LINGUOCULTURAL PECULIARITIES OF THE COLOR "RED" IN ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN PROVERBS AND PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS

Nurmatova Aziza Muhiddin kizi
National University of Uzbekistan named after Mirzo Ulugbek, master`s student
Email: azinurmatova@gmail.com

Djumabaeva Jamila Sharipovna
National University of Uzbekistan named after Mirzo Ulugbek, professor,DSc
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Annotation: The article explores the linguocultural peculiarities of the color term “red” in English and Russian proverbs and phraseological units. It examines how fixed expressions reflect collective experience, cultural values, and worldview embedded in language. Proverbs and phraseological units are considered as key carriers of cultural knowledge, preserving typical perceptions, social norms, and evaluative meanings across generations.The aim of the study is to identify the semantic meanings of the color “red” in both languages, compare them, and interpret the results in relation to historical and cultural factors. The research applies a qualitative methodology, including semantic, comparative, and linguocultural analysis. The material consists of English and Russian proverbs and phraseological units containing the component “red.”The findings reveal that in English linguistic tradition, “red” is predominantly associated with danger, warning, anger, transgression, and financial loss. In contrast, Russian usage is characterized by a strong positive semantic layer, where “red” is linked to beauty, value, importance, and celebration. At the same time, both languages share common meanings related to emotional states such as anger and embarrassment, which are rooted in universal physiological reactions.The differences identified are explained by the historical development of meanings and cultural context. In Russian, the word historically carried the meaning “beautiful,” which significantly shaped its symbolic use, while in English such meaning has never existed. The study concludes that color terms in proverbs function as culturally conditioned symbols and play an important role in conveying cultural meanings, which is essential for translation, language learning, and intercultural communication.

Keywords: color linguistics, paremiology, proverbs, phraseological units, red, linguoculture, English, Russian, cross-cultural analysis

Аннотация: В статье рассматриваются лингвокультурные особенности цветообозначения «красный» в английских и русских пословицах и фразеологических единицах. Анализируется, каким образом устойчивые выражения отражают коллективный опыт, культурные ценности и мировоззрение, закрепленные в языке. Пословицы и фразеологические единицы рассматриваются как важные носители культурного знания, сохраняющие типичные представления, социальные нормы и оценочные значения, передающиеся из поколения в поколение.

Цель исследования заключается в выявлении семантических значений цвета «красный» в обоих языках, их сопоставлении и интерпретации с учетом исторических и культурных факторов. В работе применяется качественная методология, включающая семантический, сравнительный и лингвокультурный анализ. Материалом исследования послужили английские и русские пословицы и фразеологические единицы, содержащие компонент «красный».Результаты исследования показывают, что в английской языковой традиции «красный» преимущественно ассоциируется с опасностью, предупреждением, гневом, нарушением норм и финансовыми потерями. В русской традиции, напротив, наблюдается выраженный положительный семантический слой: «красный» связан с красотой, ценностью, значимостью и праздником. В то же время в обоих языках присутствуют общие значения, связанные с эмоциональными состояниями, такими как гнев и смущение, что обусловлено универсальными физиологическими реакциями человека.

Выявленные различия объясняются историческим развитием значений и культурным контекстом. В русском языке слово исторически имело значение «красивый», что существенно повлияло на его символическое употребление, тогда как в английском языке подобное значение отсутствовало. В заключение подчеркивается, что цветообозначения в пословицах выступают как культурно обусловленные символы и играют важную роль в передаче культурных смыслов, что имеет значение для перевода, изучения языков и межкультурной коммуникации.

Ключевые слова: цветовая лингвистика, паремиология, пословицы, фразеологические единицы, красный, лингвокультура, английский язык, русский язык, межкультурный анализ.

INGLIZ VA RUS MAQOLLARI HAMDA FRAZEOLOGIK BIRLIKLARIDA “QIZIL” RANGNING LINGVOKULTUROLOGIK XUSUSIYATLARI

Annotatsiya: Mazkur maqolada ingliz va rus maqollari hamda frazeologik birliklarida “qizil” rangning lingvokulturologik xususiyatlari tahlil qilinadi. Unda turg‘un ifodalar orqali tilga xos bo‘lgan jamoaviy tajriba, madaniy qadriyatlar va dunyoqarash qanday aks etishi ko‘rib chiqiladi. Maqollar va frazeologik birliklar avloddan avlodga o‘tib kelayotgan tipik tasavvurlar, ijtimoiy me’yorlar hamda baholovchi ma’nolarni saqlovchi muhim madaniy birliklar sifatida talqin etiladi.

Tadqiqotning maqsadi ikki tilda “qizil” rangning semantik ma’nolarini aniqlash, ularni qiyosiy tahlil qilish hamda tarixiy va madaniy omillar asosida izohlashdan iborat. Ishda semantik, qiyosiy va lingvokulturologik tahlil usullarini o‘z ichiga olgan sifatli metodologiya qo‘llanilgan. Tadqiqot materiali sifatida “qizil” komponentini o‘z ichiga olgan ingliz va rus maqollari hamda frazeologik birliklari tanlab olingan.

Tadqiqot natijalari shuni ko‘rsatadiki, ingliz tilida “qizil” rang asosan xavf, ogohlantirish, g‘azab, me’yor buzilishi va moliyaviy yo‘qotishlar bilan bog‘lanadi. Rus tilida esa aksincha, ijobiy semantik qatlam ustun bo‘lib, “qizil” go‘zallik, qadriyat, ahamiyat va bayram bilan bog‘liq holda namoyon bo‘ladi. Shu bilan birga, har ikkala tilda ham g‘azab va

uyalish kabi hissiy holatlar bilan bog‘liq umumiy ma’nolar mavjud bo‘lib, bu insonning universal fiziologik reaksiyalari bilan izohlanadi.

Aniqlangan farqlar tarixiy ma’no taraqqiyoti va madaniy kontekst bilan bog‘liq. Rus tilida “qizil” so‘zi tarixan “chiroyli” ma’nosini bildirgan bo‘lib, bu uning ramziy qo‘llanishiga katta ta’sir ko‘rsatgan, ingliz tilida esa bunday ma’no mavjud emas. Xulosa qilib aytganda, maqollardagi rang ifodalari madaniy jihatdan shakllangan ramzlar bo‘lib, ular madaniy ma’nolarni uzatishda muhim rol o‘ynaydi hamda tarjima, til o‘rganish va madaniyatlararo muloqotda alohida ahamiyat kasb etadi.

Kalit so‘zlar: rang lingvistikasi, paremiologiya, maqollar, frazeologik birliklar, qizil, lingvokulturologiya, ingliz tili, rus tili, qiyosiy tahlil.

INTRODUCTION

This study examines the linguocultural meanings of the color term “red” in English and Russian proverbs and phraseological units. Language encodes cultural knowledge, and fixed expressions serve as concise reflections of collective experience, values, and worldview. Color terms are especially significant, as they combine universal perceptual features with culturally specific symbolism. The color “red” is particularly prominent due to its strong emotional and symbolic associations across languages. However, its meanings vary depending on historical and cultural contexts. This paper aims to explore how “red” functions in English and Russian traditions and what these differences reveal about the two linguocultures and their conceptual systems.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous research in paremiology and color linguistics has demonstrated that proverbs and phraseological units reflect cultural values and shared knowledge. Studies on color terms highlight their universal nature alongside culturally specific meanings. Scholars have emphasized that “red” is one of the earliest and most salient color terms across languages, often associated with strong emotions and symbolic functions. Research on English expressions shows a tendency toward negative connotations such as danger, anger, and prohibition. In contrast, studies on Russian linguistic material reveal positive associations, including beauty and celebration. However, comparative analyses of these two traditions remain limited, which justifies the present research.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research methodology combining semantic, comparative, and linguocultural analysis. The data consist of English and Russian proverbs and phraseological units containing the color term “red.” First, a semantic analysis is conducted to identify the meanings associated with “red” in each language. Next, a comparative approach is used to determine similarities and differences between the two linguistic traditions. Finally, a linguocultural analysis interprets the findings in relation to historical development and cultural context. This integrated method allows for a comprehensive understanding of how color symbolism functions within and across languages, highlighting both universal and culture-specific features.

Language accumulates the centuries-long experience of its creators. The most vivid units in which the experience of a people - its social-aesthetic, moral-ethical, artistic and spiritual ideals, and the peculiarities of worldview - are proverbs. As Hrisztova-Gotthardt and Aleksa Varga (2014) confirm: "Proverbs summarize everyday experiences and common observations in a concise and figurative way. They have been created and used for thousands of years and passed as expressions of wisdom and truth from generation to generation".

Mieder (2004) defines the proverb as "a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorizable form and which is handed down from generation to generation". Burke, cited by Mieder (2004), captures the social function precisely: "Proverbs are strategies for dealing with situations. In so far as situations are typical and recurrent in a given social structure, people develop names for them and strategies for handling them." Norrick (2014) adds that proverbs "provide evidence of stereotypes and standard cultural metaphors" - making proverbial color usage a direct index of cultural priorities.

Color terms occupy a special position in this cultural encoding. Berlin and Kay (1969) demonstrated that "semantic universals do exist in the domain of color vocabulary", finding that "a total universal inventory of exactly eleven basic color categories exists", and crucially: "if a language contains three terms, then it contains a term for red". Red is thus universally the first chromatic color term in all languages - yet its cultural symbolism diverges sharply between English and Russian.

In English, red functions even in folk meteorological wisdom as a warning signal. Mieder (2004) documents: "Red sky at night, sailor's delight; red sky in the morning, sailor take warning." In Russian, by contrast, the proverb Не красна изба углами, а красна пирогами, uses красна to mean 'beautiful/fine': 'A hut is not fine because of its corners, but fine because of its pies.' This contrast motivates the present comparative study.

The study of proverbs requires attention to both their formal and cultural dimensions. Norrick (2014) notes that connotations play a crucial role: "Connotations contribute to the overall discourse meaning of proverbs as well. They intensify the rhetorical force and the traditional significance of proverbs. Folksy, rural, pre-industrial connotations are typical of proverbs... Many proverbs also exhibit Biblical and/or religious connotations as well" (Norrick). These connotational layers - rural, religious, historical - give color terms in proverbs their specific cultural weight.

Mieder (2004) explains how proverbs acquire and transmit cultural values: if a saying "contains an element of truth or wisdom" it may "catch on" and spread from a family circle to eventually global currency. The community selection process means that only observations resonating with shared values survive as proverbs. Color symbolism encoded in proverbs is therefore a reliable index of cultural priorities, refined over centuries.

The historical semantics of красный in Russian is decisive for understanding the divergence. In Old Russian, красный primarily meant 'beautiful, fine, excellent' before becoming chiefly a color term. This is confirmed by Не красна изба углами, а красна пирогами, where красна means 'fine/worthy.' In English, red has never carried the meaning 'beautiful.' Its dominant folk association is with warning, as illustrated by Mieder (2004): "Red sky at night, sailor's delight; red sky in the morning, sailor take warning."

The present study employs a qualitative comparative approach to the analysis of English and Russian proverbs and phraseological units containing the color term red (English) and красный / красн- (Russian). The study includes both proverbs and phraseological units containing the color term red.

The dominant symbolic meaning of red in English proverbial and phraseological tradition is danger, warning, and moral transgression. The cluster is confirmed by Mieder's (2004) documentation of "Red sky at night, sailor's delight; red sky in the morning, sailor take warning" - red in the morning signals dangerous weather. This warning function extends across a range of fixed expressions: red alert (highest level of emergency), to catch red-handed (to apprehend someone in the act of wrongdoing, from the image of a murderer caught with blood on his hands), to see the red light (to recognize danger in time), a red-light district (zone of moral transgression). Norrick (2014) notes that proverbs frequently carry "Biblical and/or religious connotations" - the English association of red with sin and transgression has deep Biblical roots that reinforce this proverbial cluster.

English also encodes red as fury and uncontrollable anger: like a red rag to a bull (something that provokes immediate rage) and to see red (to become suddenly furious). The physiological basis is transparent - anger reddens the face - but the cultural framing is significant: anger-coded-as-red is presented as threatening and to be avoided. A third category is shame and embarrassment: to get a red face / to go red, encoding the involuntary reddening of the face under social exposure. Finally, English uniquely contains a financial loss category - in the red (operating at a deficit, from the accounting practice of recording debts in red ink) - entirely absent from Russian proverbial tradition.

The most distinctive feature of red in Russian proverbial and phraseological tradition is its deep association with beauty and aesthetic excellence. The proverb Не красна изба углами, а красна пирогами uses красна to mean 'fine/worthy': 'A hut is not fine because of its corners, but fine because of its pies.' Further expressions preserve this layer: красная девица (beautiful maiden), красное словцо (a witty/fine phrase), красный угол (the icon corner - the 'beautiful/honorable corner'), красная цена (the fair/right price). In each case, красный functions as an evaluative term meaning 'excellent, worthy, fine,' not primarily a color word.

Closely linked is the celebration and significance category: красный день календаря (a holiday - a day of positive distinction) and проходить красной нитью (to run through something as the central theme - to be of central importance). This significance category has no equivalent in English. Norrick (2014) notes that proverbs carry "Biblical and/or religious connotations" - in Russian Orthodox tradition, red is associated with the joy of the Resurrection, reinforcing its sacred and celebratory valence.

Russian proverbial and phraseological tradition also contains anger, shame, and danger associations, though secondary. For fury: как красная тряпка на быка - a direct parallel of English like a red rag to a bull, the clearest convergence point between both traditions. For shame: покраснеть от смущения, краснеть до корней волос, красный как рак. For danger: пустить красного петуха (to commit arson - 'to release the red rooster').

The findings are summarized in the following table:

Semantic Category	English examples	Russian examples
Beauty / Attractiveness	Absent (dominant level)	красная девица, красное словцо, красный угол, красная цена (dominant)
Shame / Embarrassment	to get a red face / to go red	покраснеть от смущения, краснеть до корней волос, красный как рак
Danger / Warning / Transgression	red sky warning; to catch red-handed; red alert; red-light district (dominant)	пустить красного петуха (secondary)
Fury / Anger	like a red rag to a bull; to see red	как красная тряпка на быка
Holiday / Celebration	to paint the town red (excess connotation)	красный день календаря (positive)
Significance	Absent	проходить красной нитью
Financial Loss	in the red	Absent

Table 1. Semantic categories of red in English and Russian proverbial and phraseological tradition

Three key patterns emerge. First, both traditions share the anger/fury and shame/embarrassment categories, reflecting the universal physiological basis of blushing and flushing - consistent with Berlin and Kay's (1969) finding that red is the first chromatic color term in all languages. Second, danger-warning-transgression is dominant in English but only secondary in Russian. Third, beauty/attractiveness and significance are prominent in Russian but entirely absent in English, reflecting the unique semantic heritage of красный as 'beautiful.'

The divergences identified above are rooted in concrete historical and cultural factors. The most fundamental is the semantic history of красный in Russian. The proverb Не красна изба углами, а красна пирогами shows that in Old Russian красный meant 'beautiful, fine' - a meaning English red has never possessed. This semantic heritage generates the positive-aesthetic layer of Russian red symbolism. Religious tradition reinforces this: as Norrick (2014) notes, proverbs carry Biblical and religious connotations; in Russian Orthodox tradition, red is associated with the joy of the Resurrection, while in English Protestant tradition red more readily evokes sin and transgression. These findings confirm Berlin and Kay's (1969) insight that color universals "appear to be related to the

historical development of all languages in a way that can properly be termed evolutionary" - English and Russian share the universal perceptual primacy of red but have followed distinct cultural paths.

In our view, the color red functions as a culturally conditioned symbol that reflects not only perception but also historical memory, aesthetic values, and collective experience. This is precisely what proverbs and phraseological units - as "strategies for dealing with situations" in Burke's formulation (cited in Mieder, 2004) - encode and transmit across generations. For language learners and translators, these differences are practically significant: красная девица means 'beautiful maiden,' not 'red maiden'; красный день календаря means 'holiday,' not something alarming. Understanding the color red in proverbs and phraseological units requires understanding the cultural history of the language.

DISCUSSION

The findings highlight both universal and culture-specific aspects of color symbolism in language. The shared associations of “red” with anger and embarrassment in English and Russian confirm the influence of common physiological responses, supporting the idea of universal semantic patterns. However, the divergence in dominant meanings reflects distinct cultural and historical developments. English emphasizes warning, danger, and transgression, suggesting a more cautionary symbolic framework. In contrast, Russian preserves a positive, aesthetic interpretation linked to historical meanings of the word. These differences demonstrate that while perception may be universal, interpretation is culturally shaped, reinforcing the role of language as a carrier of collective experience and worldview.

CONCLUSION

Both English and Russian proverbs and phraseological units share the universal associations of red with anger and embarrassment, grounded in the physiological primacy of the color confirmed by Berlin and Kay (1969). Beyond this shared core, English proverbial and phraseological usage is dominated by danger, warning, and moral transgression - confirmed by Mieder (2004) and a cluster of fixed expressions. Russian usage is dominated by a positive-aesthetic layer rooted in the historical meaning of красный as 'beautiful,' preserved in Не красна изба углами, а красна пирогами and expressions such as красная девица, красное словцо, красный день календаря. These divergences confirm the thesis that language is the instrument through which a people's "social-aesthetic, moral-ethical, artistic and spiritual ideals, and the peculiarities of worldview" are encoded and transmitted.

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