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**S.A.Abdramanova**

KIMEP University

### **CONCEPTUALIZATION OF HAPPINESS BY YOUNG NATIVE SPEAKERS OF KAZAKH**

**Annotation:** The present study analyses the way Happiness is contextualized by young native speakers of the Kazakh language who were asked to write an essay on the topic «What is happiness?». Idioms with colour components of Ақ [aқ] white and Қара [qara] black are evidence of the fact that the conceptual base of Kazakh colour terms reflects the specific perception of the world by nomadic Kazakhs who lived in close relationship with nature. Their written works have been analyzed and the basic conceptualization of that notion has been elaborated. In Kazakh, there are more than 1,000 terms that designate colours; this is mostly reasoned by Kazakhs' traditional engagement in breeding.

**Key words:** happiness, perception, concept, Kazakh, language

**С.А.Абдраманова**

КИМЭП университеті

### **ҚАЗАҚ ТІЛІНДЕ ЖАС СӨЙЛЕУШІЛЕРІ САНАСЫНДАҒЫ «БАҚЫТ» КОНЦЕПТІСІ**

**Аннотация:** Осы зерттеуде «Бақыт дегеніміз не?» тақырыбына эссе жазу ұсынылған қазақ тілді жастардың Бақыт контекстуализациясы талданады. Ақ [aқ] және Қара [qara] түсті компонентті идиомалар қазақ түс терминдерінің тұжырымдамалық негізі табиғатпен тығыз байланыста өмір сүрген көшпелі қазақтардың әлемді ерекше қабылдауын көрсетеді. Олардың жазбаша жұмыстары талданып, осы түсініктің базалық тұжырымдамасы жасалды. Қазақ тілінде түстерді білдіретін 1000-нан астам термин бар; бұл негізінен қазақтардың мал шаруашылығымен дәстүрлі айналысуына байланысты.

**Тірек сөздер:** бақыт, қабылдау, концепт, қазақ, тілі.

**С.А.Абдраманова**

Университет КИМЭП

### **КОНЦЕПТ «СЧАСТЬЕ» В СОЗНАНИИ МОЛОДЫХ НОСИТЕЛЕЙ КАЗАХСКОГО ЯЗЫКА**

**Аннотация:** В настоящем исследовании анализируется контекстуализация Счастья молодыми носителями казахского языка, которым было предложено написать эссе на тему «Что такое счастье?». Идиомы с цветовыми компонентами Ақ [aқ] белый и Қара [qara] черный свидетельствуют о том, что концептуальная база казахских цветовых терминов отражает специфическое восприятие мира кочевыми казахами, жившими в тесной связи с природой. Были проанализированы их письменные работы и разработана базовая концептуализация этого понятия. В казахском языке более 1000 терминов,

обозначающих цвета; в основном это объясняется традиционным занятием казахов скотоводством.

**Ключевые слова:** счастье, восприятие, концепт, казахский, язык.

### Introduction

The aim of this article is to investigate the conceptual base of the word ‘happiness’ in the perception of native speakers of the Kazakh language. For this purpose young people from the age of 19 to 22 were asked to write an essay on the way they understand the notion of ‘happiness’. Their written works were analyzed and the basic conceptualization of that notion has been elaborated. In Kazakh, there are more than 1,000 terms that designate colours; this is mostly reasoned by Kazakhs’ traditional engagement in breeding. A vast majority of colour denominations refer to colours of horses, sheep, camels and cows, for example, *Боз*[boz]whitish-grey; *Сұр*[sūr]grey, pale; *Құла*[qūla] light brown; *Торы*[tori]bay; *Жирен*[žiren] chestnut. Idioms are an attractive source of investigation due to the fact that they keep the memory of historical and everyday events of the nation experienced through centuries. They are mostly defined as semantically complex, compositionally permanent, morphologically and syntactically fixed, at the same time some idioms appear to vary lexically, morphologically and syntactically.

### Literature review

The notion of «colour» has been the object of numerous studies; among them the well-known work on colours by Berlin and Kay [4] who elaborated a sequence of eleven basic colour terms in a fixed sequence based on studies of 78 languages. Sahlins (12) develops colour structures (a pair of white and black; a triad of red, white and black and a system of four colours: red, green, yellow and blue). Sharpe (13) describes studies based on Semantic Differential (SD), which operates with three variables: evaluation (positive to negative), potency (weak to strong) and activity (passive to active). Together with a set of bipolar adjectives (e.g., good - bad), they serve as instruments to assess dimensions of colour effect. Different studies based on SD showed that there is no relation between languages and the scale ratings of colour.

Kononov [8] conducts a semantic analysis of colour denominations in Turkic languages with a bigger focus on *Қара* ([qara] black). According to him, *Қара* has the meanings of a) Big, abundant; b) Chief, great; c) Strong, severe; d) Pure; e) Land, earth; f) North; g) Cattle, crowd, army, ordinary people, a slave, mass; and h) an intensifier of quality or characteristic. He defines *Ақ* ([aq] white) as having the notions of 1) white; 2) pure, innocent, honest, correct, beautiful/wonderful; 3) ash grey; 4) white of the eye; a wall-eye; and 5) dairy. Ancient Turks attached different colours to parts of the world: white referred to west, black – to north, blue – to east, and red determined south.

In Kazakh linguistics, colour denominations have been studied both from structural and semantic-cognitive perspectives. Colour designating terms in Kazakh comprise basic colours, for example, *Қызыл* ([kizil] red), *Сары* ([sari] yellow), *Жасыл* ([žasil] green), *Көк* ([kök] blue), *Қара* ([qara] black), *Ақ* ([aq] white); *Сұр* ([sūr] grey); their derivatives, for example, *Көгілдір* ([kögildir] pale blue), *Күлгін* ([külgin] violet); and compound words, for example, *Сарықызыл* ([sari qizil] orange). Very few studies have been done on the conceptual representation of colours in Kazakh. Laulanbekova [9] in her research points out that the Kazakhs since ancient times attached certain colours to four parts of the world, i.e., blue – to east, white - to west, red – to south, and black – to north. Kazakhs have attached much importance to the colour of ‘blue’ which was associated with the heavens, and, correspondingly, the same importance has been given by them to east; they prayed and set *yurts*’ (nomadic shelters) entrances facing east. Laulanbekova also notes that colours in Kazakh reveal definite conceptual notions which reflect the way of living of nomads, cultural and historical events in their life, and specific perception of the surrounding world. She distinguishes three basic colours that are characteristic of the world of the Kazakhs

– *Ақ* [aқ] white, *Ала* [ala] multicoloured and *Қара* [qara] black. According to her, *Ақ* ‘white’ has concepts of a location of Gods, eternity life, and a sign of cleanness and innocence; *Ала* ‘multicoloured’ is a mediator between the top and the down without clear distinction between white (the heavens) and black (the earth); and *Қара* ‘black’ is underworld, kingdom of evil, and death. According to Laulanbekova [9], *Ақ* has an extended meaning of CLEANNES (ақбосаға [aқ bosaға] *lit.* a white threshold, ақотай [aқ otai] *lit.* a white family, ақбесік [aқ besik] *lit.* a white cradle), BEAUTY (ақтаммақ [aқ tamak] *lit.* white meal, ақдидар [aқ didar] *lit.* white image, ақшабет [aқша bet] *lit.* white-faced), ELDER (ақсақал [aқ saқal] *lit.* white-bearded, ақбас [aқ bas] *lit.* white headed, аққас [aқ qas] *lit.* white eyebrowed), SACREDNESS (ақана [aқ ana] *lit.* white mother, ақсүт [aқ sūt] *lit.* white milk, ақшаш [aқ shaş] *lit.* white hair), JOY (ақкүн [aқ күн] *lit.* a white day, ақсарбас [aқ sarbas] *lit.* a white warrior) and FAIRNESS (ақжол [aқ jol] *lit.* a white way, ақниет [aқ niet] *lit.* a white intention, ақбата [aқ бата] *lit.* white blessing). *Қара* ‘black’ is conceptualized as BAD (қарақағаз [qara қағаз] *lit.* black paper, қарату [qara tu] *lit.* a black flag), CRUEL (қараниет [qara niet] *lit.* a black intention, қаракөңіл [qara көңіл] *lit.* a black wish/mood), PRIMARY (қарасу [qara su] *lit.* black water, қаратау [qara tau] *lit.* a black mountain), SACRED (қарашаңырақ [qara шаңырақ] *lit.* a black house, қаражер [qara žer] *lit.* black soil), PLAIN (қарақазак [qara қазак] *lit.* a black Kazakh, қарабұқара [qara buқара] *lit.* black people), and SORROW (қаракүн [qara күн] *lit.* a black day, қарасайым [qara saim] *lit.* black grief, қаратүн [qara tün] *lit.* a black night). *Ақ* (white) as a common Turkic monosyllabic word has a figurative meaning of Milk and Dairy; also, the meaning of Truthful and Innocent. The analysis done by Laulanbekova mostly places *Ақ* and *Қара* into opposition to each other – ‘white’ is good and ‘black’ is bad.

At the same time, the examination of these two colour terms as idiom components can reveal more extended, not contradicting, meanings. Of course, in combination with *Қара* black, *Ақ* white creates binary pairs with opposing, contrasting connotations of Right/ Wrong, Fair/ Unfair, and Good/ Bad, e.g., *Ақты қара деді* [aқti qara dedi] – *lit.* to say black on white, *fig.* to replace truth with a lie; *Ақ қараны таныды* [aқ қарани tanidi] – *lit.* to recognize white and black, *fig.* to recognize good and bad. In combination with *Көк* [kök] blue, *Ақ* [aқ] white represents a colour denomination, e.g., *Ақ безер де көк безер болу* [aқ bezer de kök bezer bolu] *lit.* to escape being both white and blue, *fig.* not to admit one’s guilt.

Sadykbekova [10] gives a semantic characteristic of the word *Қара* [qara] (black) and its application in their description of people and their body parts. She also compares the connotative meaning of the word in three languages – Kazakh, Russian, and English – and comes to the conclusion that in Kazakh the word *Қара* has a positive connotation rather than a negative one. Zharkynbekova [14] explains it by the association of *Қара* with the earth/ land/ soil (*Умай ана* [Umai-Ana] mother Umai) which provides people with food and water and with femininity (sacred Mother-land). *Қара* stands in opposition to *Көк* (blue) which symbolizes the heavens/ place where God lives (*Көк Tengri* [Kök Tengri]) and masculinity (*Tengri Ata* Father Tengri). The word *Ақ* [aқ] (white) is a symbol of the mankind birth and the prime origin of life in the world which hierarchically stands higher than *Көк* blue; that is why the colour of *Ақ* ‘white’ is regarded with reverence and referred to as a memory of ancestors. It is also associated with the month of Nauryz (March) which has been considered as the beginning of the year *Ақ наурыз* (ақнаурыз white March) when nature ‘awakens’, the green and offspring grow, and dairy (*Ақ*) is produced in big quantities.

Akberdiyeva [2; 3] notes an importance of myths in revealing the conceptual meaning of lexical units through their reflection in the language. At the time when myths originated, the world was perceived as a whole unique place without clear-cut distinction of its comprising parts: there was no separation of such notions as objective and subjective world, internal and external form, a human being and the nature, the sky and the earth, and living beings and objects.

The concept of integrity of the world found its reflection in language itself and its products, i.e., folklore and myths, etc. Akberdiyeva [2] classifies three groups of semantic symbols: 1) binary (*аспан-жер* [aspan-žer] the sky-the earth, *оң-сол*[on-sol] right-left, *алды-арты* [aldı-artı] front-back); 2) pair (*жақсы-жаман* [žaksı-žaman] good-bad, *өмір-өлім* [ömir-ölim] life-death, *жоғары-төмен* [žogarı-tömen] up-down, *күн-түн* [kün-tün] day-night); and 3) triad (*Ақ-Ала-Қара* [aқ-ala-қара] white-multicoloured-black). As it was mentioned above, *Көк* (blue) symbolizes the sky, *Қара*(black) represents the earth, and the space between them is described as *Ала* [ala] (multicoloured). The connotational meaning of a colour designation *Ала* has already been examined by me [1]; the present paper studies the cognitive base of *Ақ* and *Қара* as components of Kazakh idioms.

### Methodology

The method of research is a qualitative one; the semantic and structural analysis of idioms is based on elicitation and intuition; the semantic distribution of idiom components are identified and the meaning of components of color are interpreted. Each lexical unit has some background information which is historically, culturally and logically justified. The Kazakh idioms with corresponding components are examined and analyzed by means of the method which I conventionally called «semantic break-down of idioms». The meaning of an idiom is traditionally considered to be not derived from the meaning of its components. At the same time, the semantic structure of idioms cannot be strictly monolithic; the links between components can be loose enough to determine the contribution of each component to the idiom's semantics. This feature of idioms found its realization in different classifications, one of which I consider to be the most appropriate for the present research – the classification by Gibbs (1994). He focuses on degrees of idioms' analyzability ranging from decomposable to non-decomposable ones and divides idioms into three groups: i) decomposable idioms a part of which is used literally (e.g., 'lip' in 'button your lip'); ii) abnormally decomposable idioms components of which are connected to their referents by a metaphor (e.g., 'hit the panic button'); iii) non-decomposable idioms the meaning of which is in no way derived from the meaning of their components (e.g., 'kick the bucket'). The two latter ones could be eligible to semantic break-down analysis of components.

The mechanism of analysis can be demonstrated in the following examples: the Kazakh idioms with a color component of *Қара* 'black' is conceptualized as BAD, e.g., *Қара тизім* [qara tizim] *lit.* a black list, i.e., to be blacklisted. A 'list' component has a neutral meaning, and a negative connotation is assigned by the word *Қара* 'black'. *Ақ* 'white' has an opposite to *Қара* 'black' connotation of GOOD, e.g., *Ақ ниет* [aқ niet] *lit.* white wish, *fig.* open-hearted, unsophisticated. Similarly, a 'wish' component has a neutral derivation but in combination with *Ақ* 'white' color term it obtains a positive meaning. A term *Ала*[ala] 'multicoloured' has no clear colour designation; it bears the notion of changeability and instability characteristic tonature: colours change throughout the day following the sun 'walk' from rise to set. The concept of instability has also been attached to a human's behaviour, mood and intention - from kind to evil, from right to wrong, e.g., *Ала болды* [ala boldı] *lit.* to become multicoloured, *fig.* to get quarrelled, to break up. In other words, the meaning of *Ала* denotes a sudden change of state of a person or weather to a worsened one. The colour designating term *Ала* holds a negative connotation, while *болды* 'to become' component just states the act without attaching any connotation to it.

### Data analysis

The colour terms are regular components in the structure of idioms. Below the analysis and conceptualization of colors «white and black» are presented.

The semantic break-down analysis of idioms with the colour component of *Ақ*[aқ] white showed that its connotation can be defined as the following:

a) PURE/ NOBLE/ FAIR



*Ақ жүрек* [aқ žürek] *lit.* white heart, *fig.* straightforward, frank, out-spoken  
*Ақ сөйле* [aқ söile] *lit.* speak white, *fig.* 1. speak gospel truth; 2. Be lucky! For luck!

b) OPEN/ KIND

*Ақ жарқын* [aқ žarkin] *lit.* white shine, *fig.* open, cheerful, optimistic;  
*Ақ көкірек* [aқ kökirek] *lit.* *fig.* good-natured, benevolent, sympathetic.

c) ORDINARY/ PLAIN

*Ақ көйлек* [aқ köilek] *lit.* white attires, *fig.* simple-hearted, a simpleton, a goof;  
*Ақ ауыз қылды* [aқ auız қildi / boldi] *lit.* To make someone a white mouth, *fig.* To deceive, to cheat.

d) GOODNESS/ LUCK in blessing/ benediction

*Ақ бата* [aқ бата] *lit.* white blessing, *fig.* white blessing, it is said to wish good luck to anyone in their future and fate.

*Ақ күн тұсын!* [aқ күн tusin] *lit.* Let the white sun be born! *fig.* Good luck! Good journey/ trip!

e) TRIBUTE TO SUBJECT in rituals/ traditions

*Ақ арулап жөнелтті* [aқ arulap žöneltti] *fig.* To bury the deceased with respect and honors;

*Ақ жазулық* [aқ žaulıq] *lit.* white scarf *fig.* A (female) life companion;

*Ақ киізге көтеру* [aқ kiizge köteru] *lit.* to raise on the white carpet, *fig.* to proclaim someone a khan, to crown;

f) TRIBUTE TO OBJECT

*Ақ адал мал* [aқ adal mal] *lit.* white fair property, *fig.* A profitearned by hard work and sweat

*Ақ болып кетті, ақ болып тартылып кетті* [aқ bolip ketti/ aқ bolip tartılıp ketti] *lit.* It has gone white, *fig.* m

*Ақ түіенің қарны жарылды* [aқ tüienin қami žarıldi] *lit.* The camel's abdomen has got torn, *fig.* A joyful on special occasion.

The semantic break-down analysis of Kazakh idioms with the colour of *Қара*[қара] black revealed that it has both positive and negative connotations:

1. LAND, MOTHERLAND, EARTH, SOIL

*Қара жердің талысы* [қара žerdiñ talisi] *lit,fig.* bowels of the earth

*Қара жер төсек болды*[қара žer tösek boldi] *lit.* the black earth became his/ her bed, *fig.* 1. to get into trouble; 2. to pass away.

2. COMMON PEOPLE, THE POOR

*Қара жұрт*[қара žürt] *lit.* black people, *fig.* common people

*Қара табан*[қара taban] *lit.* black bream, *fig.* poor

*Қара борбай*[қара borbai] *lit.* black part of a leg above knee, *fig.* a hard-working person

*Қара сирақ*[қара siraq] *lit.* black shin, *fig.* 1. poor people; 2. barefoot kids of poor people.

3. A PERSON, INDIVIDUAL, LIVING BEING, HUMAN BEING

*Қарасы көрінді/ қарасын көрді* [қарası köriñdi/ қарasın kördi] *lit.* his/her black has been seen / someone saw his/her black, *fig.* one stood out/ was noticed

*Қарасын көрсетпеді* [қарasın körsetpedi] *lit.* someone didn't show his/her black, *fig.* 1. someone left/ was not reached; 2. someone vanished into thin air

*Қарасын үзбеді* [қарasın üzbedi].

4. MATURITY

*Қара табан болды* [қара taban boldi] *lit.* he became a bream, *fig.* he got mature

*Қара құлақ болды* [қара қулақ boldi] *lit.* he became an ear, *fig.* he got mature.

5. BAD

*Қара басқан* [қара basқан] *lit.* pressed by black, *fig.* ungrateful

*Қара бет* [қара bet] *lit.* black face, *fig.* obscene, cynical

*Қара көңіл* [қара көñil] *lit.* black mood/ interest, *fig.* a person with a bad intention, concerned,

## 6. DEATH

*Қара қиды* [qara kidi] *lit.* he put on black, *fig.* to mourn

*Қара байлады* [qara bailadi] *lit.* he tied up black, *fig.* a black fabric which is attached to a house; it serves as a sign that someone died there.

## 7. EVIL in curses/ damnation

*Қара аспан айналып түскір* [qara aspan ainalip tuskir] *lit.* let the black sky fell on you

*Басына қара күн түсын* [basina qara kun tusin] *lit.* let the black sun be born on your head

*Қарана жайылсын* [qarana žailsin] *lit.* let it spread to your black.

## 8. VERY for intensification, reinforcement, strengthening purposes

*Қара жау* [qara žau] *lit.* black enemy, *fig.* avowed enemy

*Қара күш* [qara küš] *lit.* black power, *fig.* natural courage

*Қара жаяу* [qara žaiiau] *lit.* black on foot, *fig.* without transport

## Conclusion

kind, -hearted.

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