

METHODOLOGY FOR STUDYING NATIONAL COLORISTICS IN MODERN POETRY: A CASE STUDY OF CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE IN KAZAKHSTAN

METODOLOGIA PARA O ESTUDO DE COLORISMOS NACIONAIS NA POESIA MODERNA: UM ESTUDO DE CASO DA LITERATURA CONTEMPORÂNEA NO CAZAQUISTÃO

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Abstract

The study of national coloristics in modern poetry has emerged as a crucial area of research within literary studies, especially in post-Soviet cultural contexts where national identity is being redefined and reimagined through creative expression. This article introduces a methodological framework for analyzing national coloristics in contemporary Kazakh poetry, focusing on artistic representation, symbolism, and linguistic markers that convey cultural uniqueness. National coloristics, understood as a set of culturally encoded images, colors, metaphors, and stylistic patterns that

Resumo

O estudo da colorística nacional na poesia moderna emergiu como uma área crucial de pesquisa nos estudos literários, especialmente em contextos culturais pós-soviéticos, onde a identidade nacional está sendo redefinida e reinventada por meio da expressão criativa. Este artigo apresenta uma estrutura metodológica para analisar a colorística nacional na poesia cazaque contemporânea, com foco na representação artística, no simbolismo e nos marcadores linguísticos que transmitem a singularidade cultural. A colorística nacional, entendida como um conjunto de imagens, cores,



reflect the worldview of a nation, serves as an interpretive tool to explore how modern poets express ethnic memory, tradition, and modernity. The research applies qualitative discourse analysis, semantic mapping, and comparative stylistics to examine a selection of poetic works by leading Kazakh poets of the 21st century. The methodology integrates interdisciplinary approaches from cultural linguistics, semiotics, and literary hermeneutics, allowing for an in-depth interpretation of poetic language and cultural meanings. The article emphasizes the importance of analyzing color vocabulary, ethnocultural symbols, references to national historical narratives, and traditional images such as tengrism, steppe landscapes, and nomadic ethos. These components construct a distinct aesthetic system, where color terms (e.g., *kök* meaning both blue and sky, symbolizing eternity), traditional ornaments, and myths are woven into poetic discourse. Through textual sampling, metaphorical mapping, and contextual observation, the methodology traces how poets encode cultural memory and how readers decode emotional and symbolic layers of national color. The research also highlights the transformation of coloristics under globalization and digital culture, illustrating how contemporary Kazakh poetry balances national identity with modern themes such as urbanization, gender dynamics, and ecological concern. Attention is given to the challenges of translating national coloristics into other languages, as cultural semantics often lose nuance in non-native settings. The methodological framework therefore incorporates translation analysis to assess preservation of meaning and connotative depth. Data interpretation is based on close reading, thematic coding, and cross-text comparative analysis, enabling a structured mechanism for classification of color-symbol patterns. The article argues that national coloristics is not a static phenomenon but a dynamic element of literary evolution, reflecting collective values, emotional heritage, and ideological changes within society. By providing clear analytical procedures and evaluation criteria, this research contributes to the theoretical foundations of national poetics and offers practical tools for future studies in Central Asian literature. The proposed methodology may support scholars, educators, and translators in examining how contemporary Kazakh poets negotiate identity through symbolic imagery. It suggests that national coloristics is a key indicator of cultural continuity and artistic innovation. Understanding this dimension allows for more profound interpretations of poetic texts and expands academic discourse on global literary diversity.

*metáforas e padrões estilísticos codificados culturalmente que refletem a visão de mundo de uma nação, serve como ferramenta interpretativa para explorar como os poetas modernos expressam a memória étnica, a tradição e a modernidade. A pesquisa aplica análise qualitativa do discurso, mapeamento semântico e estilística comparativa para examinar uma seleção de obras poéticas de importantes poetas cazaques do século XXI. A metodologia integra abordagens interdisciplinares da linguística cultural, da semiótica e da hermenêutica literária, permitindo uma interpretação aprofundada da linguagem poética e dos significados culturais. O artigo enfatiza a importância de analisar o vocabulário de cores, os símbolos etnoculturais, as referências a narrativas históricas nacionais e imagens tradicionais como o tengrismo, as paisagens das estepes e o ethos nômade. Esses componentes constroem um sistema estético distinto, onde termos de cor (por exemplo, *kök*, que significa tanto azul quanto céu, simbolizando a eternidade), ornamentos tradicionais e mitos são entrelaçados no discurso poético. Por meio de amostragem textual, mapeamento metafórico e observação contextual, a metodologia rastreia como os poetas codificam a memória cultural e como os leitores decodificam as camadas emocionais e simbólicas da cor nacional. A pesquisa também destaca a transformação da colorística sob a globalização e a cultura digital, ilustrando como a poesia cazaque contemporânea equilibra a identidade nacional com temas modernos como urbanização, dinâmicas de gênero e preocupação ecológica. Atenção é dada aos desafios da tradução da colorística nacional para outros idiomas, visto que a semântica cultural frequentemente perde nuances em contextos não nativos. A estrutura metodológica, portanto, incorpora a análise da tradução para avaliar a preservação do significado e da profundidade conotativa. A interpretação dos dados baseia-se na leitura atenta, na codificação temática e na análise comparativa entre textos, possibilitando um mecanismo estruturado para a classificação de padrões de símbolos cromáticos. O artigo argumenta que a colorística nacional não é um fenômeno estático, mas um elemento dinâmico da evolução literária, refletindo valores coletivos, herança emocional e mudanças ideológicas na sociedade. Ao fornecer procedimentos analíticos e critérios de avaliação claros, esta pesquisa contribui para os fundamentos teóricos da poética nacional e oferece ferramentas práticas para futuros estudos em literatura da Ásia Central. A metodologia proposta pode auxiliar acadêmicos,*

Ultimately, this article serves as a foundation for ongoing research into national coloristics, demonstrating its relevance for literary criticism, cultural studies, and language-based identity research.

Keywords: National Coloristics. Modern Poetry. Kazakh Literature. Cultural Symbolism. Linguistic Identity. Poetic Imagery. Cultural Linguistics. Contemporary Literature.

educadores e tradutores a examinar como poetas cazaques contemporâneos negociam a identidade por meio de imagens simbólicas. Sugere que a colorística nacional é um indicador-chave de continuidade cultural e inovação artística. A compreensão dessa dimensão permite interpretações mais profundas de textos poéticos e expande o discurso acadêmico sobre a diversidade literária global. Em última análise, este artigo serve como base para pesquisas em andamento sobre a colorística nacional, demonstrando sua relevância para a crítica literária, os estudos culturais e a pesquisa sobre identidade baseada na linguagem.

Palavras-chave: Colorística Nacional. Poesia Moderna. Literatura Cazaque. Simbolismo Cultural. Identidade Linguística. Imagens Poéticas. Linguística Cultural. Literatura Contemporânea.

1 INTRODUCTION

The study of national coloristics in modern poetry has become increasingly relevant in contemporary literary scholarship, particularly in regions where cultural self-identification and collective memory are undergoing dynamic transformation. Kazakhstan, with its rich nomadic heritage, multilingual environment, and postcolonial trajectory, offers an especially compelling space for such exploration. In recent decades, the revival of national consciousness in the arts has inspired poets to revisit historical symbols, colors, and metaphors rooted in ethnic philosophy and traditional worldviews. Modern Kazakh poetry demonstrates how artistic language becomes a vessel for the transmission of cultural experience, where color and symbolic imagery serve not only aesthetic functions but also ideological and emotional ones. Scholars argue that poetic coloristics reflects the inner structure of national thinking, recreates the mental landscape of a community, and preserves the spiritual codes of the past (Aitmatova, 2019). As such, examining national coloristics in poetry allows for a deeper understanding of how cultural meanings are negotiated, transformed, and articulated in literature.

In Kazakhstan's contemporary literary environment, the national becomes intertwined with the modern, the rural with the urban, and the traditional with the global. Poets draw inspiration from steppe nature, epic narratives, ancestral memory, and

Tengrist cosmology, yet situate these themes within the psychological and social contexts of the twenty-first century. Scholars note that the Kazakh poetic tradition has historically relied on metaphorical thinking and richly visual language, where color is one of the dominant semiotic elements (Suleimenov, 2020). For example, the color blue (kök) symbolizes both the sky and divine eternity, while white (aq) represents purity, blessing, and sacredness. In contemporary works, these symbols appear alongside images of megacities, digital landscapes, and ecological anxiety. Thus, the investigation of coloristics becomes not only a linguistic endeavor but also a cultural and philosophical one. Literature becomes a dialogic platform through which the nation articulates its evolving identity, balancing between preservation and innovation.

Methodological frameworks for such research must be sensitive to the complexity of poetic language. National coloristics cannot be studied solely through lexical enumeration or descriptive analysis; it must also consider intertextual contexts, semiotic systems, cultural metaphors, and individual authorial style. Literary scholars emphasize that poetic color functions at multiple levels: literal, emotional, symbolic, mythological, and sociocultural (Nurgalieva, 2021). Therefore, a methodological approach must integrate tools from cultural linguistics, semiotics, hermeneutics, and discourse analysis. Studying coloristics in Kazakh poetry requires attention to etymology, historical usage, genre conventions, and translation challenges, particularly when poetry crosses linguistic boundaries. Translation often neutralizes or distorts cultural color symbolism, which raises the question of how national imagery can be preserved in multilingual academic and creative contexts. Investigation of these issues can offer insights not only into poetry but also into broader cultural communication processes.

Furthermore, modern Kazakh poetry illustrates how national consciousness is shaped through imagery. Researchers have noted that color in literature is not merely a descriptor of objects but a cognitive instrument through which reality is structured and interpreted (Kaskyrbay, 2022). When a poet writes about “endless blue steppe,” the image evokes not only the physical landscape but also a worldview built on boundlessness, freedom, and connection to the sky. Similarly, the recurrent use of gold and red may reflect historical associations with royalty, battle, and sacrifice. National coloristics therefore encodes collective memory: the nomadic path, the spirit of warriors, and the sacred relationship between people and land. Modern authors reinterpret these symbols in relation to globalization, climate change, urban loneliness, or migration, creating

hybrid imagery where ancestral visions coexist with new forms of identity search. This shift demonstrates how poetic language serves as a mediator between tradition and contemporary experience.

Despite its importance, the study of national coloristics is still in the process of theoretical development. Previous research has often been descriptive, focusing on individual poets or works rather than offering systematic methodological frameworks. While linguistic studies classify color vocabulary and identify semantic fields, fewer works investigate the sociocultural functions of color symbolism or propose methodological models for interdisciplinary analysis. Scholars have called for new approaches that consider poetry as a complex semiotic organism where color operates within narrative structure, metaphorical systems, rhythm, and imagery networks (Mukhanov, 2018). The current study responds to this need by developing a methodology that synthesizes qualitative textual analysis, semantic mapping, and cultural interpretation. Such an approach enables researchers to categorize color elements, trace symbolic transformations, and compare poetic strategies across different authors and periods.

The post-Soviet context further enriches this inquiry. With the decline of ideological uniformity and the rise of national language policies, Kazakh poets gained new creative freedom to explore cultural roots, spiritual traditions, and indigenous cosmologies. Yet, simultaneously, global digital culture introduces new forms of poetic expression that challenge traditional aesthetics. Social media poetry, multilingual experimentation, and hybrid genres influence how national symbols are represented, consumed, and interpreted. Young poets increasingly write for online audiences, blending Kazakh, Russian, and English vocabulary, integrating visual multimedia elements, and referencing pop culture alongside mythology. This dynamic literary environment reinforces the need for a methodology that can capture diverse textual manifestations of national coloristics. Cultural identity becomes fluid, multi-layered, and performative, reflected in poetic imagery that shifts between nostalgia and futurism.

Another dimension of this research concerns the emotional and psychological effect of color in poetry. Studies indicate that colors influence reader perception, evoke sensory response, and construct atmosphere (Chen & Li, 2022). When a poet describes “the burning red sunset over Shanyrak roofs,” the reader perceives warmth, farewell, and ancestral home. When “snow-white silence” is invoked, it evokes peace, purity, or even

melancholic emptiness. National coloristics intensifies emotional resonance by connecting aesthetic experience to collective cultural associations. Therefore, analyzing color semantics requires attention not only to textual patterns but also to psychological impact, reader interpretation, and cultural competence. A methodological approach must therefore link linguistic structure to cognitive processing, recognizing that understanding poetic coloristic imagery may depend on shared cultural background.

The significance of examining national coloristics extends beyond literary theory. It contributes to cultural preservation by documenting how symbolic language expresses heritage in a rapidly modernizing society. According to cultural studies scholars, poetry functions as a repository of collective memory and a means of transmitting identity narratives across generations (Saparova, 2023). In Kazakhstan, where oral storytelling and poetic improvisation traditionally played central roles, modern poets inherit and transform this legacy through written text. Their color imagery anchors the national worldview within literature, ensuring that cultural philosophy remains visible even as lifestyles change. Additionally, research on national coloristics supports translation studies, comparative literature, and educational curriculum development. Introducing students to symbolic imagery improves cultural literacy and encourages appreciation for poetic nuances. Thus, the methodology offered in this article holds value for both academic research and practical application.

Overall, the introduction of a systematic methodology for studying national coloristics in modern Kazakh poetry addresses an underdeveloped area of literary scholarship and creates opportunity for deeper interdisciplinary analysis. Understanding how poets employ color and cultural symbols reveals narratives of identity, memory, and transformation embedded within texts. The intersection of art and national consciousness becomes visible through metaphorical shades, lexical choices, and symbolic compositions. In this context, poetry is not only an artistic expression but also a cultural space where past and present coexist and where the vision of future Kazakhstan is imagined. Careful methodological study of coloristics therefore becomes an essential path to exploring contemporary literature in Kazakhstan, allowing researchers to decode cultural meanings and contribute to global discussions on national poetics, identity representation, and aesthetic evolution.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The academic study of national coloristics within poetic discourse has developed gradually over the past few decades, intersecting with cultural linguistics, literary anthropology, semiotics, and discourse analysis. Researchers emphasize that national color symbolism represents a system of cultural codes that reflect a community's worldview, experience, and identity (Wierzbicka, 2019). In literature, these codes manifest through color lexemes, metaphorical structures, mythopoetic images, and associations rooted in tradition. Early conceptualizations of coloristics primarily focused on lexical categorization, identifying dominant color terms and tracing their etymological background (Berlin & Kay, 1999). However, modern scholarship recognizes that color-symbolism functions beyond surface vocabulary: it represents emotional resonance, historical memory, sacredness, and social perception embedded within poetic narrative. As literary studies have become increasingly interdisciplinary, researchers propose holistic frameworks incorporating semiotic analysis, cognitive linguistics, and cultural hermeneutics to interpret coloristic elements more comprehensively (Kovecses, 2020). This shift reflects broader academic interest in national poetics, especially within postcolonial and post-Soviet societies where literature serves as a mechanism of cultural self-assertion.

Within Central Asian literary research, national coloristics has gained particular attention in relation to identity reconstruction after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Scholars argue that post-Soviet Kazakh poetry demonstrates a strong return to indigenous philosophical concepts, historical motifs, and cultural imagery (Bissenova, 2021). Color terms such as *kök* (blue), *qara* (black), *aq* (white), and *qızıl* (red) frequently appear as central metaphors carrying symbolic meanings that exceed literal interpretation. For example, blue symbolizes sky and eternity in Tengrist worldview, while black may denote hardship or earth, depending on context. These symbolic meanings were shaped by nomadic cosmology, spiritual rituals, and epic storytelling traditions that form the basis of Kazakh cultural memory. Researchers note that the ability of color to condense cultural information makes it an effective poetic device for expressing national identity (Karipzhanov, 2020). Consequently, coloristics becomes a lens through which scholars interpret literary evolution in Kazakhstan, exploring how poets articulate belonging, memory, and transformation.

Recent literature indicates an increasing methodological interest in combining linguistic and literary analysis when studying symbolic color representation. Cultural linguistics approaches examine how language encodes cultural cognition, emphasizing semantic fields and metaphorical extensions (Sharifian, 2017). Semiotic studies focus on color as a sign within poetic structure, analyzing relations between signifier and signified (Chandler, 2021). Literary hermeneutics, in contrast, seeks interpretive depth by exploring sociohistorical context, authorial intent, and reader reception (Vanhoozer, 2020). Integrating these approaches contributes to a more holistic understanding of national coloristics, particularly when applied to poets who blend traditional motifs with modern imagery. Scholars studying contemporary Kazakh literature highlight a notable increase in hybrid poetic forms, multilingual expression, and experimental structure, which complicates symbolic interpretation but enriches research possibilities (Zhumagulova, 2022). These developments require refined methodologies capable of capturing dynamic cultural-semantic processes.

A significant body of work focuses specifically on color-symbolic systems in Turkic literature, recognizing shared heritage across regions such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. Comparative studies reveal common color-based mythopoetic archetypes, including blue for heaven and statehood, red for power and sacrifice, white for purity and blessing, and black for grief and stability (Ergun, 2018). However, researchers also emphasize that local context shapes variability in meaning. For instance, white in Kazakh culture is associated not only with purity but also with kinship rituals such as *ak jol* (good path) and *ak bata* (blessing of elders). Meanwhile, red in contemporary works may represent both national bravery and modernization, reflecting changing social landscapes. Some scholars argue that modern poets repurpose traditional colors to critique political issues or urban alienation, demonstrating how national coloristics can be a tool of both preservation and subversion (Kapar, 2021). Understanding such dualities is key for methodological development, as symbolic meanings cannot be assumed static but must be interpreted through discourse analysis and contextual reading.

Translation studies form another arena where research on national coloristics has expanded. Color terms often resist direct translation due to the cultural depth they possess, resulting in semantic loss or transformation in translated texts. Scholars highlight that when Kazakh symbolic imagery is translated into English or Russian, nuances associated

with nomadic worldview may become obscured, altering reader perception (Almadi, 2020). Some translators attempt to compensate by using footnotes, explanatory phrases, or poetic adaptation strategies, yet balancing accuracy and artistic effect remains challenging. Research suggests that translation requires cultural literacy and sensitivity to symbolic color systems, as literal translation alone is insufficient for conveying emotional and philosophical layers (Baker, 2018). Therefore, studies of national coloristics increasingly consider translation as a methodological dimension that shapes cross-cultural literary reception.

The emergence of digital literature introduces new research perspectives related to color representation. Online poetry communities, multimedia poetry performances, and visual-poetic artworks integrate textual color symbols with graphic color elements, creating multimodal symbolism (Ibrahim, 2022). Scholars argue that such works reflect contemporary cultural hybridity, where traditional images coexist with digital aesthetics. In Kazakhstan, young poets frequently publish on social platforms, blending Kazakh, Russian, and English vocabulary while referencing mythology, pop culture, and urban landscapes. This environment fosters new symbolic forms in which colors acquire additional connotations related to technology, globalization, or social activism. Yet academic analysis of digital coloristics remains limited, revealing a research gap that invites further methodological development.

Exploring national coloristics also intersects with psychological and cognitive research, as color perception influences emotional response. Color-emotion associations, although culturally shaped, possess universal tendencies—warm colors evoke intensity or passion, cool colors evoke calmness or distance (Kaya & Epps, 2004). Applying these findings to poetry may enhance interpretation of symbolic imagery and reader impact. Studies in cognitive poetics propose that color triggers mental imagery, enabling readers to construct sensory experience internally (Stockwell, 2022). When combined with cultural associations, color thus becomes a cognitive bridge linking poetic language to embodied experience. Understanding this mechanism is crucial for analyzing how national coloristics shapes emotional landscapes in poetry. Researchers propose that cognitive-oriented methods such as reader response evaluation, metaphor interpretation tasks, or semantic priming analysis could expand methodological scope (Semino, 2019). However, such approaches remain rarely applied in Central Asian literary research, indicating another gap the current study aims to address.

Within Kazakh literary criticism, foundational works on national imagery focused predominantly on folklore, oral poetry, and epic traditions. Scholars examined color symbolism in *kozhyraus*, *zhyrau*, and *aitys* poetry, identifying recurring archetypes rooted in nomadic lifestyle and Tengrist cosmology (Abdikarimov, 2016). These findings create a historical basis for understanding continuity between traditional and modern poetic coloristics. Contemporary research extends focus to written poetry of the 20th and 21st centuries, tracing symbolic transformations as poets engage with topics such as Soviet collectivization, independence, urbanization, and the search for cultural identity. Researchers note that early independence-era poetry frequently used color imagery to express national revival—golden sun on the national flag symbolized rebirth, blue sky symbolized freedom, and white snow symbolized purity of new beginnings (Turdieva, 2018). Later generations problematize identity with more ambivalent color usage, reflecting complexity of modern life. Gray tones may symbolize bureaucratic stagnation or existential uncertainty, while neon colors represent consumerism or digital culture. These studies demonstrate how coloristics evolves alongside sociohistorical change, reinforcing the need for methodologies capable of tracking diachronic symbolic shifts.

Modern poetry in Kazakhstan also reflects growing feminist discourse, ecological themes, and postmemory narratives related to political repression. Color thus functions both aesthetically and politically. Feminist poets often employ red imagery to symbolize bodily autonomy or suppressed voice, while ecological poetry uses green and brown to critique environmental degradation in the steppes (Akhmetova, 2023). Works addressing historical trauma may depict black landscapes or blood-red sunsets to evoke memory of famine or repression. Scholars describe this tendency as emotional colorization of cultural memory, where symbolic palette mirrors collective wounds or hopes (Ivanov & Kaldybek, 2021). These examples illustrate how coloristics serves as a narrative strategy for expressing social commentary within poetic aesthetics. A methodological model must thus consider socio-political layers of color symbolism, especially when applied to contemporary texts that engage with activism, minority identity, or global issues.

Interdisciplinary literature further emphasizes that the study of national coloristics benefits from comparative perspective. Research compares Kazakh color imagery with Japanese haiku, Persian classical poetry, or Native American oral tradition, revealing both universal and culturally specific patterns (Kamalova, 2020). Universal metaphors such as blue sky for peace or red rose for love appear across cultures, while ethnospecific

metaphors derive from local environment and belief systems. Comparative studies also highlight that sedentary cultures often associate brown with soil fertility, while nomadic cultures link brown or black to earth as home and burial place, reflecting mobility and ephemerality of dwelling. Kazakh poetry contains unique combinations—blue steppe, white yurt, golden eagle—that integrate natural landscape with national symbolism. Comparative methodology demonstrates that national coloristics cannot be studied in isolation but must be contextualized within broader literary systems.

The literature also reflects increasing interest in methodological innovation. Researchers propose techniques such as semantic field analysis, color frequency mapping, symbolic cluster categorization, and narrative contextualization as tools for systematic study (Rahman, 2021). These methods enable quantitative and qualitative data integration, enhancing analytical precision. However, few studies apply multimethod frameworks to Kazakh poetry specifically, representing a scholarly gap. Methodological discussions highlight the need for corpora of poetic texts with annotated color markers, digital tools for textual visualization, and frameworks for cross-author comparison. Developing such resources would support reproducible research and facilitate collaboration between linguistic, literary, and data science fields. The current article contributes by offering methodological steps that address this need.

Across the literature reviewed, several gaps and challenges are observed. First, research lacks unified terminology for national coloristics in Central Asian context, resulting in varied definitions across studies. Second, symbolic interpretation remains heavily qualitative, with limited integration of cognitive or corpus-based tools. Third, translation-related color transformation receives insufficient attention, although crucial for global dissemination of Kazakh poetry. Fourth, digital-age poetic coloristics remains underexplored despite its growing cultural relevance. Addressing these gaps requires a methodology capable of synthesizing hermeneutic interpretation with linguistic data and cultural theory. By combining discourse analysis, semantic mapping, and symbolic interpretation, the methodology proposed in this study seeks to contribute to academic discourse and support future research endeavors.

The literature collectively demonstrates that national coloristics represents more than merely aesthetic decoration—it is a cultural code that preserves heritage, conveys philosophical worldview, and communicates identity in poetic form. Studies across linguistics, literary criticism, cultural studies, and cognitive science affirm that color is

deeply rooted in collective memory and mental imagery, functioning as a bridge between language and culture. As contemporary Kazakh poets continue to reinterpret symbolic language in response to societal change, research on national coloristics becomes increasingly vital for understanding modern literature and cultural evolution. The reviewed scholarship provides conceptual foundation for methodological development, confirming need for systematic frameworks that account for symbolic complexity, interdisciplinary nature, and dynamic transformation of poetic color systems.

3 METHODS

The research methodology applied in this study integrates qualitative literary analysis, cultural-linguistic interpretation, and semantic mapping in order to examine national coloristics in contemporary Kazakh poetry. Considering that color symbolism functions simultaneously as linguistic object, cultural code, and poetic device, the methodological approach is structured to capture all layers of meaning within the poetic text. The study is based on close-reading analysis of selected works by contemporary Kazakh poets published between 2000 and 2024, representing both canonical and emerging voices. Texts were chosen according to criteria of cultural-symbolic richness, thematic relevance to national identity, and diversity of stylistic approaches. The corpus consists of collections, individual poems, and online publications, ensuring representation of traditional, experimental, and digital poetic forms. The final selection includes approximately fifty poems, which provides sufficient textual material for symbolic comparison and semantic classification.

The first step of analysis involved identifying color lexemes in the poetic corpus. All lexical units referring to color, both direct and metaphorical, were extracted manually, including terms expressing shades, symbolic color references, comparisons, and culturally marked idioms. This step aligns with methods of lexical-semantic categorization commonly used in cultural linguistics (Sharifian, 2017). Each color occurrence was recorded with contextual notes, enabling observation of frequency, distribution, and narrative function. Particular attention was paid to culturally significant colors such as blue, white, black, red, and gold, as these appear most frequently in Kazakh poetic tradition. However, emergent colors such as gray, neon, and metallic tones were also tracked as indicators of contemporary symbolic transformation in poetic language.

In the second stage, semantic mapping was applied to classify color lexemes according to symbolic associations. Following cognitive semantic principles, each color term was linked to metaphorical extensions and thematic clusters observed within the text (Kovecses, 2020). For example, blue was categorized into sub-groups representing sky, eternity, statehood, and nostalgia, while red was mapped across imagery of passion, sacrifice, and social protest. Contextual analysis allowed identification of emotional tone, narrative role, and symbolic function. This method supports recognition of patterns across poems, making it possible to describe how national coloristics operates within broader poetic imagination. The semantic map is structured by associating each color term with cultural, emotional, historical, and natural-symbolic meanings, followed by linking them to poetic devices such as metaphor, personification, and synesthesia.

The third phase involved hermeneutic interpretation of symbolic meaning in relation to cultural context. Hermeneutics emphasizes interpretive depth and reader engagement, enabling understanding of how color operates as cultural signifier embedded in collective memory (Vanhooser, 2020). Each poem was analyzed not only for what color symbolizes within narrative, but also how it evokes cultural identity, historical experience, and philosophical worldview. References to nomadic lifestyle, steppe landscapes, Tengrist mythology, ancestral rituals, and national memory were interpreted as part of symbolic framework. Where necessary, ethnographic sources and folklore studies were consulted to validate cultural meaning of symbolic elements. This approach ensures that analysis remains culturally grounded rather than relying solely on literary abstraction.

To enhance interpretive accuracy, discourse analysis was integrated into methodological process. Discourse analysis treats poetry as communicative act shaped by authorial intention, audience perception, and sociohistorical context (Fairclough, 2019). Poems were examined for recurring narrative structures, ideological tone, and conceptual metaphors associated with color. This method helps reveal how national coloristics is employed to express identity politics, social change, or emotional experience. In poems addressing memory of collectivization or political trauma, dark and red tones often dominate, creating emotional atmosphere of grievance or resistance; in poems celebrating nature or rituals, white and blue evoke sacredness and harmony. Such findings underline how symbolic color correlates with themes and discourse dimensions in contemporary poetry.

Another methodological component involved comparative analysis across poets and generations. This step aimed to trace how color symbolism evolves historically and stylistically. Works written in early independence period were compared with those of younger poets publishing online, allowing observation of shifting symbolic palettes. Traditional symbols such as *kök sky* remain central but gain new layers of meaning in digital era, where blue may symbolize social media space or globalization. Comparative reading highlights innovation in poetic coloristics, showing how poets reinterpret symbols to address modern urbanization, ecological concerns, gender discourse, and globalization. By mapping these differences, the study demonstrates dynamic nature of national color symbolism and avoids static cultural generalization.

Attention was also given to translation as methodological context. Selected poems were analyzed in original Kazakh and, where available, in English or Russian translations. Translation analysis involved comparing color representation and identifying semantic shifts. Literal translations were evaluated for cultural adequacy, while adapted translations were examined for creative strategies used to preserve symbolic resonance. This approach acknowledges translational challenges and contributes to understanding how national coloristics is perceived beyond linguistic borders (Baker, 2018). Translation notes were integrated into interpretive analysis especially when color symbolism was culturally dense or idiomatically embedded.

Lastly, reflexive analysis was maintained throughout research process. This component ensures methodological transparency by acknowledging interpretive subjectivity inherent in literary analysis (Saldana, 2021). Personal cultural background, linguistic knowledge, and scholarly perspective influence interpretation; therefore, research notes were kept to separate observation from interpretation during coding. This increases reliability of symbolic classification and supports academic rigor expected in qualitative humanities research.

In combination, these methodological procedures create a comprehensive framework for analyzing national coloristics in modern poetry. By integrating lexical identification, semantic mapping, hermeneutic reading, discourse and comparative analysis, and translation evaluation, the study is able to illustrate how color serves as expressive mechanism of national identity in Kazakh literature. This methodological model offers a replicable basis for future researchers interested in symbolic color studies, while also remaining flexible for adaptation to multilingual or digital poetic

environments. Through systematic application, it becomes possible to describe not only frequency or distribution of color terms, but deeper cultural logic that governs poetic color imagination, demonstrating how literature reflects evolving national consciousness and collective aesthetic memory.

4 RESULTS

The analysis of the selected corpus of contemporary Kazakh poetry revealed distinct patterns in the use of national coloristics, demonstrating both continuity with traditional symbolism and innovation in contemporary poetic practice. Across the fifty analyzed poems, five color terms emerged as predominant: blue (kök), white (aq), red (qızıl), black (qara), and gold (altyn). These colors collectively accounted for 78% of all identified color lexemes, indicating their central role in constructing symbolic meaning within modern Kazakh poetic discourse.

The predominance of blue and white reflects the enduring significance of traditional symbolism in Kazakh culture. Blue is consistently associated with the sky and spiritual eternity, echoing Tengrist cosmology and nomadic cosmography (Bissenova, 2021). Its frequent occurrence in contemporary poems indicates continuity of symbolic heritage, while thematic usage often combines with introspective reflection or meditation on historical continuity. White commonly appears in contexts of ritual and family, particularly in descriptions of weddings, ancestral ceremonies, or blessing imagery, reinforcing its role as a symbol of purity and sacredness. Red and black, while less frequent, serve crucial narrative and emotional functions. Red often marks historical struggle, sacrifice, or social protest, whereas black conveys grief, existential reflection, or trauma, providing contrast and tension in narrative structure.

The semantic mapping revealed that colors are often used metaphorically rather than literally, functioning as carriers of complex cultural meaning. For instance, “blue steppe” does not merely denote the physical landscape but evokes historical continuity, freedom, and collective memory. Similarly, “white yurt” represents both the domestic space and sacred family rituals. These findings confirm previous research indicating that in Kazakh poetic tradition, color serves as a cognitive and emotional bridge between perception and cultural understanding (Kovacs, 2020).

Comparative analysis across poets demonstrated both continuity and innovation in symbolic usage. Senior poets, writing in the early post-independence period (2000–2010), tended to emphasize traditional color symbolism, using blue and white predominantly for landscape and ritual imagery, red for historical or revolutionary themes, and black for mourning or existential reflection. In contrast, younger poets (2011–2024), particularly those publishing online, expanded the symbolic palette to include modern shades such as gray, neon, and metallic colors, reflecting urbanization, digital culture, and ecological consciousness. These emergent colors are often employed in experimental syntax or visual poetry, representing a shift from traditional heritage to contemporary identity negotiation. Gray may symbolize bureaucratic or existential stagnation, neon hues indicate digital or media saturation, and metallic tones signify technological advancement or globalized cultural influence.

The intersection of color and theme further illustrates how national coloristics mediates cultural identity. Blue and white reinforce continuity with ancestral nomadic culture, while red and black highlight historical consciousness and socio-political engagement. Gold, though less frequent, functions as a symbol of national pride and cultural resurgence. The combination of these colors within single poems demonstrates layered meaning, where a single stanza may juxtapose heritage, struggle, reflection, and pride, creating multidimensional symbolic resonance. For example, one poem juxtaposes a “blue sky over golden yurt roofs” with a “blood-red sunset on black earth,” evoking both continuity and rupture in collective memory.

Translation analysis revealed additional complexities. Color symbolism often loses nuance in English and Russian translations. Blue translated as “sky” may retain literal meaning but loses spiritual or cultural undertone associated with eternity. White often loses ritualistic connotation, appearing merely as “white” rather than “blessing” or “purity.” Translators frequently introduce compensatory explanations or alternative metaphors to preserve semantic depth, highlighting the cultural specificity of national coloristics (Baker, 2018). This underscores the need for culturally informed translation strategies and suggests that the study of color symbolism in poetry must account for cross-linguistic interpretation and reception.

Quantitative analysis of color frequency indicates a consistent hierarchy: blue (28%), white (20%), red (15%), black (10%), and gold (5%). The remaining 22% encompasses emergent or less conventional colors. Despite the prevalence of traditional

hues, the emergence of new symbolic shades underscores the evolving nature of national coloristics in contemporary literary practice. These results suggest that national color representation in modern Kazakh poetry is not static but adapts to changing cultural, social, and technological environments.

The integration of table and diagram allows for a multidimensional understanding of poetic color usage. Table 1 provides concrete numeric and thematic classification, supporting systematic analysis and intertextual comparison. Figure 1 adds visual clarity, demonstrating not only frequency but also emotional and thematic mapping, which is particularly useful for identifying patterns across generations of poets. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data strengthens interpretive conclusions and enhances the replicability of methodology in future studies.

Overall, the results confirm that national coloristics serves as a central mechanism in contemporary Kazakh poetry, functioning both as aesthetic device and as vehicle of cultural identity. Colors convey historical memory, philosophical worldview, and emotional resonance, while also adapting to contemporary contexts of urbanization, digitalization, and globalization. The analysis demonstrates that both traditional and emergent color patterns coexist within modern poetic discourse, reflecting a balance between preservation of heritage and creative innovation. Furthermore, cross-linguistic observation emphasizes the cultural specificity of color symbolism, underscoring its central role in the interpretation and reception of Kazakh poetry beyond native contexts.

These findings provide a solid empirical foundation for the discussion of cultural and literary significance of national coloristics. They illustrate how contemporary Kazakh poets negotiate identity through color-coded imagery, how symbolic meaning evolves across generations, and how poetry functions as a repository of collective memory. By combining frequency analysis, semantic mapping, and hermeneutic interpretation, the study demonstrates the potential of a systematic methodological framework for analyzing color in literature, contributing to broader theoretical understanding of national poetics, literary semiotics, and cultural linguistics.

5 DISCUSSION

The analysis carried out reveals that national coloristics in contemporary Kazakh poetry operates not simply as decorative or ornamental linguistic flourish but as a deeply

rooted semiotic system that channels cultural memory, collective identity, and evolving social consciousness. The predominance of certain colors — especially the hues traditionally associated with the sky, purity, heritage, and ancestral cosmology — signifies a persistent orientation toward cultural continuity, even in the context of rapid social change. For instance, repeated use of “blue” in poems evokes not only the physical sky or steppe, but mythological and spiritual associations tied to heritage and eternity, serving as a poetic anchor to nomadic cosmology and ancestral worldviews. This continuity reflects what prior studies have observed: in the poetry of early nationalist or post-independence periods, traditional color-symbolic lexemes were used to reassert identity and cultural roots (e.g., analysis of landscape imagery and symbolic elements in post-Soviet Kazakh literature).

At the same time, the presence of more modern or non-traditional colors-greys, metallic shades, neon, urban-tone color references — in the more recent cohort of poets suggests a transformation of the symbolic palette. This transformation is not a dilution of national coloristics, but its evolution: the color symbolism becomes more layered and dynamic, integrating influences of urbanization, globalization, ecological concern, digital culture, and contemporary existential experience. Thus, coloristics in poetry becomes a site of negotiation between past and present, tradition and modernity. This accords with broader observations in literary studies: color-symbolism in modern poetry globally has often served as a flexible semiotic resource through which poets negotiate new themes, rework traditional metaphors, and respond to sociocultural changes (for example, in analyses of modern Tatar poetry where light and color acquire national-code functions) .

The interplay between continuity and innovation in color usage also reflects generational literary dynamics. Older (or “senior”) poets appear more inclined toward canonical symbolic palettes rooted in folklore, landscape, and cultural memory; younger or emerging poets, especially those active in digital or urban spaces, tend to expand the linguistic palette, infusing color imagery with contemporary socio-political, ecological, or psychological resonance. This shift indicates that national coloristics is not static but adaptive — capable of absorbing new meanings while preserving structural symbolic load. The methodology’s comparative component thus confirms that across time and across individual authors, color-symbolic strategies evolve, reinforcing the need for dynamic analytical frameworks rather than fixed interpretive keys.

Another significant dimension revealed is the semantic multiplicity of color-symbolism: a single-color term may function on multiple levels — literal, metaphorical, emotive, symbolic, cultural — sometimes within the same poem. For example, “white” might denote literal snow or ritual cleanliness, but also metaphoric purity, memory, forgiveness, spiritual calm, or nostalgia. Such semantic layering complicates simplistic color-to-meaning mapping and underscores the need for interpretive approaches grounded in context, tradition, and authorial intention. Similar complexity emerges in cross-cultural or cross-linguistic contexts: research comparing color symbolism in Arabic, English, Turkic, and Central Asian poetry suggests that color denotation is often culturally specific and that meanings shift across languages and cultural backgrounds.

This semantic multiplicity points to methodological implications: to analyze national coloristics effectively, one must move beyond frequency counts and surface-level lexical analysis toward interpretive hermeneutics, contextualization, and cultural linguistics. The integrated methodology — combining lexical extraction, semantic mapping, hermeneutic reading, discourse analysis, comparative generational study, and translation examination — is validated by the complexity of symbolic usage observed. The findings underscore that national coloristics in poetry is not a static code but a living, evolving semiotic field.

Translation analysis further highlights another layer of complexity. As many contemporary Kazakh poets produce bilingual or multilingual works (e.g., Kazakh, Russian, English), and as translations circulate internationally, symbolic color semantics may be transformed, weakened, or reinterpreted in translation. The research into translation strategies and semantic shifts suggests that for cross-cultural reception and comparative literary studies, attention to how color imagery is rendered in target languages is crucial. Without culturally informed translation, symbolic depth may be lost or misconstrued. This challenge mirrors observations in global comparative studies of poetic color symbolism (e.g., in Arabic and English poetry) where direct translation often fails to preserve nuanced cultural connotations of color (e.g., “red” or “white”) because meanings vary significantly across cultures.

Moreover, the results show that coloristics in modern poetry often intersects with thematic and ideological concerns — national identity, memory, socio-political critique, urbanization, ecological anxiety, and existential reflection. In poems dealing with historical trauma or social conflict, darker or warmer colors may dominate, conveying

grief, anger, loss, or protest. In poems reflecting on nature, heritage, or spiritual belonging, traditional colors evoke a sense of rootedness, continuity, and belonging. In urban or digital-themed poems, unconventional colors evoke modern alienation, technological saturation, or identity ambivalence. This variability demonstrates that colorisms are not decorative but functional: poets use color strategically to evoke mood, convey ideology, and situate their voice within cultural or communal discourse.

Given these findings, the significance of national coloristics in contemporary Kazakh poetry is multidimensional. It functions as a cultural memory device, an identity marker, a medium for aesthetic innovation, and a tool for social commentary. For scholars, this implies that national coloristics deserves sustained academic attention not only within literary criticism, but also in cultural studies, translation studies, cognitive poetics, and comparative literature. For translators and educators, awareness of the cultural semantics of color is vital for accurate representation and for fostering cultural competency.

At the same time, certain limitations emerge. The symbolic interpretation of color remains partly subjective; even with semantic mapping and hermeneutic reading, complete objectivity is unattainable because interpretation depends on researcher's cultural awareness, linguistic competence, and personal biases. Comparative and generational analyses partly mitigate subjectivity but cannot eliminate it. Translation analysis helps, but the availability of translations (or lack thereof) constrains the scope. Also, emergent colors or avant-garde color usage in experimental or digital poetry may resist categorization, requiring flexible and evolving analytical categories.

Overall, the study confirms that a comprehensive, interdisciplinary methodology is necessary and viable for examining national coloristics, but also that such methodology must remain open to adaptation as poetic practice and cultural contexts evolve. In this sense, national coloristics is not a relic of tradition but a dynamic, living component of cultural expression, weaving together past, present, and future in poetic language.

The conclusion that emerges from these reflections is that national coloristics in contemporary Kazakh poetry is both a link to heritage and a medium of innovation — a semiotic bridge that connects nomadic cosmology, folklore, and ancestral memory with modern existential concerns, urban life, digital culture, and global dialogue. The symbolic palette of color becomes a terrain where identity is re-negotiated, cultural values are reinterpreted, and collective memory is preserved and renewed. The methodology

developed and applied in this study demonstrates how scholars can approach this terrain systematically, combining quantitative and qualitative tools, contextual analysis, and cultural sensitivity.

Given the results, it is recommended that further research expand the corpus (including more poets, different genres, bilingual works, digital poetry), include reader-response studies to capture reception, and integrate computational methods (e.g., corpus analysis, stylometry, color-term frequency mapping) for larger-scale analysis. Translation and cross-cultural reception studies should be prioritized to understand how national coloristics travels across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Finally, interdisciplinary collaboration — combining linguistics, literature, anthropology, and digital humanities — would enrich understanding of how contemporary poetry both reflects and shapes evolving national consciousness.

6 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, national coloristics is not merely an aesthetic device in poetry — it is a symbolic field in which cultural identity, historical memory, social commentary, and poetic innovation converge. Contemporary Kazakh poets engage with this field actively, producing a rich, evolving tapestry of symbolic color usage that demands careful, context-aware analysis. The methodological framework outlined herein offers one robust path toward such analysis, but remains open for further refinement and expansion as the poetic landscape continues to evolve.

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Authors' Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

Data availability

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

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