

THE ENGLISH COLOUR VOCABULARY OF HUNGARIAN STUDENTS OF ENGLISH

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Introduction

Colour vocabulary, colour terms are quite frequently examined topics of socio- and applied linguistics. From linguists to anthropologists several kinds of researchers have approached the question of colours and their names from several directions: some of them consider the individual differences in the colour naming as female superiority in verbal ability, others look for similarities between the colour terms of different languages to make anthropological observations.

However, the vast majority of researchers dealing with colour terms are in common in the sense that they studied colours only in the native language of the speakers.

In my paper I intend to examine the characteristics of English colour vocabulary of Hungarian learners of English. I investigate this part of the vocabulary from various aspects.

First, I examine what differences there are in the English colour vocabulary of Hungarian students at different proficiency levels of English. By gathering the data from three groups of different ages in an experiment, I provide a detailed analysis of secondary and university students' colour lexicon.

Second, I clarify whether these distinguishing features can only be attributed to cultural differences (personal hobbies, interests) or whether they correlate with age and sex despite the fact there is no significant age gap between the investigated groups.

Finally, I draw a comparison between the colour names given by Hungarian students and those colour terms that native English speakers used for the same colour sample. I also refer to the official, standard naming of the colour samples.

Literature review

In the history of the research of colour terms, Berlin & Kay's 1969 monograph can be considered as the first systematic work on this topic. Berlin–Kay collected the colour terms of ninety-eight languages. In their research they concentrated on basic colour terms that they defined on the basis of several criteria (Berlin & Kay 1969). The four most important among them are the followings:

- 1) Monolexemic; that is its meaning is not deductible from the meaning of its parts (e.g. *lemon-coloured*).
- 2) It cannot be considered as a subtype of another colour name (*crimson* is a kind of *red* for most speaker of English).
- 3) Its application must not be lexically restricted (this criterion excludes for instance *blond* that is used only as an attribute of *hair*).

- 4) Psychologically salient; that is they emerge always and among the first names when informants list colour words, the meaning of these terms are stable (this criterion eliminates for example *salmon-coloured* or *sea-green*).

According to these criteria, the stock of basic colour terms in English – and in most European languages – contains the following eleven colour names: *black, white, red, green, yellow, blue, brown, pink, grey, purple, and orange*.

Although the characteristics of the basic colour terms are not closely related with the topic of the present work – since it examines all types of colour terms – it is still worth having a look at the aspect of the question of them. On the one hand, Berlin–Kay's *Basic color terms* is one of most essential literature of the research of colour terms and practically all the later works have some reference to it. On the other hand, not every researchers agree with Berlin–Kay's theory and it got a great number of criticisms.

Though the age of a given colour term is not a criterion in the criterion system of Berlin–Kay, the authors claim that, considering the colour lexicon, the basic colour terms appear first during the history of a language. Moreover, their appearance has a particular order. According to the order of their appearance and because of neurophysiological reasons (I am not going to detail them here because of lack of space) the basic colour terms can be divided into primary (*black, white, red, green, yellow, blue*) and secondary (*pink, purple, orange, grey*) ones. The secondary colours, signified by the secondary colour terms, are derived from the intersection of the primary colours (Berlin–Kay 1969).

Partially, Kay–McDaniel confirmed the theory of Berlin–Kay as for the basic colour terms and their order of appearance, but not in all terms. They thought that the number of the basic colour terms can expand and a twelweth term can appear. They mention the Russian as an example, where *goluboj* 'light blue' is a basic term and the colour it signifies can also be considered as the intersection of two primary colours (*blue* and *white*) (Kay–McDaniel 1978). There is a similar case in the Udmurt language as well, where there are two basic terms for blue: *liz* 'dark blue' and *čagir* 'light blue'.¹

Moss points to the fact that one of Berlin–Kay's criterion, the one about saliency, refers to psychologic features of the colour names. Therefore, it should be clarified if the „basicness” of the colour names is linguistic or psychologic construct (Moss 1989).

Koski has some important amendments to the criteria of determining basic colour terms. He examined the colour names of Uralic languages, however, since universal pheomena are in question, it can be reasonable to take Koski's points of view into consideration. Among other things, he does not agree with Berlin–Kay's first criterion, according to which a basic colour term must be monolexicemic. Koski mentions Finnish, where before it was replaced with the term *vihreä* 'green', the term

¹ Since most of the Udmurts – speaking Udmurt and Russian – are bilingual or partially bilingual, it would be worth investigating whether the similarity in naming the colour spectrum denoting blue can be attributed to language contact between Udmurt and Russian. It can also be an interesting question if the terms for light and dark blue in the two languages refer to the same part of the colour spectrum.

ruohopäinen 'grass-coloured' had been the basic term for *green* (*ruoho* 'grass' + *pää* 'head').

Accepting the above mentioned criticisms and arguments, since the aim of my paper is not the examination or classification of the different classes of colours, I still refer to the criteria of Berlin–Kay when using the term *basic colour term*.

The majority of sociolinguistic studies, however, do not examine the basic colour terms only, but other colour names as well that signify the whole gamut of colours in the spectrum. In connection with non-basic colour terms, the differences in the colour vocabularies of individuals were investigated most often.

Rich (1977) required informants to name different samples of colours. She found that women were more likely to use elaborate colour terms than men. Her experiment, however, said more about individuals' colour lexicon than the previous studies that found that women possess a wider colour vocabulary (Swaringen–Layman–Wilson 1978; Thomas–Curtis–Bolton 1978). Rich also recorded the age and occupation of the subjects. Using these factors as variables, she reported that even when the occupation is the same, women show a larger colour lexicon than men. She concluded that these differences are determined early in life.

Nowaczyk (1982) mentions some methodological objections against the previous experiments on colour terms. He suggests that it is possible that men have as extensive a colour lexicon as women, but they can be more reluctant to use it, since in neither experiment were the subjects encouraged to use fancy terms. In addition, the text of the instruction in Rich's test probably provided a more familiar environment for women, since it described a situation in which subjects had to describe the colour of clothes to a shop assistant. Moreover, in neither study was the correctness of the subjects' responses reported.

Considering his own methodological observations, Nowaczyk carried out his experiment in a more careful way. Thus, beside a naming-task (similar to the Rich study), a matching-exercise was added in the experiment in which subjects were asked to match some colour samples with a larger quantity of colour names – including elaborate ones – listed in alphabetical order. Men preferred to use basic colour words not only in the naming but also in the matching-task. This shows that the reason why men are more likely to use basic colour terms is not because they are less able to generate more elaborate words.

The results of the matching-task and a second experiment of Nowaczyk (also reported in the same study) seem to support Rosch's theory on internal colour representation. Rosch suggests that the category of colour is represented by a linguistic (the colour term) and a physical (containing information of a colour itself) code that are linked together. „According to Rosch, when a particular color is presented to an individual he or she generates or accesses the mental representation of the color from his or her color space” (Nowaczyk 1982: 263).

Though the correlation between the size of the colour vocabulary and the informants' sex and age has been widely examined, the relevance of personal interests and hobbies to the colour vocabulary got enough importance only in Simpson–Tarrant's experiment (Simpson–Tarrant 1991). They found that the pursuit of colour related hobbies has a considerable effect on colour vocabulary for men but not for women.

Kontra and Barratt investigated the colour lexicon of English and Hungarian native speakers (Kontra–Barratt 1996). Their main aim was to reveal what correspondence there is between English and Hungarian colour terms. They involved Hungarian students at different proficiency level of English in their experiment and beside searching answers for their primary research question, they found that when they had to name colour samples in English, the advanced and the early intermediate students' answers hardly differed.

Methodology

Subjects

My project is based on research carried out among Hungarian students of English. Seventy-five students were involved in the experiment who constituted three groups based on their age. The following groups were tested:

(A) Ten 11th year students from the Ságvári Endre Grammar School, Szeged, and thirteen 12th year students from Tömörkény István Grammar School, Szeged (Aged between 17-18). Out of the 23 students, 16 were females and 7 were males.

(B) Twenty-five students at the University of Szeged. They were all English or American Studies majors in their 1st year of studies, aged between 19-22 (mainly 20-21), 17 females and 8 males.

(C) 27 English or American Studies majors from the University of Szeged, in their 4th or 5th year of studies. The age of the 18 female and 10 male students varied between 22-28 (mainly 24-25).

I intended to choose groups with more or less equal difference between them concerning their average level of English proficiency. Though the age-gap between the first and the second group seems to be smaller than the one between the second and the third, this difference is balanced out by the fact that the majority of Group B is at the age of 20–21.

As for Group A, although it is formed by classes of two different years, it can be considered to be homogeneous, supposing that in grammar schools no considerable difference, in this sense, evolves during one year.

Materials

A set of 35 colours were selected from a 72-piece set of Crayola crayons. The main reason for choosing this type of crayon was that in Barratt–Kontra's research (1996) the same brand was used, and this made it possible for me to make a comparison between their results and mine (supposing that the producer has been left the shades of the crayons unchanged). On the other hand, as Barratt–Kontra mentions in the same research, Crayola colour names are referenced in the Universal Color Language and Dictionary of Names published by the U.S. Bureau of Standards, and, in this sense, they are considered to be standard terms.

The choice of the 35 colours out of the 72 was arbitrary. Since Crayola has replaced some colours in the 72-piece crayon set since 1996, when Barratt–Kontra carried out their research, one basis of the choice was the presence of a given colour in

the 72-item list of Barratt–Kontra's. Two colours (#17 *mauve* and #20 *scarlet*), however, did not fit this criterion. In addition, I tried to avoid overrepresentation of any particular basic colour by using an approximately equal number of their derived shades. (The consideration of this criterion – that is which shade belongs to which basic colour – was absolutely subjective, though it was based on my experience on the topic.)

All the 35 colours were displayed on a 21x30 cm sheet. Each colour stimulus was the size of 2.5 cm x 2.5 cm. For the sake of sparing time and energy, the original sheet with the colour samples was scanned then multiplied by printing it out using a high-resolution colour printer. However, during the digitalization process four of the colour samples (#10 *blue green*, #11 *orange red*, #23 *carnation pink*, #30 *lavender*) changed in shade, therefore the responses received for them were excluded from the analysis.

Procedure

The three groups were tested separately. Prior to the experimental session the students were asked to fill out a questionnaire. In the questionnaire they had to indicate their date of birth, sex, the time they had been learning English, the length of time they spent in an English speaking country, and any colour-related interests such as photography, fashion, fine arts, etc.

Then each student was given the colour sheet and another sheet on which they had to write the colour names.

Subjects were instructed in the following way:

Now you are taking part in an experiment on colour terms. Your tasks: First, please fill out the questionnaire (the experiment is anonymous). After that you find 35 colour samples on the paper provided. Write the English name of each colour sample on the numbered lines. Use the colour name you think the best describes the given sample. Imagine that you want to buy an article of clothing or a brand new car in a shop and in order to get it with the right colour you have to describe the very suitable shade of colour. Remember that the shopkeeper only speaks in English!

You can use any word or expression that comes to your mind, you can modify the colour name with an attribute or you can compare it with any object that appear in nature. You can use a colour name more than once. If you can not name a particular colour sample, you can leave a blank.

Do not bother with the spelling of the English words. If you are not sure how to spell it, put it down as you remember it or you can even use a phonetic transcriptions of the word.

You have approximately 10 seconds to find out the name of each colour, thus you can spend about 6 minutes to finish the whole exercise.

The instructions (see the Hungarian version in the Appendix) were read out loud to the students, but they could follow them by reading them on one of the sheets as well. Students had about eight minutes to complete the naming-sheet, therefore they could spend approximately fifteen seconds thinking about each colour patch.

Results

The analysis of data was divided into a quantitative and a qualitative part. First, in order to get answers for the first and the second of my research questions, I examined the size and elaborateness of the individuals' colour vocabulary. Second, I compared my results qualitatively with the results of Berlin–Kay.

Quantitative analysis

Responses were classified using the scale originally provided by Simpson–Tarrant (1991). The seven categories of response included:

- 1) *Basic*. One of the eleven basic colour terms.
- 2) *Modified Basic*. A basic colour term modified by a basic modifier (e.g. *bright, dull, light, dark, pale, deep*). Basic modifiers differ from qualified ones in their use of a higher frequency.
- 3) *Basic-Basic*. Two basic colour terms combined, either as two nouns or a noun with an adjectival attribute (e.g. *red-orange, greenish-yellow*).
- 4) *Qualified Basic*. Two or more words where the colour names used are basic names, but not falling into any of the three categories above. These could contain basic and non-basic modifiers as well (*vivid orange, light bright green, light blue-green, etc.*)
- 5) *Elaborate*. Any word or phrase containing a non-basic colour name of a non-idiosyncratic type (e.g. *peach, cyan, jade green*).
- 6) *Idiosyncratic*. Names used by single individuals such as *raver green, tomato juice red*.
- 7) *Unnamed*.

A total score for each subject was computed used by the computing method of Simpson–Tarrant (1991). Thus, a score of '1' was assigned for each use of a *Basic* name, '2' for each use of a *Modified Basic*, *Basic-Basic*, or *Qualified Basic* name, and '3' for each use of an *Elaborate* colour name. The *Idiosyncratic* names were ignored since altogether eight such responses were given by the subjects. As a matter of course, *Unnamed* responses scored '0'. Summing up these scores, I got the vocabulary score for each student, a figure that represented the elaborateness of one's colour vocabulary.

Table 1 displays the average of total scores for each of the three groups distinguishing further by sex. I also indicated the average number of the *Elaborate* names received from the six sub-groups, since in my opinion this category out of the seven is the main indicator of the elaborateness, sophisticatedness of one's colour vocabulary.

Table 1. The average of total scores of responses and the average of occurrence of Elaborate names

	Males			Females		
	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group A	Group B	Group C
Average vocabulary score	53.28	50.12	53.20	62.43	57.47	63.11
Elaborate terms	6.43	3.87	7.00	8.69	6.82	10.78

Vocabulary score

A multivariate analysis of variance was used to analyse the vocabulary scores and the number of *Elaborate* terms with age and sex as factors.

The analysis of both the vocabulary scores and the *Elaborate* scores revealed that the main effect of sex was significant. In all three age-groups, women scored a considerably higher total score. That is, they used more sophisticated colour terms than men. This fact is also supported by the higher score of elaborate terms for women.

As for the main effect of age, the scores differed significantly only in case of women, but in an unexpected way. Group C females scored significantly higher than Group B females and although their score was higher than that of Group A females only in a small degree, here, the comparison of elaborate scores confirmed the significance of age. Group B females, however, scored a lower value even than Group A females, and this result is supported by the comparison of elaborate terms as well.

In case of males, the data for vocabulary scores showed significant difference only in the comparison of Group B with Group A and C. The scores of Group A and C did not differ significantly (only 0.08%), while Group B had the lowest value out of the three groups. This result was also supported by the analysis of elaborate terms. Here the difference between Group A and Group C was only 0.57% and Group B scored the 60% and 55% of the results of Group A and C in terms of *Elaborate* terms.

Colour-related hobbies and native language experience

Swaringen et al. (1978) and Simpson–Tarrant (1991) examined the importance of colour-related hobbies in the use of colour names. Both experiments revealed a significant correlation between vocabulary scores and hobby scores, however, when Simpson–Tarrant analysed the male and female groups separately, the relationship was found to be present only for the males.

A separate analysis of variance was conducted for the sophisticatedness of colour responses with the time the students spent in an English speaking country (TIEC) and colour-related hobbies as factors. Subjects, in this experiment, scored '1' for each colour-related interest mentioned. For determining the TIEC-value, durations were converted into weeks.

The correlation was not significant between vocabulary scores and hobbies scores in any of the groups. Nevertheless, when hobbies' effect on vocabulary scores was examined separately, results showed that those who were interested in fine arts

and/or interior decoration did have a considerably higher vocabulary score. Other hobbies such as photography, knitting or interest in fashion magazines had no effect on colour vocabulary. This result was found both for males and females irrespective of age.

Under twenty-six weeks, TIEC-value had no considerable effect on colour vocabulary. Above twenty-six, there was a significant correlation between vocabulary scores and TIEC both for males and females, though high TIEC was not a precondition for a high vocabulary score.

Qualitative analysis

By the qualitative analysis I did not examine the sophisticatedness of the colour names or the distribution of the types of colour terms according to different factors, but I was interested in the lexicological characteristics of the responses gotten for the colour samples.

First, I took into consideration of the official names of the crayons, as the company Crayola labelled them according to the Universal Color Language and Dictionary of Names published by the U.S. Bureau of Standards.

Second, I compared the results of my research with the results of Kontra–Barratt's experiment. Here, not all responses were taken into consideration, only the most frequent, incidentally the second most frequent, responses were examined in case of each colour sample. I skipped all the other responses because of two reasons: the first is a practical one, namely Kontra–Barratt also examined only those responses that occurred most frequently. Thus, it must be the basis of comparison in this paper also. On the other hand, the less frequent responses which occurred only at a couple of subjects probably do not imply a typical use of the given colour name or it even can be attributed to a coincidence. Nevertheless, some of the less frequent responses were taken into consideration if they were interesting in some respect.

Responses of four groups of subjects are compared in this section:

- 1) All the subjects of the present experiment (Group X).
- 2) American native subjects in the Barratt & Kontra experiment (Group E).
- 3) EFL² students in the Barratt & Kontra experiment (Group EFL).
- 4) Participants in the Barratt & Kontra experiment who provided only Hungarian colour terms (Group H).

For lack of space, I provide just some out of the thirty-one colour samples as examples of the qualitative analysis.

1. Peach

Seven out of the total subjects of Group X (9.3%) labelled the first sample the official Crayola name, *peach*. The most frequent name was, however, *light brown*. 32% of the subjects gave this answer and a similarly high percent (43%) of the Group EFL also chose this colour name in the other study. The Hungarian equivalent of this term *világosbarna* was the most frequent response of Group H as well. Contrary to this, the most frequent English native response was *peach*, that is the same as the Crayola term.

² EFL: English as a foreign language

2. Blue

A quarter of the total 72 of Group X wrote the official name, *blue*, for this primary colour. Here also the subjects of Group E had a better result, since the 35% of them called the sample 'blue' *blue*. In my experiment four people wrote *royal blue* and four wrote *king blue*. Obviously the term *king blue* is the mirror translation of the Hungarian *királykék*, thus only the half of the people who saw the second sample as 'royal blue' knew the right English expression for this colour term. By Barratt–Kontra *blue* was the most frequent response (25%) for the same sample by the EFL students, however, the majority of Group H (24%) called this colour *sötétkék* 'dark blue'.

19. Periwinkle

It is very interesting that while none of the subject in the present study guessed right the official name of the sample 'periwinkle', *periwinkle* was the most frequent response (18%) of the E students. The vast majority of Group X used some modified version of *blue*, such as *sky blue*, *purplish blue* or *greyish blue*. Only 6% of them saw this colour as a shade of grey (e.g. *light grey*, *bluish grey*). Another contradiction that only one subject in Group X called this sample *light blue*, while this was the most frequent response of both the Group EFL and Group H (in this case the Hungarian equivalent of *light blue*, *világoskék*).

7. Maroon

Again, in case of the sample 'maroon', the response of the majority of Group E was *maroon*, while only one subject of Group X out of the 69 gave the same response. In a strange way, in group X, not a basic colour term, but an elaborate one became the most frequent response, namely *bordeaux*. One subject wrote *dark bishopic purple*, which is obviously the mirror translation of the Hungarian *püspöklila* (*püspök* 'bishop' + *lila* 'purple'). In Group H, *bordó*, with the Hungarian spelling of *bordeaux*, was the most frequent response (67%) as well. In Group EFL, *dark red* was the commonest term, which was also the second most frequent term in Group X.

35. Gray

In case of this sample 57% of the subjects of Group X used a monolexemic name of the official Crayola label, and the other used the same lexeme modified by some attribute (e.g. *bluish*, *sky*, *dark*). Here, I examined the spelling of this lexeme, as well. I took the lexeme into consideration both when it functioned as a main element of an adjectival expression and when it functioned as an attribute modifying another colour name. 92% of the subjects used *grey* and only 8% used *gray*. Anyway, the naming of this colour sample was quite unambiguous. In the Group E, 29% of the subjects used *gray* with an 'a', which is quite natural, since the English native subjects of Barratt–Kontra were from the United States. *Grey* was the most frequent response (34%) in Group EFL.

13. Olive green

In the case of this sample 3 subjects in the Group X labelled the given colour the same way as Crayola did. This is 4% of the total of 75 responses given for this colour.

Actually, the term *olive green* did not occur as the most frequent response in any of the four groups. The native Group E used *pea green* most frequently (24%), while in Group H the basic colour term *zöld* 'green', in Group EFL *yellowish green* was the most commonly occurred response. In Group X, a considerable majority (53%) of the subject used an elaborate colour name, namely *grass green*. In this group, *ochre* and *khaki* were also typical responses. However, since the term *ochre* occurred only with an incorrect spelling – mostly spelled in a way that resembled the Hungarian spelling of the word (*okker*) – supposingly it was used by the subjects just by intuition and actually they did not know the English equivalent for this Hungarian term.

18. Green blue

The majority of the subjects of all three groups of Barratt–Kontra experiment described this colour with the term *blue* (or with its Hungarian equivalent *blue*). 44.4% of Group E, 54% of Group H and 52% of Group EFL chose this term most frequently in the case of this colour sample. In Group X, however, 73% of the subjects identified this colour with some shade of *green* (e.g. *sea green*, *bluish green*, *poison green*, *moss green*, etc). Only 18% of the students chose some shade of blue for labelling this colour.

Discussion

On the basis of the results of previous experiments on colour vocabulary, I suspected that women had a larger colour lexicon than men also in a second language. This hypothesis was confirmed by the results of this study. The data presented here show that female Hungarian students of English possess a more sophisticated English colour vocabulary: they use elaborate colour terms much more frequently than men who tend to use basic colour names.

The role of other factors that can be in the background of the divergence in students' colour vocabulary is less unambiguous.

Further subdividing the females' results by age, the data show that the middle group (first year university students) has the smallest colour lexicon, then follows the youngest group (third- and fourth-year grammar school students) and the oldest group has the largest such vocabulary. However, the reason why the difference does not grow exponentially with age cannot be explained satisfactorily. One possible answer could be if the students in the middle age-group are interested less in colour-related hobbies, or have spent less time in an English speaking country, but this is not supported by the relevant data.

If we look at the distribution of men's results, it is a suspicious common feature with the women's results that the middle group has the smallest vocabulary again. However, in the case of men, there is no difference in the size of colour vocabulary between the youngest and the oldest group. It is possible that some factors that are independent from the present experiment are responsible for these anomalies or the results are not significant in this term.³

The data presented in this study show that colour-related hobbies in general do not affect the elaborateness of either male or female students' colour lexicon in any of

³ A detailed statistical analysis of the results is missing here for technical reasons.

the groups. This result contrasts with the findings of Swaringen et al. (1978) who found that the increased use of elaborate colour terms was significantly correlated with the pursuit of such hobbies, and also partly with the findings of Simpson–Tarrant (1991) who made the same statements in case of men. Nevertheless, if the hobbies are examined individually, it can be seen that two of them – fine arts and internal decoration, but not photography, needlework and reading fashion magazines – do affect considerably one's colour lexicon. The reason of this divergence from the previous studies' findings in this term can be that in this study, subjects were of a very narrow interval of age (that is, ages 17–25).

As for the time the students spent in an English language country, it can be claimed that such native language experience is not necessary for either males or females for having a large colour vocabulary. Although a long-lasting, more than half a year long, stay abroad increases the frequency of the use of elaborate colour names.

From the qualitative analysis, comparing the responses given to the particular colour samples, it can be clearly seen that English native speakers use elaborate colour terms for describing colours much more frequently as Hungarian speakers do. In this experiment, only in case of one colour sample was the most frequent response an elaborate colour name, that is *bordeaux* for the sample 'maroon'. In the experiment of Barratt–Kontra, in fourteen cases out of the 72 an elaborate term was the most frequent response, including terms like *tan*, *periwinkle*, *fuchsia*, *lavender*. Actually this could be supposed even from the English namings of the crayons. Many of them have such a name that sounds quite unfamiliar, even in Hungarian translation, for Hungarian speakers. None of the Hungarian natives, asked by me, knew what kind of plant is a *meténg*, which is the Hungarian name for *periwinkle*. However, it seems that for a great deal of English natives, it does not cause any problem to identify the colour of this plant.

The two types of spelling of the term *grey/gray* can be an indicator of the prevailing dialect of English used in Hungarian classes of English language. Supposing that the Hungarian teachers of English are aware of this dichotomy and use a variety of English consequently, it can be stated that the British variety of English is taught more often in Hungary (considering all occurrences of *grey/gray*, 88% of the subjects preferred the version with an 'e'). The university students were from secondary schools throughout the whole country, this is why I do not restrict this statement only for the schools of the students of the present study.

Conclusion

The evidence collected in this experiment supports the claim that people possess a different size of colour vocabulary in a second language. In this study, I have clarified the role of the factors that affect the characteristics of the colour lexicon of Hungarian students of English at the age of 17–25 in a second language with the help of an experiment.

First, women have a larger colour lexicon than men. Second, in the age interval of 17–25 years, the role of the age is not clarified. Third, as for colour related hobbies, only those students who are interested in fine arts and/or internal decoration have a larger colour lexicon. Finally, only more than half a year long stay in an English speaking country results in an increase of colour vocabulary.

By the quantitative analysis I have also revealed that Hungarian natives use much simpler colour terms in general than English natives. However, the reason of this phenomenon has not been investigated so far.

In order to make these results more accurate, it should be investigated whether when a subject accesses the mental representation of a particular colour – when he/she has to name a colour –, does he/she do this in the same way in the case of a second language as in the case of the mother tongue. In other words, whether one has the same differentiation of the internal colour space for the native and the second language. If this were clarified, the interference of the mother language probably could be separated from the actual second language colour vocabulary.

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APPENDIXES

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Date of birth: _____
2. Gender (indicate it by an X in the appropriate box):
Female: Male:
3. The amount of time you spent with studying English (in years):
at kindergarten:
at elementary school:
at secondary school:
at university/ college:
private lessons:
4. The amount of time you spent in an English speaking country:
 1. where: _____, how long: _____
 2. where: _____, how long: _____
 3. where: _____, how long: _____
5. Hobbies, interests: (put an X beside the activities with which you are involved nowadays or have recently been involved more or less regularly):
reading fashion magazines:
photography:
fine arts:
needlework:
modelling:
internal decoration:
6. Other hobbies or any other factors that in your opinion have something to do with colours:

ORDERING OF COLOUR SAMPLES:

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. peach | 2. blue | 3. sea green | 4. bittersweet | 5. violet(purple) |
| 6. yellow | 7. maroon | 8. tan | 9. lemon yellow | 10. blue green |
| 11. orange red | 12. brown | 13. olive green | 14. violet red | 15. dandelion |
| 16. red orange | 17. mauvelous | 18. green blue | 19. periwinkle | 20. scarlet |
| 21. cornflower | 22. red | 23. carnation pink | 24. yellow orange | 25. green |
| 26. mulberry | 27. spring green | 28. mahogany | 29. sky blue | 30. lavender |
| 31. midnight blue | 32. orange | 33. salmon | 34. blue violet | 35. gray |



MAGYAR ANYANYELVŰ TANULÓK ÁLTAL HASZNÁLT ANGOL SZÍNRE UTALÓ KIFEJEZÉSEK

DUJMOV TAMÁS

Dolgozatomban 17 és 25 év közötti magyar anyanyelvű tanulók által használt angol színre utaló kifejezéseket vizsgáltam. Az eredmények egyfelől azt mutatják, hogy a vizsgált csoportokat figyelembe véve, a nőknek bővebb szókészlet áll rendelkezésre a színek kifejezésére, mint a férfiaknak. A női adatközlők nemcsak összetettebb, bonyolultabb színneveket használtak, de gyakrabban is használták ezeket a szavakat. A vizsgálatokból az is kitűnik, hogy csak néhány színnel kapcsolatos egyéni hobbi befolyásolja a színszókincs méretét. Ezenkívül a vizsgálat eredménye azt is mutatja, hogy általában a magyar adatközlők egyszerűbben alkotott kifejezéseket használnak a színek megnevezésére, mint az angol anyanyelvűek.