

THE CONCEPT OF THE SYMBOL AND THE LINGUOCULTUROLOGICAL APPROACH

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Abstract

This article analyzes the artistic symbols found in the works of Shukur Kholmirzayev, a prominent representative of Uzbek literature, focusing on their linguocultural content and their role in expressing the national cultural code. Natural elements, colors, objects, and figurative expressions employed in the writer's works are interpreted in close connection with the national worldview, folk traditions, and cultural values. The study considers symbols not only as artistic and aesthetic devices, but also as linguocultural units that reflect the Uzbek mentality, way of life, and spiritual values.

Keywords: Symbol, sign, linguoculturology, artistic image, national culture, semantics, connotation, concept, cultural code.

Introduction

Linguoculturology, as a discipline that studies the interaction between language and culture, plays a significant role in the investigation of Uzbek cultural heritage. A people's historical memory, worldview, system of values, and mental characteristics are embodied in linguistic units, especially in symbols. A symbol is not merely a sign in itself; rather, it is a symbolic unit firmly embedded in collective consciousness and endowed with specific spiritual, historical, or religious meanings. In Uzbek linguoculturology, the symbol constitutes one of the key categories through which a nation's mentality, aesthetic perception, historical memory, traditions, and customs are expressed by means of language.

Research Methodology

A symbol is a semiotic unit with multilayered meaning that mediates between language and culture. It is formed through the ethnic and historical experience of the Uzbek people and is not limited to lexical meaning alone; rather, it encompasses

a broad semantic scope associated with religious beliefs, rituals, folk worldviews, artistic imagery, and everyday life practices.

Within the linguoculturological approach, a symbol is evaluated as a cultural code: it is not merely an ordinary word or sign, but a symbolic unit that expresses the distinctive spiritual and mental state of a particular nation.

In Uzbek linguoculturology, the following major types of symbols are most frequently encountered:

Color symbols

Symbols of natural elements

Animal symbols

Symbols of customs and rituals

Symbols of national patterns and ornamental designs

Colors represent one of the most ancient and widely distributed symbolic systems in Uzbek culture. For example, among Turkic peoples, each color possesses its own symbolic meaning. White symbolizes purity, light, and honesty (white path, pure intention); blue represents the sky, stability, and grandeur; green signifies nature, life, renewal, and Islamic associations; red symbolizes joy, celebration, and strength; while yellow is regarded as a symbol of harvest, abundance, and the sun.

Results

The symbolism of colors is especially prominent in national patterns, textiles (such as atlas and adras), and traditional clothing culture. In the Uzbek language, symbols are manifested in numerous linguistic units, including phraseological expressions (ko‘ngli oq “pure-hearted,” qora kun “dark day”), metaphors (hayot daraxti “tree of life,” umid chirog‘i “lamp of hope”), and proverbs (oyning o‘n beshi qorong‘i bo‘lsa, o‘n beshi yorug‘ – “if fifteen days of the month are dark, fifteen are bright”). Through such linguistic units, symbols remain firmly embedded in the collective consciousness, culture, and worldview of the people. Below, the aforementioned symbols are analyzed on the basis of examples from the works of Shukur Kholmirzayev.

The color white, as a symbol of clarity and purity, is very frequently encountered in literary texts. For example: – O‘-o‘, yana bittadan! – deb shang‘illadi Tavakkal. – Ketar jafosiga! Bizga oq yo‘l tilang, Quvvatjon uka! Bu safardan har birimizning orzu-armonimiz ro‘yobga chiqsin! – shunday deb, nimagadir qah-qah otib kulib

yubordi. “— Oh, one more round! — Tavakkal exclaimed loudly. — Let the hardships be left behind! Wish us a white road, brother Quvvatjon! May each of our dreams come true on this journey!” [11, 211]

The expression *oq yo‘l* (“white road”) is used to wish success, good fortune, and an obstacle-free path to someone before embarking on a journey, starting a new endeavor, or entering an important stage of life. From a linguoculturological perspective, *oq* (“white”) in Uzbek culture symbolizes purity, goodness, and blessing, while *yo‘l* (“road”) represents one’s life path, destiny, movement, and future. Consequently, the phrase *oq yo‘l* conveys the wish for a pure, bright, and prosperous future.

Another example illustrates the symbolic meaning of the color black: *Yo‘lakka chiqqanimizdan keyin men yana uyga qaytib kirib, stol tortmasidagi «bir qora kunga» deb saqlab qo‘ygan aqchamdan taksi puli olib chiqdim* “After stepping into the corridor, I returned inside once more and took taxi money from the cash I had kept in the drawer ‘for a dark day.’” [11, 218]

The phrase *qora kun* (“dark day”) is a phraseological unit in Uzbek denoting a difficult, tragic, or trial-filled period of life. It is used to describe times marked by grief, hardship, loss, and intensified challenges. Semantically, it conveys meanings such as hard times, periods of misfortune, and critical life stages. From a linguoculturological standpoint, *qora* (“black”) symbolizes sorrow, calamity, misfortune, and danger in Uzbek culture, while *kun* (“day”) signifies time or a particular stage in life. Therefore, the expression *qora kun* refers to the most difficult, hopeless, or anxiety-filled period in a person’s life.

So‘ng esa chaqmoqlarning o‘tkir xanjar-la tilgandek oqish chiziqlari ko‘kka singib yo‘qola boshladi. Va kun o‘tli oq gulxan o‘z yo‘lida muallaq to‘xtab qolgandek porlamoqqa tushdi. Uning atrofidagi moviylikda qora qadrdon nuqtalar, qay-bir shoir aytganidek, samoviy qush – turnalar ko‘rindi. Yerda – adirlarda yashillik unib chiqayotir: maysalar, shuvoqlar, qo‘zigullar... (Then the sharp, dagger-like pale streaks of lightning gradually dissolved into the sky and disappeared. The day, like a blazing white bonfire, seemed to pause momentarily in mid-course and began to glow with intense radiance. Against the surrounding azure appeared dark, familiar dots—just as one poet once described them—celestial birds, cranes, emerging in the heavens. On the earth, across the foothills, greenery was sprouting forth: young

grasses, wormwood, and lamb's-ear flowers, signaling renewal and growth.][11,164]

Drawing on the agricultural and nomadic cultural history of the Uzbek people, a number of elemental symbols are widely employed: the **sun** symbolizes life and abundance; **lakes, water, and rivers** represent purifying power and sustenance; **mountains** signify stability and grandeur; and the **tree** embodies the continuity of life (planting a tree is considered a meritorious act). Nature-based symbols are extensively represented in proverbs, sayings, and folklore genres. For example: Agranomlikni bitirganmi-yov, aniq bilmayman. Lekin, bolam, hozir ham rayonda uni juda hurmat qilishadi. Endi... bizga o'xshagan qariyalarniyam izzatlaydi-da. Ko'pning duosi – ko'l, hurmat qilsang – hurmat ko'rasan? . "I am not sure whether he graduated in agronomy or not. But, my child, even now he is highly respected in the district. And... he shows respect to elderly people like us as well. The blessing of the many is a lake; if you show respect, you will receive respect." [11, 73]

The proverb "**Ko'pning duosi – ko'l**" ("The blessing of the many is a lake") expresses the idea that the prayers, goodwill, and support of the community possess great power. It conveys that when there is collective goodwill and sincere blessing, endeavors become fruitful and success is more readily attained. In other words, communal benevolence outweighs individual effort. Semantically, the proverb encapsulates meanings such as the strength of collective prayer, the abundance brought by communal approval, and public support as a key factor of success. From a linguoculturological perspective, "**ko'p**" ("many") symbolizes the community, the people, or the ummah; "**duo**" ("prayer") represents supplication, benevolent wishes, and spiritual energy; and "**ko'l**" ("lake") signifies vastness, depth, and an inexhaustible source. Thus, the proverb embodies the people's beliefs and their religious-moral worldview. – Do'stim, uni topish kerak, – dedim. – Menga suv bilan havodek zarur. "My friend, we must find him," I said. "I need him as much as water and air." [11, 224]

The phrase "**suv va havodek zarur**" ("as necessary as water and air") is a phraseological unit in Uzbek denoting something that is extremely important-vital to life itself. It is used to emphasize that a particular person, object, or phenomenon is absolutely indispensable and irreplaceable, essential at the level of basic human existence. From a linguoculturological standpoint, "**water**" symbolizes the source

of life, purity, and abundance, while “air” represents life, freedom, and continuity of existence. Since water and air are regarded as the most fundamental conditions of life in Uzbek cultural consciousness, comparison with them carries strong expressive force.

Mansur o‘z-o‘zicha tamshanar, yutinar, ichki-azobli bir shodlikdan ko‘ngli to‘liqib-to‘lishib ketarkan: – Ey, birodarlar, – dedi ovozi birdan xira tortib. – O‘g‘ri o‘g‘rining qo‘liga suv quyari ekan. Ular bir birini qorong‘ida topar ekan. Axir, bizlar to‘g‘ri odamlarmiz-ku? Nimaga o‘shalarday do‘s, hamfikr, hamjihat bo‘lmasligimiz kerak? Yo‘q, kechirasizlar, shunday bo‘lyapmiz-u... .(Mansur smacked his lips and swallowed, overwhelmed by an inner, painful joy. “Oh, brothers,” he said, his voice suddenly fading, “a thief pours water into another thief’s hand. They find one another in the dark. But we are honest people, aren’t we? Why should we not be as friendly, like-minded, and united as they are? No—excuse me—this is what is happening...)[11, 179]

The proverb “**O‘g‘ri o‘g‘rining qo‘liga suv quyadi**” (“A thief pours water into another thief’s hand”) conveys the meaning that wrongdoers support one another and criminals collude with each other. It is used to describe situations in which individuals sharing negative traits unite, protect one another to conceal guilt, and rely on mutual assistance in wrongdoing. From a linguoculturological perspective, “**o‘g‘ri**” (“thief”) symbolizes a person opposed to honesty and one who violates social norms, while “**pouring water into one’s hand**” symbolizes service, assistance, and complicity. In Uzbek cultural tradition, the expression “qo‘liga suv quyish” denotes serving or helping someone. Through this imagery, the proverb ironically conveys the notion of negative solidarity.

Endi jilganimni bilaman, tepamdan qaynoq suv quyib yuborilganday bo‘ldi. (Now I realized what had happened; it felt as if boiling water had been poured over me)[11, 123]

The phrase “**to pour boiling water over someone**” is a Uzbek phraseological unit denoting severe emotional injury, the infliction of a sudden and painful blow, damage to one’s reputation, or the abrupt collapse of plans or activities. This expression is used in situations such as shattering someone’s hopes, delivering unexpected and distressing news, suddenly disrupting another person’s work or intentions, or causing serious moral and psychological harm.

From a linguocultural perspective, “**boiling water**” symbolizes pain, damage, punishment, and sharp intensity, while “**pouring over**” implies direct and sudden impact. In the Uzbek worldview, boiling water is perceived as one of the most painful physical agents; therefore, the idiom conveys a powerful psychological shock through a vivid and forceful image.

— Baribir yashash yaxshi, — dedi u va boshini orqaga solib, endi tog‘dek yuksalib turgan qoyaga boqdi. — Kichkinaligimdayam shu xarsangni turishi shu edi... Ana tog‘larning ham turishi o‘sha-o‘sha! Hech narsa o‘zgarmagan. Osmon ham. Bulutlar, yomg‘ir... He, nimasini o‘ylayman... — U hamon menga qaramay davom etdi: — Sizlarni... kattalarni turmush, undagi to‘polonlar xafa qiladi. Otam ham nuqul: «Endi nima bo‘ladi?» deb o‘ylaydi... Shunday paytda men shoir G‘afur G‘ulomning mакtabda yod olgan bir she’rini eslayman: Quyosh-ku falakda kezib yuribdi, Umrimiz boqiydir, umrimiz boqiy... (Life is good anyway,” he said, throwing his head back and gazing at the rock that now rose like a mountain above him. “Even in my childhood this boulder stood just like this... And those mountains are the same as ever! Nothing has changed. Not the sky either. The clouds, the rain... Why should I dwell on it? Without looking at me, he continued: “You adults are troubled by life and all its turmoil. My father keeps thinking, ‘What will happen now?’ At such moments, I recall a poem by the poet G‘afur G‘ulom that I memorized at school: ‘The sun keeps wandering across the heavens, Our life is eternal, our life is eternal...’) [11, 132]

The **sun** as a symbol is firmly established in language and culture as a positive, life-giving concept, while the **mountain** in Uzbek culture is associated with the ideas of stability, endurance, and spiritual strength. In linguoculturology, the symbols of the sun and the mountain are universal in nature yet endowed with distinct national coloration. In the Uzbek language, these symbols have been shaped as key concepts expressing the people’s mentality, values, and worldview. U sapchib turib eshikdan tashqariga qaradi, beixtiyor ko‘zi katta yong‘oqning bargi to‘kilib so‘ppayib qolgan shoxlariga tushdi. Bir shoxga qo‘nib turgan chug‘urchuqlar duv ko‘tarildi. O‘sar mahzun tortib: «He-e ketdi... Momoyam ketadi. Shu, shu yong‘oqniyam ekib o‘stirgan-a! — dedi. — Ha-ha, anavi o‘riklarniyam, behi, qizil olma, loyxonadagi olchalar... Bu daraxtlar ham kampirning bolalari. O‘zi shunday der edi... Ajab, daraxtlar odamzotdan erta qarir ekan-a? Yo‘q, bular teng qartayibdi, chamamda. Biroq baribir momom o‘lgandan

keyin ham bu daraxtlar hosil beraveradi: bizga...» (He suddenly jumped up and looked outside the door; involuntarily his gaze fell on the bare branches of the large walnut tree whose leaves had already fallen. The sparrows perched on one of the branches fluttered away. Growing visibly sad, O'sar said: "He-e, it's gone... My grandmother will go too. She planted and raised this walnut tree herself! And those apricot trees, the quinces, the red apples, the sour cherries by the clay house... These trees are the old woman's children as well. She used to say so herself... Strange, don't trees age earlier than humans? No, they seem to be growing old together, I think. Yet even after my grandmother's death, these trees will continue to bear fruit—for us...") [11, 81]

Through the **symbol of the tree**, folk consciousness conveys multiple meanings: it represents life and lifespan, lineage and continuity, as well as stability and resilience. Owing to its longevity, the tree symbolizes endurance and the perpetuation of generations, functioning as a powerful linguocultural metaphor of continuity and sustainability.

Shunda olisda – yo'lning ikki chetida ikkita pakana g'ujumdek bo'p ko'rinyayotgan daraxtlarga – qo'sh tutga ko'zi tushdi-yu, tuyqus shodlanib ketdi. Qo'sh tutni shofyorlar «darvoza» deyishar, u qandaydir darajada bekat ham edi. O'sar esini tanigandan beri biladiki, shu tutlar bor: bundan o'n-yigirma yillar burun ham ular – qari, tomirlari yer bag'irlab-bukchayib o'sgan, quchoqqa sig'mas tanasida po'stloqlari kam qolgan, doimo chakalak-kallaklangan shoxlari orasida mitti jiblajibonlar chuv-chuvlab yurishar edi; hamma vaqt otli-eshakli yo'lovchilar tuman markaziga kelishayotgandayam, chiqib ketishayotgandayam shu tutlar tagiga qo'nib, biroz hordiq olishar, ulovlarini sug'orish uchun yo'ldan sal narida qoq bor ediki, yozning jaziramasida ham unda suv bo'lardi (hen, in the distance—along both sides of the road—his eyes caught sight of two trees that looked like small, squat clumps: twin mulberry trees. O'sar suddenly felt a surge of joy. Drivers called these twin mulberries "the gate," and to some extent they also functioned as a stopping point. Ever since O'sar could remember, these mulberry trees had been there: even ten or twenty years earlier they were already old, their roots sprawling and twisting along the ground, their massive trunks impossible to encircle, their bark worn thin, and their constantly tangled branches filled with tiny sparrows chirping busily. At all times, whether horsemen and donkey riders were heading toward the district center or leaving it, they would stop beneath these mulberries to

rest for a while. Slightly off the road there was a shallow pond where they watered their animals; even in the scorching heat of summer, there was always water in it) [11, 83]

The **mulberry tree** occupies a sacred place in Uzbek linguoculturology and functions as a significant symbol of prosperity and culture. The mulberry represents a source of life and abundance: through its fruit, leaves, and long lifespan, it signifies vital wealth and continuity. In world linguistics, the slow growth and longevity of a tree are commonly interpreted as symbols of patience and perseverance. Since silk is produced from the mulberry, the tree also embodies ideas of social cohesion and economic well-being. For centuries in Central Asia, the mulberry has served as the basis of silk production and has occupied an important place in people's lives. In Uzbek linguoculture, the mulberry tree symbolizes prosperity, stability, and affluence; its fruit represents harvest, sustenance, life's wealth, and the fruit of labor, while its leaves and shade signify protection, peace, family, and social stability. Overall, the mulberry tree functions as a stable symbol of abundance and well-being in Uzbek linguistic culture.

Animal symbolism also holds an important place in folk worldview: the **lion** symbolizes bravery and power; the **fox**, cunning and guile; the **horse**, loyalty and companionship; and the **swallow**, a harbinger of good news and happiness. These symbols are not semantically neutral; rather, they are imbued with culturally specific interpretations. For example:

Bu chol – galvars, ammo tulkilik ham qo‘lidan keladi (This old man is rough, but he is capable of fox-like cunning as well) [11, 153]

In Uzbek culture and language, the **fox** is widely used as a symbol of cunning, cleverness, and trickery. It is often portrayed as intelligent yet manipulative. Across many cultures, the fox is interpreted as quick-witted and resourceful but also deceitful. In numerous fairy tales, legends, and proverbs, the fox appears as an embodiment of guile and stratagem. This symbol expresses human intelligence and strategic thinking, though it is frequently associated with negative traits as well.

In Uzbek folk tales and proverbs, the fox firmly occupies its place as a symbol of cunning and deception. As such, it constitutes a stable linguocultural concept in Uzbek culture, through which the people articulate their values related to intelligence, caution, and moral norms.

Chunki uzoq yili o'sha bog' ustida charx urib aylangan bir juft qaldirg'och ochiq derazamdan kirib, uy burchagiga in qo'yan, bola ochgan edi. Shuning uchun bahor boshlandimi – derazani ochibroq qo'yib yotardim, kun sovuq bo'lsa ham, qaldirg'ochlar keladi (Because many years earlier, a pair of swallows that had been circling above that garden flew in through my open window and built a nest in the corner of the house, where they raised their young. Therefore, whenever spring began, I would leave the window slightly open while sleeping—even if the weather was cold—so that the swallows could come) [11, 209]

In Uzbek culture, a **swallow building a nest at the entrance of a house** is regarded as a symbol of prosperity, peace, and a **благоприятное** (positive) future. The **house entrance (uy peshtoqi)** represents the threshold connecting the family with the outside world and is perceived as a source of protection and blessing. The act of a swallow nesting signifies the arrival of good fortune and harmony between humans and nature.

Ot o'rnini toy bosadi degandek, Qodirjon ham rahbar bo'lib yetishdi (As the saying goes, “a foal replaces the horse,” Qodirjon, too, eventually grew into a leader) [11, 73]

The proverb “**Ot o'rnini toy bosadi**” (“A foal takes the place of a horse”) expresses the idea that one entity may replace another, often implying generational succession—children following in their fathers’ footsteps and inheriting their roles or professions. In Uzbek culture, the **horse** frequently symbolizes strength, prestige, and social status, while the **foal** represents continuity, succession, and future potential.

Symbols related to **customs and rituals** also form a coherent system reflecting the ancient traditions of the Uzbek people.

Bread symbolizes sacred sustenance and prosperity; the **tablecloth (dasturxon)** stands for hospitality and respect; a **lamp or candle** signifies light and hope. Such symbols are actively employed in rituals and ceremonies (weddings, circumcision ceremonies, Navruz, and religious holidays). In folklore, the expression “**ochil dasturxon**” (“may the table be opened”) is a culturally marked unit: Bir nafasda «ochil dasturxon» ochilganday bo'ldi (In a single moment, it was as if the table had been opened) [11, 143]

The concept of “**to'y**” (**wedding/celebration**) occupies a central place in Uzbek linguistics and culture. It denotes not only a family ceremony or a communal

festivity but also a broad cultural and social phenomenon expressing national identity. The concept is widely reflected in proverbs and set expressions. For consolation and encouragement in difficult situations, phrases such as “**elga kelgan to‘y**” (“a trial that has come to the people”) and “**ko‘pga kelgan to‘y**” (“a burden shared by many”) are commonly used: – Ahvol yaxshi, – dedi domla. Keyin siniq jilmaydi. – El qatori. Elga kelgan to‘y-da, bu kunlar ham.... . (The situation is fine,” said the teacher, then smiled faintly. “Like everyone else. It is a trial that has come to the people; these days too will pass....) [11, 138] or: – O‘x, qattiq ketding, uka. – Yo‘talib oldi musiqa o‘qituvchisi. – Yaxshi emas. Bu, bu ko‘pga kelgan to‘y. (Oh, you went too far, brother,” said the music teacher after coughing. “That’s not good. This is a burden shared by many) [11, 157]

Expressions of good wishes often take the formulaic form “**to‘ylar bo‘lsin**” (“may there be weddings”): Ishqilib, bir kichik mavlud o‘tdi hisob: he, qariyalar: «Shu uyda to‘ylar bo‘lsin!» deb duo berishdi. (At least one small mawlid was held; the elderly prayed, saying: “May there be weddings in this house!”) [11, 147]

Uzbek **applied arts** (atlas, adras, suzani embroidery, jewelry) are distinguished by their deep symbolic meanings.

The **islimi motif** represents vitality, growth, and benevolence; **floral patterns** symbolize beauty and happiness; the **almond motif** signifies fertility and abundance; and **solar motifs** express life force and prosperity. Each region (Fergana, Bukhara, Khorezm, Samarkand) possesses its own distinctive symbolic patterns.

In Shukur Kholmirzaev’s lexicon, units associated with the **almond motif** occur frequently: Biron o‘n daqiqadan keyin O‘sar bodomgulli chit ko‘ylak kiyib, boshiga doka ro‘molini o‘ragan kampirni ko‘tarib yuk mashinasining kabinasiga o‘tqazmoqda edi. (About ten minutes later, O‘sar was lifting an old woman wearing a cotton dress with almond flowers and a gauze headscarf into the cabin of a truck) [11, 82]

Through such symbolic imagery, Uzbek linguoculture encodes collective experience, values, and worldview, integrating natural, ritual, and artistic symbols into a coherent cultural system.

In Uzbek linguoculturology, symbols perform the following functions:

they preserve cultural identity;

they ensure the continuity of historical memory;

they enrich language with a national spirit;
they strengthen the semantic content of folklore and artistic creativity;
they express the meanings of rituals and customs;
they shape aesthetic taste.

The intrinsic relationship between language and symbol constitutes one of the key methodological approaches to understanding the spirituality of the Uzbek people.

Conclusion

In Uzbek linguoculturology, the symbol represents one of the most stable expressions of the people's historical and cultural experience as well as their worldview. The symbolic system formed through colors, elements of nature, animals, ritual objects, ornamental patterns, and folk expressions constitutes the core symbolic code of Uzbek national identity. Acting as mediators between language, culture, and national consciousness, symbols serve as an essential source for gaining a profound understanding of the Uzbek worldview.

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