

CROSS-CULTURAL SYMBOLISM OF BLACK IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH WORLDVIEWS

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Annotation This article explores the cross-cultural symbolism of the color **black** in Uzbek and English worldviews. Although black frequently symbolizes negativity, grief, or mystery in both cultures, its connotations, emotional value, and linguistic representations differ. The study analyzes idioms, metaphors, folklore, and cultural practices to identify similarities and differences in the semantic associations of the color black. The findings highlight how cultural experience, historical memory, and sociolinguistic practices shape the symbolic meanings of colors.

Keywords: black symbolism, Uzbek worldview, English worldview, color semantics, cross-cultural communication, linguacultural, metaphor, idioms

Color symbolism is a crucial component of cultural cognition, shaping how societies conceptualize emotions, events, and social values. Among all colors, **black** carries the most complex semantic load. This paper provides a comparative analysis of its symbolic meanings in Uzbek and English cultures by examining idioms, metaphors, folklore, traditions, and cultural psychology.

Historical Background of Color Symbolism. Origins of Color Perceptions
Early societies associated color with natural phenomena.

Black represented:

- night,
- darkness,
- storms,
- unknown forces.

In both cultures, the absence of light contributed to its negative symbolic value, though later cultural developments added new interpretations.

Religious and Mythological Influences. Uzbek (Turkic) tradition: pre-Islamic beliefs linked black with the north, winter, and hardship, but also with resilient earth.

English (Western Christian) tradition: the Bible associates' darkness with sin, temptation, and death, which strengthened black's moral negativity.

Positive Associations. Despite the common negativity, Uzbek culture preserves unique positive aspects:

Qora yer – fertile soil indicating wealth and productivity.

Qora xalq – common people, symbolizing strength, unity, and authenticity.

Qora non – basic bread, symbolizing modesty and sustenance.

These meanings originate from agricultural life and respect for simplicity.

Negative Associations. Some of the strongest negative connotations involve:

misfortune (*qora kun*),

deception or evil (*qora niyat*),

grief (*qora libos kiyish* in mourning contexts),

calamity (*qorong 'ulik* emotionally).

Black in Uzbek Idioms and Proverbs. It usually gives negative meaning to the phrases.

As an example of followings:

Qora baxt — ill fate.

Qora ko 'z yosh — bitter grief.

Qora bulut keldi — trouble approaching.

Qora ko 'ngil — a hostile or resentful heart.

Color Semiotics in Uzbek Customs. In Uzbek weddings and celebrations, bright colors dominate, meaning black is rarely used, except for mourning. Black scarves and garments traditionally signal sorrow or widowhood.

Negative Cultural Associations. English-speaking cultures view black as a symbol of unfortune as:

-death

- evil, witchcraft (e.g., black magic)
- moral corruption
- illegality (“black market”)
- fear and danger

This is strongly rooted in Christian imagery of light vs. darkness.

Some contexts show positive or neutral meanings of word black’s positive meaning:

- authority** (black robes in academia and law)
- elegance** (black dress, black tie)
- professionalism** (business attire)

English Idioms and Expressions:

- “Black sheep” — a family disgrace.
- “To blackmail” — threaten for gain.
- “Black day” — a tragic day.
- “Blackout” — loss of consciousness or electrical failure.
- “In the black” — financially positive (unique positive meaning).

Black in Literature and Popular Culture. English literature often uses black to evoke:

- mystery (*black night*),
- loneliness (*black thoughts*),
- danger (*black forest*),
- the supernatural (*black horsemen*).

This reinforces its metaphorical negativity.

Uzbek Metaphorical Models:

- SADNESS IS DARKNESS** (e.g., *qorong‘i kunlar*).
- HARD WORK IS BLACKNESS** (e.g., *qora qozon qaynatish*).
- SIMPLICITY IS BLACKNESS** (e.g., *qora non bilan kun ko‘rish*).

English Metaphorical Models:

- EVIL IS BLACK** (e.g., blackhearted).
- ILLEGAL IS BLACK** (e.g., black market).

DEPRESSION IS BLACK (e.g., black mood).

POWER IS BLACK (e.g., black attire of leaders).

Differences in Cultural Interpretation:

Uzbek culture contains *pragmatic agricultural positive meanings*, while English culture does not.

English culture uses black heavily in *formal fashion*, while Uzbek culture prefers brighter festive colors.

English idioms reinforce *moral binary thinking*, while Uzbek expressions emphasize *social hardship*.

Social and Historical Causes:

- Uzbek nomadic-agricultural heritage - fertility symbolism.
- Western Christian dualism - moral darkness symbolism.
- Globalization influences more positive uses of black in modern Uzbekistan (fashion, branding).

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