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Linguistic and Cultural Characteristics of Achromatic Color Names Used in Parememological Units in Uzbek and Russian

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Abstract: It has been argued that color names not only function as lexical units but also as cultural codes, embodying particular national worldviews, value systems, and symbolic meanings embedded into the language. It is stated that within both Uzbek and Russian linguoculture, achromatic color names are widely used in paremiological units and represent moral, aesthetic and psychological perceptions based on dichotomous oppositions related to the conceptual opposition such as good versus evil. Though color symbolism, linguoculture and scale of research works have been analyzed, so little attention is paid to the comparative study of comparative achromatic color components as carriers of national-culture codes in paremiology of Uzbek and Russian. The purpose of this study is to identify and compare the linguistic-cultural features of six achromatic color names in the proverbs of the Uzbek and Russian proverbs based on their conceptual, figurative, and evaluative functions. The analysis shows that the white black dichotomy acts as a default cognitive model in the two languages, verbalizing universally the moral oppositions but also reflecting nationally specific readings that are aligned with the dynamics of historical memory and cultural values. Achromatic lexemes serve as cultural codes that make abstract concepts intangible and increase the didactic and psychological impact of the paraemic unit. This research revises the framework for the achromatic color terms as linguocultural codes within paremiological structures of two languages. The results add to the body of research in cognitive linguistics and linguoculturology, providing insights into the intra-national deviations of cultural coding and through analysis of proverbs, how national conceptual systems are maintained and passed down through the generations.

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1. Introduction

Uzbek and Russian, color names exist as national-cultural codes. According to VNTelia, "Cultural codes are a system of secondary signs consisting of various material and formal means used to encode a specific cultural content." VVKrasnykh's following definition of a cultural code is famous: "Cultural codes can be imagined as a net thrown into existence. This "net" inherent in our thinking divides, organizes, shapes and evaluates the world around us" [1], [2].

defines "cultural code" as "a set of basic concepts, values and norms that reflect the priorities of culture". In the doctoral thesis "The role of linguistic and cultural codes in the linguistic landscape of the world" conducted by Z.Muqimova in Uzbek linguistics, the regularities of the mechanism of emergence of linguistic and cultural codes in the Uzbek language were determined and the place of Uzbek in the linguistic landscape of the world

was determined. In this work, the linguistic and cultural code is defined as follows: “ The linguistic and cultural code can be defined as a set of concepts and norms necessary for understanding and comprehending a certain culture, as well as an expression of the worldview of a certain nation and its figurative thinking, embodied in language units, a complete, concise summary” [3].

In world linguistics, the following types of linguocultural codes are distinguished: somatic code, spatial code, temporal code, object code , biomorphic code, spiritual code, anthropomorphic code, spatial code, color code, war code, medical code, architectural code, sports code, geometric code, gastronomic code, clothing code, mythological code, theomorphic code, etc.

In addition to naming a specific color, color names carry cultural information in many languages. In Uzbek and Russian, the color nomenclature is also formed with certain national conceptual views and is actively transformed into a code for a nationally specific essence [4]. For example, in Uzbek culture, black has become a code for the meaning of "support", which is reflected in the phrase *"black to pull"* and in proverbs such as: *"When the Khan is black, the black lute walks in the mountains."*

In Russian, the lexeme “ *серый* ” acts as a cultural code for several symbolic meanings, unlike in Uzbek. For example, its “simple”, “unpretentious” meanings are observed in the following proverbs: “ *Рад Енифан, что нажил серый кафтан; У настуха нод у шка – серый stone , but soul - flower gardener* ” [5].

The occurrence of cultural codes is actively observed in works of folk oral art, in particular, in parememological units. Cultural codes in the text of proverbs usually express certain symbolic meanings, national cultural concepts, values and concepts that have become values. So, in the process of cultural coding in the language, for concepts that have abstract semantics, national value or ad-value, a specific concept, national assessment and attitude, specific things close to the people become codes. What becomes a code must be familiar to the people, given by direct observation. It can be a body part, color, plant, animal, household item. Then the formless abstract concept is conditionally objectified. For example, the concept of “innocence” is an epistemological, abstract concept that is not given by direct observation. If this concept is perceived through white color, it becomes materialized. After all, white color can be seen : *On a white day you turn pale, On a black day you turn black; Говорит бело, adelaet(dumaet)cherno* [6].

The process of linguocultural coding is carried out through cognitive metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and simile. National thinking forms the basis of this process.

The linguocultural encoding process performs the following main tasks:

- 1) Helps to understand abstract concepts more easily;
- 2) Concepts that require high intellectual thinking are relegated to a simpler, more folk-like version;
- 3) Values, philosophy of life, and historical experiences important to the people are simplified for preservation and transmission;
- 4) The influence of national and cultural views is enhanced through figurative, artistic depiction [7].

The image below shows the encoding process Fig. 1.

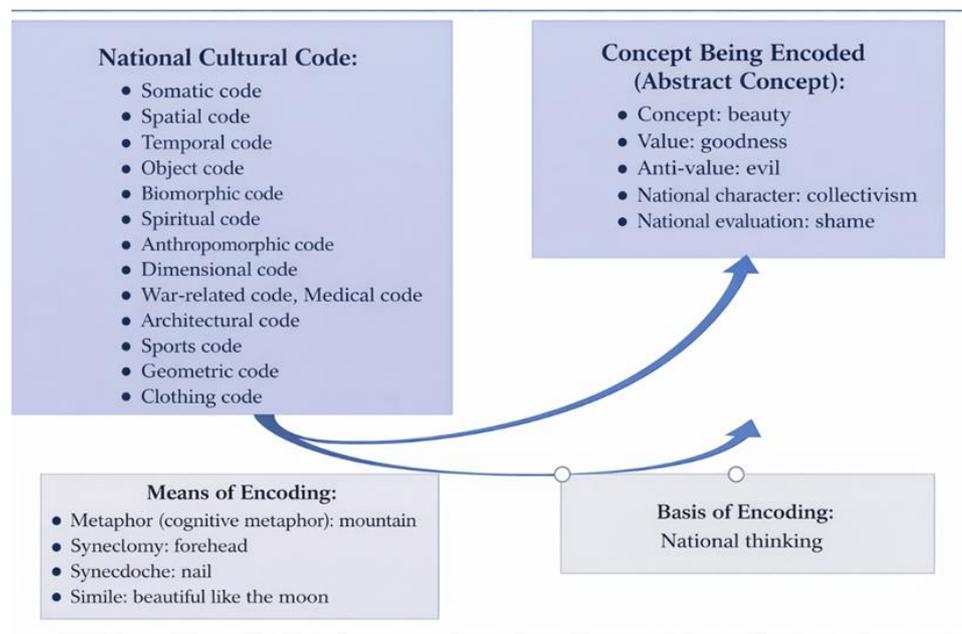


Figure 1. The coding process.

Since a specific color name in the text of proverbs expresses a concept, it certainly has the status of a national or universal code. Below, attention will also be paid to the issue of cultural code in the process of color-component conceptual analysis. The concept is derived from Latin and means "concept". This term was introduced into linguistics in 1928 by S. Askoldov. While this term was initially used as a synonym for concept, today it is interpreted as a separate entity, distinct from concept.

In linguistics, the concept is studied from different points of view. Therefore, it is not possible to give a single definition of this concept. The concept is one of the objects of study in the fields of cognitive linguistics, linguocultural studies, and psycholinguistics, and linguocognitive, linguocultural, and psycholinguistic concepts are distinguished [8].

D.Lakoff, R.Langaker, E.Sapir, Y.Kubryakova, A.Babushkin, V.Telia, N.Alifirenko, V.Krasnikh, N.Shvedova, Z.Popova, I.Sternin conducted research on the linguo-cognitive properties of the concept. According to N.Shvedova: "A concept is a content that is socially or subjectively determined behind the concept, has its own roots, reflects an important spiritual and intellectual aspect of human life, and expresses the common experience of the people"[9], [10], [11]. The linguo-cultural aspects of the concept were paid attention to by scientists such as N.Arutyunova, V.V.Vorobyov, V.I.Karasik, V.V.Kolesov, Y.S.Stepanov, G.G.Slishkin [12], [13]. The concept is one of the main basic concepts of linguo-cultural studies. YSStepanov, who was one of the first to treat the concept as a national-mental phenomenon, said: "The concept is the basis of culture in human thought, through which culture enters the mental world of man". According to Maslova: "A national cultural concept is an image that reflects the picture of the national world, generalized in words or text" [14].

Uzbek linguist O.K. Yusupov notes that "A concept is a set of knowledge in our minds, images about it and positive, negative, neutral attitudes towards it, that is, assessments," noting that it contains a layer of understanding, imagination, and evaluation [15]. Sh. Usmanova writes as follows: "A concept, as a linguistic and cultural unit, expresses the specific aspects of the culture of a particular people." While researcher Jamoliddinova denies the concept of determination, she examines it. That is, the concept is verbalized in linguistic signs. The people must have their own national understanding of the essence that this sign names. "

2. Materials and Methods

The methodology of research is based on the comparative linguocultural and cognitive-semantic approaches for the determination of language and cultural characteristics of achromatic color names of Uzbek and Russian paremiological units. In this regard, the empirical material is represented by proverbs and sayings with color components oq/qora and белый/чёрный, which are selected by the method of continuous sampling from paremiological dictionaries and other linguistic sources. This research uses descriptive, contrastive, and conceptual analysis methods to showcase semantic structure, symbolization and evaluative function potential of achromatic color lexemes of each presented language. In the first step, paremiological units by the dichotomous oppositions were classified depending on the availability of achromatic color components. Then a componential and contextual analysis was carried out in order to know their substantive a non-substantive meanings, their emotional-expressive connotations and their cognitive features. Especially, linguocultural codes and national-cultural concepts mediated by color symbolic inside paremiological structures were considered. Some of the insights from cognitive metaphor theory were used to account for how the abstract moral categories like good and evil are conceived of in terms of perceptual oppositions based in sensory experience. This comparative analysis detected similarities and differences in the symbolic interpretation of achromatic colors, and it allowed for the separation between universal semantic patterns and nationally specific features. At the interpretative stage, it was necessary to explain the mechanisms of cultural coding and the role of paremiological units in reflecting a historical memory, value orientations and the national picture of the world, reflected in the linguistic consciousness of the Uzbek and Russian languages.

3. Results and Discussion

The verbalization of concepts that have reached the level of concepts in the language is carried out through various level units, various linguistic and speech means. A certain concept is not only expressed through a single word or phrase, but also the cooperation of linguistic units is observed in its expression. For example, in the expression of a certain concept, the mutual cooperation of phonetic, lexical, grammatical, phraseological, paremeological units of the language, methods of name transfer, poetic figures, etc. is observed. In this case, linguistic and speech units complement each other, each of which serves to express certain cognitive features of the concept, some of which can express the concept more vividly, some less so.

In Uzbek and Russian, various figurative and symbolic meanings of color names express certain signs of concepts such as good, evil, beauty, health, illness, migration, youth. One of the specific features of the semantics of paremeological units in which achromatic color names participate is the contrast and comparison of two concepts, which effectively achieves an emotional impact and didactic function. Such a contrast is mainly carried out through the colors white and black, and the concepts of good and bad are clearly visualized through the dichotomy of two lexemes.

Humanity has been using various mental operations in the progressive processes of knowing and naming the very complex world in which it lives. One of such mental processes is dichotomy, which is based on the categorization of the world. In dichotomy, the elements of the world are studied in pairs based on the presence or absence of a certain sign. That is, dichotomy is a way of understanding the world in two opposite, but interconnected ways. This method is a cognitive model of human thinking, which provides for the understanding of reality through pairs such as *good* ↔ *evil*, *life* ↔ *death*, *light* ↔ *darkness*, *white* ↔ *black*.

It is known that there is a dichotomy of white and black in language. The ontological basis of this dichotomy is as follows: In nature, the colors white and black appear

depending on the physical properties of light. When the light emanating from a light source is completely reflected across the entire spectrum, the human eye perceives this as white. On the contrary, if the surface absorbs light waves almost completely and does not reflect them, it is perceived as black. In this sense, white and black are not independent colors in nature, but are a physical dichotomy based on the presence and absence of light. This dichotomy was later enriched with symbolic and cultural content in human thought and language.

So, in both Uzbek and Russian, white and black are considered the colors of day and night, expressing such contrasting concepts as good and evil, light and darkness, love and hate, and the norms inherent in the spiritual world. It is known that concepts about the spiritual world, the spiritual world, are formed much later than concepts about the natural world. A person first begins to understand the natural world through sensory knowledge, and then through intellectual knowledge, the spiritual-spiritual world. Then concepts such as stone, mountain, water, house, bread, white, black were formed much earlier than concepts such as happiness, evil, love, goodness.

The expression of the concept of good and evil through color names. These two concepts are universals that exist in all cultures, languages, and religions, embodying fundamental moral norms that have existed since ancient times in human history. The formation of these two concepts was based on cultural values, religious beliefs, and a national assessment of the world. Then, along with the universality of the concepts of good and evil, good and bad, their expression in each society acquires a national content in connection with national moral norms, historical memory, and worldview, which indicates the national-cultural specificity of the concepts.

Goodness is considered a universal concept, and all languages have keywords that name it. In Uzbek, it is *добро*, in Russian, *добро*. This concept, known as the keyword, reflects the worldview of the people, their assessment of the world, and their system of values. In both languages, it is considered one of the main positive semantic concepts and is opposed to evil. In both Uzbek and Russian, the attributive sign of the concept of "goodness" is the main positive assessment and is associated with values such as positive human behavior, noble intentions, the benefit of a person or thing, justice and humanity. The concept of good, noble, noble/ "добрый", "хороший" can be interpreted as a separate concept or as a sign of the concept of "goodness"/ "добро". We have analyzed it as a cognitive sign of the concept of "goodness". In both languages, this concept has different places in its structure. This difference indicates its national-cultural characteristics. For example, in Russian culture, expressing one's opinion to an adult is considered good from the perspective of personal standing, while in Uzbek culture, it is considered bad as disrespect for adults.

good/ "добрый (хороший)", enhanced by national mental characteristics, includes national thinking, historical memory, values, national values, national taste - everything. In the Uzbek language, the sign of good is more social in nature and is associated with issues such as benefiting society, living honestly, and honor. In Russian, it is interpreted more based on individual spiritual and moral standards. Such large metaconcepts are clearly reflected in parememological units that serve the function of helping future generations distinguish between good and evil.

In Russian, such as "Волосом-то бел, да душой чёрн", "Говорит бело, а делает черно", "Из черного не сделаешь белого" "Чёрное к белому не пристанет", "Любовь может и слепя быть – чёрное за белое почитает", "Не называй дурное хорошим, а чёрное – белым", "бело – бело, чёрно – черно" proverbs show the concept of "good" and "bad". The proverbs "Из черного не сделаешь белого", "Чёрное к белому не пристанет" express the idea that trying to make evil good is futile, that a bad person will never be good.

Through this proverb, people are warned that a negative characteristic is not attached to a person without reason; therefore, such an individual possesses traits that do

not conform to social norms, and expecting change from them is considered illogical. The same idea is expressed in the Uzbek proverb “*Asli qora oqarmas, Asli qing’ir tuzalmas.*” This reflects a shared universal worldview rooted in the common life experience of humanity. In the Uzbek version, the word *asli* (“by nature,” “originally”) is added, emphasizing an innate quality of a person. The proverbs “*Asli qora oqarmas*” and «Из черного не сделаешь белого» are almost identical in structure and conceptual meaning, but they differ in the presence of the word *asli* in the Uzbek variant.

This single word reveals a national character trait of compassion and emotional softness. It implies that only a truly inherently bad person does not change, yet there remains a subtle undertone of “perhaps he might change.” In contrast, the Russian national character, traditionally associated with rationality and a strong sense of justice, clearly separates white from black. This mentality favors strict dichotomous thinking either good or bad rather than intermediate possibilities expressed through “perhaps.” This idea is also reflected in the expression: «Посажехотыгладь,хотьбей—всечерно».

In Uzbek and Russian, the concepts of “evil” and “bad” are also expressed through color components. In many languages, these concepts have developed as symbolic meanings of the lexemes “black” / «черный». The lexemes *qora* / «черный», which are associated with night, acquire additional symbolic meanings such as “darkness,” “evil,” “shame,” and “secrecy.” In both languages, the symbolic potential of the lexemes *qora* / «черный» is most clearly manifested in paremiological units through their dichotomous opposition to the lexemes *oq* / «белый». The white–black dichotomy in Uzbek proverbs is vividly expressed in the following examples: *Oq kunda oqararsan, Qora kunda qorayarsan; Qoradan ortiq bo’yoq bo’lmas; Qorani yuvgan bilan oq bo’lmas; Oq tangang ortiq bo’lsa, Qora kuningga saqla; Qora itning uyati oq itga tegar; Ig’vogarga oq sut ham qora.*

Similarly, in Russian paremiology, the dichotomy is reflected in such proverbs as: *Белое—венчальное, черное—печальное; Белый, как сажа, и черный, как снег; Будь проклята любая змея: и черная, и белая; В добром житье лицо белится, румянится, в плохом чернится; В споре и белая ворона черна, а черная ворона бела; Дела как сажа бела maqollarida voqelanadi.*

Thus, the national-cultural concept embedded in a language is necessarily verbalized through its paremiological units. The paremiological fund of a language serves as one of the principal sources for the formation of linguocultural concepts. Paremiological units represent the historical experience, value system, and worldview of a nation in their most concise and stable form. Such units preserve historical memory, ancient traditions, and values shaped within the collective consciousness. Therefore, paremiological units play a crucial role in revealing the concepts that constitute the semantic core of national culture.

4. Conclusion

Thus, the study has shown that linguistic culture codes in Uzbek and Russian paremiological units expressed through the names of achromatic colors represent basic moral and evaluative ideas about good and evil in their national world views. The results show that the whiteblack opposition functions as a cosmopolitan cognitive model to conceptualize oppositions like good, evil, light, darkness, but its semantic expression demonstrates national specificity determined by historical memory, value system and collective mentality. Not only do achromatic lexemes name perceptual properties, but they also conceptualize metaphorically and dichotomously abstract ethical classes, which enhances the educative and the expressive force of proverbs. The study verifies that paremiological units serve as a medium for storing and transferring cultural codes—they are a relatively compressed and established unit and therefore represent a good source for discerning national-cultural concepts. Cognitive linguistics and linguoculturology stand

to gain from the implications of this study because of their interest in the mechanisms of cultural coding and conceptualisation in language producing texts reflecting the communicative process between cognition and language. Future work might broaden the scope of comparison to additional color groups or languages, or quantitative corpus-based analyses to further our understanding of relationships between color semantics, cultural cognition, and linguistic encoding.

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