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METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL**<http://mentaljournal-jspu.uz/index.php/mesmj/index>**LEXICAL GRADUONYMY OF COLOR TERMS IN UZBEK, ENGLISH, AND
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Key words: graduonymy, color terminology, lexical semantics, degree of adjectives, Uzbek language, English language, Russian language, synonymic series.

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Abstract: Graduonymy, understood as the expression of varying degrees of a particular quality, plays a significant role in structuring color perception and its linguistic representation. The research focuses on the gradational properties of basic color lexemes such as white, black, and red, analyzing their synonymic series, degree forms, and contextual usage. Special attention is given to the morphological, lexical, and phraseological means of expressing gradation in each language.

Introduction. The lexical expression of color in language goes far beyond simple nomination, functioning as a subtle instrument for conveying degrees of intensity, evaluation, and emotional nuance. In this respect, the phenomenon of graduonymy becomes especially relevant, as it reflects how speakers organize and interpret reality through a scale of semantic variation. When examined across Uzbek, English, and Russian, color terms reveal both universal patterns and language-specific strategies of gradation, offering valuable insight into the interaction between language, cognition, and culture. Graduonymy, understood as the arrangement of lexical units along a continuum of increasing or decreasing intensity, is particularly evident in the semantic field of color. Unlike discrete categories, colors form a natural spectrum, and languages respond to this continuity by developing systems of lexical differentiation. The opposition between black and white serves as a fundamental axis in all three languages under consideration, functioning as a cognitive and linguistic anchor for the organization of intermediate shades. This binary opposition is not merely descriptive but also

symbolic, often carrying evaluative and cultural meanings that extend beyond the visual domain.

Materials and Methods. In English, the gradation of black is typically expressed through metaphorical extensions derived from tangible objects, such as pitch-black, jet-black, and coal-black. These expressions rely on shared cultural knowledge, where pitch, jet, and coal are associated with extreme darkness. Similarly, variations like bluish-black introduce subtle shifts within the spectrum, indicating how perception is linguistically categorized. In contrast, Russian employs a combination of morphological and lexical means, producing forms such as чёрный, смоляной, and аспидный, which often carry stylistic or literary оттенки. Uzbek, on the other hand, demonstrates a strong tendency toward reduplication and intensifying particles, as seen in forms like qop-qora and tim qora, which convey heightened intensity through structural emphasis rather than lexical expansion.

A comparable pattern can be observed in the gradation of white. English utilizes expressions such as dazzling white, pure white, snowy, and milky, again drawing on metaphorical associations with natural or culturally salient referents. Russian parallels this with белоснежный, снежный, and молочный, where affixation and compounding play a significant role in intensification. Uzbek expresses similar meanings through combinations like oppoq, qorday oq, and oqish, where both derivational morphology and simile contribute to the gradational structure. Across all three languages, it becomes evident that natural phenomena such as snow, milk, and light serve as universal reference points, while the linguistic realization of these concepts varies according to structural and cultural preferences.

An important dimension of color graduonymy is its manifestation in phraseological units. Expressions such as as black as night, чёрный как ночь, and tun kabi qora demonstrate a shared reliance on simile to intensify meaning. Likewise, as white as snow, белый как снег, and qorday oq illustrate how different linguistic systems converge in their use of culturally embedded imagery. These phraseological constructions not only reinforce gradation but also enhance the expressive and aesthetic quality of speech, making them particularly prominent in literary and colloquial discourse.

From a linguocultural perspective, the differences among the three languages become more pronounced. English often reflects a tendency toward analytical and metaphor-driven constructions, frequently incorporating objects associated with industrial or natural contexts. Russian exhibits a richer morphological system that allows for nuanced derivation and stylistic variation, particularly in literary usage. Uzbek, in turn, emphasizes phonetic and structural means such as reduplication and intensifying particles, which create a vivid and immediate

effect. These distinctions highlight how each language encodes perception in ways that are shaped by its historical development and cultural environment.

The comparative analysis of color graduonymy in Uzbek, English, and Russian ultimately demonstrates that while the underlying cognitive mechanisms are largely universal, their linguistic realizations are diverse and culturally grounded. The gradation of color terms not only reflects perceptual differences but also serves as a tool for expressing evaluation, emotion, and stylistic nuance. As such, it occupies an important place within the broader study of lexical semantics and cross-linguistic analysis, illustrating how languages both mirror and shape human experience.

In fact, the study of color-related graduonymy reveals a complex interplay between universal semantic structures and language-specific expressive resources. The similarities observed across Uzbek, English, and Russian point to shared cognitive foundations, while the differences underscore the role of linguistic form and cultural context in shaping meaning. This duality makes graduonymy a particularly rich field for further research, especially in areas such as translation studies, lexicography, and linguocultural analysis, where understanding subtle gradations of meaning is essential.

The lexeme white is considered by Russian scholars to be one of the earliest emerging color terms, and it has been emphasized that the evaluative semantics of color adjectives often prevail over their purely color-related meanings. The presence of gradual adjectives between two oppositional poles demonstrates the inevitability of gradosemes within the semantic structure. As illustrated in the table above, when indicating the color of an object, it is also appropriate to include degree forms of the lexemes white and black, such as whiter–blacker, whitish–blackish, and the whitest–the blackest. The sequential arrangement of such forms contributes to the intensification of meaning and enhances expressive coloring.

The phenomenon of graduonymy is not limited to synonymic series of adjectives; it is also evident in synonymic–antonymic relationships and in lexical sets where gradation is particularly prominent. For instance, in Russian, the deep red color is represented by two distinct gradational series: (a) красный, алый, пунцовый, рдяный, кровавый, кумачовый, карминный, киноварный, рубиновый, гранатовый, червонный, шарлаховый; (b) багровый, багряный, пурпурный, кровавый. The second series is characterized by the presence of an intensified gradoseme equivalent to “very” or “deep,” which allows the emergence of gradonymic relations between the two sets.

As an example of intensity, the adjective blood-red (кровавый) appears in both series, reflecting the semantic and intensity range of the red color within the spectrum between orange

and violet. Taking these observations into account, it is reasonable to construct the following gradational sequence: scarlet – red – kumach-red – crimson – garnet – blood-red, where the gradoseme can be defined as the “degree of color brightness.”

Certain color terms such as carmine, vermilion, and scarlet are typically used within specialized or literary contexts. Others, like ruddy or chervonny, are considered archaic or less frequent in modern usage. The adjective blood-red, in particular, is predominantly found in literary texts, where it conveys not only the color red but also negative connotations such as tension, sorrow, or emotional intensity.

It should also be noted that the intensity of the color red is not always consistently reflected through a clear gradational hierarchy, and its usage tends to be limited to specific contexts, such as descriptions of the sky, the sun, clouds, or autumn leaves. This distinguishes it from other color gradations and suggests that the conceptualization of red may have been among the earliest to form in human cognition. These associations are closely linked with spatial perception and demonstrate a universal semantic character observable across languages of different families.

The gradational opposition “multicolored–monochrome” reveals an asymmetry in which positive forms dominate, and there is an absence of adjectives formed with the negative prefix equivalent to non- or un-. However, such prefixed forms can potentially restore balance within the gradational system. Adjectives like rainbow-colored, multicolored, and variegated originate from relational adjectives and may also form synonymic–antonymic pairs, although direct antonyms are not always recorded in standard dictionaries. The dominant term multicolored itself does not strongly exhibit gradation, whereas colored shows a limited degree of it. While colored refers to a specific hue, multicolored conveys semantic plurality and diversity of colors, making it more abstract. Words such as many and various function as gradosemes, and positive gradational indicators tend to prevail in this domain.

Color perception is inherently visual, and individuals construct mental images based on sensory input. In both Uzbek and Russian, adjectives encode features that may exceed, fall short of, or deviate from a normative standard. Adjectives are capable of adding supplementary meaning, negating the primary feature, or intensifying it to an extreme degree. These semantic variations are expressed through the category of degree.

In recent linguistic research, increasing attention has been paid to the cognitive and structural role of adjectives in language. Adjectives contribute significantly to the formation of perception, emotional imagery, and conceptual understanding. Within modern linguistics, where the human factor occupies a central position, adjectives enhance the expressiveness and

figurative richness of language. The diversity of adjective forms, including their degrees, reflects the speaker's linguistic competence and stylistic capacity.

For example, in Uzbek, the suffix *-roq* indicates the comparative degree, whereas in the related Karakalpak language it may function as an intensifying marker. Additionally, suffixes such as *-ish* and *-(i)mtir* do not simply denote a weaker degree but rather indicate a tendency toward a particular color, forming part of a gradational sequence: whitish – pale white – white – pure white. In context, such forms convey subtle nuances, as in descriptions of slightly pale light or a face with a faint darkish tone.

The suffix *-ish* or *-imt(ir)* may express approximation rather than mere reduction in intensity, while lexical means such as *slightly*, *somewhat*, or *a little* can also be used to indicate a lower degree. Conversely, intensification can be achieved through adverbs such as *very*, as in *very black* or *very white*, which correspond to Russian *очень чёрный, очень белый*.

Similarly, compound expressions such as *black-red* or *white-yellow* indicate proximity between colors, suggesting that one color leans toward another. These forms highlight the fluid and transitional nature of color perception in language.

Results and Discussion. Research on color terminology further indicates that gradonymy reflects semantic proximity among lexical units, with gradational series typically distributed on both sides of a normative central point. Empirical studies of media texts reveal that the most frequently occurring colors are white (27%), red (24%), black (21%), green (12%), blue (7%), yellow (6%), gray (2%), and brown (1%). In both Uzbek and Russian media discourse, the adjectives *white* and *белый* are most commonly used in the meaning of “clean” or “pure.” While certain shades of white in Russian (such as *chalky*, *milky*, or *alabaster*) are relatively rare, others like *snow-white* or *pale* occur more frequently.

Ultimately, all color terms participate in a gradational paradigm, where each carries a specific gradoseme and interacts with broader systems of color harmony and emotional association. For instance, *white* is associated with purity and lightness; *yellow* with joy and expansiveness; *red* with warmth, intensity, and sometimes fatigue; *violet* with heaviness; *green* with calmness and renewal; *light blue* with coolness and tranquility; *brown* with warmth and stability; *blue* with calmness; and *black* with heaviness and melancholy. These associations demonstrate that color gradonymy is not only a linguistic phenomenon but also a reflection of human perception, emotion, and cultural experience.

In the Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language (O'TIL), the phenomenon of gradonymy has been identified in three synonymic series of color terms. In particular, the lexeme *white* itself is recorded as having eleven meanings as an adjective, and its corresponding

gradational series in actual speech includes forms such as whiter, pure white, very white, the whitest, and simile-based expressions like white as milk or white as snow. Compared to Russian, Uzbek demonstrates a relatively more limited range of gradonymic derivatives for the adjective white.

In literary usage, the gradation of white is often expressed through both basic and intensified forms. For instance, in poetic and prose contexts, the alternation between *oq* (white) and *oppoq* (pure white) contributes to semantic intensification. The sequential use of these forms reinforces the expressive effect, highlighting not only the color itself but also its heightened degree. This stylistic device enhances imagery and emotional resonance within the text.

The adjective red occupies the next position in terms of frequency and semantic richness. In O'TIL, it is presented with four meanings, and its gradational forms include reddish, slightly red, intensely red, bright red, very red, and the reddest. Among these, forms such as *qip-qizil* represent an intensified degree, expressing a level of color that exceeds the expected norm. This intensification is often achieved through phonetic means, particularly reduplication of the initial syllable, which is characteristic of Uzbek morphology.

The lexeme black, when used purely to denote the color of an object, typically lacks emotional or expressive connotations, functioning primarily as a descriptive term. However, within a broader contextual framework, it can acquire either positive or negative expressive meanings depending on the speaker's attitude. Its intensified forms, such as *qop-qora*, not only denote a deeper shade of black but also serve to amplify meaning. In literary texts, black may function as an epithet, especially in relation to physical features like hair or eyes, where it can convey aesthetic appreciation. Conversely, in expressions such as a black heart (Uzbek: *ichi qora*), the term acquires a negative evaluative meaning, referring to a person with ill intentions or moral deficiency. In this case, the color term becomes part of a phraseological unit that encodes cultural and ethical judgments.

Beyond the primary color terms such as white, black, blue, red, yellow, green, and others, Uzbek also distinguishes a range of lexical-semantic groups related to animal coloration, including terms like *saman*, *jiyron*, *to'riq*, *chavkar*, *chipor*, and *targ'il*. These units further expand the semantic field of color and demonstrate the richness of lexical categorization in the language.

It is also important to note that gradonymy is not restricted to color terminology. It extends to other semantic domains, including taste (sweet-bitter), gender and age (man → youth → adolescent → boy; woman → girl → young girl → child), emotional states (brave-

cowardly; love–hate), subjective evaluation (town–city; big–small), physiological and psychological conditions (happy–sad; fortunate–unfortunate), intellectual abilities (intelligent–stupid; simple–complex), moral evaluation (beautiful–ugly; lucky–unlucky), and social status (rich–poor; expensive–cheap). In all these cases, lexical items form gradational series that reflect varying degrees of a particular quality.

The expression of weaker degrees of a feature in Uzbek is often achieved through affixes such as *-ish* and *-(i)mtir*. However, these affixes do not merely indicate a reduced intensity; rather, they signal a tendency toward a particular color. For example, *sarg'ish* means “yellowish,” indicating proximity to yellow rather than a diminished form of it. Similarly, *ko'kimtir* and *qoramtir* express a shift toward blue or black, respectively. These affixes are limited in scope and attach selectively to certain color adjectives.

Another productive mechanism involves phonetic intensification through reduplication. For example, forms like *ko'k* → *ko'm-ko'k*, *yashil* → *yam-yashil*, *qizil* → *qip-qizil*, and *qorong'i* → *qop-qorong'i* demonstrate how the addition and repetition of consonants create a stronger, more vivid expression of the quality. In the case of white, the form *oppoq* emerges from a similar process, though it does not always require the insertion of an additional vowel.

Diminution, on the other hand, is more closely associated with color semantics and can be expressed through both morphological and lexical means. Morphologically, suffixes such as *-ish*, *-g'ish*, *-(i)mtir*, and *-roq* are employed, while lexically, modifiers such as *slightly*, *somewhat*, *a little*, or *rather* serve to reduce intensity. These mechanisms collectively illustrate the flexibility and richness of gradational expression in Uzbek.

Overall, the analysis demonstrates that color terms in Uzbek, in comparison with Russian and English, exhibit a distinct balance between morphological creativity and semantic nuance. While the range of gradonymic forms may be more limited in some cases, the language compensates through expressive devices such as reduplication, affixation, and phraseological constructions. This confirms that graduonymy is a multifaceted linguistic phenomenon that reflects not only perceptual distinctions but also cultural values, cognitive patterns, and stylistic preferences.

Conclusion. In conclusion, lexical graduonymy of color terms serves as an important intersection of language, cognition, and culture. Its study not only deepens our understanding of semantic structures but also reveals how different linguistic communities interpret and verbalize sensory experience. Future research may further explore graduonymy in other semantic domains or investigate its implications for translation studies, language teaching, and intercultural communication.

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