



## PAREMIOLOGICAL UNITS WITH A COMPONENT DENOTING WHITE COLOR AND ITS MEANING

**Djumamuratova Gulbakhar Jenisbaevna**

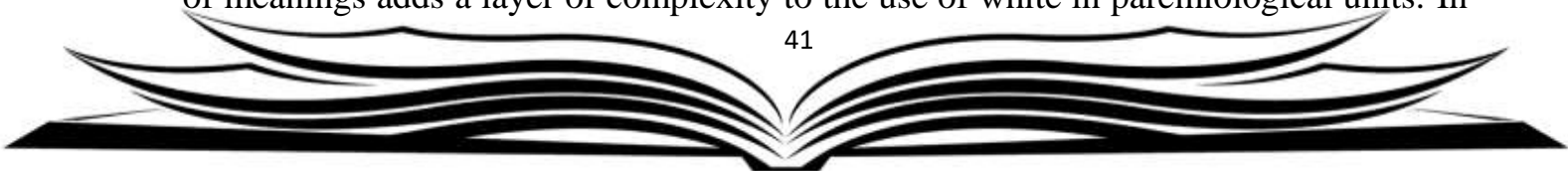
Nukus State Pedagogical Institute named after Ajiniyaz

**Abstract:** This article delves into the use of paremiological units containing the color white in the English language, exploring their symbolic and metaphorical meanings. Through expressions like "white lie," "white as a sheet," and "white elephant," the study examines how white conveys notions of purity, fragility, deception, and value in various cultural contexts. The article highlights the complexity of the color white in paremiological units, showing its ability to symbolize both positive and negative attributes. Understanding these expressions helps in gaining insights into the intersection of language, culture, and human emotion.

**Keywords:** paremiological units, white color, symbolism, metaphors, cultural meanings, English language.

Premia, derived from the Greek word *paremia* meaning a "wise saying" or "proverb," refers to a collection of proverbs, sayings, and idiomatic expressions that convey collective knowledge, values, and cultural practices. These expressions are an essential part of a language and serve as mirrors of societal norms, beliefs, and traditions. In many cultures, color plays a crucial role in shaping language, symbolism, and metaphor. One of the most significant colors that have found deep representation in paremiological units is white. White, as a color, holds a special place in various languages, including English, often being used to denote purity, innocence, new beginnings, and even negative or ambiguous meanings, depending on the context. This article explores paremiological units in the English language that feature a component denoting the color white, analyzing their meanings, origins, and cultural significance.

**The Symbolism of White Color.** In Western cultures, white is predominantly associated with purity, innocence, and cleanliness. It is often seen as the color of goodness, virtue, and light. For example, wedding dresses, often white, symbolize purity and the beginning of a new life. However, in some cases, white can also carry more ambiguous or even negative connotations. In many cultures, white is the color of mourning, representing death and loss, as seen in some Asian traditions. This duality of meanings adds a layer of complexity to the use of white in paremiological units. In





language, colors like white often extend beyond their literal meanings and come to symbolize emotions, situations, or moral states. When paired with words in proverbs, idioms, and sayings, the color white can denote various qualities, from simplicity to something unexpected or deceptive. Understanding the nuances of white's symbolic meaning in paremiological units is key to decoding the cultural and linguistic interpretations of these expressions.

**The Role of White in English Paremia.** The English language is rich in paremiological units that include references to white. Some expressions highlight the positive attributes traditionally linked to the color, such as purity or honesty, while others utilize white to convey more complex or even contradictory ideas. The use of white in proverbs and sayings often reflects cultural attitudes towards morality, social values, and human nature.

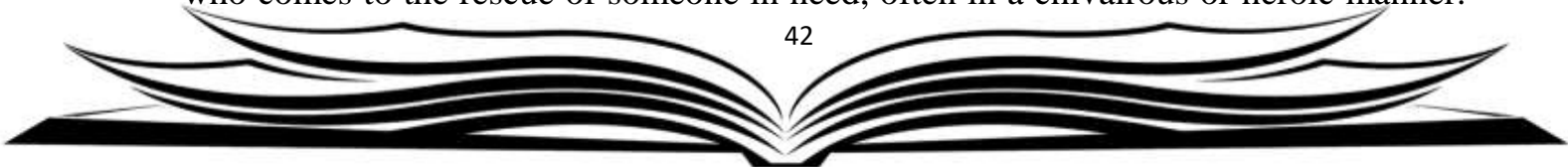
**1. "A white lie".** One of the most common expressions involving the color white is "a white lie." This phrase refers to a harmless or trivial lie, typically one told to avoid hurting someone's feelings or to maintain social harmony. The term "white" in this context contrasts with the negative associations of "black" lies, which are considered more serious, harmful, or malicious. The use of "white" here symbolizes the benign, almost innocuous nature of the deception. Interestingly, while white is often seen as a symbol of truth and purity, in this case, it denotes a lie, illustrating how the same color can carry contrasting meanings based on context.

**Meaning and Cultural Significance:** The phrase suggests that not all lies are malicious, and some are justified by social or emotional considerations. This reflects a more nuanced understanding of morality, where certain small lies are considered acceptable in specific contexts, such as in personal relationships or social interactions.

**2. "White as a sheet".** The expression "white as a sheet" describes someone who is extremely pale, often due to fear, shock, or illness. In this idiom, the color white is associated with a loss of color or vitality, as a person's skin turns pale in response to fear or physical weakness. The imagery of being "white as a sheet" evokes a sense of fragility and helplessness, linking the color white with a lack of life force or vitality.

**Meaning and Cultural Significance:** In this case, white represents the absence of color, highlighting the physical and emotional vulnerability of the person experiencing fear or distress. It underscores how white, typically a symbol of purity and strength, can also represent frailty in certain contexts.

**3. "A white knight".** The phrase "a white knight" is used to describe a person who comes to the rescue of someone in need, often in a chivalrous or heroic manner.





The expression invokes imagery of a knight in shining armor, typically wearing white, coming to save the day. The "white" in this context symbolizes nobility, virtue, and an idealized form of heroism.

**Meaning and Cultural Significance:** The "white knight" metaphor has roots in medieval literature and mythology, where knights, often depicted as virtuous and morally upright, would engage in heroic deeds. In modern usage, the phrase has evolved to describe someone who rescues others, sometimes in a slightly patronizing or overbearing manner. However, it still conveys the ideal of selfless virtue and altruism, using white as a symbol of moral purity.

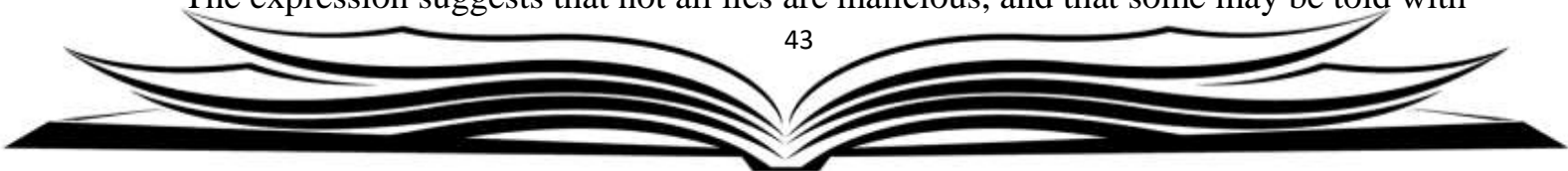
**4. "The white elephant".** "The white elephant" is a phrase that refers to a burdensome possession that is difficult to maintain or dispose of. It comes from the ancient practice in Southeast Asia, where white elephants were considered sacred and highly revered. While these animals were seen as symbols of wealth and power, they were also expensive to maintain because they could not be put to work like ordinary elephants. Owning a white elephant, therefore, became a symbol of wealth and responsibility, but also of an impractical, burdensome asset.

**Meaning and Cultural Significance:** The phrase "white elephant" carries both positive and negative connotations. On the one hand, it represents something rare and precious, while on the other, it signifies something costly, impractical, and often inconvenient. In Western usage, it is commonly used to describe a large, expensive, or unwanted possession that becomes more of a liability than an asset.

**5. "Whitewash".** "Whitewash" is both a literal and figurative term. Literally, it refers to the act of painting a surface with a white, watery paint, often used to cover blemishes or imperfections. Figuratively, "whitewash" refers to the practice of concealing unpleasant facts or presenting a misleadingly positive view of something, often to avoid criticism or to protect someone's reputation.

**Meaning and Cultural Significance:** The use of "whitewash" as a metaphor highlights the notion of covering up flaws or presenting something in a false light. The color white, which generally symbolizes clarity and truth, is here used ironically to suggest the concealment of reality. This phrase is often used in political or social contexts to describe efforts to obscure truth or hide wrongdoing under a facade of purity.

**6. "The white lie".** Another well-known paremiological unit is "a white lie." This refers to a harmless or trivial lie, often told to avoid hurting someone's feelings. The expression suggests that not all lies are malicious, and that some may be told with





good intentions, such as maintaining social harmony or sparing someone's feelings. The color white in this expression denotes purity, emphasizing the benign nature of the lie compared to more serious or malicious lies.

While the color white holds particular significance in Western cultures, it is important to note that the symbolic meanings of white in paremiological units can vary across different cultural contexts. For example, in many Eastern cultures, white is associated with mourning and death. In countries such as China, Japan, and Korea, white is the traditional color of mourning, used during funeral rites and ceremonies. The association of white with death contrasts sharply with its symbolism in Western cultures, where it represents purity and new beginnings. This cultural variation further complicates the understanding of paremiological units involving white, as the meanings of these expressions may shift based on cultural context. For example, while the expression "white lie" may carry a relatively benign connotation in English, in cultures where white is linked to death or misfortune, a "white lie" may be viewed as more problematic, even deceitful.

Paremiological units with a component denoting the color white provide rich insight into the ways in which language uses color to convey cultural, emotional, and social meanings. Through expressions like "a white lie," "white as a sheet," "white elephant," "whitewash," and "white knight," the color white is imbued with various symbolic meanings that reflect both positive and negative attributes, depending on the context. White, as a color, transcends its physical appearance, embodying purity, fragility, heroism, and even deception. These expressions are more than just linguistic tools; they reflect the complex interplay between language, culture, and the human experience of emotion, morality, and social interaction. Through this exploration, we can see that color terms, especially white, function as significant elements in the lexicon, helping to shape and communicate complex cultural values and ideologies. Understanding the symbolic meanings of these terms in paremiological units offers deeper insights into the cultural fabric of language and how colors are used to convey nuanced messages.

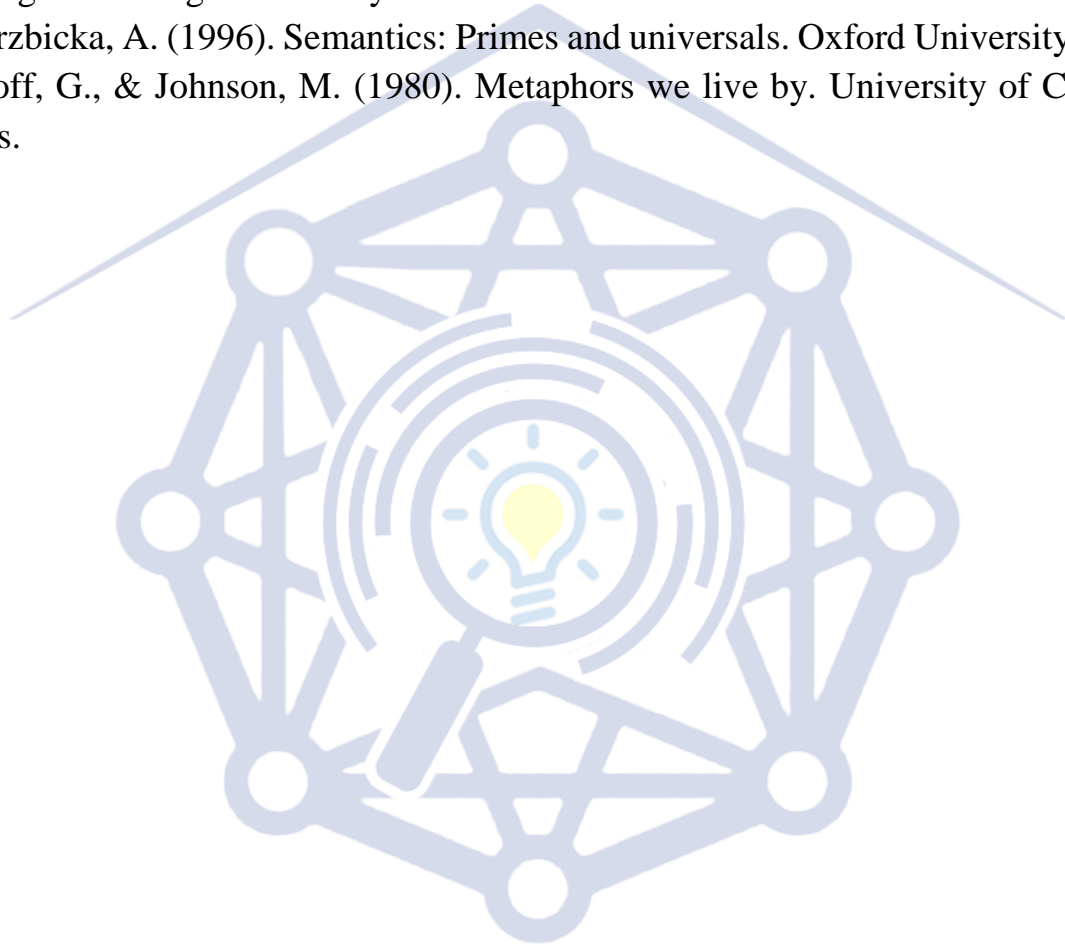
Research Science and  
Innovation House





**References:**

1. Berlin, B., & Kay, P. (1991). Basic color terms: Their universality and evolution. University of California Press.
2. Firth, J. R. (1957). Papers in linguistics 1934–1951. Oxford University Press.
3. Kövecses, Z. (2000). Metaphor and emotion: Language, culture, and body in human feeling. Cambridge University Press.
4. Wierzbicka, A. (1996). Semantics: Primes and universals. Oxford University Press.
5. Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). Metaphors we live by. University of Chicago Press.



**Research Science and  
Innovation House**

