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**COLOUR NAMING IN OSSETIAN LANGUAGE:
LINGUOCULTURAL ASPECT**

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Abstract

The paper explores core and peripheral color lexicon and shades in Ossetian language. Derived, complex words and analytical structures transmit shades of colors. Four colors have the highest use frequency in Ossetian language: black, white, red and blue. Black and white colors have the greatest semantic and stylistic meaning in the speech of Ossetian linguistic culture. These colors are precisely the part of mental language formations. An important role in color features of objective world is played by yellow and gold that is close to it. Blue, green and gray are named by one color. Color words have connotative meanings, express the peculiarities in people mentality and participate in symbol formation and stereotypes. Individual author's development of color vocabulary enriches visual and expressive possibilities in Ossetian language. This study gives an idea of color picture of the world in the minds of the Ossetians. The example of folklore texts in various genres, Ossetian Nart legend, works of literature, ethnographic material and historical data carry out semantic, stylistic, morphemic and grammatical analysis of lexical and phraseological units with a component of color naming. The study used lexicographic editions, Russian-Ossetian and Ossetian-Russian dictionaries. There are representation of words and components with the color semantics in the dictionary entries, recommendations to extend words and expressions with the described meaning, right version in disputed moments of lexemes and combinations. We also consider the questions of color semantics in Ossetian proper names.

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1. Introduction

Ossetian linguistics has no complex consideration of colour terms, so the topic of the study is quite relevant. The colour picture of the world in Ossetian vision is diverse and colourful, despite the fact that not all eleven basic colour names are recorded in the language. The study of colour words in Ossetian language and speech (text) will describe their types, as well as their use to form complex words, phrases, phraseological units and the way colour vocabulary reflects the connection with Ossetian culture.

2. Problem Statement

Many scientists dealt with the problem of color naming in linguistics. Among them are not only domestic researchers, but also foreign scientists. (Bedoidze, 1997) and Nuradilov , 2011) and many others wrote about the color subspace in linguocultural picture of the world in Ossetian language within a comparative aspect. The study of the Besolova and Abaeva (2015) reflected the problem in color semantics of national mentality in Ossetian ritual text, informative intensity of signs, possessing universal and specific features in color vocabulary. Various aspects of semantics in color vocabulary were reflected in the works of Karsanova (2010), Mamiev (2016), Kanukova & Dzagoeva 2013, Kanukova, Tuaeva, & Plieva, 2017), Gatsalova, Martazanov & Parsieva, 2014; Gatsalova & Parsieva 2016), Parsieva (2008) and others.

3. Research Questions

Despite a variety of publications devoted to the above issues, the study includes only some aspects of color phenomenon. We share not just the authors' point of view about the huge role of lexemes with coloristic semantics in the language of any nation, but also reveal the essence of specific nature of color meanings in Ossetian linguoculture.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to describe semantic features of color words and their place in language and linguoculture. The results of the study will contribute to the study of color vocabulary in Ossetian language.

5. Research Methods

The study is based on the method of continuous sampling to identify lexemes with colour component in Ossetian language in lexicographical publications and literature. The method of component analysis is taken as a reference in this study to describe semantic features of colour vocabulary. We applied the methods of statistical counting to identify what colors and shades have the greatest number of derived words in Ossetian language.

6. Findings

The process of forming a set of basic colour names is universal, so it is inherent to all languages equally. World's languages distinguish basic (core) and peripheral colours. Out of seven colours in the spectrum that are red, orange, yellow, green, blue, blue and purple, Ossetian language has only four colours

– red “*сырх*”, yellow “*бур*”, besides green and blue use one word “*цъæх*”. The most important colours in Ossetian culture are *сау* (black), *урс* (white), *сырх* (red), *цъæх* (blue, green), *бур* (yellow). There are also names for brown (*морæ*) and gray (*хæр*). According to V.I. Abaev, *морæ* (dark brown) refers to “errant words”, as it is available in many languages. “The same vocalization in Iron and Digor languages suggests that the word is a relatively late borrowing in Ossetian” (Abaev, 1979).

Black and white are considered achromatic. These two colours are part of mental language formations and bear the greatest semantic and stylistic meaning in the text of Ossetian linguistic culture. Other colours and shades also have names in the language; they are formed according to basic colours or borrowed. Additionally, modern Ossetian language has the following color terms: *æвзист* “silver”, *маейы æвзист тынтæ* “silver rays of the moon”, *æвзист дон* “silver water”, *сыгъзарин* “gold”, *рухс* “light”, which play an important role in the colour picture of the Ossetian world.

Initially, the color was designated indirectly by indicating color of relevant common things or objects of nature. Many basic and peripheral colors get terms from the names of objects with appropriate color, for example, *миты хъæпæны хуызæн* “white”, “like a snowdrift”; *лимонхуыз* “lemon”, “like a lemon”; *зæххы хуызæн йæ цæсгом* “black”, “sallow complexion”; *фæныкхуыз* “gray”, “like an ash”; *сиренхуыз* “lilac”, “like a siren”; *чернилахуыз* “purple”, “like an ink”; *æхсархуыз* “brown”, “like a nut”. Some colour adjectives are borrowed from the Russian language: *оранжхуыз* “orange”, *анельсинхуыз* “like an orange”, *урдихуыз*, *розæхуыз* “pink” and so on. Colour naming has a large number of connotative meanings that occurs due to the expansion in associative world of man and increasing scope of contextual relationships.

Adverbs were formed from colour adjectives in Ossetian language. Many verbs with figurative meaning are components of complex words, phrases, phraseological units, proverbs. They have a metaphorical meaning and have become symbols, stereotypes, standards. Colour words are part of socio-political, medical, zoological, botanical, physical and geographical terms such as *сау хъæлардзы* “black currant”, *саубындз* “gadfly”, *саугарк* “blackcock”, *бур дидинæг* “buttercup” and many others.

Colours have concepts of light, darkness, fire, grief, disease, social status, sadness, misfortune, envy, joy, happiness, so they play a big role in linguistic culture. The symbolism of colours in Ossetian language indicates the color picture of the world in people’s minds.

Ossetian folklore uses traditional, regular epithets that are colour adjectives. They define natural phenomena, inanimate objects, plants, animals, birds, man meaning the entire objective and non-objective world. Traditionally folk art, especially poetic texts, use colours such as *сау* (black), *урс* (white), *цъæх* (blue) and *сыгъзарин* (gold) that is close to it, *рухс* (light): *сау* “black” – *бæгæны* “beer”, *сыджыт* “land”, *туг* “blood”, *мигъ* “cloud”, *бон* “day”, *хох* “mountain”, *рæхыс* “chain”, *арт* “fire”, *хъуына* “mold”, *бæх* “horse”, *хъæд* “forest”, *лæгæт* “cave”, *сынт* “raven”, *цухъхъа* “Circassian coat”, *зæрдæ* “heart”, *къæдзæх* “rock” and others; *урс* “white” – *дæллагхъуыр* “neck”, *цæссыг* “tear”, *дуне* “universe”, *æхсардзæн* “waterfall”; *цъæх* “blue” – *бæгæны* “beer”, *арахъ* “moonshine”, *згæ* “rust”, *æндон* “steel”, *къæдзæх* “rock” and so on.; *сырх* “red” – *уадултæ* “cheeks”, *уæйыг* “giant”; *бур* “yellow” – *физонæг* “shashlik”; *сыгъзарин*, *зæрин* “gold”: *хъæлæс* “voice”, *къухтæ* “hands”, *фæззæг* “autumn”, *Уастырджы* (Uastyrdzhi – the protector of men, travellers and warriors), *Мады Майрæм* (Mother Mary – the patroness of women).

Ossetian Nart legend has constant combinations of *сау бæх* “black horse” and *урс бæх* “white horse”. The “white” is also a symbol of nobility, purity and light. The negative horse color is determined by other terms: *мыстрагъ* “mouse-colored”, *хъулон бæх* “piebald horse”. Constant epithets such as *сыгъзæрин* “gold”, *урс* “white” are used to evaluate different objects and animals like *сыгъзæрин саг* “golden deer”, *урс саг* “white deer”, *йæ сыкъатæ – хуры тынтæ* “its horns are sun rays”; *сыгъзæрин зæд* “golden angel”, *сыгъзæрин рувас* “golden fox”.

Generally constant epithet *сыгъзæрин* “gold” plays an important role in Ossetian folklore in the names of objects and phenomenon. Let us remember that according to Herodotus, the Scythians got three gold objects as a gift from the sky. It was plough with a yoke, an axe and a bowl. They were on fire and only the youngest of three brothers was able to take them. It was Kolaksay, who became the Scythians ruler. The Nart Tales narrates that God threw golden tangle to Batraz; Agunda made a beautiful golden flute and handed it to Atsamaz. The woman gave birth to golden-haired son and silver-haired girl in the tale. This word is an adorning epithet in poetry *бæлæстæн сыгъзæрин фæлыст* “Golden robe in the tree”, *сыгъзæрин уарзт* “golden love”, *сыгъзæрин хур* “golden sun” and so on.

Following the indivisible phrases, the color words have their symbolic importance: *сау рæхыс* “black chain”, *сау халон* “black raven”, *урс уæрыкк* “white lamb”, *урс бæлон* “white dove”, *сау бындур* “black hearth” that literally means “black base” and many others. Each of these symbols is associated with some cultural phenomenon of people, so its content can be easily explained. “*Рæхыс*” is the chain above the fireplace. “To steal or throw it away was a great insult not only for a particular family... This fact caused blood feud”. (Besolova & Abaev, 2015, p. 59). The concept of *сау рæхыс* indicates misfortune in the family, destruction of the family hearth.

The color of an object may be referred to comparison, for example, in person’s appearance *цæстытæ сау цæппузыртæ* means “eyes like black beads”. There are shades with different saturation, intensity and brightness of expressed color. Ossetian language uses different tools to name shades of colors in addition to similar meaning of the words. First, these are suffixes. *Ид* suffix in complex words is the following: *сырх-сырхид* – “perfect red”, *бур-бурид* – “bright yellow”, *сау-сауид* – “bright black”, etc. *Бын* suffix is as follows: *саубын* – “blackish”, *урсбын* – “whitish”, *цъæхбын* – “bluish”, etc. *Гомæу* suffix is the following: *саугомæу* – “blackish”, *морæгомæу* – “brownish” and others. Second, these are words such as *сæнт* (very, absolutely), *хæнт* (very, absolutely).

The shades of color can be conveyed by such components as *хуыз* (type), *зонд* (made) in a complex word. The first components in complex words can be the names of plants, household items, animals, birds, astronomical names and others with certain color. You can also specify shades of particular color by adding *фæлурс* and *тап* words to the primary colors. “*Фæлурс*” is a complex word formed from Indo-European *pal* “pale” or “grey”, helps to convey the shade of main color. *Фæлурс* “pale” (close to white), *тап* “dark” are both used independently.

There are colors such as white (*урс*), *урс-урсид* (bright white), *сæнтурс* (too white), *урсбын* (whitish), *урсгомæу* (whitish), *урсгæнд* (whitish). White color is specified through subject, for example, *митхуыз* (color of snow), *æхсырхуыз* (color of milk), *сæкæрхуыз* (color of sugar), *мæрдонхуыз* (deathly), etc. White can be used for *рухс* (light), *зарæг* (song), *зæрдæ* (heart), *фынк* (foam), *сæнтурс базыр* (white wing), *урсцагъд мигъ* (whited cloud), *фæндаг* (road), *урссæр саби* (white-haired child means aged), *фат*

(arrow), *хъысмæт* (fate), *урсбарц дагтæ/æврæгътæ* (white water/clouds) and so on. These and other figurative meanings of white are typical for poetry. Combinations of *урс къухтæ* (white hands), *урс буар* (white body), *урс зæнгтæ* (white tibia), *урс дæллагхъуыртæ* (white neck) traditionally symbolize feminine beauty. *Уастырджы* (Saint George) is in a white dress and on a white horse. New color symbols appear with changes in political and cultural life of the country. So, *урс* (white) became periphrasis of *Урс хæдзар* (White home). Color names are complicated by the relationship of compared objects, for example, *урс-урсид рыг бадти, цыма съл сæкæры ссад байзæрстæуыд* (...there was too white dust as if they were sprinkled with sugar flour); *миты хъæпæнау урс зæнгтæ* (feet are white as snowdrift); *Бæстæ урс цикъæйау сæрттывтæ* (Everything sparkled like a white canvas). Nart hero gets his father's horse out of the basement, where the horse was champing the bits and cleans it: *бæхы пылыстæг цæппузыры хуызæн ныккодта* (he cleaned horse like an ivory button). Artistic works with the color symbol becomes more visible as follows: *Хъæпæн йæ урсæй хицæн кодта мигъы цъæхæй* (The snowdrift differs from the gray cloud by its whiteness); *Урс базыл сау цæссыг/Тынгæй-тындæр куы цыдис* (there are many more black tears on a white pillow); *дзулаг ссады хуызæн* (similar to flour intended to bake bread), *пакъуыйы хуызæн урс* (white like feather) and others.

White is traditionally a symbol of peace (white dove, white flag). White color becomes a symbol of betrayal in E. Britaev's Khazbi drama. Tsora is one of the characters. He ties a piece of white material to a stick and attaches to a tree during, the battle. The attitude of defenders of the native land to this fact was unambiguous: *“Чи сæвдыста урс тырыса?..* (Who raised the white flag?..” *“Ды гæдзрахат бакодта – урс тырыса сдардтай”* (“You have committed treason by raising the white flag”). The family of the dead woman brings white scarf (*урс кæлмæрзæн*) and puts it on her. White color is also used in idioms: *цæстытæ ныуурс сты æнхъæлмæ кæсынæй* (tired of waiting or literally eyes turned white), *урс сæнттæ цæгъдын* (to soar in the clouds or literally to whip white dreams).

There are yellow (*бур*), *бур-бурид* (bright yellow), *бургомай* (yellowish), *тарбур* (dark yellow) and others. Color in the names of objects is the following: *лимонхуыз* (lemon color), *чыухуыз* (like a resin), *сыгъзаринхуыз* (gold color), *айчы буры хуызæн* (like a yolk), *бронзахуыз* (like a bronze), *мыдхуыз* (honey-colored), *хурхуыз* (color of the sun), *хъайлахуыз* (colors of scrambled eggs), etc. The *бур* (yellow) word undoubtedly existed in Scythian language, for example, in their own names. The word was associated with primitive religious and mythological concepts according to the fact that Bur-Ærtxuron, Borœtœ, Burœ-fœrnyg is the deity of fire in Ossetian. It is part of many words. *Бурæфæрныг* is the name of a prominent hero in Nart epos, *Бурхолары* is the deity of harvest, *бурæнæлфыс* (yellow sheep) is in the mythological songs, etc.

There are green (*цъæх*), *кæрдæгхуыз* (color of grass), *таркæрдæгхуыз* (color of dark grass), *цъæх нæмыг* (green (unripe) grain), *цъæхснаг кæрдæг* (sedge), *цъæхдæндаг* (sedge or literally green tooth) and so on. Green is used as *“хосгæрсты цъæх зу”* (“green hay harvest”), etc.

Red (*сырх*) and its shades are the following: *сырх-сырхид* (bright red), *сырхбын* (reddish), *сырхгомай* (reddish), *тарсырх* (dark red), *фæлурссырх* (pale red), *фæлурссырх* (burgundy), *сæнтсырх* (too red), etc. Red in the names of objects is as follows: *уардихуыз* (color of rose), *мæнаргъыхуыз* (raspberry color), *æрыскъæфхуыз* (strawberry color), *бордохуыз* (burgundy), *ирдсырх* (light red), *тугхуыз* (color of blood), *рæдæнг* (bloodshot) (it means face), *игæрхуыз* (color of the liver), *зынгхуыз*

(color of fire), *балхуыз* (cherry color), *цæхæрахуыз* (color of beet), *æртхуыз* (color of fire), etc. This color can indicate both the beautiful, special in a person, in life and dangerous, bad qualities. The Ossetian language formed indivisible phrases with red color that were associated with well-known social and political events. These phrases are preserved in the passive dictionary as follows: *Сырх Сæрибар* (Red Freedom), *Сырх Уæлахиз* (Red Victory), *Сырх Æфсад* (Red Army), *Сырх къуым* (Red Corner). *Сырх* (red) is used to evaluate positive person's appearance in the following: *йæ рустæ сырхфарс фæткъуыйау* (cheeks like red apple), *сырхрус* (ruddy). Red color is associated with blood, grief, anger in Ossetian language, for example, *цæсгом сырх афæлдæхт* (blood rushed to the face), *туг ахъазыд йæ рустыл* (blood sparkled on the cheeks), *тугдзастæй кæсын* (look with bloody eyes), *туджы зылын* (be angry or literally be in blood), *туджы цъыртт дзы нæй* (no blood on the face), *цæстытæ туджы зылын* (bloodshot eyes), *сырх нæ кæнын* (don't blush, don't be shy), *тугæрхæм цæсгом* (bruised face), *цæсгом туджы зылын* (be shy or literally be in blood), *йæ цæсгом туг æмæ æхсыр* (face of blood and milk is about beautiful, healthy-looking girls) and many others. It is possible to give many more examples where the main importance is in combination of red color. It is reflected in the following: *цъуйтæ митыл сырх-сырхдæй зындысты* (rowanberry looked bright red in the snow), *сырх æндахау зынын* (highlight like a red thread). *Сырх* "red" is part of indivisible combinations indicating religious concepts in Ossetian picture of the world. *Сырх* serves as a decorating epithet of some deities in religious songs and prayers, for example, *Аларды (сырхæрин сырх Аларды* – gold and red Alardi), *Уацилла (сыгъæрин сырх Хоры Уацилла* – gold and red Hlebny Uacilla), *Уастырджы (сырхцæст Уастырджы* – red-eyed Uastyrdzhi), *Сырх Аларды* (Red Alardi). *Аларды* is the deity of smallpox, measles, eye diseases in Ossetian mythology. It is also called *Сырх дзуар* (red dzuar). Colours close to red are *зынг* (flaming), *цæхæр* (burning coals, fire), *зынг цæстытæ* (burning eyes or literally fiery eyes), *цæхæрдзаст цæстытæ* (burning eyes), *знæтзынг хурæй* (furious and fiery sun), *цæхæркалгæ зæрдæ* (heart emitting fire).

There are gray (*цъæх*), *фæныкхуыз* (color of ash), *хæрæ мигъ* (grey mist), *æхсин* (dark gray, dark blue), *æлыгхуыз* (color of clay), *бæлонхуыз* (color of dove) colors. The old Iranian term for dark gray or dark blue is partly displaced, partly existed near the base of *цъæх*. Gray is regular epithet in combinations like *цъæх хæрæг* (grey donkey), *цъæх бæх* (grey horse), *цъæх бирæгъ* (gray wolf), *цъæх фæсмын* (gray fur).

There are blue (*цъæх*), *цъæх-цъæхид* (bright blue), *цъæхгомау* (bluish), *цъæхбын* (bluish), *фæлурсцъæх* (pale blue), *ирдцъæх* (bright blue), *тарцъæх* (dark blue), *æрвхуыз* (color of the sky), *тар æрвхуыз* (literally dark sky), *копразхуыз* (blueing), *лазурхуыз* (azure) colors. *Цъæх мæга* (Corncrake), *мигъ* (bluish fog), *цъæх чызг* (little girl or literally green girl), *арвы цъæх* (blueness of sky), *æхсæвы цъæхæй* (early morning), *зæрдæцъæх кæнын* (bother or literally heart plus blue), *цъæххос* (copper sulphate or literally blue plus mean), *цъæхахст* (cry or literally blue plus scream), *цъæхбыл* (bird stomach or literally blue lip) and others can be blue.

The concept of *цъæх чызг* (lit. blue girl) is linguacultural ethnic symbol and means the only daughter of parents. When they bring the bride to the groom's house, they ask for her seven sons and one blue-eyed girl (*Райгуыраед дын авд лæппуы æмæ иу цъæхдзæст чызг!*). There are idioms like *цъæх арт уадзын* (to make the sparks fly or literally to emit blue light) and have a temperature, *цъæхæй рæгъæд* (as green as grass (literally green but ripe)). There are euphemistic terms such as *цъæхæй йæхимæ фæкаст* (stand a

drink of blue means moonshine), *йæ цъæхтæй мын авæр* (give me pervach (fresh home-brewed vodka) or literally out of her blue). There are black (*сæу*), *тæр* (dark), *мылазон* (black) colors. Shades of black are *сæутар* (dark black), *сæугомай* (blackish), *сæубын* (blackish), *сатæгсæу мигътæ* (blackest clouds), etc. Colors in names of objects are *зæххуыз* (earthy color), *сæдджытхуыз* (colors of soil), *алахуыз* (colors of smoke), *милахуыз* (colors of soot), *мылазон арв* (black sky), *æвзалыйы хуызæн* (color of coal). Intensity in expression of black color is as follows: *хæнтсæу* (too black), *сæнтсæу* (too black), *сæу-сæуид* (blackest). This color is included in the terms of different subjects.

The *сæу* (black) has positive and negative connotation in Ossetian language. The adjective black defines concrete and abstract objects in transferred use. Things that can be black are *бон* (day), *дидинæг* (flower), *дон* (water), *сæу гæххæтт* (death notification or literally black paper), *сæудон* (spring), *стъалы* (star), *цæсгом* (face), *сæу хъару* (black (physical) force), *сæу æхца* (copper money), *ном* (name), *сæурæсугъд* (black beautiful woman).

Combinations with negative estimated meaning of black (*сæу*) color are *сæу стæг* (black bone means dishonorable), *сæу адæм* (black people means commoners), *сæу лæг* (black man that is without honour), *сæу хабар* (black news), *сæу бон* (black day). *Сæу* is used in the lamentation to curse itself: *Сæу бон мыл ныккодта* (It is a black day for me). *Сæу туг* (black blood) has two meanings. First, it symbolizes cruel, evil person. The second meaning indicates a lowborn person. The term *сæу халон* (black raven) represents mourning and misery. A woman is called *сæу хæйрæг* (black devil) as a joke.

There are phrases with positive evaluation. They include *сæу гуырð* (black guy, man) and *сæу лæнну* (black guy). It means a good man, hope of the family, of people. This meaning is confirmed by the following proverb: *Сæу лæнну – сæдджы хуызæн, урс лæнну – хъазы хуызæн* (Black guy looks like a deer, white guy looks like a goose). K. Hetagurov uses the meaning of *сæу лæнну* (black guy) in his poem called *Салдат* (Soldier): *Фенæм уал... Фесæфæд сæу лæнну, цардбæллон – / Чи мæ цы айса – йæхи!* (Let's see... Let cheerful guy (black guy) get lost – / Who will take him from me!) The soldier finds the strength to fight with his humiliated position in the royal service, because he knows that his purpose in life is to be a breadwinner, keep the family name alive and be the worthy son of his people. Thus, *сæу лæнну* (literally means black guy) has become a linguacultural, ethnic character.

Сæу (black) color is included in the names of Ossetian deities. *Сæу Барæджы дзуар* (The Black rider) is the patron of thieves and robbers, *Сæу дзуар* (The Black diety) protector of forests and all its resources in Ossetian mythology. *Сæуы дзуар* (patron of the Black that is the agricultural holiday, where people asked for a good harvest). In the evening people cut black rooster or chicken to protect themselves from devil intrigues on the religious holiday, which happens on the first Tuesday before the Old New year. This night is called “*Хæйрæджыты æхсæв*” (“Night of the Devils”). A stranger shall not taste of cooked food. Linguocultural stereotypes formed on the basis of natural objects are closely related in the language system. For example, the word *сæу* (black) determines objects of nature that are symbols for the Ossetians. Words such as *сæу хох* (black mountain), *сæу къæдзæх* (black rock), *сæу сæудон* (black spring), *сæу цæргæс* (black eagle), *сæу мæсгуытæ* (black towers) are associated with the image of homeland.

Surprisingly emotional and mental state is accurately conveyed by the words consisting of color words. This includes adjectives, idioms, metaphors in the following: *сæузæрдæ* (with black heart),

хорззæрдæ (with good heart), зæрдæ ссæу (heart turned black), зæрдæмæ хуры тынтæ кæсын (rejoice or literally the sunrays look at the heart), etc.

7. Conclusion

Modern Ossetian language has a well-developed system of color naming. Black and white colors have the greatest semantic and stylistic meaning of speech in Ossetian linguistic culture. Particularly these two colors are the part of mental language formations. Yellow and gold that is close to it play an important role in color description of the subject world. Blue, green and grey have the same name of цъæх. Color words have connotative meanings, express peculiarities in mentality of people, form symbols and stereotypes. Individual author formations of color vocabulary significantly enrich the pictorial and expressive possibilities in Ossetian language. Presented difference of color lexicon and phraseology is described by examples from works of literature and folklore

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