

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE COLOR TERM “QÍZÍL” (RED) IN THE KARAKALPAK EPIC QÍRQ QÍZ” (FORTY GIRLS)

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In fact, color symbolism in epic literature serves as a vital semiotic resource for expressing collective worldviews, emotions, and values. In the Karakalpak epic *Qırq Qız*, the color "qızıl" (red) plays a multilayered role. It is associated not only with physical descriptions but also with symbolic meanings such as courage, bloodshed, youth, honor, and divine beauty. This study explores the discursive patterns and functions of "qızıl" (red) within the narrative structure of the epic, using methods from cognitive linguistics, cultural linguistics, and discourse analysis [Lakoff, 1987, p. 30; Wierzbicka, 1992, p. 75].

In the epic **Qırq Qız**, the adjective “**qızıl**” (red) frequently functions as a key descriptive element, enriching physical and aesthetic portrayals. Rooted in the traditional worldview of the Karakalpak people, the use of “**qızıl**” (red) transcends mere color description to embody ideals of vitality, beauty, and natural perfection. When bodily features are compared to vivid natural objects like a red apple, the color red becomes a cognitive and cultural marker of youthfulness, health, and attractiveness. Thus, within the discourse of **Qırq Qız**, **qızıl** serves not only a decorative but also a symbolic role, enhancing the imagery and emotional resonance of the epic narrative.

Physical and Aesthetic Description:

The phrase “*Қыпша белли, қызыл алмадай*” (“With a slender waist, like a red apple”) [Qıyas Jıraw, 2020, p. 7] uses the adjective “**qızıl**” (red) in a metaphorical comparison to a ripe apple, emphasizing physical beauty and vitality. The "red apple" symbolizes youthful freshness, health, and desirability. Here, “**qızıl**” (red)

enhances the vividness and attractiveness of the image, linking aesthetic qualities to natural imagery familiar to the cultural environment.

Symbol of Bravery and Battle:

"*Сарлап ағар қызыл қанның дәрьясы*" ("The river would flow yellowing with red blood") [Qiyas Jıraw, 2020, p. 34] uses "**qızıl**" (red) to describe blood, invoking strong connotations of heroism and the brutality of battle. The red color of blood not only emphasizes the reality of violence but also honors the bravery of warriors. The "river of red blood" metaphor dramatizes the scale of conflict, positioning "**qızıl**" (red) as a linguistic symbol for sacrifice and valor.

Socio-political Connotations:

"*Қызыл-жасыл тағынды*" ("She adorned herself in red and green") [Qiyas Jıraw, 2020, p. 16] reflects socio-political and cultural status through the symbolic use of color. *Qızıl* (red), paired with *jasil* (green), suggests wealth, festivity, and elevated social rank. In traditional contexts, rich colors in clothing were indicators of prosperity and belonging to the upper layers of society. Here, "**qızıl**" (red) is not merely decorative but a marker of social distinction and ceremonial splendor.

Mythical and Cosmic Symbolism:

"*Қанаты қулаш Қара қус, Айқассам күшим жетпеди, Ерксиз төкті қызыл қанды*" ("The black bird with widespread wings struck me, and unwillingly, I spilled red blood") [Qiyas Jıraw, 2020, p. 32] integrates *qızıl* into a mytho-cosmic framework. The black bird represents fate or doom, and the spilling of red blood highlights the predestined nature of suffering and death. Here, "**qızıl**" (red) transcends its physical meaning, becoming a cosmic symbol associated with destiny, loss, and existential struggle.

To summarise, in *Qırq Qız*, the color "qızıl" (red) is a dynamic and multifunctional symbol embedded deeply in the epic's discourse. It reflects the collective Karakalpak understanding of beauty, bravery, honor, and fate. Analyzing *qızıl* through discourse reveals the intricate ways oral narratives embed cultural meaning in linguistic forms. Thus, the color term "qızıl" (red) serves not only as a

descriptive tool but also as a powerful cultural signifier in shaping heroic identity and collective memory.

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