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Article

A Comparative Study of the Structural and Semantic Features of Karakalpak and Russian Color Terms

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Abstract: This article examines the structural and semantic characteristics of color lexemes in the Karakalpak and Russian languages. A comparative study of the structural features of agglutinative Karakalpak and inflectional Russian reveals several similarities and differences determined by their typological nature. The analysis of the semantic category of colorative lexemes establishes a contrast between Karakalpak and Russian—ranging from nominative components to associative meanings—which highlights the cultural and linguistic uniqueness of each language.

Keywords: Karakalpak Language, Russian Language, Color Terms (Color Naming), Word-Formation Methods, Reduplication, Affixation, Semantic Field, Core, Periphery.

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1. Introduction

The structural-semantic category of color-denoting lexemes, as in many other languages, has been an object of close study by Russian and Karakalpak researchers. Most scholars define color terms as adjectives and, by their nature and semantics, classify them as qualitative adjectives. In works dedicated to the lexico-semantic characteristics of Russian color terms (N.B. Bakhilina, V.G. Kulpina, E.A. Kosykh, S.V. Kezina, L.A. Novikov, M.V. Lomtev, etc.), it can be observed that the system of Russian color naming has a clearly organized internal structure, where morphology, semantics, and historical development are interconnected and determine the place of each lexeme within the general system [1], [2], [3], [4].

From a structural-morphological perspective, color can be expressed in the form of an adjective, noun, verb, participle, adverbial modifier, or adverb. However, the adjective remains the primary part of speech used for expressing color.

Given that most Karakalpak color terms can be traced back to Common Proto-Turkic roots, there is naturally a certain commonality in their history of study. Consequently, color terms as a category of qualitative adjectives should be considered within a lexico-grammatical framework, drawing on the works of Turkic scholars (M.D. Abzhaparova, A.N. Maizina, R.T. Muratova, A.T. Kaidarov, Z.T. Atkhamberdieva, B. Umarbekova, M.B. Borisova, etc.) [5]. It should be noted that, at present, there are no works dedicated to a comprehensive analysis of the structural and semantic features of color-denoting lexemes specifically in the Karakalpak language.

From a structural-morphological perspective, color can be expressed as an adjective, noun, verb, participle, converb (verbal adverb), or adverb. However, the primary vehicle for color designation is the adjective [6].

2. Methodology

This study applies structural-semantic, comparative, and field-analysis methods to examine color-denoting lexemes in the Karakalpak and Russian languages. The research analyzes the morphological and syntactic mechanisms of color term formation, including affixation, compounding, and reduplication. The study also employs semantic field analysis based on the principles proposed by V.G. Kulpina and M.D. Abzhaparova. Basic color lexemes and their peripheral semantic zones were examined through comparative linguistic analysis.

Key theoretical foundations are based on the works of V.G. Kulpina, M.D. Abzhaparova, R.M. Frumkina, and A.N. Baskakov.

3. Results

When analyzing the structure of color-denoting lexemes, it is appropriate to refer to the works of V.G. Kulpina, in which the author identifies the following methods of color vocabulary formation[7].

1. The Morphological Method

According to this method, the structure of color terms is subdivided into:

1.1. Derivational Models for Formatting Color Terms

This model involves the formation of color designations using word-forming affixes.

1.1.1. Prefixation

One of the key differences between the Karakalpak and Russian languages is the absence of prefixation in Karakalpak. Since Karakalpak belongs to the Turkic languages—which are agglutinative in type—the order of morphemes is strictly fixed, and there are no morphemes preceding the root. In contrast, the inflectional structure of the Russian language allows for the presence of prefixes. Thus, in the formation of color terms, prefixes such as *po-* (по-), *na-* (на-), *za-* (за-), and *o-* (о-) are used. For example: *pozheltet'* (to turn yellow), *zazelenet'* (to start turning green), *posinet'* (to turn blue), *ochernit'* (to blacken) [8].

1.1.2. Suffixation

Among the suffixes of the Russian language, the most productive are *-ovat/-evat*, *-enk/-onk*, *-ist*, *-in*, *-ov/-ev*, *-chat*, and *-ovsk/-ivsk*, among others. Examples include: *belovaty* (whitish), *belenky* (white-ish/diminutive), *medisty* (coppery), *malinovy* (raspberry/crimson), *perlamutrovy* (mother-of-pearl), *belo-poloschaty* (white-striped), and *florentiysky* (Florentine).

In this aspect of studying the word-forming affixes of the Karakalpak language, we rely on the work of the Kazakh Turkologist M.D. Abzhaparova, as the structural-semantic categories of the Kazakh language are, in our view, the most closely related to Karakalpak. In her work, the author identifies the following methods for forming degrees of color-denoting adjectives: the **morphological method** (affixation) and the **syntactic method** (compounding and reduplication—both full and partial) [9].

Within the morphological method, specific affixes are identified that express high and low degrees of a color trait. To express a **low degree** (weakening) of a color attribute, affixes are used that semantically combine with adjectives of various lexico-semantic groups:

- **-laý, -leý:** *sarylaý*, *kökleý* (yellowish, bluish).
- **-is:** *kögis* (bluish, greenish).
- **-shyl, -shil:** *aqshyl*, *kökshil* (whitish, bluish/greenish).
- **-ghylt, -ghyltym:** *qyzghylt*, *sarghyltym* (pinkish, yellowish).
- **-raq, -rek, -yraq, -irek:** *qyzylraq* (redder), *kögirek* (bluer).
- **-ghysh:** *qyzghysh*, *sarghysh* (pale red, pale yellow).
- **-myq:** *qaramyq* (dull, darkish).
- **-ildir:** *kögildir* (bluish, light blue).

2. The Syntactic Method

This method involves color designations consisting of more than one word, formed through compounding, as well as partial and full **reduplication** (the repetition of words or parts of words to form a new word shape) [10].

2.1. Compounding

In the Russian language, it is used to express various shades of color: *bledno-zelyony* (pale green), *yarko-krasny* (bright red), *molochno-bely* (milky white), etc. In the Karakalpak language, shades are expressed both through the affixal method (*sarghysh* – pale yellow) and through complex constructions with various semantic qualifiers (*aqshyl kök* – pale green/light blue, *toyghyn qyzyl* – dark red). When combining two stems—a noun and a color adjective, or two adjectives—a comparison with a certain standard may be established: *aspan kök* (sky blue/azure), *qan-qyzyl* (blood-red/burgundy), *syya kök* (ink blue/violet).

Additionally, the method of stem compounding is used in both languages to denote mixed colors: *qara-aq* (black and white), *aq-jasyl* (bright green/white-green).

2.2. Reduplication

Is used in the Karakalpak language to express a high degree of a trait (intensification). Unlike the Russian language, Karakalpak features partial reduplication of color terms:

- **Qap-qara** – pitch black (literally: black-pre-black).
- **Sap-sary** – bright yellow (literally: yellow-pre-yellow).

The phenomenon of partial reduplication develops as a result of a partial modification of the first component: *zhap-zhasyl* (vivid green), *qyp-qyzyl* (bright red). The first element of the adjective pair is transformed into an abbreviated intensifier [11].

The lexico-semantic group "Color" represents a systematic organization. Indeed, words expressing color often manifest as a multifunctional semantic category, realized in literal, figurative, and symbolic meanings.

In studying the structural-semantic layer of color lexemes, most researchers agree on the primary importance of identifying basic colors. Regarding the system of basic color terms in the Karakalpak language, it is important to note that there is no consensus on the exact number of basic colors. However, based on the works of Turkic scholars in this field, it can be suggested that basic color terms vary from 6 to 10 [12].

The most frequently used basic color terms in the Karakalpak language are: **aq** (white), **qara** (black), **qızıl** (red), **kók** (blue), **jasıl** (green), **qońır** (brown), and **sur/boz/kúlreń** (grey).

In the Russian language, basic color terms are represented by a broader system. R. M. Frumkina writes: "In the Russian 'naive picture' of the color world, it includes the '7 colors of the rainbow,' as well as pink, brown, and the so-called achromatic colors—black, white, and grey. Native speakers of Russian consider these colors to be 'basic'" [13].

The primary difference in the color designation systems of Russian and Karakalpak lies in the fact that Karakalpak, like other Turkic languages, does not differentiate between the colors "dark blue" (синий) and "light blue" (голубой), and sometimes even "green" (зелёный) and "grey" (серый). The lexeme *kók* encompasses all these meanings. A.N. Baskakov refers to this phenomenon as "Turkic color blindness."

Traditionally, all basic colors are divided into chromatic (colored)—including all colors of the rainbow spectrum—and achromatic (colorless): black, white, and grey.

In analyzing the lexico-semantic group of "color," we—along with most researchers (Gataeva N.Z., Kodirova F.K., Abzhaparova M.D.)—rely on the principle of field analysis. According to this approach, the **core** is formed by basic color terms, while the **periphery** consists of the nominations of various shades.

According to M. Abzhaparova, the structure of the semantic field "Color" consists of a core—the lexeme "color" itself—and "near-core" zones. these zones include the basic colors that form color-denoting adjectives, as well as words from other parts of speech containing the sememe "color." These "colors" form microfields, within each of which a core, periphery, interpretative zone, and associative zone are identified. The core of each microfield primarily consists of the basic color lexemes.

For example, at the center of the "Black" microfield lies the lexeme *qara* (black) as the primary representative of this color. The core zone describes the literal meanings of this lexeme and includes synonymous color designations. The near-core zone consists of words from other parts of speech derived from the basic color term whose lexical meanings include the sememe "color." The peripheral zone examines figurative and phraseologically bound meanings that arise within stable collocations and idioms. Metaphors are located in the interpretative zone, while the associative zone presents associative links and color standards (paragons) within the linguocultures of the languages being described [14].

Below are the diagrams showing the correlations of the field analysis for the semantic field "Color" in the Karakalpak and Russian languages.

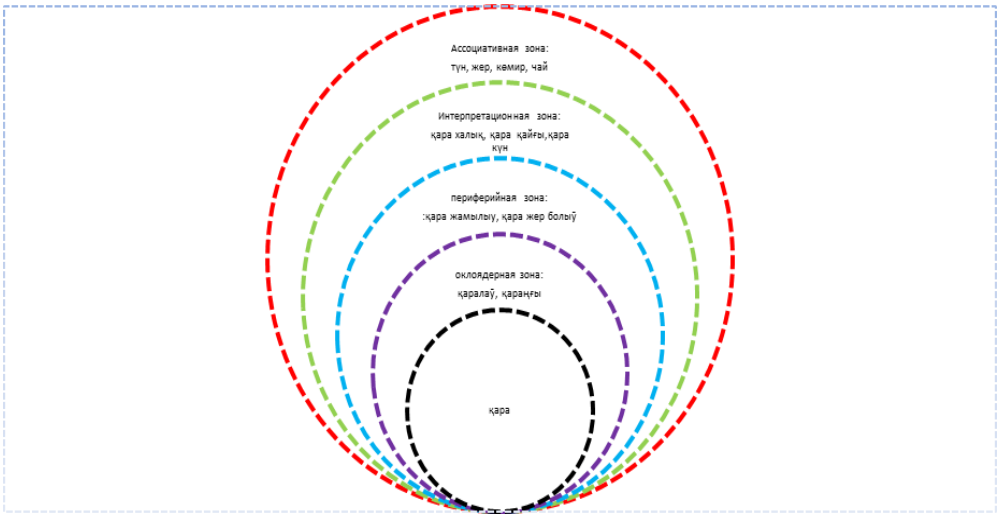

Figure 1. The semantic field of the word "qara".

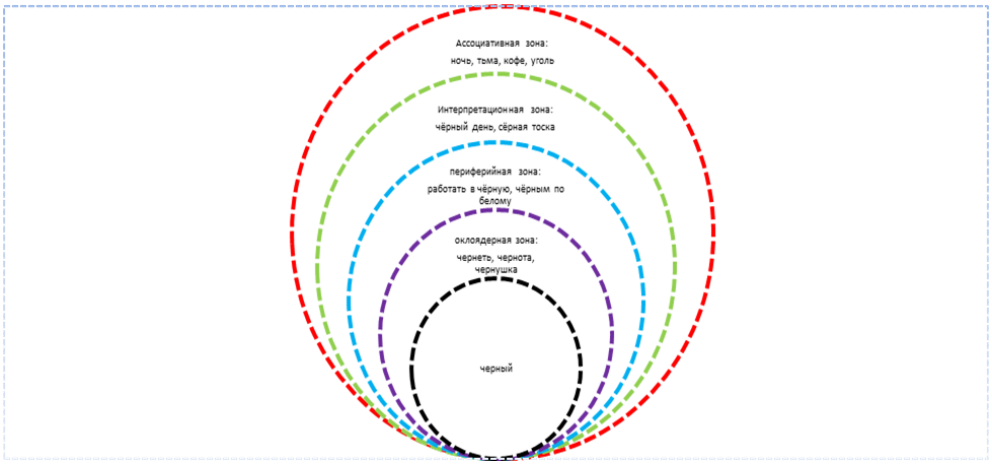

Figure 2. The semantic field of the word "chorny" (black).

4. Discussion

A comparative analysis of color terms in the Karakalpak and Russian languages reveals their structural and semantic features, which are conditioned by typological

differences. Russian, as an inflectional language, actively utilizes prefixation and suffixation to create color terms, providing a wealth of shades and variations. Karakalpak, belonging to the agglutinative Turkic languages, relies on suffixal forms, compounding, and reduplication, reflecting its specific linguistic nature. The semantic field of "color" in both languages is constructed on the principle of a core, represented by basic colors, and a periphery, including shades, metaphors, and phraseological units. The diagrams illustrate this structure, showing the zones from the core to associative meanings, thereby highlighting cultural and linguistic peculiarities [15].

5. Conclusion

The study demonstrates that color-denoting lexemes in the Karakalpak and Russian languages possess both universal and language-specific structural-semantic characteristics. While both languages organize color vocabulary through semantic fields centered on basic colors, their morphological formation mechanisms differ due to typological distinctions between agglutinative and inflectional languages. The analysis confirms that color lexemes serve not only as linguistic units but also as carriers of cultural and associative meanings.

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