



A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF STRUCTURAL AND SEMANTIC FEATURES OF COLOR TERMS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Abstract: *In this study, the object of analysis in examining the means of color expression is the system of color naming. In the Uzbek language, the color-naming system comprises nouns, adjectives, and word combinations such as *sutrang* ("milky-colored") and *qaymoqrang* ("cream-colored"), which are unified by the seme "color." The analysis of color terms takes into account their semantic, stylistic, and grammatical features. From a semantic perspective, color expressions can be divided into primary colors and secondary colors (shades) in order to more precisely demonstrate their structural, stylistic, and grammatical characteristics. The findings reveal both universal and language-specific features in the formation of color terms, highlighting the role of cultural and structural factors.*

Keywords: *color terms, word formation, Uzbek language, English language, comparative linguistics, semantic analysis, structural analysis, stylistic features, color naming system, lexical units*

INTRODUCTION

Color terminology constitutes an essential part of the lexical system of any language and reflects both linguistic and cultural characteristics of a speech community (Berlin & Kay, 1969; Vasilevich, 1987). The study of color terms has attracted considerable attention in modern linguistics, particularly within cognitive linguistics, semantic theory, and linguoculturology (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Frumkina, 1984).

In both English and Uzbek, color terms function not only as descriptors of visual perception but also as carriers of cultural, symbolic, and stylistic meanings (Safarov, 2008; Mahmudov, 2012). Despite the universality of color perception, the linguistic representation of color varies significantly across languages due to differences in cultural experience, lexical development, and word-formation processes (Gak, 2000; Bazarbaeva, 2019).

This study aims to investigate the formation of color terms in English and Uzbek, focusing on their structural, semantic, and stylistic characteristics. A comparative approach is employed to identify both common patterns (isomorphic features) and language-specific differences (allomorphic features) in the color-naming systems of the two languages.

Methods

This study employs a combination of comparative, descriptive, and semantic analysis methods to investigate the formation of color terms in English and Uzbek. The



comparative method is used to identify similarities and differences between the two languages, while the descriptive method enables the classification of color terms according to their structural and stylistic features. Semantic analysis is applied to determine the meanings and semantic components of color expressions.

The research is based on linguistic approaches to color terminology developed in both international and Uzbek linguistics. In particular, the theory of basic color terms proposed by Berlin and Kay (1969) is taken into account. In Uzbek linguistics, color terms are studied within the framework of lexical semantics and linguoculturology (Safarov, Mahmudov, Nurmonov, Yo'ldoshev, Yusupov), which provides a basis for analyzing their semantic and stylistic characteristics.

The empirical data consist of color terms collected from explanatory dictionaries, literary sources, and contemporary usage in both languages. The analysis is carried out according to the following criteria:

- structural types (simple, derived, compound, and phrasal units);
- semantic classification (primary colors and shades);
- stylistic features (neutral and stylistically marked units);
- word-formation mechanisms (derivation, compounding, and phrase formation).

Results

Structural and Semantic Features of Color Terms in Uzbek

Primary color terms traditionally include achromatic colors (white, black, gray), as well as chromatic colors such as red, yellow, green, blue, light blue, pink, purple, and brown. All other color terms are regarded as shades and can be subdivided into smaller groups based on shared semantic features that determine their meaning. For instance, within the semantic field of green, various shades can be distinguished: dark green, light green, transparent green, khaki, grass-green, lettuce-green, emerald, and others.

The system of color terms in Uzbek is structurally and stylistically heterogeneous. Among simple color terms, there are all primary color names as well as a large number of words denoting shades. Primary color terms are stylistically neutral. In contrast, color terms derived from adjectives such as *aqiq* ("agate") and *zumrad* ("emerald"), as well as compound forms such as *sabzi rang* ("carrot-colored") and *sutrang*, function as secondary nominative units and exhibit varying degrees of stylistic coloring.

From the perspective of semantic motivation, these secondary color terms can be classified into several groups:

- a) derived from the names of plants and fruits (*gulhayri*, *safsar*, *ko'knor*, *zaytun*, *za'faron*, *binafsha*, *po'rtahol*)
- b) derived from the names of precious stones (*zabarjad*, *zumrad*, *yoqut*, *lojuvard*, *firuza*)
- c) derived from the names of animals and their products (*zarg'aldoq*, *qaymoqrang*)



d) derived from the names of natural objects and phenomena havo, osmon, tilla, kumush)

e) derived from the names of human-made objects and substances (siyoh, surma, gulobi, asfalt, olov, novvot)

In Uzbek, there are numerous simple and compound color terms used to describe specific domains such as facial complexion (ol, qirmizi, gulgun, qoramag'iz, bug'doyrang, za'faron, rangpar, somon), hair color (malla, moshrang, mosh-guruch, kumush, qo'ng'ir), animal coloration (ola, hol-hol, chipor, to'riq, qashqa, targ'il, bo'z), and textiles (shaffof, yaltiroq, uniqqan).

Borrowed words (terrakota, xaki, salat rang, asfaltrang, choko, kapuchino, indigo, fil suyagi), terminological units (kobalt, ultramarin, ultrabinafsha, qizil qo'rg'oshin), archaisms (nilobi, mikori, maykaylik), neologisms (himoya rangi), and occasionalisms (oltin, jiyron, jigari) represent stylistically marked elements within the color lexicon.

Complex color terms constitute another important group and are often formed morphologically by combining intensity markers such as och-, to'q-, nim-, tim-with basic color terms (e.g to'q qizil, to'q ko'k, och havorang, nim pushti, tim qora). It is noteworthy that while colors such as green, yashil, ko'k, sariq readily combine with modifiers to form shades, achromatic colors such as qora va oq rarely do so, due to their semantic extremity within the color scale.

Two-component color terms also form a distinct subgroup and can be classified structurally into four types:

- a) both components are primary color terms (sariq-qizil, ko'k-yashil);
- b) the first component is a primary color term, and the second is a secondary term (ko'k lojuvard, qora mag'iz);
- c) the first component is a secondary term, and the second is a primary term (kesak qizil, pistaqi pushti);
- d) both components are secondary color terms (qoracha qo'ng'ir, dani farang, pistamag'iz).

Additionally, color terms include phraseological constructions such as gilos rang, sutrang, qaymoqrang, qahvarang, moshrang, bargrang and maysadek yashil, pahtadek oq, qatrondek qora. Such constructions typically denote shades that cannot be expressed by simple color terms (e.g asfalt rang, safsar rang, samorang) and are often used as stylistic devices in broader contexts.

Thus, the means of color naming are characterized by diversity in terms of lexical class, structural formation, stylistic properties, combinability, and semantic extension. Despite this diversity, the system demonstrates a coherent internal organization. Based on the general lexical and grammatical features of color expressions, a central group within the color-naming system can be identified according to the following criteria:

1. independence of color meaning from other semantic features (e.g zarg'aldoq=to'q sariq);



2. predominance of color meaning in metaphorical usage (e.g. The meanings 'guilty' and 'sinful' originate from semantic extensions of the word 'black: Yana men qora bo'ldimmi?);

3. lack of transparent etymology (e.g. sariq, limon rang);

4. productivity in word formation and grammatical variation (e.g. ko'k — ko'klam, ko'kat, ko'm-ko'k, och ko'k, to'q ko'k, ko'karmoq; qizil — qizillik, qizilcha, qizg'ish, qizilroq, och qizil, to'q qizil, qip-qizil, qizarmoq, qizartirmoq);

5. stylistic neutrality (e.g. yashil and ko'knor, qizil and qirmizi);

6. combinability with other lexical units (jigarrang and qo'ng'ir, kulrang and kumushrang);

7. inclusion in phraseological units;

8. frequency of usage.

Structural and Semantic Features of Color Terms in English

Nominal color designations in English include nouns (redness, blackness), adjectives (orange, lilac, mauve), and phrasal constructions (wine-colored, sea-green, honey-colored). Semantically, as in Uzbek, English color terms can be divided into two groups: primary colors and hues. Primary color terms include white, black, gray, brown, red, blue, green, yellow, purple, and orange, while all other color designations are considered hues.

Within the category of hues, simple color terms constitute the most active and numerous group. Some of these are restricted to specific contexts, such as grizzled, chestnut, ruddy, bay, and roan, which are typically used to describe hair, skin, animal coloration, or heraldry. Other color terms are derived from the names of plants and animals (flamboyant, cinereous, testaceous), and all of them form part of the English color lexicon.

Simple color terms may originate from various semantic sources, including:

- plant names (orange, lemon, olive);
- minerals and precious stones (emerald, amber, amethyst);
- animals and their products (milky, creamy);
- natural phenomena (snowy, celestial);
- human-made objects (chocolate, inky);
- lexemes with non-transparent etymology (crimson, scarlet, pink).

A separate subgroup consists of stylistically marked units such as borrowings, archaisms, neologisms, and poeticisms (indigo, cinnabar, beige, ecru). In addition, some color terms possess strong metaphorical connotations (plumbeous, biscuit, mulberry), which reflects the interaction between semantic and stylistic features.

Complex color terms represent another important structural category. They are commonly formed by combining intensity modifiers (light, dark, pale, bright) with basic color terms (light-green, dark-blue), or through two-component structures. These can be classified into four types:

1. combinations of two primary color terms (yellow-red, blue-green);



2. hue + primary color (emerald-green, milky-white);
3. primary color + hue (red-gold, yellow-lemon);
4. combinations of two hue terms (orange-pink).

A characteristic feature of English is the productive use of the suffix *-ish*, which expresses a weak or approximate shade (bluish-green, yellowish-brown).

Another subgroup includes color terms derived from proper names and geographical names (Oxford blue, Cambridge blue, Navy blue), reflecting cultural and historical influences. Similarly, color terms may be formed from the names of objects with characteristic colors (grass-green, wine-red), often carrying figurative meaning.

Finally, English widely employs phrasal color terms such as cream-colored, peach-colored, copper-colored, which are firmly established in the core vocabulary and serve to denote specific shades.

Discussion

The comparative analysis of color term formation in English and Uzbek reveals both shared patterns and language-specific features. In both languages, the color-naming system is structured around a core set of primary color terms and an extensive peripheral system of shades. This indicates a universal tendency in the lexical organization of color concepts.

However, significant differences can be observed in the mechanisms of color term formation. Uzbek demonstrates a stronger reliance on metaphorical and culturally motivated expressions, particularly through references to plants, food, and natural objects (e.g., *sabzi rang*, *sutrang*). In contrast, English shows a higher degree of morphological productivity, especially through affixation (e.g., *-ish*) and compounding (blue-green, dark-red).

Another notable distinction lies in stylistic distribution. Uzbek color terms are often closely connected with everyday life and cultural perception, whereas English includes a broader range of specialized and context-dependent terms, including those related to heraldry, fashion, and historical traditions (Oxford blue, Navy blue).

Furthermore, English color terminology demonstrates a greater tendency toward lexical standardization, while Uzbek exhibits richer variation in figurative and descriptive naming. Despite these differences, both languages maintain a systematic internal organization based on semantic and structural principles.

Overall, the findings suggest that while the conceptual basis of color categorization is universal, its linguistic realization is shaped by cultural, historical, and structural factors specific to each language.

Conclusion

The present study demonstrates that the formation of color terms in English and Uzbek is a complex and multi-layered process shaped by semantic, structural, and stylistic factors. Both languages share a common core of primary color terms and a peripheral system of shades, which reflects universal principles of color categorization.



However, the analysis reveals clear language-specific differences in word-formation mechanisms. Uzbek color terminology is predominantly characterized by metaphorical and culturally motivated expressions, often derived from everyday objects, natural phenomena, and traditional associations (e.g., *sabzi rang*, *sutrang*). In contrast, English color terms show greater reliance on morphological processes, particularly affixation (e.g., *-ish*) and compounding (*blue-green*, *dark-red*), which allows for more systematic formation of shades.

Furthermore, English demonstrates a higher degree of lexical standardization and the inclusion of historically and culturally conditioned terms (e.g., *Oxford blue*, *Navy blue*), whereas Uzbek exhibits richer variation in figurative and descriptive naming patterns.

In conclusion, while the conceptual basis of color perception is universal, the linguistic realization of color terms reflects the interaction of cultural, cognitive, and structural factors specific to each language. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of comparative lexical systems and highlight the importance of both universal and culture-specific features in language.

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