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THE LEXEME RED IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH: A COMPARATIVE ETYMOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Abstract. This article presents a comparative etymological and semantic analysis of the lexemes *qizil* in Uzbek and *red* in English. The study examines the historical development of these color terms within Turkic and Germanic language families, focusing on their morphological origins, diachronic evolution, and semantic expansion. The research is based on the analysis of early written sources, including Orkhon - Yenisey inscriptions, classical Uzbek literature, and Old English texts such as *Beowulf*. The findings show that both lexemes originate from ancient roots associated with blood, fire, and physical intensity, reflecting a close connection between color perception and embodied human experience. Over time, both words developed extended metaphorical and symbolic meanings related to life, death, vitality, power, and emotional expression. Despite belonging to different linguistic families, *qizil* and *red* demonstrate notable parallels in semantic development, while also revealing language-specific cultural interpretations. The study highlights the interaction between universal cognitive processes and culturally specific factors in shaping color terminology.

Keywords: color terms, red, comparative linguistics, etymology

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O‘ZBEK VA INGLIZ TILLARIDA “QIZIL” LEKSEMASI: QIYOSIY-ETIMOLOGIK NUQTAI NAZAR

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqola o‘zbek tilidagi *qizil* va ingliz tilidagi *red* leksemalarining qiyosiy-etimologik va semantik tahlilini taqdim etadi. Tadqiqotda ushbu rang bildiruvchi so‘zlarning turkiy va german tillar oilalaridagi tarixiy rivojlanishi, ularning morfologik kelib chiqishi, diaxronik taraqqiyoti va semantik kengayishi ko‘rib chiqiladi. Ish O‘rxon - Yenisey bitiklari, klassik o‘zbek adabiyoti hamda *Beowulf* kabi qadimgi ingliz matnlari tahliliga asoslangan. Natijalar shuni ko‘rsatadiki, har ikkala leksema qon, olov va jismoniy intensivlik bilan bog‘liq qadimgi ildizlardan kelib chiqqan bo‘lib, rangni idrok etish va insonning jismoniy tajribasi o‘rtasidagi yaqin aloqani ifodalaydi. Vaqt o‘tishi bilan bu so‘zlar hayot, o‘lim, hayotiy kuch, hokimiyat va emotsional ifoda bilan bog‘liq keng metaforik va ramziy ma’nolarni rivojlantirgan. Turli til oilalariga mansub bo‘lishiga qaramay, *qizil* va *red* semantik rivojlanishda sezilarli o‘xshashliklarni namoyon etadi, shu bilan birga har bir tilga xos madaniy talqinlarni ham aks ettiradi. Tadqiqot rang terminologiyasining shakllanishida universal kognitiv jarayonlar va madaniy omillar o‘rtasidagi o‘zaro ta’sirni yoritadi.

Kalit so‘zlar: rang terminlari, qizil, qiyosiy tilshunoslik, etimologiya

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ЛЕКСЕМА «RED» В УЗБЕКСКОМ И АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКАХ: СРАВНИТЕЛЬНО-ЭТИМОЛОГИЧЕСКАЯ ПЕРСПЕКТИВА

Аннотация. Данная статья представляет сравнительно-этимологический и семантический анализ лексем *qizil* в узбекском и *red* в английском языках. В исследовании рассматривается историческое развитие данных цветообозначений в тюркской и германской языковых семьях с акцентом на их морфологическое происхождение, диахроническую эволюцию и семантическое расширение. Работа основана на анализе ранних письменных источников, включая орхоно-енисейские надписи, классическую узбекскую литературу и древнеанглийские тексты, такие как *Beowulf*. Результаты показывают, что обе лексемы восходят к древним корням, связанным с кровью, огнём и физической интенсивностью, что отражает тесную связь между восприятием цвета и телесным человеческим опытом. Со временем оба слова приобрели расширенные метафорические и символические значения, связанные с жизнью, смертью, жизненной силой, властью и эмоциональной экспрессией. Несмотря на принадлежность к различным языковым семьям, *qizil* и *red* демонстрируют заметные параллели в семантическом развитии, одновременно отражая культурно-специфические особенности. Исследование подчёркивает взаимодействие универсальных когнитивных процессов и культурно обусловленных факторов в формировании цветовой терминологии.

Ключевые слова: термины цвета, красный, сравнительное языкознание, этимология.

INTRODUCTION

The linguistic representation of color has long attracted scholarly attention due to its complex interaction with perception, cognition, and culture (Crystal, 2008; Berlin & Kay, 1969). Color terms are not merely lexical units denoting visual properties; they function as culturally embedded signs that reflect historical experience, symbolic associations, and conceptual categorization within a speech community. (Kay & McDaniel, 1978). Consequently, the study of color terminology occupies an important position in comparative and historical linguistics.

Among basic color terms, the lexeme denoting the color red holds a particularly prominent status across languages and cultures (Berlin & Kay, 1969). It is frequently associated with fundamental human experiences such as blood, fire, life, death, and ritual practices. These associations contribute to the development of extensive metaphorical and symbolic meanings that extend beyond the purely denotative function of the term. As a result, the semantic field of red often exhibits both universal tendencies and language-specific realizations.

This article aims to conduct a comparative etymological and semantic analysis of the lexemes “qizil” in Uzbek and red in English. The choice of these languages is motivated by their belonging to distinct language families—Turkic and Germanic—which allows for the identification of both typological parallels and historically conditioned differences in the evolution of color terminology (Alieva, 2015). The study focuses on the diachronic development of the lexemes, their morphological formation, and their semantic expansion from concrete color reference to abstract and symbolic meanings.

The research is based on the analysis of early written sources, including ancient Turkic inscriptions, classical Uzbek literary works, and Old English epic and religious texts (Alieva, 2015; Heaney, 2000). By examining these materials within a comparative linguistic framework, the study seeks to demonstrate how shared human experiences interact with distinct cultural and historical contexts to shape the lexical and semantic development of color terms.

METHODS

The methodology is based on diachronic analysis, comparative linguistics, and the examination of early written sources, including ancient Turkic inscriptions, classical Uzbek literary texts, and Old English literary and religious works (Crystal, 2008). The study traces morphological formation, semantic evolution, and cultural contexts through direct analysis of primary texts such as Orkhon–Yenisei inscriptions, Alisher Navoi’s works, and Beowulf.

RESULTS

The Uzbek lexeme qizil belongs to the core vocabulary of Turkic languages and demonstrates a high degree of historical stability (Alieva, 2015). According to comparative Turkic linguistics, qizil originates from the Old Turkic form kïzïl, which is morphologically derived from the verbal root kïz- meaning “to become hot,” “to heat,” or “to redden.” The adjectival

suffix -ïl contributes to the formation of a descriptive quality, resulting in the meaning "having a red hue" or "becoming red." (Alieva, 2015).

This derivational process (kïz- + -ïl → kïzïl) reflects an early conceptual association between color perception and physical sensation, particularly heat and fire. The lexical root has been preserved with minimal phonological variation across Turkic languages, including Uzbek (qizil), Kazakh (qyzyl), Kyrgyz (kyzyl), Tatar (kızıl), Turkish (kızıl), and Uyghur (qizil) (Alieva, 2015).

Early written evidence of qizil is found in the Orkhon–Yenisey inscriptions, where the term frequently appears in contexts related to warfare, sacrifice, and heroism. In these inscriptions, qizil often functions not merely as a color adjective but as a semantic marker of bloodshed and human vitality.

The English lexeme red traces its origin to Old English rēad, which derives from Proto-Germanic raudaz and ultimately from the Proto-Indo-European root reudh-, meaning "red," "ruddy," or "blood-colored." This etymological lineage reveals a deep historical continuity shared among Indo-European languages.

In Old English texts, rēad is predominantly used to describe blood, fire, and violent events. One of the most notable examples appears in the epic poem Beowulf, where rēad blod ("red blood") is employed to emphasize brutality and mortal danger. Religious texts further expanded the semantic range of red, particularly in references to the blood of Christ. (Heaney, 2000).

By the Middle English period, the lexeme underwent semantic broadening. In addition to denoting color, red increasingly appeared in figurative contexts associated with beauty, youth, passion, and vitality.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

A comparative examination of qizil and red reveals striking parallels in their semantic evolution despite their belonging to distinct language families. In both languages, the earliest semantic core is closely tied to blood and fire. These associations provided a foundation for the subsequent metaphorical expansion of meaning.

In both languages, red developed symbolic meanings related to life, strength, power, and sacrifice. In Uzbek, qizil is frequently associated with natural beauty, health, and vitality. In English, the semantic field also expanded toward danger, prohibition, and emotional intensity. The core notion of redness remains perceptible in all metaphorical uses.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study support the hypothesis that basic color terms emerge from embodied experience and gradually acquire abstract and symbolic meanings through cultural mediation. Both qizil and red illustrate how a lexeme can evolve from denoting a concrete visual property to expressing complex emotional, social, and ideological concepts.

From a linguistic perspective, the stability of these lexemes across centuries highlights their fundamental role in the lexical systems of their respective languages. At the same time, their semantic flexibility demonstrates the dynamic nature of language, where meaning is continuously reshaped by historical events, belief systems, and artistic expression. (Kay, et al., 1978)

The comparative approach adopted in this study underscores the value of cross-linguistic analysis in identifying both shared cognitive foundations and culturally specific developments in semantic change. Such an approach contributes to a deeper understanding of how language encodes human experience.

CONCLUSION

This article has presented a comparative etymological and semantic analysis of the lexemes qizil in Uzbek and red in English. The analysis demonstrates that both terms originate from ancient linguistic roots associated with blood, fire, and physical intensity, reflecting universal aspects of human perception. Over time, these lexemes developed rich semantic fields encompassing symbolic, metaphorical, and evaluative meanings shaped by cultural and historical contexts.

Despite differences in linguistic structure and cultural background, Uzbek and English exhibit notable parallels in the semantic evolution of the color red. These findings confirm that color terminology provides valuable insights into the interaction between cognition, culture, and language history. The study contributes to comparative linguistics and historical semantics by highlighting the dynamic processes underlying the development of basic color terms across languages.

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