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The Colour Names in Belarusian, Russian and Polish Toponymy: Frequency, Ways of Implementation of Semantics, Ethnic Meaningful Characteristics

Nazwy kolorystyczne w toponimii białoruskiej, rosyjskiej i polskiej:
częstotliwość, sposoby realizacji semantyki, cechy etnorelevantne

Toponymy is not only a set of geographic names of a national language but also the result of people's word formation. It retains many of the dialectal and archaic features, it is an important source of information of public-cultural, social and even mental nature. Every toponym is a kind of linguistic reminder of the past, which presents a sample of national-specific thinking of native speakers and reflects the richness and originality of the national historical and spiritual heritage.

Toponyms, which either include in its composition a coloristic component or the inner shape of which is motivated by colour tokens, have a high informative significance since the content of such onomastic units is supplemented by semantically symbolic richness and diversity of colouronyms. Colour vocabulary occupies a special place in the lexical-semantic system and it is not just a separate system fragment indicating the results of the visual perception of a person, but also an important component of the national and cultural context, through which the features of colour perception of the linguistic community of people are reflected and the figurative potential of their speech is transmitted. Researchers attribute colour designations to a number of concepts that are constantly present in the ethnolinguistic culture of the people and represent the undoubted cultural value of the given ethnic community (Kul'pina, 2001, p. 403).

Colour conceptualization can vary significantly. Even closely related peoples have their own so-called ethno-colour dominants and priorities relating to ethnic constants – “subconscious complexes, which are formed in the process of the adaptation of the human community (ethnos) to the surrounding natural and social environment and perform, in ethnic culture, the role of the main mechanisms responsible for the psychological adaptation of the ethnic group to the environment” (S. Lurie on: Kul’pina, 2001, p. 404).

Therefore, it can be argued that the “colour” toponyms is a clear and accurate speech projection of a specific national colour vision and cultural experience of the people, a kind of markers of ethnic identity. For this reason, the study of the level of representation in the toponymy of specific colours, the designation of ways to implement colour semantics (direct or indirect) in the toponyms and the correlation of the features of toponymic colouristics with the general ethno-colour characteristics in the framework of a language is an interesting and important scientific task.

In the article, the analysis of toponyms with a colour component was carried out mainly on the basis of *oikonyms*, *hydronyms*, and *microtoponyms*. The selection of material and designation of the etymology of geographical names was carried out in accordance with the publications listed in the list of the actual source of the material [see “List of sources” – I. G.].

1. As part of Belarusian, Russian and Polish toponyms, colour items such as: *жоўты* “yellow”, *сіні* “blue”, *зялёны* “green”, *чорны* “black”, *белы* “white”, *красны* “red” are recorded. [Feed material was carried out according to the frequency of names of the analyzed type in the Belarusian toponymy – I.G.].

1.1. Жоўты [yellow]. The names of settlements etymologically related to this colour in Belarusian toponymy are the same: *Жаўткі*, *Жаўцякі*, *Жоўтая Горка*, *Жоўты Брод*, microtoponyms *Жоўта Выскаць* (tract), *Жоўтае Тапіло* (swamp forest, wherein the yellow water). They are somewhat more frequent among hydronyms: lakes *Жоўтае*, *Жоўтая Вада*, *Жоўтая Яма*, *Жоўты Вярацел*, *Жоўтыя Ямы*, *Жоўцень*.

In Russian toponymy, the colour yellow is also represented only sporadically: *Желтовская сопка* (in parallel Cape Yellow), *Жёлтая* (mountain), *Желтяк* (river), *Жёлтая*, *Жёлтое болото* (yellow marsh), *Желтура*, *Жёлтый родник* (tract), *Жёлтый Мох* (moor), *Желтушка* (beam) and others. Indirectly, it is displayed in the names such as *Saratov* – from the Turkic *sari* (yellow) and *Tau* (hill). And the name of *Tsaritsyn* (today *Volgograd*) – is an overdubbed distorted formation from Turkic word *Sari-su*, meaning literally “yellow water”.

In Polish sources there was a limited number of names with such a component: *Żółkiewka*, *Żółkiewka-Osada*, *Żółta Górka*, *Żółta Kolonia*, *Żółte*, *Kolonia Żółte*, *Żółtki*, *Żółtki-Kolonia*, *Żółtnica*, *Kolonia Żółtnica*, *Żółtowo*.

It is most likely that in all languages, colour tokens, yellow in this case, exercised their direct colour semantics; thus the abovementioned names were influenced by the yellow colour of certain objects water, soil or other landscape features.

1.2. **Cіні [blue]**. This colour is represented in the following Belarusian toponymic names: settlements *Сінін, Сінічанка, Сіньша, Сінюга, Сінявічы, Сінягорскае, Сінянка, Сіняны, Сіняўка; Сіні Востраў, Сінія Горы, Сіняе Мора, Сіняўская Слабада, Сіняя Гара*; rivers *Сінюха, Сіняўка, Сіняя*, lakes *Сіневіца, Сінеў, Сіняе, Сіняе Плёса, Сіняя Града, Сіняя Даліна, Сіняя Лужа*, and others. Quite often there are similar names among microtoponyms: tracts *Сіне, Сінеха, Сіній Мост*, fields, pastures, hays, swamps and forests *Сінеўка, Сінічышча, Сінюха, Сіняво, Сінякова, Сінячыхі*, hydro facilities *Сініе Бухты* (bays on stream), *Сіняя Тонь* (a deep hole in a river).

The colour blue in Russian toponyms is rarely reflected in the names. A famous river, mountain, rock *Сінюха*, rivers *Сіняя, Сіняя Речка, Сіняш, Сіняя Каша*, a mountain and a river *Сіняк*, lakes *Сінее, Сіняя Протока*, mountain *Сіній Бугор*, tract *Сіній Холм*, and some others.

Only the name *Granatówka* (part of a village) is recorded in the available Polish sources and the names of the substrate *blekit* has never been mentioned.

The names with such colour components could be implemented with different values of colouronym *сіні* “blue” Valâncina Lemcûgova with respect to bodies of water, *сіні* could mean “clear, transparent with a blue tint” (in the names such as *Сіні Ручай*) or “dark-tinged” (such as *Сіняя Тонь*). *Сіняй, сіняком*, is also called a black wet, muddy soil (respectively – barren) (Lemcûgova, 2008, pp. 343–344). Bluish tint could be given to water or soil by the outcrops of iron oxide to the surface of wetlands (Žučkevič, 1974, p. 343). Settlements located near areas with such landscape features could be named with the appropriate colour component. In some of them, onomastics toponymy motivation could be connected with the name of the plant *сінелы, сінюхі*, which appears to grow in large numbers around the respective locality (like *Сіні Востраў*) (Bagamol’nikava, 2008, p. 51; Žučkevič, 1974, p. 343), or with colour dense spruce forest (type *Сінеж*) (Lemcûgova, 2008, p. 343).

1.3. **Зялёны [green]**. “Green” toponyms are quite common in the Belarusian toponymic system: settlements *Зеленкаўшчына, Зелень, Зеляневічы, Зелянец, Зеляніца, Зелянковічы, Зелянуха, Зелянькі, Зялёнаўка, Зялёнаўшчына, Зялёная, Зялёнка, Зялёная Даліна (Дубрава, Ліпа, Паляна, Рунь, Слабада, Хвоя), Зялёны Бор (Востраў, Гай, Дуб, Клін, Краж, Курган, Луг, Мох, Прудок, Сад), Зялёныя Дубы (Лукі, Ляды)*; hydronyms: lake *Зялёнае, Зелянец*, river *Зелянуха*; microtoponyms *Зялёнаўка* (field), *Зялёнка* (meadow and forest), *Зялёная Гара* (mountain, overgrown with thick grass), *Зялёная Дарога* (the road, overgrown with grass,

or a road through a field), *Зялёная Дарожка* (tract), *Зялёны Лясок* (small forest island among hay), *Зялёны Мост* (part of a village) and others.

In the above sources, the following Russian toponyms are fixed with a “green” component: settlements *Зеленогорск*, *Зеленоград*, *Зеленоградск*, *Зеленодольск*, *Зеленокумск*, *Зелёный город*, *Зелёная поляна*, *Зелёный Клин*, *Зелёная Роща*, *Зелёный Город*, rivers *Зелёная*, *Зелёнка*, mountain *Зелёная*, tract *Зелёная Зона*, *Зелёный Дол*, rift *Зелёная Кочка*, and some others.

The following names of settlements and micro-objects are marked in Polish toponymy: *Zielonka*, *Zielonki*, *Zieleniew*, *Zieleniewo*, *Kolonia Zieleniewo*, *Zielenin*, *Zieleń*, *Zieleńszczyzna*, *Zieleniec*, *Zieliniec*, *Zielinówka*, *Zielona Góra*, and some others. With regard to the latter name, it is believed that the modern name is the result of either an ordinary translation or an erroneous reinterpretation of the old name comes from the German form *Grünberg*, known since 1302, which may be associated with the name of the owner – “the mountain, which belongs to Grün” (Nikonov, 1966, p. 147).

Similar names of natural origin, the researchers suggest, is likely to nominate such geographical objects that have a thick, lush planting of trees or other vegetation located in a wooded area (Bagamol'nikava, 2008, p. 50). It is possible that some of the names of the series reflected the following values of the token *зялёнка*: (“stream place, covered with dark green vegetation”, “swamp (including dried)”) (Åškin, 1971, p. 82). The names of hydro objects (*Зялёны Прудок*) types could be motivated by a corresponding colour of the water.

Some names within this group could even be artificially invented, symbolic, having no semantic value, especially if they were a result of renaming. For example, in Belarus, in the territory of the Gomel region, the village *Вугал* became *Зялёны Востраў*, the village *Пячкаў* – *Зялёны Гай*, *Падсад* – *Зялёны Сад* (Bagamol'nikava, 2008, p. 50), the village *Пляшыўцы*, Talachyn district, and the village *Жазленка*, Buda-Koshelevo district, received the name of *Зялёная*, the village *Юрздыка*, Novogrudskii region, and the village *Цярпілавічы*, Brest district, has been renamed – *Зеянец* (Žučkevič, 1974, p. 140).

1.4. Чорны [black]. Black motivates considerably large numbers of Belarusian oikonyms: *Чарнабель*, *Чарнавосава*, *Чарнагосце*, *Чарнагразь*, *Чарнагубава*, *Чарназем'е*, *Чарналескі*, *Чарнарэчка*, *Чарнеевічы*, *Чарняны*, *Чорнава*, *Чорны*, *Чорнае Балота (Ляда)*, *Чорная Вірня (Гара, Гразь, Зямля, Лаза, Лужа, Сасна)*, *Чорны Бор (Брод, Дуб, Засценак, Лес)*, *Чорныя Брады (Гвазды)*. It is widely noted as a part of hydronyms: lakes *Чарне*, *Чарнец*, *Чорнае*, *Чорнае Балота (Мора)*, *Чорная Вада*, *Чорны Вір*, rivers *Чорная*, *Чорны Роў (Ручай)*, as well as among microtoponyms: fields, meadows, forests, swamps *Чарналесце*, *Чорна*, *Чорнагалоўка*, *Чорна Грань*, *Чорная Ніва*, *Чорны Луг*, tracts *Чарназём*, *Чарнуха*, *Чорнополь*, *Чорны Брод* and many others.

Black is reflected in Russian place names of settlements and microtoponyms: *Черномаи, Черношарка, Чернянка, Чёрное, Чёрная Балка (Речка, Сопка), Чёрный Камень (Ключ)*, water bodies: dozens of *Чёрная* rivers and lakes, streams *Чёрный Исток, Чёрный Ключ*. There are a lot of names in Russia, where the colouronym *чорны* acts as a definition: *Чёрная Кедва (Кожва, Лобань, Халуница), Чёрный Яр, Чёрный Июс (Урум), Чорныя Яры* and many others. The black colour of many Russian names is “hidden” in the foreign language bases. So, the name of *Kirensk* city comes from the name of the river *Kirenga* – “dirty (black) river” (from the Evenk *кiры* “dirt” + suffix *-iza*), which in turn was named because of the dark colour of the sand and gravel in its bed, coated black patina of manganese hydroxide. This may also include the names of Turkic origin with a component *кара* (“black”): *Каракулино, Караидель, Карабаи*, and others.

Polish names with a “black” component are represented as the following: *Czarna, Czarnolas, Czarnopole, Czarnożyły, Czarnowąsy, Czarnowoda, Czarnuszka, Czarnystok, Czarna Białostocka, Czarna Dolna, Czarna Buchta (Buda, Chata, Choina, Dąbrówka, Droga, Glina, Huta, Łąka, Rola, Smuga, Wieś), Czarne Bagno (Jezioro), Czarne Holendry (Niwy), Czarne Małe (Wielkie), Czarny (Dunajec, Kąt, Las, Ług, Młyn, Potok, Staw, Zdrój), Czarnybród, Czarnogłowy* and many others.

According to Valâncina Lemcûgova, in most cases colouronym *чорны* was used as part of the names according to its direct colour value. In the names of water bodies or the correlative oikonyms, *чорны* represents the dark, muddy colour of water, including associated with the presence of peat deposits (see *Чорнае Балота, Чорная Вірня, Чорная Лужа*), in relation to the settlement names, this colouronym conveys the black colour of the soil, for example, the names *Чорная Зямля, Чорная Гразь* are used as the names of settlements located on black (*чарнозем* “black earth”), respectively, fertile, rich lands. *Чорны Бор* or *Чорны Лес* – these are, possibly, the names of the relevant objects, where the trees have been damaged by fire (burnt to black) or grow very densely, and the sun’s rays cannot break through their crowns. The colouronym *чорны* can also show a social content, such as in the name *Чорны Засценак* – a settlement that belongs to the category of *чорных* (communal) lands, which in contrast to the *белых* (the landlords) were taxed (Lemcûgova, 2008, pp. 380–381).

In Russian toponymic vaults, there are also the following explanations of “black” place names: *Черногорск* (coal mining place), *Чернушка* (from marsh watercolour near the village hydro facility), *Чернь* (impassable dense forest), *Чёрные Земли* (the name of snowless territories).

1.5. **Белы [white].** The colour white is symbolic for Belarusians, as it is reflected in the name of the country – *Belarus*. This “white” foundation or component

are also related to many Belarusian place names: the names of settlements *Белае, Белева, Белевічы, Белья, Бель, Беляі, Белякі, Бялавічы, Белаазёрск, Белаводка, Белавежскі, Белавусаўка, Беладзедава, Белакорац, Белалессе, Белалозы, Беламошша, Белае Балота (Балотца, Возера), Белая Ветка (Дубрава, Дуброва, Ліпа, Сарока, Царква, Ферма), Белы Бераг (Бор, Двор, Засценак, Калодзеж, Камень, Клён, Лясок, Морг, Мох, Пераезд), Белья Балаты (Гвазды, Лугі, Лужы)* and many others. The colour white is also commonly used in hydronymy: lakes *Белаваддзе, Белагорскае, Белагурнаўскае, Белае, Белае Вялікае (Малое), Белае Катлярова, Белая Вада, Беленькае, Белы Бераг (Каверт, Пясок), Белянец, Белянок, Бялец*, rivers *Белая, Беліца, Белічанка, Бялянка, Белая Натана*, as well as in microtoponymy: tract *Беллагалоўе, Белахвостая, Белая Гара, Белы Мошок, Бялень*, fields, forests, hayfields *Белаўішчына, Белы Бераг, Белы Груд, Белы Лес* (birch), *Белья Лужы, Бель*, mountains *Бела Гара, Бялеў* and many others.

In Russian toponymy the colour white is often used: see, the names *Белае мора*, dozens of *Белая* rivers and lakes, the names *Белая Глина (Гора, Калитва, Холуница), Белгород, Белово, Беломорск, Белоомут, Белоостров, Белореченск, Белорецк, Белозерье, Белоцарск, Белоярск, Белоярский, Белый Ключ, Белый Яр* and some others. The names with foreign (Turkic) bases, which contain a component *ак-* (“white”) could be attached to “white” toponyms: *Ак-Довурак, Ак-Ярык, Акчабак, Акмурун, Акраш*.

White is widely represented in Polish geographical names: *Biała, Biała Podlaska* (from *Piotr Janowicz Biały*), *Biała Puszcza, Białe Jezioro, Biało Pole, Biały Bor, Biały Dunajec, Białka, Bieliny, Białośliwie, Białobrzegi, Białogard, Białowieża, Bielsk Podlaski, Bielsko-Biała* and many others.

According to the researchers (see Lemcûgova, 2008, 2015) the colouronym “white” often emphasizes the topographical conditions of the terrain, near which there were settlements: location near wetlands with white moss, birch woodland, near swamps, overgrown with fluffy plants of the appropriate colour, or near meadows, where wild clover with small white flowers grew, near objects with sandy soil, with cretaceous deposits coming to the surface (Bagamol’nikava, 2008, p. 50; Lemcûgova, 2008, p. 13). The city of *Białystok* named after the nearby river *Biały Stok* – “a white stream”. In such hydronymic names transferred from rivers, lakes to settlements the white hue of the corresponding water bodies is reflected, due either to its extraordinary purity and transparency or the presence of dissolved coastal cretaceous sediments in it. If the water in the “white” river or lake does not meet these characteristics, the body of water could be named after the colour of underwater or coastal vegetation.

According to the researchers, toponymy reflected not only the original colour meaning of the adjective *белы*, but also its social and religious symbolism. So, *Белае Сяльцо, Белы Двор, Белы Засцена* – settlements on lands of *white* clergy (in contrast

to *black*, i.e. monastic clergy), on lands, exempted from taxes or on lordly lands (*biały dom* in the Polish language of 16th century – “manor house”). White has also long had the semantics of “sacred”. Thus, water bodies, which in the pre-Christian period served as a venue for certain rites, ritual actions, received, for example, the name *Белая Крыніца*. In relation cities, the epithet *белы* “white” was assigned to settlements with the large (main) church and symbolized the Supreme Church power: *Белгарод, Белая Царква* (Lemcûgova, 2008, pp. 13–15; Nikonov, 1966, p. 48).

1.6. **Красны (чырвоны) [red]**. Particularly well represented in the Belarus toponymy *красны (чырвоны) colour: Краснае, Краснаўка, Краснаўцы, Красная, Красновічы, Красноўка, Красняне; Краснабаі, Краснабор’е, Краснагоркі, Краснадворцы, Красналуужжа, Краснаполле, Краснаселле, Краснасумы; Краснае Возера (Сяло), Красная Буда (Воля, Гара, Дуброва, Зара, Зорка, Искра, Ніва, Паляна, Плошчадзь, Слабада), Красны Агарод (Акцябр, Асавец, Багатыр, Барок, Барэц, Бераг, Бор, Брод, Васход, Вугал, Дар, Двор, Дварэц, Курган, Лес, Луг, Луч, Маяк, Мост, Пахар, Пуць, Рог, Сад, Свет, Яр), Красныя Арлы (Буднікі); Чырвоны, Чырвонагор’е, Чырвонамайск, Чырвонаполле; Чырвонае Возера (Забараўе, Знамя, Поле, Сяло), Чырвоная Беларусь (Воля, Гара, Даліна, Дубрава, Лука, Кветка, Перамога, Рانیца, Слабада, Старонка, Швабаўка), Чырвоны (Алёс, Арал, Бычок, Востраў, Вугал, Гай, Гарадок, Груд, Дар, Камень, Кастрычнік, Клін, Лес, Партызан, Пільшчык, Прамень, Ручай, Сад, Сцяг), Чырвоныя Дольцы. Among hydro objects are famous lakes *Красна, Краснае, Красныя Крыніцы, Чырвонае Палессе*, rivers *Красная, Красноўка, Чырвоная Рэчка*, streams *Красны, Красноўскі*. As part of the microtoponyms are tracts *Краснае, Краснае Балота, Красная Гара, Красніца, Красное, Красны Дуб, Чырвоныя Нівы*, fields, hayfields, forests, hills *Красная Горка, Красны Груд*, swamps *Чырвонае, Чырвоны Брадок*.*

The Belarusian toponymy names with *красны* and *чырвоны* components differ in the time of origin and the nature of motivation. Toponyms with the component *красны* – ancient. Colour components in their composition, on the one hand, could be used in the direct colour value and could indicate the colour of soil due to deposits of red clay or the red colour of the water, and/or the bottom of water bodies as an indirect sign of the presence of iron oxides. On the other hand, *красны* in antiquity signified also a positive sign – “beautiful, nice”, and in relation to the settlement – “is located in the scenic area” (in type *Краснаполле*). According to Lemcûgova, *Красныя Сёлы* were a continuation of the manor estate, which was surrounded by *Красныя Слабоды*. On *Красная Горка* “occurred merrymaking and rituals associated with the celebration of Maslenitsa, with the meeting of Lel and Lada, urging spring. In Christian times on *Красная горка*, they usually built religious objects – churches and monasteries” (Lemcûgova, 2008, pp. 202–203).

The Belarusian toponyms with component *чырвоны* – are mostly artificial creations of the Soviet era, which in their meanings are abstractly-symbolic and reflect the revolutionary realities and symbols or are the result of an incorrect translation. A striking example is *Красная* street in Minsk, which is still wrongly associated with communist symbols and, as a consequence, is translated into *Чырвоная*. In fact, according to the researchers (Zelenkov, 2017; Sacukevič, 2011), this street is one of the few that has retained its original sound as it originated at least 200 years ago and has nothing to do with the revolution. Accordingly, in Belarusian, it should be written as *вуліца Красная*. The fact cited by Ivan Sacukevič is indicative: in 1919, after the Polish troops entered Minsk, many streets were renamed, with their names being translated into Polish. Thus, the street called *Красная* became known as *Piękna* “beautiful” (Sacukevič, 2011). It is noteworthy that despite the absurdity of the fact of translation, this name was more correct than today’s signs with the name of the street *Чырвоная*.

In Russian toponymy the names with the *красный* component of two types are noted. There are names in which *красный* contains the semantics of “beautiful”: *Красная Поляна, Красная Яруга, Красный Холм, Красное Село*. In addition, “red” names with a clear ideological content are widely presented: cities *Краснаармейск, Краснаград, Краснадар, Краснадон, Краснозаводск, Краснознамёнк, Краснакамск, Краснауральск, Краснауфімск, Красный Бор, Красный Броневик, Красный Ключ* (renaming of *Белый Ключ*), *Красный Стекловар, Красный Текстильщик, Красной Арміі*, the lake *Краснагвардзейскае*. The name *Краснакаменск* reflects the real landscape characteristics. The name of the city of *Краснаярск* is based on the translated Turkic name of the tract *Кызыл-Джар* (“red yar”), where the city was founded. In the name of the tract, in its turn, the red colour of rocks on the coastal cliffs of the Kachi river, which flows through this territory, is transmitted.

The following names are noted in Polish toponymy: *Czerwińsk nad Wisłą* (red colour of the soil, plant), *Czerwone Wierchy* (the colour of plants), *Czerwony Bor, Czzerwonek, Czerwotka; Krasnobród, Krasnystaw, Krasnik Fabryczny, Krasny, Krasnopol, Krasnosielc*. Here, the coexistence of *красных / чырвоных* elements in the toponymy names is due to natural linguistic reasons: *krasny* is an archaism, meaning of “beautiful”, and *czerwony* directly conveys colour semantics.

2. As the study showed, in the toponymy of the Belarusian, Polish and Russian languages, names with a colour component primarily reflect pure (without shades) natural chromatic colours (primary *red, yellow, blue* and secondary *green*) and achromatic *white* and *black* colours.

Belarusian, Polish, and Russian toponymy coincide on colour sets, and have a high degree of similarity in terms of the frequency of specific colours. In all

three languages in the analysed proper geographical names the rarest are жоўты “yellow” and сіні “blue” colours, and the most widely available белы “white” красны / чырвоны “red” colours. With regard to Belarusian and Russian toponymy the numerical advantage of красных / чырвоных toponyms can be interpreted not in favour of the natural evolution of toponymy, but as a result of artificial processes, caused by the intervention of the political and ideological factors. When adjusted for this parameter, it turns out that the absolute majority of colour Belarusian, Russian and Polish toponyms are motivated by colouronym белы “white”.

3. Let’s see how this conclusion relates to the concept of ethnic colour.

Studies on the linguistics of colour, list the following basic criteria of the relation of colour in reference to their ethnic colour: a) high frequency of use, the constant presence of colour units in the language and culture of the people; b) the reliance on prototypes in nature; c) the presence in the folk tradition and the participation of ethnic colour in the formation of the image of the homeland; d) the width of range in the use of ethno-colour: a high degree of compatibility with abstract vocabulary, derivational activity, the presence of homonyms, neologisms, contextual design in the form of means of artistic expression (Kul’pina, 2001, pp. 421, 432–433).

In the Belarusian cultural and mental space, all these criteria correspond to a white colour, which “performs a unique role in the cultural code that reflects the specific realities of Belarusians environmental vision of the environment” (Babaed, 2008, p. 26). In the Polish language, according to the researchers’ conclusions (Kul’pina, 2001), the function of ethno-colour is performed by green, in Russian, respectively, blue. The researchers point out that the designation of Poland and Russia with the help of these colours is an ethnic stereotype (examples of broad compatibility, the use of artistic definitions and metaphors, filling the so-called zones of colour uncertainty, the expressions of qualitative evaluation).

In addition to ethnic colour, scientists distinguish these significant colour designations, which are characterized by lower frequency in the language and in which the above signs of dominance appear in a weakened form. Ethnically significant in the Belarusian ethno-colour register, researchers recognize the colour codes “black”, “green” and “red” (Babaed, 2008, p. 27). In Polish and Russian of ethnic significance are the colours of золоты “gold” and белы “white” (Kul’pina, 2001, pp. 422–424). White, for example, according to Natalia Bahilina, who studied the history of colour notation in the Russian language, in the monuments of the 11–12 centuries, is one of the most frequent colours, which has the highest valency and has a number of derivatives of nouns and verbs (Bahilina, 1975, pp. 24–26)¹. An

¹ The author has no relevant data on the history of color names in the Polish and Belarusian languages.

abstract *red* colour has an ethnic relevance, although somewhat erased, in Polish and Russian languages. And Alexander Belov indicates that ethnic endemics [a kind of worldview concepts – I. G.] in Russian culture can be regarded as *red*, *white*, *black*, and *blue* colour (Belov, 1988, p. 50).

It is characteristic that these Belarusian toponyms in both colour blocks directly correlate with general linguistic conclusions. In Polish and Russian languages, not the most requested colours in toponymy are recognized as ethno-colours, but the colours that are only called ethno significant are widely reflected in toponymic names. It is difficult to judge what explains the discrepancy between certain Polish and Russian ethnic colours with the most frequent toponymic colours. Perhaps this is the specificity of individual research perception. Moreover, since the conclusions regarding the colour priority had been made mostly on the basis of the poetic contexts, it could be assumed that the poetic colour picture of the world is somewhat different from the natural pattern. Moreover, these differences are not fundamental, since the most commonly used *белы / bialy* “white” colour is, on the scale of colour priorities, only one step lower, being ethno relevant.

In any case, the results of the analysis suggest that toponymic parameters can be extremely indicative of colour priority and act as an independent criterion for establishing a hierarchy in the national colour picture of the world.

The investigated material convincingly testifies that an essential part of the ethnic cultural heritage is contained in the national toponymy. It is extremely important to be very careful with regards to this historical and cultural fragment. In addition, “the analysis of colour ethnic endemics is key to understanding the psychology of people. Knowledge of ethnic endemics reduces the distance between the communicants and actively contributes to overcoming ‘cultural colour blindness’” (Belov, 1988, p. 50), and thus promotes the dialogue between cultures and peoples.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the article was a comparative study of Belarusian, Russian and Polish toponymic units, which include a coloristic component or the internal form of which is motivated by color lexemes (colouronyms). In the article, the consideration of toponyms with color component was carried out mainly on the basis of oikonoms, hydronyms and microtoponyms. The selection of the material and the definition of etymology of geographical names had been carried out according to the authoritative Belarusian, Russian and Polish publications, as well as electronic state catalogues and registers. The scientific approaches to the study of language as a social phenomenon, generally accepted in linguistics, constitute the methodological basis of the work. Descriptive, comparative, and quantitative methods had been used in the study. The analysis revealed the degree of representation of specific colors in the national toponymy, the ways of realization of color semantics and features of color toponymic motivation have been established, the color priorities in toponymy against the background of ethnic coloristic tradition in the culture of the Belarusian, Russian and Polish peoples have been determined.

Keywords: toponym, colouronym, toponymic motivation, ethnic tradition

ABSTRAKT

Celem artykułu było porównanie białoruskich, rosyjskich i polskich jednostek toponimicznych, które zawierają komponent kolorystyczny lub formę wewnętrzną, motywowaną leksemami kolorystycznymi (koloronimy). W artykule analizowano toponimy ze składnikiem kolorystycznym głównie na podstawie oikonimów, hydronimów i mikrotoponimów. Wybór materiału i określenie etymologii nazw geograficznych zostało przeprowadzone zgodnie z oficjalnymi publikacjami białoruskimi, rosyjskimi i polskimi oraz elektronicznymi katalogami i rejestrami państwowymi. Naukowe podejście do badania języka jako zjawiska społecznego, powszechnie akceptowane w lingwistyce, stanowi metodologiczną podstawę pracy. W badaniu wykorzystano metody opisowe, porównawcze oraz ilościowe. Analiza wykazała stopień reprezentacji poszczególnych kolorów w toponimii narodowej, sposoby realizacji semantyki kolorystycznej, a także pozwoliła ustalić cechy motywacji toponimicznej koloru oraz priorytety etniczne w toponimii na tle tradycji kolorystycznej w kulturze narodów białoruskiego, rosyjskiego i polskiego.

Słowa kluczowe: toponim, koloronim, motywacja toponimiczna, priorytety etniczne

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