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**SYSTEM OF COLOR TERMS IN THE BALKAN SLAVIC LANGUAGES  
IN COMPARISON WITH ALBANIAN AND ROMANIAN  
(ETHNOLINGUISTIC ASPECT)**

Dissertation Summary  
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The dissertation is devoted to the study of the lexical system of color terms in the Balkan Slavic languages – Bulgarian, Macedonian and Serbian (in particular its Torlak dialects) in comparison with the non-Slavic Balkan languages – Albanian and Romanian. The work is related to several scientific areas – comparative Slavic lexicology, lexical typology, ethnolinguistics and Balkan studies, i.e. the study of the Balkan sprachbund. The comparative aspect of the study is related to the specifics of the Balkan sprachbund, which includes languages of different origins. Bulgarian, Macedonian and Torlak dialects of the Serbian language make up its Slavic-speaking part. Romanian and Albanian are also part of the core Balkan language area. Pastoral migrations of Albanians and Romanian-speaking peoples (nomadism) contributed to numerous contacts with Slavic languages, which entailed linguistic and cultural borrowings and determined the formation of the Balkan cultural-linguistic landscape. At the same time, the long-term convergent development of the Balkan languages with different religious and ethnic features did not erase their linguistic and cultural differences. Identification of the general and specific in the Balkan model of the world (according to the terminology of T. V. Tsivyan)<sup>1</sup>, reflected in language and folk culture is the focus of the work. The ethnolinguistic aspect stated in the title of the work involves an appeal to the material of the traditional folk culture (beliefs, rituals, folklore).

The **subject** of the research is the vocabulary of color terms in the literary languages and dialects under study, its semantics and symbolism, cultural functions and geography.

The **relevance** and **novelty** of the study is due to the fact that until now the comparison of color designation systems in the languages under consideration and the place of color term systems in the Balkan model of the world of the named peoples have not been the subject of a special research. Analysis of the color terms allows us to identify similarities and differences in the “coloring” of the real world in the linguistic consciousness in the cultures of these Balkan peoples.

The **purpose** of the study is to identify common and specific features of the studied Balkan sprachbund languages using the example of color designation systems and their cultural functions, directions of mutual influences.

The **objectives** are:

- identification of the color term system of individual languages;
- determination of general Balkan features and trends in the color characteristics of certain realities;
- identification of specific contexts in which certain groups of color terms operate;
- determination of the place, role and direction of borrowings in the color term systems of

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<sup>1</sup> Tsivyan T.V. *Lingvisticheskie osnovy balkanskoy modeli mira* [Linguistic basis of the Balkan model of the world]. Moscow, Nauka Publ., 1990. 207 p.

the languages of the Balkan sprachbund;

- analysis of comparative phrases and stable combinations involving color terms;
- determination of the specifics and place of each language in the general Balkan context using the example of a comparison systems of color terms<sup>2</sup>.

**Research methods.** Color terms are considered as a **system** of interconnected elements, hierarchically distributed and functionally dependent on each other. As part of a **systemic analysis**, the **structural approach** allows us to highlight what is common in the Balkan color naming systems, as well as show a number of significant differences between individual languages. According to the objectives of the study, one of the most important was the **comparative method** – regular comparison of entire systems of color terms and their individual components in the languages under consideration. This method formed the basis for a comparative dictionary of comparative phrases with a colorative component in the Balkan languages, as well as a general index of all coloronyms recorded in the work. **Lexico-semantic analysis** of the texts in the languages of the Balkan sprachbund makes it possible to study the peculiarities of the functioning of a word not only in the dictionary, but also in the text, to identify stable and previously unrecorded occasional meanings. The **method of semantic reconstruction** is used in this work to restore earlier meanings of the corresponding coloronyms, which helps in the study of the polysemy of color terms at the present stage. This method is closely related to **etymological analysis**, since often turning to earlier forms allows us to see the basis for the formation of a particular meaning in the analyzed languages.

The work was carried out using an **ethnolinguistic approach**, which allows us to see how coloronyms function in cultural texts, how they reflect mythological ideas and how the system of color terms can evolve under the influence of changing cultural conditions.

The **linguogeographical method** was also used within the work, since it clearly demonstrates the distribution of certain cultural and linguistic phenomena in the studied area and in some cases helps to determine the direction of some linguistic and cultural influences. The **statistical method** was used to study the compatibility of coloronyms. A **questionnaire** was also used: a questionnaire on color terms was compiled, reflecting the specifics of the functioning of this system in the Balkan languages. The questionnaire was tested on two expeditions to the Republic of North Macedonia (see Appendix 1).

The **theoretical basis** of this study was made up of works on Slavic and Balkan lexicology and semasiology (A. Yu. Rusakov, V. Friedman, T. V. Tsivyan), on lexical and semantic typology (A. Wierzbicka) and the typology of color terms in the languages of the world

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<sup>2</sup> The lexemes *color term*, *color designation*, *color lexeme*, *colorative*, *coloronym* are used as synonyms within the framework of this study.

(B. Berlin and P. Kay, A. Bidu-Vrănceanu, M. Ivić, M. Racheva, I. A. Sedakova, etc.), as well as the works of representatives of the Moscow ethnolinguistic school (N. I. Tolstoy, S. M. Tolstaya, O. V. Belova, L. N. Vinogradova, A. V. Gura, A. A. Plotnikova, I. A. Sedakova, E. S. Uzenyova, etc.).

The **sources** of the linguistic material were explanatory, phraseological, etymological dictionaries, dictionaries of literary languages and dialects of the Balkan languages under consideration, which cover not only linguistic phenomena, but also contain extralinguistic material about the life and folk culture of the people<sup>3</sup>; national corpora of Albanian, Bulgarian, Serbian and Romanian languages. The study also included media texts, textbooks and teaching aids. The work includes materials from author's own field observations.

Not only the literary languages provided the material, but also dialects, since the latter can preserve and accumulate unique linguistic phenomena in the system of color terms. On the problem of the color terms, the following dialect dictionaries were studied: N. Živković "Rečnik Pirotskog govora" (1987), R. Žugić "Rečnik govora Jablaničkog kraja" (2005), M. Zlatanović "Rečnik govora Juga Srbije" (2014), J. Dinić "Rečnik Timočkog govora" (1988) and other dialect collections of south-east Serbia; L. Galabov "Leksikata na govora v s. Dobroslavtsi, Sofijsko" (2000), V. Stefanov "Rechnik na govora na selo Rabisha, Belogradchishko" (2010), A. Mladenov "Transkitedumite. Rechnik na regionalniya govor" (2011) and other dialect dictionaries of the Bulgarian language; B. Malenko "Štipskiot govor" (2012), K. Peev "Kukuškiot govor" (1988), "Rečnikot in Makedonskite govori vo jugoistočniot egejski del" (1999–2011) and other dialect dictionaries of the Macedonian language.

An important source was the ethnographic material of rituals and beliefs, which reflects the functioning of color in folk culture and coloratives designed to denote the corresponding colors. In addition, folklore, and especially small folklore genres, have become a valuable source for the analysis of color terms within traditional folk culture.

We used the general works on ethnography and folklore by T. Djordjević, L. Radenković, D. Marinov, M. Tirta, M. Olinescu. Important for the study were collections on ethnography and folklore of individual regions of Bulgaria and Macedonia (Sakar, Rhodopes, Karnobatsky region, etc.), Albania (Tirana, Malesia, Hogosht, etc.), as well as individual articles on ritual and calendar holidays of the Romanian tradition E. Bantsova (2017), L.-M. Ilin-Grozoiu (2004, 2016), M. Ya. Salmanovich (1973, 1976, 1978), N. G. Golant (2011, 2013), etc.

The sources of folklore material were collections of folk songs and lexicographic works: "Sbornik za narodni umotvoreniya, nauka i knizhnina", "Rečnik na makedonskata narodna

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<sup>3</sup> Plotnikova A. A. *Dictionaries and folk culture. Essays on Slavic lexicography*. Moscow, Institute of Slavic Studies RAS, 2000.

poezija”, works of V. S. Karadžić. First of all, works of ritual folklore, in which the use of a particular color is motivated by the context of a rite or ritual, were important to us. Small folklore genres (proverbs, sayings, curses and good wishes, verbal formulas and clichés), due to their stability over time and clichéd form, retain the features of cultural archaism<sup>4</sup>, so they also became our research material.

**Practical significance.** The results of this study can be used in practical works and lecture courses on South Slavic, Albanian and Romanian lexicology and dialectology, in special courses on Balkan studies and Balkan traditional culture, and used in research works with similar issues based on the material of other languages of the Balkan area (when compared with Greek, Turkish, Gypsy), when compiling a comparative dictionary of comparative phrases with a colorative component in the Balkan languages.

**Approbation of work.** The main provisions of the dissertation were presented in reports at Russian and international conferences. They are also reflected in 28 publications.

**Theses** submitted for defense:

- different groups of color terms and corresponding color concepts have unequal significance in the system of coloronyms and their functioning in languages and culture. Within the framework of the studied languages and traditions of the Balkan sprachbund, the following subgroups can be distinguished: 1) white, black, red; 2) yellow, green; 3) blue and its shades; 4) gray; 5) brown; 6) orange, pink, purple;

- the polysemy of the color terms of the Balkan sprachbund is manifested not only in a wide range of direct and figurative meanings of an individual lexeme, but also in the ability to designate different shades of the color spectrum;

- a number of color terms in the Balkan languages under consideration have limited, narrow areas of use (for example, the name of the color of animals and the plumage of birds, the color designation of human hair);

- the color designation systems of the Balkan languages include numerous borrowings, the place and role of which depends both on the time of appearance of a particular term in the corresponding languages, and on the characteristics of the color term system of a particular language;

- closely related Balkan Slavic languages, despite numerous convergences, demonstrate a certain degree of differences in the semantic content of color terms;

- the system of color terms in the Albanian language appears as a unique system in the Balkan cultural-linguistic area, sharply different from typologically similar systems in other

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<sup>4</sup> Tolstaya S. M. Slavic and Balkan linguistics: The structure of small folklore texts. *Collection of articles* / Eds. S. M. Tolstaya, T. V. Tsiyvan. Moscow, Nauka, 1993, pp. 3–4.

languages of the Balkan language;

- analysis of the system of color terms in the Romanian language demonstrates both the presence of parallels with the Albanian system, as well as common Balkan features and trends;

- ethnolinguistic data make it possible to expand the linguistic semantics of coloronyms and determine their cultural semantics and symbolism within the framework of the Balkan sprachbund.

**Work structure.** The work consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography, and five appendices.

**The main content of the work.**

The **introduction** substantiates the relevance of the topic, defines the object and subject of the work, research methods, formulates goals and objectives, as well as theses submitted for defense. In the part related to the history of the issue, the discussion around the theory of the universality of basic color terms is covered in detail. A separate section is devoted to a review of studies of color terms in the Balkan Slavic languages, as well as in Albanian and Romanian, and provides the main provisions of the most significant works on the issues of color perception and color terms in the Balkan languages.

The **first chapter** is devoted to the lexicological analysis of coloronyms, their origin and compatibility in texts in the corresponding languages, as well as their ethnolinguistic analysis based on the material of traditional folk culture. The analysis of individual colors is carried out both from the point of view of the general theory of typology and the evolution of color terms<sup>5</sup>, and taking into account the specifics of the functioning of color in the language and culture of the Balkan peoples. Colors are grouped into separate subgroups, each of which has its place in the hierarchy of lexical and cultural functions.

1) *Balkan triad. White, black, red.* The widespread use of designations for basic (and historically primary) colors – the triad white-black-red – confirms the hypothesis about the emergence of the first coloronyms in a language, serving the human need to name the color of certain realities. The designations white, black, red have the widest range of direct and figurative meanings. These direct and figurative meanings of coloronyms are reflected in the symbolic use of colors in traditional folk culture. The colors of the triad are not only opposed to each other, but in some contexts, they also act as synonyms. The opposition of these three colors and their terms within the triad is a general, and a Balkan, universal feature.

2) *Yellow and green.* These color terms are the most typical in the function of describing the flora and fauna. Designations for these two colors are equally often found with both positive

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<sup>5</sup> Berlin B., Kay P. *Basic color terms: their universality and evolution*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1969, 178 pp.

and negative semantics. Ethnolinguistic material also made it possible to assume the existence of a transitional period of the presence of the so-called “yellow-green” color category in the languages of the Balkan sprachbund. Thus, despite the closeness of the lexemes denoting yellow and green, in the context of traditional folk culture these colors are used in opposite meanings: yellow traditionally symbolizes illness and death, associated with unhealthy skin tones, and green metaphorically correlates with youth, expressed through the plant code. Thus, the material of traditional folk spiritual culture reflects a situation when these colors are no longer perceived as a single whole and acquire their own meanings and, possibly, different lexical design. A more detailed study of this issue requires reference to written sources reflecting the history of languages.

3) *Terms for blue and its shades.* Shades of blue can be lexically realized differently in dialects, however, in the literary languages of the Balkan sprachbund there is only one basic color name to denote dark and light tones. The Albanian language formally has separate lexemes, but they are delimited inconsistently; the coloronym for blue is perceived as a borrowing and designation of the corresponding shade. Therefore, based on the material of the Albanian language, it is possible to identify a single functional group of lexemes to designate this segment of the color spectrum. At the initial stage of their appearance, coloronyms are inextricably linked with the objects of reality, the shade of which they are intended to characterize. The color blue is poorly represented in the texts of calendar and family rituals; it is often endowed with meanings traditionally assigned to black. This may indirectly indicate the late stage of the coloronym blue’s entry into the system and its acquisition of meanings.

4) *Gray color and its terms.* Using the example of the color terms for gray, one can note the high degree of mutual influence of the Balkan languages: among the numerous ways of conveying the color gray, lexemes are recorded that are formed both from the roots of their own stock and from borrowed ones. Not only common Balkan Turkic borrowings, but also Slavic dialect forms remain widespread across dialects. This is especially clearly expressed in pastoral vocabulary, which seems natural, since shepherding has always remained an important part of the economic life of the Balkans. The designation of unclear shades of fur finds a bizarre expression in the languages under consideration: animals with grayish fur can be characterized by color terms with the semantics ‘green’, ‘blue’, ‘dark’. During contacts, these lexical ways of conveying color are borrowed.

5) *Terms for brown.* The designation of brown color and its shades is associated with a reality typical of the Balkan area – coffee. Coloronym derived from Turkic *kahve*, is the most common characteristic color term in all the Balkan languages under consideration, since it reflects the method of naming through an indication of a product common in the Balkans.

6) *Terms for red shades: orange, pink, purple.* The color designations of red shades should be considered in one row. On the one hand, these coloronyms in the minds of their speakers are already separated from the designation of red by new meanings, connotations, and cases of opposition. Orange, pink, and purple are perceived as independent colors along with their individual names. On the other hand, they can still relate to the semantic field of one or two “producing” colors at once (red and yellow, red and white, red and blue). Coloronyms within a group are not only opposed to each other, but can also be perceived as synonyms: individual methods of designation coincide not only in dialects, but also in the literary language. Thus, in the Balkan Slavic languages the lexemes *modar*, *indigo*, dial. Bulg. *morav* (Tran), dial. Maced. *morof* (Štip) can be interpreted in two ways, i.e. as a shade of blue, dark blue or violet, and the lexemes South.-Serb. *galibarda* (Piroć), South.-Serb. *moravilkast* (Kamenica), South.-Serb. *amberboj* (Prizren), South.-Serb. *djuvezan* (Timok) – like red-violet, pink-violet shades, which is explained by the mixed nature of this color.

Thus, according to this classification, we have six diachronic gradations common to the Balkan Slavic and non-Slavic Balkan languages under consideration:

I	II	III	IV	V	VI
white	yellow	blue	gray	brown	orange
black	green				pink
red					purple

The **second chapter** examines comparative units (comparisons) with a colorative component. When analyzing comparative phrases, we took into account the semantics of color designation, its direct and figurative meanings, the presence of additional connotations, an evaluative component, and also took into account the stylistic characteristics of comparisons. In rites and rituals, color is endowed with additional symbolic meanings, so ethnolinguistic analysis helps to identify the key meanings for the people's consciousness.

Common to the languages under consideration is the predominance of comparisons involving the coloronyms white, black, red. They have the largest number of meanings, additional connotations, the possibility of being used in the opposite meaning to compare disparate characteristics (for example, in Bulgarian *byal kato katran* “white like tar / like pitch”, Mac. *bel kako jaglen* “white like coal”, Rom. *alb ca pana corbului* “white like a raven’s feather”, Alb. *i zi si bora* “black like snow”).

Colors that are “mixtures” (brown, purple, gray, pink, orange) are rarely found in comparative usage. This is due to their late appearance in the language, and the absence of additional connotations (except for pink and gray), as well as the nature of the origin of the



lexeme: the main terms for these colors are derived from the names of plants, respectively, in the very form of the word there is already a figurative assimilation. For example, in the compared languages the lexemes Bulg., Mac. *portokal*, Alb. *portokall*, Rom. *portocal*, Serb. *narandz* means 'orange', and the coloronyms are Bulg., Mac. *portocalov* / Alb. *portokallí* / Rom. *portocaliu*, Serbian *naranzhast* have the meaning 'orange', i.e. "orange color".

Important information about the functioning of comparative phrases is provided by the analysis of such a component of the structure as the subject of comparison (what is being compared). In light of the anthropocentricity of language, it is natural that in a large number of analyzed contexts this will be a person, his appearance, face, facial features. Thus, almost all color lexemes can serve to characterize the color of a person's skin: a human face can be of any color, depending on health / illness, good / bad mood, the subjective attitude of the author of the statement to the person being described: Bulg. <lice> *zhalto kato vosak* "<face> yellow as wax", Mac. *so lice belo kako mramor* "with a face as white as marble", Serb. <čovek> *bled i modar kao modar patlizhan* "<man> pale and blue, like an eggplant," Alb. <fytyrë> *e gjëlbër si bari* "<face> green like grass", Rom. *roșu ca racul la față* "face red, like a lobster".

The choice of the object of comparison (what is being compared with) determines the figurativeness of the expression, and in the case of the author's comparisons, the originality. In stable terms, the object of comparison is objects and phenomena that have long surrounded man. So, in particular, the next examples of comparisons have a positive characteristic: Bulg. *modar kato vino* "dark as wine", Mac. *crn kako cafe* "black as coffee", Mac. *bel kako sirenje*, Rom. *alb ca brânza* "white as feta cheese", as these are ones of the Balkan staple foods.

In the context of ritual, comparative phrases with coloronyms are built on the basis of comparison with the color of specific objects in the real world. The symbolism of the colors of the triad – white, black, red – is most clearly expressed in their opposition to each other. Contexts in which these colors can act as synonyms are also identified. For example, in different parts of Sakar region (Bulgaria) it was customary to leave a white scarf with a needle and a white or red thread next to the deceased, so that each person, upon forgiveness, could make a stitch as a sign of reconciliation with the deceased<sup>6</sup>. Thus, red and white in the context of a particular ritual become interchangeable synonyms.

Black is found in contrast to white and red. Of all the meanings inherent in the corresponding color term, the negative semantics of the dangerous comes to the fore in rituals. Thus, in Bulgaria and Macedonia, it was customary to leave white and black threads near the deceased – the black one was buried with the deceased, and the white one was kept in the house

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<sup>6</sup> Sakar: ethnographic, folklore and ezik studies. Ethnographic studies on Bulgaria. Sofia, Ethnographic Institute and Museum at the BAN, "Prof. Marin Drinov", 2002, pp. 316–317.

as a symbol of life<sup>7</sup> – the white color of sunlight and life is contrasted with the dark afterlife.

The red color, associated with blood, as the brightest referent of the surrounding reality, is used in contexts that directly or indirectly refer to blood as a metaphor for life, health, blush, and beauty. For example, in Stranzha (Bulgaria), eggs freshly painted for Easter were applied to the skin of children and to the fur of livestock so that paint stains would remain<sup>8</sup>. In this way, they sought to convey to them the health and vitality contained in the color red.

In comparative constructions within the framework of folk culture, yellow and green are taken to opposite poles: comparison with yellow is based on sickly skin tones, and with green – on the basis of youth, expressed in the plant code. So, greenery is one of the main attributes of the Trinity complex<sup>9</sup>. The floor is covered with greenery, residential and outbuildings and livestock are decorated<sup>10</sup>. The abundant use of green plants is intended to evoke associations with fresh strength and fullness of life. Yellowness is interpreted as a negative sign, and figuratively “yellow” means an unhealthy complexion. Through associations with the skin color of a deceased person, yellow can symbolize death. According to popular beliefs, a pregnant woman should not say goodbye to the deceased, so that her children do not suffer from newborn jaundice and are *yellow like the deceased*. The bearers of the tradition itself explain the prescription through the use of a prototypical comparison with wax: South.-Serb. *jer će dete da im bude žuto kao vosak* [because their child will be yellow as wax] (Zaplanje, Suva Planina)<sup>11</sup>.

Blue and tint colors are not found in comparisons based on family and calendar rituals, which indicates a late stage of color’s entry into culture and its acquisition of additional connotations.

The **third chapter** is devoted to the analysis of color terms in stable phrases with the meaning of good wishes and curses. Their research showed that such verbal clichés most often include the terms for white and black in Balkan languages. “White” is used regularly as in proverbs with the meaning of a curse (South.-Serb. *Da Bog da belo videlo u kuću ne videlo* [God

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<sup>7</sup> Risteski L. S. *Postmortniot obreden complex v tradiziskata kultura na Mariovo*. Prilep, Institute for Old Slovenian Culture, 1999, pp. 71–72; *Loveshki kray, material and spiritual culture. Ethnographic studies on Bulgaria*. Sofia, “Prof. Marin Drinov”, 1999, pp. 414.

<sup>8</sup> *Stranzha. Material and spiritual culture. Ethnographic, folklore and language studies in Bulgaria*. Sofia, “Prof. Marin Drinov”, 1996, pp. 333.

<sup>9</sup> Sedakova I. A. Folk version of the celebration of Trinity in the Balkans: Opening address. *Trinity. Rusalii. Πεντηκοστή. Rreshajet... Towards the green color motif in the Balkan spectrum (Round table material 2012)* / Ed. M. M. Makartsev. Moscow, Institute of Slavic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, 2013, pp. 9; Agapkina T. A. *Mythopoetic foundations of the Slavic folk calendar. Spring-summer cycle*. Moscow, “Indrik”, 2002.

<sup>10</sup> *History and culture in the Karnobat region*. Volume 3. Sofia, BAN, Institute of History. Ethnographic Institute and Museum, 1993, pp. 193; Novik A. A. Green color - light - peace in the traditions of the Albanians. *Trinity. Rusalii. Πεντηκοστή. Rreshajet... Towards the green color motif in the Balkan spectrum (Round table material 2012)* / Ed. M. M. Makartsev. Moscow, Institute of Slavic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, 2013, pp. 160; Author’s recordings 2018 from the village of Pelince (Kumanovo, North Macedonia).

<sup>11</sup> Đorđević T. R. *Life cycle: birth, marriage and death in the beliefs and customs of our people*. Niš, Prosveta, 2002, pp. 341.

grant that the white light in the house was not visible, i.e. that all household members die]), so in well-wishes (Alb. *Qofsh i bardhë si drita e diellit!* lit. [Be white as sunlight]), but “black” is for the most part not mentioned in the latter. The coloronym in texts of this kind correlates not so much with a specific noun, but with an entire lexical-semantic group, and sometimes an entire semantic field. In the case of good wishes and curses, such fields will be the oppositions “good” and “evil,” “dignity” and “dishonor.” Thus, “white” and “black” are used exclusively in symbolic meanings as the poles of “good” (health, light, beauty) and “evil” (illness, death, grief). Other color terms are practically not found within the framework of good wishes, threats and curses, since they are outside these poles.

The **conclusion** summarizes the findings of the study.

A common feature of the analyzed Balkan languages is the polysemy of coloronyms. The largest number of values is recorded for the terms *white* and *black*. The presence of numerous figurative meanings determines the free use of synonymous figurative expressions in contact languages without the use of color terms (cf. Rom. *Bună să-ți fie inimă* [Let your heart be good] and Alb. *Paç zemër të bardhë!* [Have a white heart]). The ambiguity of coloronyms in the Balkan languages is manifested not only in a wide range of meanings of an individual lexeme, but also in its ability to denote different shades depending on the context. Comparison of linguistic material using the example of comparative phrases helped to identify such contexts. So, the coloronyms are Bulg., Mac., Serb. <sup>+</sup>*modar* can be used to denote blue, violet, dark, cf. synonymous comparative phrases: Serb. *ljubičast kao mastilo* “purple like ink”, Mac. *modar kako mastilo*, Mac. *sin kako mastilo* “blue like ink”, Bulg. *cheren kato mastilo*, Mac. *crn kako mastilo*, Serb. *crn kao mastilo* “black as ink.” Derivations from <sup>+</sup>*crven* in Bulgarian are used exclusively in the meaning ‘pink’. In the Serbian language, a lexeme from a similar root (*crvenkast*) is used mainly in the meaning of ‘orange, red’ (*kao kajsija* “like an apricot”), although sometimes other connotative meanings can be traced (*kao krv* “like blood”, *kao stid* “like shame”). The Macedonian language provides ample opportunities for interpretation of the lexeme *crvenkast* depending on the context: *kako tikva* “like a pumpkin”, *kako domat* “like a tomato”.

The system of color terms in languages of the Balkan sprachbund is also characterized by the presence of special terms limited to narrow areas of use. Such isolated groups of coloronyms can be called auxiliary subsets within the overall system. They include the color terms of human hair and skin, horse colors, terminological vocabulary for pigeon and cattle breeding. Such groups present both words from their own lexical fund and borrowings from Turkish, a prestigious language of a five-century historical period in the Balkans, as well as borrowings from neighboring languages (Balkan-Slavic, Albanian, dialects of Romanian). Coloronyms move

between languages and become common Balkan heritage.

A special feature of color term systems in the languages and dialects of the Balkan sprachbund is the presence of Turkic doublets, in addition to their own lexemes-. Turkisms become a universal means of denoting color, since they coincide in the contacting Balkan languages. However, today, the once very active Turkisms are of a marginal nature: they are preserved in folklore texts and dialects, pass into a reduced colloquial style, or are used as special terms in various professional fields of economic activity. The exception is the Albanian language system, where at the level of the basic coloronym Turkism is used to denote green *jeshil*.

In general, the system of color terms in the Albanian appears as a unique system in the Balkan cultural-linguistic area, sharply different from systems typologically similar to it in other Balkan languages. Due to the peculiarities of the history and geography of Albanian, the system of its main coloronyms was formed partly from borrowings, and “increased” competition of lexemes played a significant role in its formation. Thus, in Albanian there are three lexemes to denote green: one is the Latin *i gjelbër*, the other is the Turkish *jeshil* and the third is the actual Albanian *i blertë*; in addition to them, to denote the color green, a lexeme with the meaning ‘fresh’ is used, as well as specialized nominal constructions with the meaning ‘color of grass’ and ‘color of leek’. Moreover, the coloronyms for yellow and green overlap (and it seems that their connection is even predicted)<sup>12</sup>, but in a very peculiar way: the literary 'green' in the southern dialects becomes 'yellow' – and vice versa, the lexeme *i verdhë* with the meaning 'yellow' in the northern dialects means 'green'. Albanian is the only Balkan language that has developed an independent term for a light shade of blue (*i kalter* ‘blue’).

An analysis of the system of color terms in the Romanian language demonstrates the presence of certain similarities with the Albanian system. It is in vocabulary that the greatest number of analogies is observed. In the field of cattle terminology, both languages have bilateral borrowings, which later spread to other Balkan languages, in particular to the analyzed South Slavic ones. The expression “green horse”, common to the Balkan cultural and linguistic space, is used in Albanian and Romanian to mean a non-existent object, fables, fiction (Alb. *kalë i preshtë nuk ka* 'there is no green horse', Rom. *cai vezi pe pereți* 'fables' (lit. "green horses on the walls")), in contrast to the Balkan Slavic languages, where the expression "green horse" is used to denote the color of a real animal, of an unclear color shade.

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<sup>12</sup> Berlin B., Kay P. *Basic color terms: their universality and evolution*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, The University of California Press, 1969; MacLaury R. *Color Terms. Language typology and Language Universals*. Vol. 2. Berlin – New York, Walter de Gruyter, 2001.

As for color terms in the Bulgarian, Macedonian and Serbian languages, against the background of non-Slavic Balkan languages they form a single system with minimal differences. Differences most often appear in the set of lexical units to denote the color purple, orange or pink. The Macedonian language regularly demonstrates convergence either with the Serbian cultural-linguistic space (for example, in the choice of typical objects of comparison or in the use of coloronyms from the common root <sup>+</sup>*crven* in different meanings), or gravitates towards Bulgarian (in the phonetic form of most color lexemes: Bulg., Mac. *violetov* 'violet', Bulg., Mac. *rozov* 'pink', Bulg., Mac. *portokalov* 'orange', Bulg. *kafyan*, Mac. *kafen* 'brown'). The Serbian language is characterized by a set of color terms that differs from the closely related literary South Slavic Balkan languages (Serbian *plav* 'blue', *braon* 'brown', *naranzhast* 'orange', *ljubičast* 'violet', *ružičast* 'pink', etc.), but these lexemes are found in dialects of Bulgarian and Macedonian, therefore they belong to the general Balkan-Slavic fund. In the Torlak dialects of Serbian, which are directly included in the Balkan sprachbund, the system of color terms is close to the Bulgarian-Macedonian one (South.-Serb. *rozan*, *roznikav* 'pink', South.-Serb. *kafeničav* 'brown', cf. Bulg. *rozov*, *kafyan*). An analysis of the comparative phrases in different Balkan Slavic languages showed that there are minimal differences in the strategy for choosing an object of comparison. This is the basis for considering the systems of color terms of these individual languages as a single Balkan-Slavic system.

**Appendix 1** presents a questionnaire on color terms, prepared during the writing of the dissertation and tested in the author's ethnolinguistic expeditions to North Macedonia (Kumanovo 2018, Debar 2020). **Appendix 2** contains diagrams and histograms illustrating the compatibility of coloronyms for green in the Albanian language. **Appendix 3** provides a map showing the distribution of names for plum (*Prunus spinosa*) in the Macedonian linguistic area. **Appendix 4** is a comparative dictionary of comparative phrases with a colorative component based on the material of the Balkan Slavic, Albanian and Romanian languages. Comparative phrases are distributed in accordance with the identified values of the object of comparison (what is being compared with) and are located within the values in order from stable phrases to individual author's single examples. Thus, the dictionary clearly presents convergences and differences across languages in the field of comparative phrases with a colorative component in closely related and / or typologically similar Balkan languages. **Appendix 5** is an index of all coloronyms found in the text of this dissertation. The lexemes collected in one place give a clear idea not only of the word-formation capabilities of the corresponding languages, but also of the influence of the systems of these languages on each other.

Works published in leading peer-reviewed journals:

1. Tsvet v nominatsiyakh racteniy v yuzhnoserbskikh, zapadnobolgarskikh i

makedonskikh govorakh [Color terms in the nomination of plants in Southern Serbian, Western Bulgarian and Macedonian dialects]. *Slavyanovedeniye* [Slavic Studies], 2019, 5, pp. 95–103. (In Russian).

2. Color terms for blue in the Balkan languages. *Linguistique balkanique*, 2020, 2, pp. 339–347. (In English).

3. Zheltyy ili zelenyy? (O razgranichenii zelenogo i zheltogo tsveta v albanskom yazyke) [Yellow or green? Distinguishing green and yellow colors in Albanian]. *Voprosy jazykoznanija* [Topics in the study of language], 2021, 5, pp. 59–65. (In Russian).

4. Tsvetooboznacheniya v ustoychivyykh sochetaniyakh so znacheniyem blagopozhelaniya i proklyatiya v balkanskikh yazykakh [Color terms in the idioms with the meaning of blessing and curse in Balkan languages]. *Linguistique balkanique*, 2022, 2 (61), pp. 271–279. (In Russian).

5. The Balkan Spectrum of Color Terms Among the Aromanians (Ethno-Linguistic Aspect). *Ezikov Svyat*, 2023, V. 21, 2, p. 61–66. (In English).

6. Motley 'motley': terms for multi-colored in Macedonian and other Balkan languages. *Balkanistica*. 2024, pp. 1–6. (In English).