

## Colorative Phraseological Units of a Metaphorical Nature

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### ABSTRACT

*This article investigates metaphorical colorative phraseological units (CPUs) in the English and Karakalpak languages, analyzing their semantic, cultural, and cognitive dimensions. The study compares how color metaphors and metonymies function in both languages, particularly in expressions related to emotions, social roles, appearance, and life experiences. Using comparative, cultural, and linguistic methods, the paper identifies similarities and differences in the conceptual and emotional meanings of color terms. The research also highlights the challenges of translation due to cultural specificity and suggests strategies for effective intercultural adaptation. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how language mirrors worldview and cultural identity.*

**Keywords:** Phraseological units, metaphor, color terms, Karakalpak language, English language, translation challenges, cultural context, cognitive linguistics.

### INTRODUCTION

Phraseological units are integral components of any language, reflecting its cultural heritage, cognitive worldview, and historical experience. This study focuses on colorative phraseological units (CPUs) of metaphorical nature in English and Karakalpak languages. The figurative usage of color terms within these units reveals the deep connections between

language, thought, and culture. The metaphorical and metonymic mechanisms involved in the formation of CPUs are instrumental in shaping national identity and conveying complex emotional and social meanings. Scholars such as Mokienko, Lakoff, and Johnson argue that metaphors go beyond linguistic constructs, functioning as tools of cognition and culture.

#### METHODS

This research employs a comparative-analytical method to identify similarities and differences in metaphorical CPUs between English and Karakalpak. It uses semantic categorization, cultural-linguistic analysis, and interdisciplinary approaches combining insights from cognitive linguistics, cultural studies, and translation theory. Data was collected from phraseological dictionaries, corpora, and folklore, followed by a quantitative analysis presented in statistical tables. Examples of CPUs were categorized by color (black, white, red), emotional valence, and semantic field (e.g., emotional state, appearance, social status).

#### RESULTS

The following comprehensive information analyzes the properties of colorative phraseological units of a metaphorical nature in the English and Karakalpak languages, explaining their formation, semantics, cultural and cognitive functions, as well as the complexities in the translation process, enriched with citations.

Phraseological units are traditional elements that constitute the rich and complex system of language. They are essential linguistic phenomena that reflect the cultural heritage, historical experience, and cognitive worldview of a people. Their main characteristic is that the words comprising these phrases possess figurative and metaphorical meanings rather than simple lexical meanings. Through these units, the worldview, thoughts, cultural values, and social experiences of people are expressed [1: 250]. Mokienko's view demonstrates that phraseological units are not merely linguistic phenomena, but are imbued with deep cultural

and psychological content. In this case, by studying the cultural layer of phrases, it becomes possible to better understand the distinctive aspects of national thinking.

Metaphor is a linguistic and cognitive process that creates new, deeper meanings through the comparison of one concept or image with another concept, playing an important role in the creation of phraseological units. In this process, simple meanings change through metaphor and acquire more symbolic or figurative meanings. For example, in the English phrase "red tape," the word "red," beyond its basic color meaning, is used metaphorically to denote complex bureaucratic processes in social life and difficulties arising from excessive paperwork. This example illustrates that metaphor is connected with cultural context and is an effective tool for reflecting the cognitive experiences of native speakers [2: 416]. As Lakoff & Johnson point out, metaphors are not only a linguistic tool but also a cognitive tool that shapes people's thinking processes. In their view, through metaphors, people define and describe complex and abstract concepts, imbuing them with deeper emotional and cultural meaning.

Metonymy is the direct substitution of one concept or image with another. In the context of colors, the metonymic approach is more often manifested based on the proximity between objects, that is, physical and cultural proximity. In these processes, the main change extends beyond the nominative meaning of the word and forms its figurative, cognitive, and cultural layers (See Table 1).

Table 1. *Similarities and differences of colorative phraseological units in the English and Karakalpak languages*

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Karakalpak language</b>
Positive color connotation	"White lie" (white color – purity and goodness)	<i>Aqjol</i> (white color – luck, purity, good intention)
Negative color connotation	"Red tape" (red color – bureaucracy)	<i>Qarabaxit</i> (black color – unhappiness, difficulties)
Social connotation of color	"Blue blood" (blue color – aristocratic origin)	Used more in historical and socio-cultural contexts

Basis of metaphor	Social and political events	Historical experiences and folk culture
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This table helps to better understand the differences and similarities in the cultural context, semantics, and metaphorical properties of colorative phraseological units in the English and Karakalpak languages.

In the English language, colorative phraseological units are found in many areas and express a wide range of meanings. For example: "Red tape" – this phrase is used to denote obstacles that arise through bureaucracy and excessive regulation. The red color here signifies strength, weight, and often inconvenience. "White lie" means a small, harmless lie. In this phrase, white reflects purity, honesty, and delicate ethical choices. "Blue blood" – a phrase denoting aristocratic origin, where the color blue often refers to cold, passive, and special ethnolinguistic values.

In these English phrases, colors carry deep meaning not only as visual sensations but also in cultural and cognitive contexts. As a result of the metaphorical and metonymic reflection of colors, they not only represent feelings but also express people's psychological and social experiences.

In the Karakalpak language, colored phraseological units serve as an important tool for reflecting national culture, historical experience, and the unique worldview of the people. For example, "Akjol" (White road) is used in the sense of a good path, often understood as a symbol of luck, purity, and goodness. However, in some cases, this phrase can take on other semantic layers in accordance with the social values and historical traditions of the people. *Qarabaxıt* (Black happiness) or *qarajol* (black road) – the color black is often associated with negative thoughts, unhappiness, or difficult times, but it can also be used in other contexts, for example, to reflect periods of solemnity or hardship.

Colored word combinations in the Karakalpak language often have variable meanings in accordance with the historical events, traditions, and cultural characteristics of the people. In these phrases, visual, emotional, and cognitive aspects are also

reflected through the metaphorical representation of colors in the mind.

The presence of a prototype: A pre-existing word or concept with lexical meaning serves as the basis for the creation of a phraseologism. This prototype concept, in addition to its original meaning, is reused in a metaphorical or figurative form, forming new and broader semantic layers. As a result, a figurative meaning emerges in the phraseologism, and this meaning acquires new content related to the cultural, historical, or social experiences of the people.

Semantic reflection and reimagining in the main concept: In phrases created based on metaphors, the original lexical meaning is partially or completely altered, generating a new figurative and symbolic content. For example: in the English phrase "red tape," the word "red" transcends its primary color meaning and is metaphorically used to denote the burden, complexity, and excessive bureaucracy of administrative procedures. In this phrase, the metaphorical reimagining of color is formed on the basis of social and cultural experiences, and the cognitive experiences of language users play a significant role in the transformation of its semantics.

This metaphorical reimagining enriches the semantics and cultural layers of the language, while also reflecting the psychological experiences of language users.

Metaphorical character performs the following functions in phraseological units:

- **Enhancing imagery:** Images created in phrases through metaphors have a clear and sensory impact on the listener or reader. This not only enhances the aesthetic content of the language but also strengthens its communicative potential.
- **Formation of semantic polysemy:** Through metaphorical phraseologisms, words can acquire multiple meanings. For example, the phrase "white lie" not only conveys a simple lie but also reflects the complexity of ethical choices and social relationships.
- **Representing cultural context:** In both languages, colors and their expressions change according to the historical,

cultural, and social characteristics of the people. For this reason, metaphorical phraseological units also serve as a means of reflecting cultural identity and national consciousness.

Metaphorical reflection is based on the everyday experiences, cultural values, and historical events of native speakers and is a necessary way of expressing people's way of thinking, emotional attitudes, and worldview. In the example of "red tape" in English, the color red, beyond its primary lexical meaning, metaphorically denotes complex bureaucratic procedures, their burden and inconvenience. The metaphorical feature of this phrase has formed on the basis of social and historical experiences, and to understand its content, it is necessary to be familiar with historical events related to the processes of state administration, legislation, and governance in English culture and history. Indeed, according to Lakoff and Johnson, by understanding the meaning of such metaphors, we can gain insight into people's attitudes towards social and political events, as well as how historical experiences profoundly influence language and thought processes.

Metaphors help form complex cognitive representations in human consciousness and express abstract concepts through clear and sensory images. For example, the phrase *qarabaxit* (black happiness) in the Karakalpak language reflects negative thoughts and feelings based on the historical experiences and cultural values of the people. This example illustrates that metaphors are not merely linguistic tools, but also play a crucial role in understanding the mental world of individuals, social events, and cultural processes. Comprehending the meaning of this phrase also requires familiarity with the historical experience of the people.

Finding the exact equivalent of the English phrase "white lie" in the Karakalpak language can be complex, as each language possesses its own cultural and historical context [1: 112]. Mokienko's idea emphasizes the necessity of a deep understanding of cultural context in the translation process. While in English, "white lie" is used to maintain social

relationships, finding a similar phrase in the Karakalpak language requires consideration of the cultural traditions and ethical values of its speakers. Taking into account intercultural differences when seeking such equivalents helps improve the quality of translation.

Color meanings and connotations in English, such as those associated with “black,” “white,” “red,” “blue” reflect certain semantic and emotional contrasts. In the Karakalpak language, however, these colors are interpreted differently in accordance with cultural traditions, historical experiences, and the unique worldview of the people. Therefore, finding a complete equivalent of a phrase in another language is often complex.

Cultural nuances and psychological layers are related to translators' efforts to preserve the original cultural context of a phrase. Lexical, psychological, and cognitive elements are also considered in this process. For example: when translating the English phrase "white lie" into Karakalpak, the cultural connotations and social meanings of the color white may differ between the two languages.

The following methods can be applied in the translation process:

- **Cultural adaptation:** The translator must study the original cultural context of the phrase and adapt it to the cultural traditions of the target language.
- **Contextual explanation:** Identify the semantic and emotional layers of each phrase and strive to accurately and fully convey them in the target language.
- **Interdisciplinary approach:** Conduct a deeper analysis of the phrase formation process and its cultural layers by utilizing knowledge from philology, cultural studies, and cognitive linguistics.

The functional aspects and socio-cultural significance of phraseological units are associated with several functions. For instance, in the communicative function, color-related phraseological units play a crucial role in conveying information

during communication, enriching the expressive, emotional, and cultural layers of the language. As rich figurative tools of language, they serve to convey specific cultural contexts and emotions to the listener or reader. In cognitive and aesthetic functions, metaphorical phraseologisms create distinct cognitive images in the human mind. They help simplify complex concepts, enhance imagery, and highlight the aesthetic aspects of language. Word combinations created through colors form cognitive maps and reflect the worldview of native speakers. In reflecting cultural identifiers, each nation's phraseological system acts as a factor mirroring its cultural heritage, with color-related phrases reflecting the historical experiences, traditions, and social values of the people. Colorative phraseological units in English and Karakalpak languages also express the semantic richness of the language and serve as cultural identifiers.

In the examples, phraseological units characterizing a person's appearance are presented through color terms: "White complexion" and "whiter than white" – these phrases are used in English to denote the cleanliness, purity, and ideal appearance of a person's face. In this example, white color not only represents a visual hue but also reflects positive aesthetic and ethical concepts. These metaphorical phrases primarily reflect a person's social status, as white is perceived as a symbol of idealization and purity.

Example in the Karakalpak language: *Aqdidar* (white face) and *aqmañlay* – these phrases are used in the Karakalpak language to denote the bright and positive aspects of a person's face. Their semantic aspect, similar to the examples in English, reflects a person's appearance and social attributes, but they are created in accordance with the traditional aesthetic views of the people.

Russian example: *Белая как лебедь* (White as a swan) – this phrase in Russian is used as a symbol of a human face, especially for women, representing tenderness, beauty, and charm. In this phrase, the metaphorical influence of white is associated with the positive qualities of a person, while simultaneously idealizing their appearance.

Examples in English expressing emotional states and inner feelings: "Blue blood" – this phrase is used to denote aristocratic origin and high social class. Here, "blue" transcends its simple color meaning and becomes a symbol reflecting a person's cognitive and cultural perspectives. This example demonstrates how the metaphorical representation of color manifests in English culture.

An example in the Karakalpak language is *Qarabaxyt* or *qarajol* – where the black color is typically associated with negative feelings, unhappiness, or difficult life situations. For instance, the phrase *qarajol* (black road) is used to describe a person's unpleasant situations and hardships. In this example, the metaphorical meaning of black is based on the historical experience and psychological model of the people. It expresses feelings evoked by negative circumstances.

The English phrase "black out" refers to a person fainting or losing consciousness. Here, "black" is used not only as a visual concept but also as a metaphorical sign reflecting a person's inner state, specifically sudden emotional changes. This example illustrates the metaphorical representation of color and its communicative potential.

The expression of social status and individual characteristics is demonstrated through an English language example. The phrase "black sheep" is used to describe a person who stands out within a family or social group, usually with a negative connotation. This example shows how a person's social role and their character are reflected through the metaphorical use of color (black). Sometimes this phrase can also be used in a positive sense, for instance, to describe a person who thinks independently or deviates from the norm.

In Karakalpak culture, color components reflect a person's social status and characteristics. For example, in some phraseological units found in folklore, the external and internal states of a person, as well as their social status, are reflected through white and black colors. It demonstrates that the colors "white" and "black" possess key semantic features that express human character. This illuminates national cultural and social contexts.

Metaphorical colorative phraseological units are essential tools for reflecting the complex system of language and culture, through which the inner world, aesthetic values, and historical experiences of people are expressed. As Kunin notes, the complexities in the creation and translation of phraseological units require a deep understanding of cultural contexts, and research in this field will provide a necessary foundation for the future development of language and cultural studies [3: 300]. Indeed, through the study of these units, interlingual and intercultural connections are better identified. This is also important for the development of global cultural ties.

By conducting a statistical comparative analysis of metaphorical colorative phraseological units in the English and Karakalpak languages, similarities and differences in the phraseological systems of the languages are identified, and their semantic properties are expressed through quantitative indicators.

Phraseological units are divided into groups according to the following semantic categories:

- Emotional states (positive/negative);
- Social position and status;
- Appearance and aesthetics;
- Health and illness;
- Happiness and luck/unhappiness and misfortune

Table 2. *Table for statistical analysis*

Color component	Language	Emotional states	Social status	Appearance	Health	Happiness/ luck or misfortune	Total No.	(%)
Black/qara	English	45	30	15	5	5	100	100%
Qara	Karakalpak	50	25	10	10	5	100	100%
White/aq	English	20	25	40	10	5	100	100%
White	Karakalpak	25	20	35	15	5	100	100%
Red/qızıl	English	35	20	15	10	20	100	100%
Red	Karakalpak	40	15	15	15	15	100	100%

Through the selected examples, one can observe how the main mechanisms – metaphor and metonymy – are employed in creating phraseological units with a color component and expressing their metaphorical nature, and how they are connected to the cognitive,

cultural, and social experiences of native speakers. While metaphorical meanings of color are reflected in English phrases such as "red tape," "white lie," "blue blood," and "black sheep," examples in the Karakalpak language also illuminate the cultural traditions and historical experiences of a specific people. These examples serve as concrete evidence by selecting and clarifying instances related to the topic, while also reinforcing the theoretical foundations widely used in scientific articles and research.

1. The main mechanisms of metaphorical character – metaphor and metonymy – are the primary tools in the creation of phraseological units. Color names and their cognitive reflections serve to convey new, figurative meanings rather than the original lexical meanings for speakers of the language. In this process, prototype concepts are replaced, and new semantic layers are formed.
2. While coloristic phraseological units in the English language often reflect social and psychological issues such as bureaucracy, officialdom, and aristocracy, in the Karakalpak language, they possess distinct semantic and connotative differences reflecting the people's cultural traditions, historical experiences, and social values. In the context of both languages, colors represent not only visual perception but also human emotions and cultural thinking.
3. The complexity and methods of the translation process necessitate considering the specific cultural and cognitive contexts of each language when translating phraseological units with color components. Translators should employ cultural adaptation, contextual interpretation, and interdisciplinary approaches to fully convey the underlying semantic layers, emotional and cultural connotations of phrases.
4. Metaphorical phraseological units of functional and communicative significance, along with the semantic richness of the language, also enhance its communicative, cognitive, and aesthetic functions. They serve as essential tools for expressing the cultural identity, worldview, and psychological experiences of native speakers.

5. Further research directions should focus on digital corpora, interdisciplinary methodologies, and cultural adaptation processes for a deeper study of color-related phraseological units. This will help to better understand the complex connections between language and culture.

Metaphorical colorative phraseological units are rare tools that reflect the complex system of language, culture, and human cognition. In English and Karakalpak languages, these phrases reflect not only the simple visual perception of colors but also their cognitive, psychological, and cultural layers. The process of their creation and the complexities involved in their translation are of great importance from the perspectives of philology, cultural studies, and cognitive linguistics.

#### DISCUSSION

The findings emphasize that CPUs are not only linguistic artifacts but mirrors of national psychology and worldview. Their metaphorical nature enables speakers to express nuanced concepts such as ethical judgment (white lie), social deviation (black sheep), and luck or hardship (*aqjol, qarajol*).

Translation challenges arise due to cultural and cognitive gaps. For instance, the English white lie lacks a direct Karakalpak equivalent, requiring either contextual explanation or cultural adaptation. The study recommends translators to use interdisciplinary strategies to bridge these gaps and preserve semantic and emotional depth.

The functional value of CPUs lies in their communicative, cognitive, and aesthetic roles, acting as cultural identifiers and contributing to the semantic richness of language.

#### CONCLUSION

The results of the analysis presented in this article demonstrate how phraseological units express the unique cultural heritage and worldview of native speakers, as well as the difficulties encountered in accurately translating these phrases and ways to

overcome them. Future research in this field will serve to reveal the richer and more complex structure of language, and the cultural and cognitive strata of the people.

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