

Common Visual Arts Terminology In Turkic Languages

Seytmuratova Ariwxan Ajiniyazovna

Doctoral Candidate, Karakalpak branch of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, Karakalpak Scientific Research Institute of Humanities, Uzbekistan

Received: 16 December 2025; **Accepted:** 10 January 2026; **Published:** 31 January 2026

Abstract: This article examines the lexical-semantic and functional features of common visual arts terminology in Turkic languages, with a particular focus on the Karakalpak language. The study analyzes color terms, pigments, and decoration-related terminology, considering their usage in everyday speech, literary texts, and poetic discourse. Using the works of poet Ibrayim Yusupov as material, the research highlights both direct and figurative uses of color terms such as white, black, blue, yellow, red, and green, and clarifies their metaphorical, symbolic, and phraseological functions. The article also demonstrates how color lexemes appear alongside nouns and verbs, as well as in compound expressions, playing a role in generating new meanings. The study concludes that color terminology is essential for enriching the Karakalpak vocabulary, expanding artistic expression, and identifying common lexical layers across Turkic languages.

Keywords: Color, decoration, pattern, drawing, red, green, white, black, pencil, blue, paper, gray, brown, reddish, color, sketch, drawing, painting, makeup, ornamentation, arrangement.

Introduction: When considering the communicative function of language, noticeable distinctions can be observed in the scope of word usage. This depends on factors such as the familiarity of a term to the wider community, the regional extent of its use, its professional limitations, and other contextual conditions. Although many visual arts terms have Mongolian, Arabic, or Persian origins, they are frequently encountered in everyday life. This is because our ancestors adopted these terms in daily practice, integrating them into common vocabulary. For example, words such as "boyaw" (color/painting), "bezek" (decoration), "gezleme" (pattern), "sızıw" (drawing), "qızıl" (red), "jasıl" (green), "aq" (white), "qara" (black), "sızıǵış" (pencil), "kók" (blue), "qaǵaz" (paper), "kúl reń" (gray), "qońır" (brown), "qızǵılt" (reddish), "reń" (color), "sızıлма" (sketch), and others are universally recognized and understood by all speakers of Karakalpak. These words function as fundamental lexical units in everyday speech and are deeply integrated into all aspects of life. They are widely accepted by the community and exhibit general public characteristics.

In fact, in any language, the presence of lexical units that share common phonological, lexical, and grammatical features across speakers is a natural phenomenon. Such widely used words carry semantic distinctions related to objects, qualities, signs, and actions. Within the domain of visual arts terminology, for example, object-related terms include "sızıǵış" (pencil), "gezleme" (pattern), and "sızıлма" (sketch), while action-related terms include "sızıw" (drawing), "boyaw" (painting), "pardozlaw" (makeup), "bezek beriw" (ornamentation), and "qurastırıw" (arrangement). To indicate the features of a given object, color terms such as "aq" (white), "qara" (black), "qızıl" (red), "jasıl" (green), "tarǵıl" (yellow), "qońır" (brown), "kók" (blue), "sarı" (yellow), "aspan kók" (sky blue), "sur" (gray-blue), and "kúl reń" (gray) are employed, as they are firmly embedded in our lexical system.

Within the common visual arts terminology of Turkic languages, the use of color-designating words is considered highly effective. Consequently, such terms have not been neglected by poets. The emergence, stabilization, and development of the Karakalpak

lexical system is closely related to the appearance and usage of specialized terms in the public language, as well as to the lexemes formed within that language. Of course, in any lexical system, conventionalized words reflect the daily life and historical circumstances of a society, the conditions of social life, the level of material and spiritual development, and the social, economic, and cultural context. Focusing on terms that emerged under such conditions, we observe that in Karakalpak vocabulary, particularly in the works of poets and writers, color terms often appear individually, combined with other words, or incorporated into compounds. They may undergo morphological changes—such as the addition of various affixes—to produce new meaningful words, and in some cases, they are used figuratively. This demonstrates that new terms and lexemes continue to emerge, and their scope of use is expanding in both scholarly and societal contexts. In the lexical system of Turkic languages, particularly in Karakalpak, the range of color terms and their usage is very extensive. To this day, color terminology in Karakalpak has not been fully studied from a linguistic perspective. However, linguists have acknowledged that these words are incorporated into everyday speech and convey various hues. Indeed, color terms exist in the lexicon of all Turkic languages, and their linguistic significance has been noted in scholarly works on Kazakh, Uzbek, and other Turkic languages. Examining the function of color terms in Karakalpak vocabulary, we see that they serve not only as descriptive words but also function alongside nouns and verbs, and they appear in idiomatic expressions. Moreover, the individual and figurative use of color terms deserves special attention.

Example:

"Shıq jırlarım jawdıń janın zirletip,
Súren salıp haqıyqatshıl til menen,
Keleshektiń arızıların jır etip,
Shalǵıt kókke bar dawıs, bar ún menen." — "Jır uranı"
(Meaning: The poet expresses the power of his songs and voice, conveying truth and hopes for the future.)

In this excerpt, "kók" is not used to denote color but rather in the sense of "universe," "world," or "cosmos." The color "kók" has been familiar to us since ancient times. Historically, our people associated "kók" with the sky, which they considered divine—believing that

God resides in the sky—and thus the sky itself was referred to as "kók." Indeed, the sky often appears in a light blue shade, and from ancient times, in oral traditions, the word "kók" was used alongside "aspan" (sky). For instance, in the works of poet I. Yusupov, "kók" is used to refer both to the sky and in other metaphorical or symbolic senses.

"Kókte barar quşlar dizbegi,
Bir qaptalda mashina júzer," — "Seniń qollarıń"
(Meaning: Describes birds flying in the sky and a car moving nearby.)

"Túnde kókten juldızlar tógilip,
Tal shaqasına ilinip qalǵanday." — "Bir gúl úzdim
Shırshıq boyınan"
(Meaning: Stars fall from the sky at night, appearing to hang on tree branches.)

In poet I. Yusupov's song "Avariya":
"Kók ójetlik bermes qayır,
Sóytseń júda savxoz bayır."
Here, "kók ójetlik" conveys a stern or resolute quality, intensifying the meaning of firmness or strictness in the phrase.

In the song "Epke kelse ashıq bolmay jasańlar...":
"Adamlar bar qarnı toysa kóklegen,
Ashıqlıq aldında dize bókpegen"
(Meaning: People who are full do not act rashly in times of hunger.)

"Sen netken ásirseń?
Qılwań bar qanday?"
"Kók jiyegiń qáwip-qáterler dumanı" — "Jańa ásirge"
(Meaning: The edge of the sky symbolizes danger or uncertainty.)

"Shıǵıs aspanınıń kók jiyeginen,
Bas kóterdi mustaqıllıq quyashı..." — "Prezident"
(Meaning: From the eastern horizon, the sun of independence rises.)

"Temir qatın kók koravl aydar,"
Mingizgenbiz muzday kombaynlarǵa" — "Kim bar biziń
jaqtıń hayallarında..."
(Meaning: Refers to working on machines like cotton harvesters, metaphorically called "kók koravl.")

"Qolı jetken alar sennen keregin,

Jetpegenler kókley úzer qámegin" — "Ámiwdárya"

(Meaning: Those who reached their goal have what they need; those who didn't struggled prematurely.)

In this song, "kóklegen" means "satisfied" or "full," "kók jiyegi" refers to the edge of the sky or horizon, and "kók koravl" was a traditional folk term for the cotton harvesting machine. The phrase "kókley úziw" literally refers to picking unripe fruits but here metaphorically describes wasting water from the Amu Darya river.

In Karakalpak, as in other Turkic languages, "qara" (black) is also a widely used color term. Color words, whether standalone or in compound expressions, exhibit diverse lexical-semantic features and versatile usage in both poetic and everyday contexts.

Example:

"Kekili guzelgen, moynı ırǵanaq,

Qara bala yadıńda ma, Kegeyli?" — "Kegeyli"

(Meaning: The poet recalls a child with a beautiful hair and slender neck, asking Kegeyli if he remembers this "qara bala." Here, "qara bala" simply refers to the child himself.)

"Seze aldıma jaslıq kúnlerde,

Mıń jıl burın sol qara bala" — "Ál-Beruniy tuwılǵan jerde"

(Meaning: The phrase "qara bala" here emphasizes that the hero was very young and small, not literally black-skinned. It highlights his youthfulness and innocence in past times.)

In the first example, "qara bala" denotes the physical presence of the child. In the second, it conveys the idea of a young, small, or inexperienced person, showing that the meaning of the same phrase can change depending on context.

"Arasında bazı bir qızǵanshaqlar,

Ishi qara hám hásetgóy alshaqlar" — "Duwa"

(Meaning: Among them are some envious and malicious individuals. The phrase "ishi qara" literally means "black inside," metaphorically describing someone as having a wicked, malicious, or envious character.)

"Qara suwǵa semirip,

Qayǵısız shaǵlap júrmeyseń"

(Meaning: Growing fat in bad or harsh conditions, and living without worry or concern. "Qara suwǵa semirip" literally means "getting fat in black water," symbolizing thriving in difficult or adverse circumstances.)

"Shayır hám júrek" Livadiya baǵında óser kashtan,

Miywasın qattı kórdim qara tastan. — "Livadiya tórtliklerinen"

(Meaning: In the Livadiya garden, the poet saw a chestnut fruit so hard that it seemed like black stone. "Qara tas" conveys both the color black and the sense of hardness or solidity.)

In this passage:

The phrase "ishi qara" conveys a wicked, malicious, or envious intent.

The phrase "qara suwǵa semirip" forms a stable collocation, meaning someone or something thriving or growing in harsh conditions without concern, literally "getting fat in black water."

The phrase "qara tas" conveys the meaning of hardness or firmness, literally "black stone."

The poet deliberately uses "qara" instead of repeating the word "qattı" (hard) to enhance the expressive impact of the poem.

"Qara jerden ǵaziyne óndirgen"

(Meaning: Extracted mineral resources or valuable products from the black earth. Here, "qara jer" literally means "black earth" and symbolically refers to fertile or resource-rich soil.)

"Jeńge, seniń qollarıń altın." — "Seniń qolarıń"

(Meaning: The poet refers to "qara jer" as land that has not yet been cultivated or worked. Here, "qara" conveys the sense of uncultivated or unused earth.)

"Qara sózdi ayıra almas qosıqtan,

Qanat shıqpay ushaman dep asıqqan..." — "Sın kerek"

(Meaning: "Qara" is used metaphorically to describe something dark, heavy, or burdensome. The poet expresses eagerness or restlessness, as if unable to take flight because of the weight.)

"Qara terge túsken qara miynettiń,

Eskirgen zamanı ótip barmaqta." — "Isbilermenlerge"

(Meaning: "Qara" describes sweat and toil, highlighting hard, exhausting labor. Literally, it refers to the sweat-soaked, darkened hair of a worker, symbolizing effort

and diligence.)

"Bazda tayıp qara muzğa,

Bazda aǵar dárya dizden." — "Mámelek oy"

(Meaning: "Qara" describes ice or water, indicating cold, darkness, or heaviness. In context, it shows contrast between dark ice and the light (aǵar) river, emphasizing natural conditions or challenges.)

In these examples, the word "qara" in poetic usage does not always carry literal meaning; it often appears as a non-rhythmic, expressive word without direct semantic content.

"Qara ter" (black sweat) conveys exhaustion or fatigue.

"Qara miynet" (black labor/effort) conveys hard or heavy work.

"Qara muz" (black ice) conveys extremely hard and cold.

A. Bekbergenov notes about the color "qara":

"The word 'qara' entered from Mongolian; initially it denoted a specific color, but later, as abstract thinking developed, it began to convey other meanings as well. In modern Karakalpak, the figurative use of 'qara' has lexical, morphological, and syntactic patterns," — he supports this with examples in his scholarly article.

From these observations, we can see that in the works of poet I. Yusupov, "qara" has developed its own unique characteristics and stylistic functions. Beyond this, in the poet's creativity, other colors such as "aq" (white), "sarı" (yellow), "qızıl" (red), and "jasil" (green) also exhibit figurative or non-literal uses, showing flexible and context-dependent application in his poetry.

Example:

"Insandi 'aq', 'qızıl', 'ariy'ğa bólip,

Tájiriybeler qoyma xalıq táǵdirine" — "Jańa ásirge"

(Meaning: People are divided into "aq" (white), "qızıl" (red), and "ariy" (Aryan), reflecting internal divisions and categorizations in society.)

"Qızıl aydarhanıń túsip dástine,

Miy shayılp júrek suwlaǵan shelli,

Samolyottan záhár shashtı ústine..." — "Kim bar biziń jaqtıń hayallarında..."

(Meaning: "Qızıl aydarha" refers to the former Russian monarchy or its officials; the lines depict the tragic

impact of historical events on the people's lives. "Aq" and "qızıl" symbolize internal divisions and tensions, while "qızıl" also literally connects to the historical or political "red" faction, as reflected in historical literature.)

In these examples, "aq" and "qızıl" denote internal divisions in the early Soviet era, highlighting conflicts or distinctions among groups. Historically, in many literary and oral traditions, "qızıl" often referred to Russians or the "red" faction, as seen in phrases like "qızıl bayraq" (red banner) or "qızıllar" (Reds) among the people.

The color "aq," like "qara," can shift in meaning depending on context. In most cases, it conveys goodness, purity, or sanctity.

Examples:

"Aq kewlińnen aralasıp jasasań,

Alalamas, qanatlıǵa qaqtırmas" — "Tórtlikler"

(Meaning: Through the lexeme "aq," the poet expresses that if you are righteous, upright, and pure, no one can harm or oppress you. "Aq" symbolizes moral integrity and protection.)

"Baǵ-baqshalar sırgıp ırǵalǵan jerler,

'Aq altın', 'sarı altın' nurlaǵan jerler" — "Ámiwdárya"

(Meaning: "Aq altın" refers to cotton, "sarı altın" to wheat. The poet poetically glorifies his homeland's wealth, portraying fertile fields as golden and radiant, rather than describing them literally.)

"Aq júzinde az-kem ájim sızıǵı,

Aqjarqın, iybeli kózler súzigi" — "Jaqsı hayallarǵa jas mingen sayın..."

(Meaning: "Aq júzi" describes a young person's fair complexion, clear and bright appearance, and gentle, beautiful eyes. Here "aq" symbolizes physical beauty and purity.)

"Ustazım' dep, jaslar arqa súyegen,

Aldırızda aq basımdı iyemen" — "Men muǵallım degen xalıqtı súyemen"

(Meaning: In this line, "aq basımdı iyemen" refers to respect and reverence toward elders or teachers. "Aq" conveys honor, trustworthiness, and esteem.)

In the first example, "aq altın" represents cotton, while "sarı altın" represents wheat. The poet emphasizes his homeland's wealth and abundance by describing it in

radiant, golden terms rather than using dry literal descriptions. In the other examples, “aq” conveys purity, beauty, and moral or social respect, showing the versatility of color terms in poetic and figurative language.

The color "sarı" (yellow) in many works conveys weakness, longing, or anticipation, or when applied to a person, it can indicate youth or smallness. For example: “sarı palapan” (yellow chick), “sarı shóje,” or “awzınan sarısı ketpegen” (a chick whose yolk has not left its mouth yet).

In Ibrayım Yusupov’s poetry:

"Ayrılıqtıń dártin jazdım,

Íshqırında sarǵaydım –azdım" — "Jánan kirer túslerine"

(Meaning: “Sarǵaydıw” here conveys suffering, hardship, or distress.)

"Sarı awız, temir qanat palapan,

Eplep uslar onı epsiz alaqań" — "Onıń qosıqlarınan"

(Meaning: “Sarı awız palapan” depicts a young, inexperienced, or not yet fully developed chick, literally a chick whose mouth still has yolk. It symbolizes innocence or immaturity. The poet’s depiction can be considered a figurative variation of the traditional phrase “awzınan sarısı ketpegen palapan.”)

The color "jasıl" (green) is often used to signify growth, renewal, or flourishing. In Ibrayım Yusupov’s song "Kavkaz":

"Jasıl tóbelerdiń mindik basına,

Jasıl qala jatqań etekte."

(Meaning: “Jasıl tóbe” refers to green hills or mountains, symbolizing nature and freshness. “Jasıl qala” refers to the Caucasus in its verdant beauty, emphasizing both natural scenery and aesthetic appeal.)

Thus, both "sarı" and "jasıl" demonstrate figurative versatility in Karakalpak poetry: “sarı” conveys youth, weakness, or struggle, while “jasıl” conveys renewal, growth, or the beauty of nature.

In the works of poet I. Yusupov, we see that colors and paints (“boyaw”) are used not only literally but also figuratively, reflecting shifts in meaning, changes in collocations, and lexical creativity. The poet uses colors to convey abstract concepts, philosophical reflections, and human experiences, connecting the aesthetic,

moral, and emotional dimensions of life.

Example:

"Sarı boyaw – kewlimdegi qayǵı–muń,

Qara boyaw taǵdirimniń guwası,

Jasıl boyaw ármanları jaslıqtıń,

Qızıl boyaw júregimniń jarası" — "Gilemshi hayal haqqında haqıyqatlıq"

(Meaning: Here, “sarı boyaw” symbolizes grief and sorrow in life, “qara boyaw” symbolizes the bitterness of fate, “jasıl boyaw” symbolizes the youthful longing or hopes, and “qızıl boyaw” symbolizes the wounds or passions of the heart. The poet assigns abstract and emotional meanings to each color.)

"Qaralıq tileymen hámme qazanǵa,

Qaralıq tileymen qara kózlerge,

Jasılıq – japıraqqa, qızılıq – qanǵa,

Adam kewli, aqlıq tileymen sizge!"

*(Meaning: The poet uses color metaphorically to convey blessings and good wishes:

- “Qaralıq tilew” for the cauldron – wishing the fire in the cauldron never goes out, symbolizing prosperity and sustenance.
- “Qaralıq tilew” for black eyes – wishing vigilance, endurance, or good fortune.
- “Jasılıq” (green) to leaves – wishing life, renewal, and growth.
- “Qızılıq” (red) to blood – wishing vitality and courage.

Overall, this stanza expresses a long life, well-being, and prosperity.)*

Through these examples, we see that I. Yusupov’s use of colors and paints goes beyond literal depiction: they structure abstract concepts, philosophical ideas, and moral reflections, linking poetic imagery with human life and experience. The social, practical, and scholarly value of any language is determined by how its units convey particular meanings. Among these units, lexical items with distinct lexico-semantic and grammatical features—what we might call “lexical forms”—are some of the most widely used in everyday life, literature, and publicistic writing. Among these, lexemes that convey color are notable for their use in spoken and written communication, their frequent

application in figurative meanings, and their ability to combine with other words to express a wide range of nuances. These features distinguish color lexemes from other types of words. Today, they are widely used across all styles of the Karakalpak language. Thus, in Karakalpak, color-expressing words, with all their figurative meanings, usage variations, and creative manipulations, play a major role in enriching the language's vocabulary.

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