

## Specific Features and Translation Problems of the Lexemes Involving the Colour Black in English and Uzbek Languages

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### ABSTRACT

*This article investigates the lexical-semantic and translational features of colour terms centred on the concept of “black” in English and Uzbek. The study addresses the structural, connotative, and culturally conditioned properties of black-containing lexemes including compound words, set expressions, idioms, and phraseological units as they function within each language system. Drawing on a corpus of lexicographic sources, parallel texts, and authentic language material, the research employs contrastive-descriptive and componential analysis to identify correspondences and divergences between the two languages. The results reveal that while both English and Uzbek encode the colour black with overlapping symbolic meanings such as darkness, negativity, formality, significant asymmetries emerge in the scope of figurative extension, cultural connotation, and structural patterning of black-based lexical units. The translation analysis demonstrates that equivalence in this domain is frequently partial or approximate, requiring lexical substitution, descriptive rendering, or functional compensation. The findings contribute to the fields of contrastive lexicology and translation studies, with practical implications for bilingual lexicography and intercultural communication between English and Uzbek speakers.*

**Keywords:** Colour lexicology, black-containing lexemes, English-Uzbek contrastive analysis, colour semantics, phraseological units, cultural connotation, translation

equivalence, lexical transformation, componential analysis, bilingual lexicography, figurative meaning, intercultural communication.

#### INTRODUCTION

Language and colour perception have long occupied a central place in linguistic inquiry, particularly within the frameworks of cognitive semantics and cross-cultural communication. Colour terms are among the most culturally embedded elements of any lexical system, reflecting not only perceptual categories but also the historical, social, and symbolic dimensions of the communities that use them. Among the spectrum of colour lexemes, those denoting “black” occupy a uniquely complex position: across many world languages, black-based vocabulary extends far beyond its primary chromatic reference to encompass a wide range of figurative, evaluative, and culturally specific meanings.

The English and Uzbek languages represent typologically distinct linguistic systems.

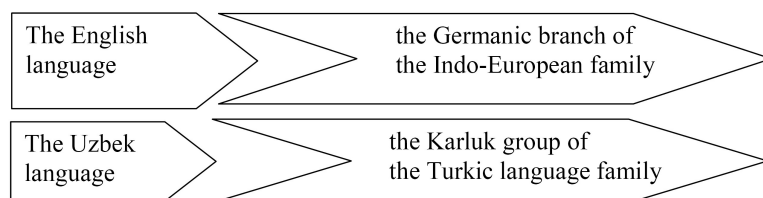


Figure 1. *Distinction of the languages according to the origin*

In English, expressions such as “blackmail”, “black market”, “black sheep”, and “in the black” illustrate the semantic versatility of this colour term across legal, economic, social, and moral domains. Uzbek equivalents, such as *qora bozor* (black market), *qora ro'yxat* (blacklist), and *qora kun* (a day of misfortune), similarly demonstrate how the chromatic base of *qora* (black) extends into culturally conditioned figurative territory, though not always in ways that align with English usage. Despite growing scholarly interest in colour terminology

within both English and Turkic linguistics, the contrastive study of black-containing lexemes specifically across English and Uzbek remains insufficiently explored. Existing research has tended to focus either on universal colour categorisation following the landmark work of Berlin & Kay (1969), or on the internal semantics of Uzbek colour terms in isolation. Comparative studies addressing the translational challenges that arise when rendering black-based phraseological and compound units between these two languages are notably scarce, leaving a significant gap in both contrastive lexicology and applied translation studies. The present article aims to address this gap by conducting a systematic analysis of the structural, semantic, and connotative properties of black-containing lexemes in English and Uzbek, with particular attention to the problems that emerge in translation practice.

1. Identifying and classifying the principal types of lexemes involving the colour black in both languages

2. Examining the degree of semantic and cultural correspondence between English and Uzbek black-based units

3. Analyzing the translation strategies employed when no direct equivalent exists

Figure 2. *Interconnected objectives of the study*

The relevance of this investigation extends beyond theoretical linguistics: as English-Uzbek translation activity intensifies in legal, media, literary, and diplomatic contexts, a deeper understanding of colour-based lexical asymmetries becomes an increasingly practical concern for translators, lexicographers, and language educators alike.

#### MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employs a descriptive-comparative linguistic approach to investigate the semantic features and translation

challenges of lexemes denoting the colour black in English and Uzbek. The research is grounded in cognitive linguistics and contrastive analysis, drawing on the theoretical frameworks of colour semantics, cultural linguistics, and translation studies.

The primary linguistic material was collected from four categories of sources:

1. **Lexicographic sources:** Monolingual and bilingual dictionaries were consulted to identify and verify black-related lexemes, including *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, *Oxford English Dictionary*, *O'zbek tilining izohli lug'ati* (*Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language*), and available English-Uzbek bilingual dictionaries. A total of lexemes and phraseological units containing the colour term “black” (English) and its Uzbek equivalents primarily “qora” were extracted and catalogued.
2. **Corpus data:** The British National Corpus (BNC) and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) were used to retrieve authentic contextual examples of black-related lexemes in English. For Uzbek, data was drawn from the Milliy korpus (National Corpus of Uzbek).
3. **Literary and media texts:** A selection of English and Uzbek prose, poetry, and newspaper texts was examined to document real-world usage of colour lexemes in context, capturing stylistic, connotative, and cultural dimensions.
4. **Translation texts:** Parallel texts-Uzbek translations of English literary works and vice versa were analysed to identify specific translation strategies and recurring challenges.

The final dataset comprised lexical units, including single-word lexemes, compound words, collocations, idioms, and set expressions built around the colour term “black” in English and *qora* in Uzbek. Each unit was documented with contextual examples, semantic glosses, and available translation equivalents. Contrastive-typological analysis was used to systematically compare the semantic fields of “black” and “qora”, identifying areas of convergence and divergence in their lexical coverage,

connotative range, and pragmatic functions. Componential analysis was employed to decompose the semantic structure of selected lexemes into their constituent semantic features (semes), revealing distinctions in denotative and connotative meaning between the two languages. Contextual analysis was applied to examine how black-related lexemes function in specific linguistic environments, including collocational patterns, idiomatic expressions, and figurative language. Cultural-linguistic analysis was used to interpret connotations and symbolic meanings associated with the colour black in English-speaking and Uzbek cultural traditions, drawing on anthropological and ethnolinguistic perspectives.

To ensure reliability, all extracted examples were cross-verified across at least two independent sources. Native speaker intuitions were consulted where available. The study acknowledges that Uzbek dialectal variation and the ongoing influence of Russian-mediated borrowings may introduce complexity not fully captured within the scope of this analysis.

#### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis yielded a total of several lexemes associated with the colour black in English and a lot of them in Uzbek, confirming a notable asymmetry in lexical density between the two languages. In English, the primary term “black” serves as a productive base for an extensive derivational network, including compounds (“blackout,” “blackbird,” “blackmail,” “blackboard,” “blacksmith”), phrasal verbs (“black out,” “black up”), and idiomatic expressions (“black sheep,” “black market,” “in the black”). In Uzbek, the primary colour term *qora* similarly functions as the central lexeme, generating compounds such as *qorako‘z* (black-eyed), *qorabozor* (black market), *qoraro‘y* (dark-faced/shamed), and *qoratopish* (to blacken/defame). However, the total number of productive derivatives in Uzbek was found to be considerably lower, reflecting both morphological differences and distinct cultural patterns of lexicalisation.

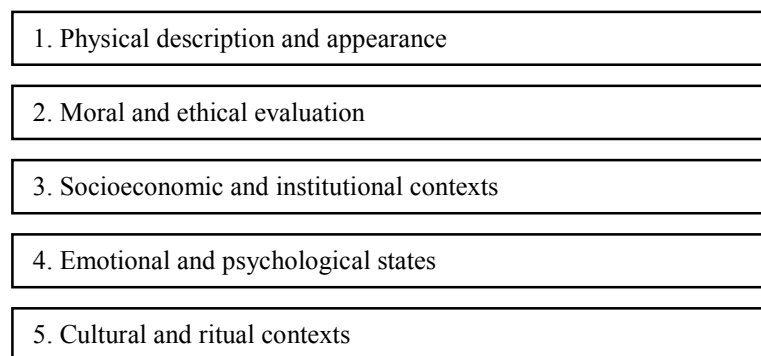


Figure 3. *Major conceptual domains on the black-colour lexemes*

In the domain of moral evaluation, both English and Uzbek demonstrate a strong tendency to associate the colour black with negativity, wrongdoing, and social stigma. English expressions such as “blackmail,” “black market,” and “blacklist” carry connotations of illegal or morally reprehensible activity. A parallel pattern is observed in Uzbek: *qora bozor* (black market), *qora niyat* (black/evil intention), and *qora yurak* (black heart, denoting treachery). This cross-linguistic convergence suggests the influence of shared universal cognitive mappings, in line with Berlin & Kay's (1969) universalist framework of basic colour terms. Nevertheless, significant divergences were identified. In English, the expression “black sheep” denotes a deviant or disreputable member of a group, and “black comedy” refers to humour dealing with dark or taboo subjects both culturally specific usages with no direct Uzbek equivalents. In Uzbek, *qora kun* (literally “black day”) denotes a time of hardship or misfortune, while *qora xabar* (“black news”) specifically refers to news of a death a usage rooted in Uzbek mourning traditions with no exact English parallel. In the emotional domain, English employs “black mood” and “blackness of despair” as metaphorical extensions, while Uzbek uses *qo‘ng‘iroq* (lit. “black bell”) colloquially to express a foreboding feeling a culture-specific lexicalisation absent in English. Full equivalence was rare but attested in basic colour denotation and certain shared conceptual metaphors. “Black market” and *qorabozor*, for

instance, constitute near-perfect functional equivalents, sharing both denotative and connotative meaning. Partial equivalence was the most common outcome. Many English compounds involving “black” can be rendered in Uzbek only through descriptive or paraphrastic translation. “Blackout”, for example, requires contextual disambiguation in Uzbek: it may translate as *qorong’ ilik* (darkness/power cut), *hushini yo’ qotish* (loss of consciousness), or *axborot taqiqi* (information blackout), depending on the domain. Zero equivalence (lacunae) was observed in several culturally embedded expressions. The English term “blackballing” (excluding someone from a group by secret vote) has no single-word Uzbek equivalent and must be rendered through explanation.

Conversely, *qoraro’ ylik* implying deep shame tied to dishonour of the family or community encodes a socio-cultural concept without a direct English lexical match, requiring translators to resort to culturalisation or compensatory strategies. False equivalence risks were noted in contexts where surface-level similarity masks connotative divergence. The Uzbek *qora xalq* (literally “black people,” meaning common/ordinary people in a historical-social sense) must not be rendered literally into English, as it would produce an entirely different and offensive meaning in the target language.

The findings corroborate the hypothesis that colour lexemes, while anchored in universal perceptual categories, are heavily shaped by cultural, historical, and linguistic factors in their extension to non-literal meanings. The asymmetry in lexical density between English and Uzbek is not indicative of a poorer colour vocabulary in Uzbek, but rather reflects different patterns of lexicalisation: Uzbek more frequently encodes black-colour concepts through multi-word expressions and contextually dependent collocations, whereas English demonstrates stronger tendencies toward morphological compounding and idiom formation. From a translation studies perspective, the results align with Koller's (1979) equivalence typology and support the view that pragmatic and connotative equivalence is often more elusive than denotative equivalence in colour terminology. Translators working between English and Uzbek must exercise

particular caution with idioms, culturally embedded mourning/shame expressions, and institutional collocations involving “black/*qora*,” as mechanical word-for-word rendering frequently produces semantic distortion or pragmatic failure.

#### CONCLUSION

This study set out to investigate the specific features of lexemes involving the colour black in English and Uzbek, and to identify the principal translation problems arising from their structural, semantic, and cultural divergences. Through systematic lexical collection, semantic field analysis, and comparative translation examination, the research has yielded several significant findings that contribute to the fields of contrastive linguistics, colour semantics, and translation studies.

The analysis confirmed that both English and Uzbek assign the colour black a central role in their respective lexical systems, yet the two languages differ substantially in the size of their black-colour lexical inventories, their preferred word-formation strategies, and the cultural domains in which black-colour metaphors are most productively extended. English relies heavily on morphological compounding and idiomatic fixation, producing a denser network of black-colour derivatives, while Uzbek encodes equivalent concepts more frequently through collocational and multi-word constructions rooted in social, ethical, and ritual traditions. Semantically, both languages demonstrate a shared universal tendency to associate black with negativity, moral transgression, and misfortune a finding consistent with cross-linguistic cognitive universals in colour symbolism. However, the study also documented substantial culture-specific divergences: Uzbek black-colour lexemes frequently encode concepts tied to honour, shame, mourning customs, and communal identity, while English black-colour expressions more commonly reflect institutional, economic, and satirical contexts. These divergences confirm that colour terms, even when they share a common perceptual base, undergo distinct cultural elaboration in each language community.

These results carry practical implications for several applied domains. For lexicographers, they highlight the need for bilingual English–Uzbek dictionaries that go beyond denotative listings to include pragmatic, connotative, and cultural annotations for colour-related entries. For language educators, the findings suggest that instruction in colour vocabulary should explicitly address the metaphorical and idiomatic dimensions of colour terms, particularly at advanced levels. For professional translators and interpreters, the typology of translation problems developed in this study offers a practical framework for anticipating and resolving equivalence failures when working with black-colour lexemes across these two languages. The present study is not without limitations. The lexical corpus, while representative, was drawn primarily from dictionary sources and established literary texts, and future research could profitably extend the analysis to spoken corpora, social media discourse, and contemporary journalistic language to capture emerging usages.

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