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PECULIAR FEATURES OF COLOR TERMS CONTAINING PROPER NAMES IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Abstract. Colors play an important role in understanding and interpreting the world that surrounds people. There are many colors, shades, tones and hues that have their presentation in English. The key focus of this research is color terms that comprise proper names. Specific emphasis is made on their semantics and structure peculiarities.

Keywords: color, color term, proper name, English language

Introduction and Literature Overview

The significance of colors differs based on a great variety of aspects, including culture, traditions, religion, fashion, as well as their language presentation. Colors have been the focus of study and analysis in various fields of human life (Abbott, Griffiths, and Regier, 2017; Adams 2017; Chilver, Osborn, and Farr 1988; Courtlandt, and Lemberg, 2007; Gibson et al.; 2017; Levinson, 1994; Müller et. al, 2021; Patterson 2004; Witzel 2016). In anthropology, the symbolism of colors has been paid attention to for many centuries. For instance, in Egypt, people associated black with rebirth, whereas in China and India, white is regarded as the color of grief and death (Levinson, 1994). In the Western world, red is associated with fire, love, honor; green – with youth, freedom, vitality, and fertility, white – with purity and innocence. The world is considered to consist of four elements – fire, air, water, and earth, each of which has its unique color presentation, such as red, white, blue, and
black. In religion, each color is related to a certain holiday, for instance, green – to New Year, gold or yellow – to Easter; red – to Pentecost. In geometry, in the 1930-th, Johannes Itten conducted an experiment proving that three primary colors (blue, red, and yellow) can be associated with geometric figures. Thus, red is correlated with the square, blue – with the circle, and yellow – with the triangle (Britannica, n.d.). The following colors belong to the fundamental and elementary colors from which other colors can be derived, including orange, green, indigo, and violet. When all these three colors are mixed together, black can be obtained. In marketing and advertising, green is regarded as a color with a soothing effect, while yellow, orange and red are considered to have an energizing or provocative effect on consumers. In physics, the color is defined as an aspect of any object that can be described in terms of saturation, hue, and brightness. It is associated with the visibility of the length of electromagnetic waves. For example, red light is proven to have the longest length of waves, whereas blue – the shortest one. Yellow, green and orange are in between the lengths of red and blue. In linguistics, variations, semantic differences and similarities, as well as structure of color terms used in different languages have been the focus of research by many scholars for many decades.

The **purpose of the research** is to analyze the semantics and structure of color terms comprising proper names in the English language.

**Methodology**

The study made specific emphasis on color terms that include proper names used in English. The **data** for this research was collected from *The Oxford Dictionary of Art* (1988) by Chilver, Osborn, and Farr; *A Dictionary of Colors* (2004) by Paterson, and *The Designer’s Dictionary of Color* (2017) by Adams. The methods used in the following research are as indicated below. General theoretical methods were used to synthesize different studies on the issues of colors in general and color terms in particular. Word-forming analysis was applied to determine the structure and semantics of color terms in English. Linguo-cultural analysis helped to explicate certain features that affected the creation of color terms comprising proper names in the English language, including culture, politics, education, art, religion, history, and many others.
Results and Discussion

In our research we focus on the primary colors, including red, orange, yellow, green blue, indigo, and violet, as well as black and white. These primary colors cannot be created by mixing other colors. All the above-mentioned colors are found in all cultures and are verbalized by means of color terms, in our case those containing proper names in the English language. It is worth noting that ordinary people can distinguish and name all these colors and their key shades with ease, whereas professionals are capable of determining various minute hues. These colors do not describe a specific color; they simply give a certain name. For instance, in English, green is the basic color term for a wide range of hues that the majority of people think of as green, such as jade, emerald, mint, olive, pistachio, etc. The other names given to other shades are specific and unique and do not perform the function of unification. For example, Hooker’s green is related to the name of William Hooker, who was an English botanist and illustrator. Hooker took Prussian blue with gamboges and obtained the green color with the undertones of brown and grey. Hooker devoted all his life to studying the fauna and flora of England. All paintings by Hooker are very outstanding, lifelike, and unique. He was considered exceptional and excellent at depicting green colors (Kelleher, 2018).

Red color: Turkey red; Adrianople red; Levant red; Cherokee red; Colorado red; Granada red; Derby red;

Turkey red is referred to a red dye manufactured from alizarin (Paterson 2004, 392). This color is regarded as brownish or moderate red. The following color is also known as Adrianople red or Levant red. Adrianople red is derived from the ancient name of Adrianople (currently Edirne), which is a Turkish city. Edirne was the former capital of the Ottoman Empire, famous for its red cloth production. As to Levant red, Levant was used in reference to Mediterranean land located in the eastern part of Italy (Courtlandt & Lemberg 2007, 722). This region is known for its beautiful sunrise. Moreover, it should be noted that the word Levant was borrowed from French, meaning orient (Etymonline.com, n.d.). Thus, a specific feature of the region is reflected in the name of the color red.

Cherokee red is one of the dark shades of red that Frank Lloyd Wright, the
best-known American designer and architect, chose as his signature color (Paterson 2004, 88).

![Turkey red](image)

**Fig. 1. Turkey red**

*Colorado red* or *Colorado* is one of the shades of red, probably originated from the Spanish word *well-colored*. The name of the color is based on the specific coloring of the territory of the state (Courtlandt & Lemberg 2007).

*Congo red* is used to name a red cotton dye that was produced in the 19-th. It should be mentioned that this dye was applied to treat rheumatism and diphtheria (Paterson 2004, 119).

*Granada* or *Granada red* derives from the proper name of the city in Spain, which was founded by the Arabs. The name of the city is derived from the Italian word *granatum*, meaning *pomegranate*. As evident, the color of the fruits planted in this part of Spain is conceptualized in the name of the color (Etymonline.com, n.d.).

*Magdala red* is a dye used to produce the red color taking its name from the city of Magdala, currently Amba Maryam, situated in Ethiopia. It is worth noting that Robert Napier, a British general, defeated Tewodros II not far from city in 1868. The witnesses of the battle were shocked by the views of dead people and their blood (Paterson 2004, 245; Oxford Dictionary Online, n.d.).

**Green color:** *Brunswick green; Verona green; French green; Grenta Green; Guignet’s green; Hunter’s green; Hooker’s green; Kelly green; Lincoln green; Nile green; Pannetier green or Guignet’s green;*

*Grenta Green* is a color term used in reference to the green color. Its name is originated from the village located in Scotland. It was famous in the United
Kingdom for several centuries as the place where couples who ran off could get married without their parents’ consent (Paterson 2004, 184). By the Elizabeth’s I time, it had been an ordinary custom to get married wearing a green wedding dress rather than a white one (Etymonline.com, n.d.).

*Kelly green* is a very pure and intense green color found between blue and yellow in the wheel of colors. The name of the color is derived from the proper name *Kelly*, which is one of the common family names in Ireland. The colors of the picturesque landscapes of Ireland are reflected in the name of color. According to Irish superstitions, *Kelly green* is related to the colors of Saint Patrick’s Day and leprechauns (Everything about the color Kelly Green. n.d).

![Kelly green](image)

**Fig. 2. Kelly green**

*Lincoln green* is related to the name of the English town – Lincolnshire. The following city has been famous for its fabrics dye, a vivid and original shade of green, since the 16-th century (Paterson 2004, 238; Etymonline.com, n.d.).

*Pannetier green or Guignet’s green* is the name of a deep green color obtained from chromium oxide. The oxide was discovered by Louis-Nicholas Vauquelin, a French chemist, in 1791. In 1838, it was produced by Pannetier and then patented by C.E. Guignet in 1859. The following color became very popular and widely used by the impressionist painters (Paterson 2004, 406).

*Blue color:* Winsor blue; Wedgewood blue; Turkey blue; Berlin blue; Brunswick blue; Cambridge blue; Oxford blue; Antwerp blue; Chasseur blue; Coventry blue; Garter blue; Klein blue; Milori blue; Paris blue; Prussian blue; Nattier blue; Dresden blue; Devonshire blue; Egyptian blue; Ming blue; Nile blue;
Winsor blue, Winsor green and Winsor violet were created and released by Winsor and Newton Company in the 1940-th. These colors were first chemically synthesized and have staining properties. Winsor blue was supposed to replace Prussian blue, which was less reliable. This color is also known as phthalo blue, monastral blue, British Rail blue, copper phthalocyanine blue, and Cu-phthaloblue.

Chasseur blue is the dark blue color of the jackets worn by French soldiers in the 18-th century (Paterson 2004). According to the etymological dictionary of the English language, chasseur means huntsman or a hunter (Etymonile.com. n.d.).

Garter blue is originated from the color of the ribbon worn by the Knights of the Garter (Paterson 2004, 175). According to the historical records, Edward III established the Order of the Garter in 1344 (Etymonile.com. n.d.).

Klein blue or international Klein blue is the color created and patented by Yves Klein, a French painter, and Edouard Adam in the 1950-th. It should be noted that Klein was among the creators of the monochrome genre in painting, also known as the Blue Epoch. The key feature of this epoch is that color can be regarded as an independent and original element (Paterson 2004, 213).

Fig. 3. Klein blue

Egyptian blue is an ancient turquoise or blue color that was produced by heating lime, quartz, and copper. It is considered one of the ancient synthetic pigments (Paterson 2004, 148). This color is also known as Pompeian blue.

Yellow color: Guimet’s yellow; Guinea gold or yellow; Naples yellow; Indian yellow; Leghorn yellow

Naples yellow was obtained from a very heavy yellow pigment that contained
antimony. It is worth noting that this color was very toxic. Vincent Van Gough got ill as he used this color while working on his paintings (Paterson 2004, 147).

![Naples yellow](image)

**Fig. 4. Naples yellow**

*Indian yellow* got its name from the yellow pigment applied in India for centuries. Originally, this color was produced from the earth on which camels or cows eating mango leaves urinated for several weeks. As mango leaves gave not enough nourishment, the production and export of this natural pigment was forbidden in order to avoid cruel treatment to animals. Currently, this pigment is synthetically made (Paterson 2004, 212).

*Leghorn yellow* is originated from the name of the Italian city Legorno, modern Livorno. This city is known for a specific breed of fowl having a unique shade of yellow (Paterson 2004, 231).

In the corpus of our research, there are color terms that comprise proper names, including names of cities, countries, nationalities, educational institutions, mountains, rivers, as well as people’s last names, people’s names. The structural peculiarities of the color terms are given below.

**Proper names of cities** (*N*<sub>city</sub> + *Adj*): *Worcester green; Winsor green; Winsor violet; Bremen blue; Bremen green; Brunswick black; Antwerp red; Antwerp brown; Berlin black; Berlin blue; Cassel brown; Cassel green and Cassel yellow; Cassel yellow; Cincinnati red; Cologne brown (Cologne earth); Coomassie blue; Copenhagen blue; Coventry blue; Vienna white; Nottingham white; Verona green; Damask pink (red); Florence brown; Frankfort black; Havana brown; Hunter’s
green; Kashmir blue; Manchester yellow; London purple; Naples yellow; Nuremberg violet; Magdala red;

**Proper names of nationalities** (\text{Adj}_{\text{nationality}} + \text{Adj}): Prussian blue; Burmese red; English pink; Cherokee red; Chinese blue; Chinese white; Chinese orange; Chinese yellow; Chinese red; Chinese vermilion; French pink; Italian pink; Dutch pink; English red; Indian Red; Indian brown; Indian orange; Indian red; Indian yellow; Persian red; German blue; Italian pink; Roman Brown; Maya blue; Spanish white; Spanish red; Japanese red; Russian blue;

**Proper names of people (last names)** (\text{N}_{\text{last name}} + \text{Adj}): Ackermann’s green; Wedgewood blue; Turnbull’s Blue; Bacon’s pink; Bismarck brown; Manchester brown; Botticelli blue; Botticelli pink; Vandyke brown; Davy’s grey; Hatchett’s brown; Hooker’s green; Rubens brown; Hatchett’s brown; Scheele’s green; Nattier blue; Goya red; Warhol pink;

**Proper names of people (names)** (\text{N}_{\text{name}} + \text{Adj}): Adam blue; Alice blue; Cleopatra (greenish-blue color); Isabella yellow; Eleanor blue;

**Proper names of countries** (\text{N}_{\text{country}} + \text{Adj}): Congo red; Iraq red; Rajasthan red; China blue; Japan black; Japan blue;

**Proper names of educational institutions** (\text{N}_{\text{institution}} + \text{Adj}): Yale blue; Eton blue; Cambridge blue;

**Proper names of the rivers** (\text{N}_{\text{river}} + \text{Adj}): Nile green, Nile blue;

**Proper names of mountains** (\text{N}_{\text{mountain}} + \text{Adj}): Alp green.

It should be noted that the group of color terms comprising proper names of the cities are the most numerous one.

**Conclusion**

Based on the analysis conducted in the article, it is evident that various color terms comprising proper names are used to name specific primary colors in the English language. These colors are red, green and blue. In terms of structure, the group of color terms comprising the name of the city and the name of the color – \text{N}_{\text{city}} + \text{Adj} – has become the most numerous one. Metaphor and metonymy affect the creation of color terms containing proper names in the English language.

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References:


