek Phraseological Model
Extreme Anger / Rage	Ponerse negro, Ponerse morado	Ko‘karib ketmoq, Bo‘g‘rib ketmoq
Satiety / Overeating	Ponerse morado	To‘yib ketmoq (Non-color) / Osh qozon yorilmoq

Emotional / Physical State	Spanish Phraseological Model	Uzbek Phraseological Model
Financial Destitution	Estar en blanco, Estar sin blanca	Bir tiyinsiz qolmoq (Non-color)
Envy / Jealousy	Ponerse verde de envidia	Ichi qoraymoq (Turning black inside)

Analysis and Discussion

The contrastive analysis of specific color categories uncovers the intricate cognitive mechanisms that govern phraseological production in Spanish and Uzbek.

The Idiomatics of Anger and Physical Discoloration

The expression of anger represents a primary emotional domain where color metaphors serve a vital somatic function. In Spanish, anger is heavily linked to two colors: black and purple. The expression *ponerse negro* signifies becoming highly irritated or enraged, drawing a metaphoric link between darkness, foul mood, and moral corruption [9]. More complex is the idiom *ponerse morado*. While its primary idiomatic meaning in contemporary Spanish denotes overeating or consuming to excess ("*En el banquete se puso morado*"), it historically and contextually extends to describe a person changing color due to intense rage, suffocating anger, or physical trauma [5]. The purple color (*morado*) mimics the physiological state of cyanosis—where oxygen deprivation turns the skin purple or blue.

In Uzbek, the physiological mapping of anger shifts decisively toward *ko'k* (blue/green) and *bo'g'ir* (a specific dark dark-red, purplish hues resulting from choking or blood rush). The idiom *ko'karib ketmoq* (literally "to turn blue/green") is frequently used to describe a person who is shaking or hyperventilating with rage: "*G'azabdan ko'karib ketdi*" (He turned blue with rage) [6]. Alternatively, the dialectal and classical term *bo'g'rib ketmoq* describes the physical expansion and darkening of the face under stress or anger, stemming from the verb *bo'g'moq* (to choke/strangle). Thus, while Spanish utilizes the static noun-based color *morado* (derived from the mulberry fruit), Uzbek employs active dynamic verbal transformations (*ko'karmoq*, *bo'g'irmoq*) to convey the volatile nature of the emotion [10].

The Black and White Binary Opposition

In both Spanish and Uzbek, black (*negro / qora*) and white (*blanco / oq*) carry heavy ethical, existential, and social weight, yet their specific cultural applications diverge. In Spanish, *negro* consistently represents bad luck, illegality, or structural misery: *ver el panorama negro* (to see a bleak future), *trabajar en negro* (to work illegally without paying taxes), or *tener la negra* (to suffer chronic bad luck) [2].

In Uzbek phraseology, *qora* extends far beyond bad luck into domains of social organization, heavy labor, and deep psychological states. Phrases like *qora xalq* (the common people, mass population) or *qora mehnat* (heavy manual labor) carry historical structural meanings free of purely negative moral condemnation, reflecting old social stratifications of the Khanate era [8]. Psychologically, *ichi qoraymoq* (literally "for one's inside to turn black") means to become consumed by envy or malice toward another's success, an idiomatic structure completely absent in Spanish, which maps envy onto green (*ponerse verde de envidia*) [7].

White (*blanco / oq*) universally encodes purity, truth, and legitimacy. In Spanish, *pasar la noche en blanco* (to spend a sleepless night) links whiteness to blankness or lack of fulfillment, while *quedarse en blanco* denotes a sudden memory lapse during an examination or public speech [9]. In Uzbek, *oq* is culturally sacred, largely due to Islamic influences and nomadic traditions where dairy products (*oqliq*) represented life and sustenance. The expression *oq yo'l* (literally "white road") is universally deployed to wish someone a safe, blessed journey, while *oq yuvib*, *oq taramoq* (literally "to wash white and comb white") represents the ultimate parental devotion and sacrifice in raising a child cleanly and honorably [3].

The Semantic Ambiguity of Blue and Green

Green (verde) and Blue (azul) illustrate a profound structural contrast. In Spanish, verde represents structural dualism: it denotes youth, lack of maturity, or experience (estar verde), but it also unexpectedly carries a strong sexual connotation. Expressions like chiste verde (a dirty/sexual joke) or viejo verde (a lecherous old man) are deeply embedded in Spanish culture [5]. The origin of this sexual connotation trace back to the association of green with uncontrolled natural growth, vitality, and Roman bacchanalian imagery.

In Uzbek, yashil (green) is strictly positive, frequently associated with nature, renewal, and Islamic semiotics. It completely lacks any lecherous or dirty connotations. The sexual or negative connotations found in Spanish verde are entirely foreign to Uzbek yashil. Instead, the syncretic term ko'k absorbs many complex negative and positive associations. For example, ko'kka ko'tarmoq (to raise to the sky/blue) means to praise someone excessively, whereas ko'k eshak (blue donkey) or ko'kko'z (blue-eyed) can carry subtle historic pejorative nuances depending on regional contexts [4].

Conclusion

This contrastive idiomatic analysis reveals that color terms in Spanish and Uzbek function as complex linguistic signs that mirror the cognitive and cultural realities of their speakers. The comparison yields three major conclusions:

First, universal physiological realities create cross-linguistic parallels. Both Spanish and Uzbek link facial color changes to intense emotional experiences like anger, fear, or shame. However, the specific lexical items chosen to represent these states differ based on linguistic categorization. Spanish frames anger through negro or morado, while Uzbek relies on the active verbal transformations ko'karmoq and bo'g'rib ketmoq.

Second, cultural, religious, and socio-historical vectors dominate the phraseological systems. Spanish chromatisms are deeply tied to Western European cultural traditions, resulting in unique connections like green with sexuality or white with cognitive emptiness. Uzbek chromatisms are profoundly shaped by Central Asian nomadic herding history and Islamic values, embedding concepts of purity, social labor, and community protection within terms like oq and qora.

Third, structural differences in color perception alter phraseological flexibility. The syncretic nature of the Uzbek term ko'k, which spans across boundaries that Western languages split into blue and green, allows it to take on a wide range of idioms that have no direct equivalents in the Spanish system. Ultimately, this contrastive study highlights how two distinct tongues can arrive at different phraseological systems while observing the same colorful world.

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