

# Linguistic Research of Color Lexicology: Theoretical Paradigms and Lexical-Semantic Properties

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**Abstract:** This article analyzes the linguistic study of color lexicon within the framework of theoretical approaches developed in modern linguistics. Color names are interpreted not only as simple nominative units of the language, but also as complex semantic phenomena reflecting human thinking, cultural experience and social consciousness. In the process of research, the factors of formation of color lexicon, their semantic structure and stages of semantic development are highlighted on the basis of specific language materials. Particular attention is paid to the fact that color units acquire different meanings depending on the context, are enriched with metaphorical and symbolic content, as well as perform an expressive function in the speech process. The article also considers the linguocultural characteristics of color names and substantiates their inextricable connection with national thinking. The results of the research serve to assess color lexicon as an active layer of the language system, as well as to further understand its lexical-semantic capabilities.

**Keywords:** Color lexicon, color names, lexical-semantic properties, semantic development, metaphorical meaning, linguocultural approach, contextual analysis.

**Introduction:** Through language, a person not only names the surrounding world but also expresses their attitude toward it. In this regard, words denoting colors constitute one of the most ancient and active layers of the lexicon. Color terms, while indicating the external features of objects and phenomena in everyday speech, also serve to reflect a person's emotional state, mode of perceiving the world, and socially established views. For this reason, color vocabulary in linguistics is regarded not merely as a nominative device, but as an essential unit that enriches meaning and content.

In recent years, scholarly interest in color-related linguistic units has been steadily increasing. The primary reason for this lies in the multifunctional nature of color terms in discourse and in the expansion or transformation of their meanings depending on context. For instance, certain color names, beyond denoting a specific hue, may convey positive or negative evaluation, psychological states, or even social status. Such phenomena demonstrate that color vocabulary is not a simple lexical category, but rather a

dynamic and evolving semantic system.

From this perspective, issues such as the semantic formation of color lexicon, its functional roles in discourse, and the changes it undergoes over time require dedicated scholarly investigation. The present article analyzes words denoting colors with particular attention to these aspects. The study elucidates the place of color terms within the language system, their semantic richness, and their discursive potential, and proposes conclusions that contribute to a deeper understanding of color vocabulary.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on color vocabulary has been conducted in linguistics across different historical periods and within various theoretical frameworks, and this issue belongs to the category of relatively well-studied scholarly topics. In early studies, words denoting colors were primarily examined within the scope of the lexical richness of language. Later, however, their semantic features, usage in discourse, and cultural content

began to be considered as independent objects of research. Thus, it can be observed that scholarly perspectives on color lexicon have gradually expanded and become conceptually richer over time.

An analysis of the existing literature shows that color terms have been examined from different perspectives by various researchers. Some studies have focused on the origin and historical development of color names, while others have analyzed their semantic shifts, figurative usage, and functional roles in discourse. In addition, issues such as the relationship between colors and cultural representations, their place in the worldview of a people, and their symbolic meanings occupy an important position in academic literature.

At the same time, it can be noted that research devoted to color vocabulary has often been limited to a particular direction or specific aspect. This circumstance highlights the need for a broader and more systematic approach to the study of words denoting colors. In the present article, existing scholarly views are synthesized, their main directions and approaches are examined, and aspects contributing to a deeper elucidation of the lexical-semantic features of color vocabulary are identified.

The issue of the semantic development of colors also occupies a central place in the research of N. S. Trifonova. The scholar interprets the evolution of color meanings not merely as a phenomenon confined to language, but as a process intrinsically connected with human life and societal development. In particular, she emphasizes that the semantics of colors are directly related to people's way of life, the standard of living of a community, and the everyday interactions of objects and phenomena. According to Trifonova, "the development of color semantics encompasses the linguistically significant features of people's lifestyle, the level of folk life, and the habitual state and interrelations of objects and phenomena" [11, p. 11].

Furthermore, the author demonstrates that the formation of color terms and their consolidation within the language system are closely interconnected with the life of society. She particularly emphasizes that this process unfolds in direct relation to everyday life, trade and commerce, craftsmanship, technological development, beliefs and customs, as well as changes in taste and fashion. Trifonova associates the

differentiation of colors, their nomination, their symbolic usage, and the emergence of comparisons primarily with extralinguistic factors. Specifically, she identifies geographical location, the predominance of certain landscape colors, national history, the daily lifestyle of a people, and the level of social and cultural development as significant factors in the formation of a color system.

The issue of color semantics and their figurative use also occupies an important place in N. S. Trifonova's scholarly research. In particular, in her candidate dissertation devoted to the analysis of metaphors in the early lyrics of Anna Akhmatova, the functions of color units in artistic discourse, their role in image creation, and their semantic load are extensively examined. The study substantiates that colors, as metaphorical expressive means, serve to reflect a person's inner experiences, psychological state, and aesthetic views. Trifonova's works are significant in demonstrating that color vocabulary possesses not only nominative, but also profound semantic and figurative potential [11, p. 11].

Beginning from the late twentieth century, color lexicon has been extensively investigated within historical-etymological, semantic, conceptual, linguocultural, ethnocultural, sociocultural, comparative-typological, linguocognitive, linguopoetic, psycholinguistic, and ethnolinguistic frameworks. Research conducted in these directions contributes to a deeper understanding of the place of colors within the language system, their semantic potential, and their functions in discourse.

The studies of Y. V. Normanskaya are of particular importance with regard to the development and genesis of color terms in ancient Indo-European languages. According to the scholar, the emergence of semantic derivatives associated with each color is intrinsically linked to changes in social life, people's lifestyles, religious beliefs, and social relations. From this perspective, a distinct diachronic direction has taken shape within color linguistics, focusing on the historical layers of color vocabulary, semantic shifts across different periods, and the causes underlying these changes [10, p. 379].

Among the studies devoted to the issue of color, D. N. Borisova's article entitled "On the Problem of Choosing

a Term for Naming Color-Expressing Forms in Language” deserves particular attention. In this work, the author analyzes research conducted in various languages on nominative units expressing colors and color shades, and identifies both the common and distinctive features of the approaches adopted in this field.

Within the framework of the terminological field of color-component expressions, the article distinguishes five principal directions. The first is associated with the use of the term “color names.” The author interprets this term not as the result of a specific lexical unit or isolated word, but as a process occurring within language. According to D. N. Borisova, the concept of “color names” denotes not a ready-made form of expressing color, but rather the very process of naming it.

The study further emphasizes the following point: “color naming is the process of indicating color in language, that is, the various methods of designating color shades” [4, p. 34].

In contemporary linguistics, approaches to the study of the color paradigm have significantly expanded. The issue of color is no longer examined within a single disciplinary framework, but increasingly investigated at the intersection of multiple fields in an integrated manner. This development once again confirms the complex and multifaceted nature of color vocabulary. In particular, among studies devoted to color lexicon in English, special attention is given to works exploring the historical-etymological development of lexical and phraseological units denoting color, the genesis of colors, and their manifestation in cognitive processes. In recent years, the number of studies examining the semantic changes of colors from antiquity to the present day, in relation to human cognition, national lifestyle, and social development, has increased considerably.

N. M. Okhritskaya, who investigated color names from a linguocultural perspective, defines color as follows: “Color is a universal mental category that characterizes the specific properties of material entities, is perceived through vision, and is expressed in language through specific names” [10, p. 5]. This approach makes it possible to interpret colors not merely as visual attributes, but as linguistic-cognitive units closely

interconnected with human thought and culture.

In Uzbek scholarship, the issue of color vocabulary has also come into focus in recent years. Researchers have examined the role, semantic richness, and imagery of color terms in poetry, literary texts, and folklore. They emphasize that color units function not only as visual markers, but are also closely linked with spiritual, cultural, and social contexts. At the same time, the figurative, metaphorical, and symbolic uses of colors in Uzbek literature have been analyzed, and their lexical and semantic features are being studied as an interconnected system.

Y. Is’hoqov’s article entitled “The Symbolism of Colors,” prepared on the basis of the divan “Khazoyin ul-Maoniy,” is considered one of the first substantial scholarly studies devoted to the theme of color in Uzbek literature. In this article, the author analyzes not only the aesthetic significance of colors, but also their cultural, historical, and social contexts. The symbolic meanings of colors in literature and art, their influence on human emotions, and their place in cognition are examined in detail [6, p. 128].

Similarly, in an article prepared by S. Hasanov on the basis of Alisher Navoi’s epic “Sab’ai Sayyor,” the symbolic functions of colors in literary texts are explored. The author analyzes colors as a means of conveying moral and spiritual meanings through poetic imagery and draws theoretical conclusions. The article also contributes to a deeper understanding of Navoi’s color symbolism [5, p. 56].

In addition, in S. Jumatova’s candidate dissertation entitled “Symbolic Images Associated with Color in Contemporary Uzbek Poetry,” the symbolism of colors in the works of twentieth-century Uzbek poets is examined in greater depth. The dissertation demonstrates the role of colors in the creation of literary images, in conveying the emotional states of poets, and in enriching the semantic content of texts [7, p. 88].

These studies establish a scholarly foundation for a deeper exploration of the theme of colors in Uzbek literature and for understanding their symbolic meanings.

Ibrohim Haqqul’s article “On the Interpretation of the Color Black Once Again” analyzes the color black and its symbolic meanings within the context of Uzbek Sufism

and literature. The author interprets black not merely as an external color, but as a spiritual indicator associated with inner purification, ascetic poverty (faqr), and the devotee's dedication of the heart to God along the Sufi path. The article discusses the black cloak, black garments, and other Sufi attire as symbols expressing the spiritual and ethical perfection of the seeker. The scholar rejects the association of black with negativity or evil, presenting it instead as a symbol of patience, ascetic discipline (riyāzat), sincerity, and virtuous deeds. In this respect, the article serves as an important source for literary and Sufi studies concerned with the symbolism of black [5, p. 19].

Overall, these studies provide a scientific basis for a comprehensive investigation of colors in Uzbek literature and for a deeper understanding of their symbolic dimensions.

In linguistics, colors deserve attention not only as a means of describing the external world, but also as an important device for expressing the emotional and spiritual content of a text. Research conducted by linguists demonstrates that the lexical expression of colors and their semantic features form a stable system within language and play a significant role in determining the overall tone of a text. This feature is particularly evident in literary works, especially in the poetic compositions of Navoi.

In his research, G'iyosov examines the subjective and evaluative aspects of colors. According to him, the linguistic interpretation of colors is determined by their contextual dependence. For example, in our language, color terms frequently express not only external appearance, but also evaluative and emotional nuances. The word "red" denotes not only a color, but may also embody subjective values such as passion, vitality, and love. This aspect further underscores the importance of colors within the lexical system [12, p. 54].

Bafoyev's first article, entitled "Synonyms, Syntagms, and Semantic Equivalence of 'Red' in the Language of Navoi's Poetry," analyzes the lexical system of the color red. In this study, the author examines the meanings generated through the synonyms and various syntagmatic combinations of the word red in Navoi's poetic texts. Bafoyev emphasizes that red is not used merely as an external attribute; rather, it is perceived

as a symbol of love, passion, sincerity, and vital force. The research demonstrates that the synonyms and syntagms of red not only provide aesthetic coloring to the text but also enrich its emotional layer [2, p. 39].

Bafoyev's second article, "Color-Denoting Words in Navoi's Ghazals," focuses specifically on the functions of colors within ghazal texts. In this work, the author analyzes the figurative, symbolic, and emotional aspects of color usage. He notes that in Navoi's творчество colors acquire different meanings depending on context: for example, red expresses love and passion, while blue conveys calmness and a harmonious mood. This study reveals the significance of colors within the linguistic system and highlights their subjective and aesthetic functions [3, p. 53].

The linguistic analysis of colors shows that they perform a distinctive function within the semantic and pragmatic layers of language. Through color terms, an author not only describes the external features of an object but also adds emotional coloring, imagery, and expressive tone to the text. Particularly in Navoi's works, colors possess multifaceted meanings, enabling them to express diverse nuances across different contexts.

From this perspective, the linguistic study of colors facilitates the identification of their lexical, semantic, and pragmatic functions. Such research, especially in the works of Bafoyev and G'iyosov, clearly demonstrates the role of colors in shaping textual meaning and their figurative and emotional significance. As a result, colors emerge not only as visual markers but also as devices enriching the meaningful, evaluative, and emotional layers of language.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study is aimed at examining the linguistic, semantic, pragmatic, and linguocultural characteristics of color vocabulary. Historical-etymological and semantic approaches were employed to determine the historical development and semantic shifts of color terms. In addition, the relationship between color units and national cognition, culture, and human perception was analyzed through linguocultural and cognitive approaches. The research also investigates the functions of color names in discourse, their emotional and evaluative layers within texts, and their contextual

dependence.

Uzbek and Russian literary texts, as well as examples from contemporary poetry, were used as sources for the analysis of color units. Their synonyms, syntagmatic combinations, and metaphorical uses were examined in order to determine the place of colors within the lexical system and their function in enriching textual meaning. This approach makes it possible to understand color vocabulary as a multidimensional phenomenon.

## DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The characteristics of color terms necessitate their study in close connection with culture. Each person perceives colors based on its historical experience, customs, and worldview. As a result, the same color may express different meanings and concepts in different languages or cultural contexts. This fact is crucial for understanding how color terms function in discourse and how they acquire additional semantic nuances.

In this regard, the issue of selecting appropriate terms from the nominative system of language to express the concept of color remains highly relevant in linguistics. In many languages, basic color names are very ancient and have undergone relatively little change throughout the historical development of the language. For example, words denoting white and black developed in association with the concepts of light and darkness, expressing oppositional meaning relationships. This indicates that colors have functioned not only as external attributes but also as means of expressing broader conceptions of life and existence.

The origin of certain color names, however, is linked to specific objects or phenomena. For instance, in many languages the color red developed on the basis of associations with blood, fire, or the sun. Green emerged in connection with the plant world and natural landscapes, while blue became associated with the imagery of the sky and water. Such etymological foundations show that color terms initially possessed concrete and specific meanings, which later expanded to include abstract and symbolic dimensions.

In the process of language development, color vocabulary has broadened through the acquisition of new meanings. Some color names have gradually moved away from their primary denotative sense and

begun to express social, emotional, or evaluative meanings. At the same time, contact with other languages has led to the borrowing of certain color terms or to the enrichment of the meanings of existing ones. This process demonstrates that color vocabulary is in constant motion and is intrinsically linked to the overall development of language.

Among the studies conducted in this field, a common feature is that all scholars emphasize that color vocabulary should be examined not merely as an external attribute, but as a phenomenon intrinsically connected with human cognition, cultural values, and social life. In their view, color names do not constitute only a part of the lexical wealth of language; they also function as a means of reflecting culture, aesthetic taste, and various spheres of social existence. From this perspective, color lexicon in linguistics is regarded not simply as a collection of lexical units, but as a complex system that enables the study of the visual and cultural dimensions of human thought.

The differences among scholars are manifested in their methodological approaches. For instance, D. N. Borisova views color names as a process occurring within language itself. She interprets color naming not as a ready-made lexical unit, but as a dynamic process constantly operating within the linguistic system, explaining their formation and usage from this standpoint [4].

N. S. Trifonova, in contrast, directly links color vocabulary to human activity and social life. She demonstrates that the formation, differentiation, and symbolic use of color terms are closely associated with everyday life, beliefs, customs, and socio-cultural development. Thus, changes in color vocabulary and the emergence of new meanings are explained not only by internal linguistic mechanisms, but also by developments in social life [11].

Y. V. Normanskaya places the historical-etymological development of colors at the center of her research. She associates the emergence of semantic derivatives specific to each color with human activity, societal changes, and historical context. In this way, the diachronic semantic transformations of color vocabulary and their underlying causes are examined from a developmental perspective [9].

N. M. Okhritskaya interprets color as a linguocultural

and universal mental category. She considers color names as units that express the properties of material entities, are perceived visually, and are represented in language through specific names. This approach makes it possible to understand colors not merely as visual attributes, but as complex units closely interconnected with human cognition, culture, and linguistic processes [10].

Studies of color vocabulary in Uzbek literature demonstrate that colors function not only to describe the external features of objects, but also as devices that enrich the emotional, artistic, and symbolic layers of a text. In poetic discourse, colors play an important role in conveying feelings, vividly depicting poetic imagery, and creating an emotional tone for the reader. In this respect, color units are closely related to cultural, social, and subjective contexts.

The analyses show that the contextual dependence of colors helps determine their various meanings. For example, red expresses love, passion, and vitality; blue reflects calmness and harmonious mood; black is interpreted as a symbol of spiritual purification and patience. The subjective evaluation of colors enhances their significance within the linguistic system. The word "black," belonging to the ancient Turkic lexical stratum, was originally associated with darkness, night, and invisibility. Black is one of the primary colors explained by the absence of light. Although semantically it has often been associated with negative connotations, it does not invariably signify evil. In Uzbek, black may express grief and suffering, but in certain contexts it can also denote seriousness, depth, and spiritual maturity. In the following couplets by Alisher Navoi, the word "black" appears with both positive and negative connotations.

Ko'zing ne balo qaro bo'lubdur,

Kim jong'a qaro balo bo'lubtur. [1, p 519].

Moreover, several ethnonyms have emerged through the use of this color. The Turkic ethnonyms containing the component "black" include the Karakalpaks, Karachays, Qara-Nogais, Qara-Khitays, Korays, Koramanlis, and Qara Uyghurs. In these ethnonyms, the word "black" conveys not only the color meaning but also social and symbolic connotations such as greatness, prominence, power, or centrality. Many researchers associate the "black" component with

common people or the main tribal stratum. From this perspective, the word "black" in Turkic ethnonyms manifests not as a negative term, but as a semantic unit of socio-cultural significance.

In ancient Turkic ethnonyms, the word "white" carried important symbolic meaning, representing nobility, the eastern direction, authority, and purity. For example, in ethnonyms such as the White Huns, White Oghuz, White Ko'yunlus, and White Kyrgyz, the component "white" indicated the influential or dominant segment of the community. These names were closely linked to the socio-political stratification in Turkic society. Thus, ethnonyms containing the "white" component reflect a significant semantic aspect of the ancient Turkic worldview.

In literary texts, colors create multifaceted imagery through synonyms, syntagms, and metaphors. Color terms do not merely describe external features; they also add emotional tone, affective coloring, and symbolic layers to the text. This enables the identification of the lexical, semantic, and pragmatic functions of colors.

Overall analysis shows that in Uzbek literature, colors perform multifaceted, symbolic, and emotional functions. Their linguistic and literary analysis contributes to enriching textual meaning, conveying emotional impact to the reader, and deepening the understanding of artistic imagery. The contextual dependence of colors, along with their meanings in synonyms and syntagms, adds aesthetic and emotional layers to the text, enhancing their role within the linguistic system.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study aimed to examine the linguistic and cultural features of color vocabulary through a systematic approach. The analyses demonstrate that color names, beyond being ordinary lexical units, manifest as a complex semantic phenomenon closely connected to human cognition, cultural values, and social life. Colors not only represent the external appearance of objects but also play a crucial role in forming emotional, evaluative, aesthetic, and symbolic layers.

The contextual dependence and metaphorical potential of color terms allow them to function as multifaceted devices in literary texts. For instance, red expresses passion and vitality, blue conveys calmness

and harmonious mood, and black symbolizes spiritual purification and patience. In this sense, color names enrich the linguistic system not only visually but also culturally, subjectively, and emotionally.

The results of the analysis indicate that applying an integrative approach to the study of color vocabulary is effective: D. N. Borisova emphasizes intra-linguistic processes [3], N. S. Trifonova focuses on extralinguistic factors [10], Y. V. Normanskaya highlights historical-etymological development [8], and N. M. Okhritskaya addresses linguocultural and mental aspects [9]. These approaches collectively facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the multidimensional nature of color vocabulary and its place within both language and cultural systems.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

In studying color vocabulary, applying conceptual and linguocognitive approaches more extensively would allow for a deeper analysis of colors' functions within cultural, social, and psychological contexts.

It is recommended to systematically investigate color imagery in Uzbek literature in relation to artistic texts, including the compilation of color synonyms, metaphors, and symbolic uses into a dedicated catalog. Examining the historical-etymological and cultural roots of color vocabulary is important for determining its role in the contemporary linguistic system.

Studying the contextual meanings of color names and analyzing them based on linguistic corpora provides an effective tool for tracing changes in their use within speech.

Considering the subjective and emotional functions of colors in the analysis of literary texts is beneficial for enriching textual meaning and conveying emotional nuances to the reader more profoundly.

Thus, investigating the linguistic, cultural, and artistic aspects of color vocabulary in an integrated manner—not only within linguistics but also in conjunction with literary studies, psychology, and cognitive sciences—enhances its semantic potential and practical significance.

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