

## AN ANALYSIS OF WORLDVIEW OF KHETRAN COMMUNITY THROUGH COLOR TERMS

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### ABSTRACT

*There are two main perspectives on the issue of color categories throughout the world. One of them mainly influenced by the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis is Universalists perspective while the second one emerged out of the criticism on the Universalists' perspective is Relativists' perspective. Present research aims at understanding Khetrani color terms of the Khetran tribe of Balochistan. 11 colors identified by Berlin and Key (1969) were shown to the respondents on a color chart and their responses were measured. The following selection criterion was likewise adopted: i) Khetrani speaking natives; ii) having age between 30 to 50 years; and iii) illiterate; for the inclusion of the respondents. Keeping in view this criterion, Khetrani speaking rural people were sampled through purposive sampling. On the basis of the responses of the respondents two major color groups emerged, the group-I represents seven basic colors with Khetrani names while group-II shows remaining four colors which have no specific native color terms either respondents take it from the physical objects or from the other languages. Present community resides at sixth stage with seven color term.*

**Keywords:** Khetrani language, Color Terms; Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, Universalists' Perspective, Relativists' Perspective, Rural Barkhan, Balochistan

### INTRODUCTION

Color is an integral and important part of our life and culture. Our aesthetic sense greatly depends upon the color scheme besides structure of living and non-living things. Therefore, role of color terms in making our worldview has always been debated. There are two main schools of thought to the color debate, the Universalist and the Relativist. The Universalist School of thought is of the view that having similar biological characteristics the development of color terminology has absolute universal constraints, while the relativist side claims that the variability of color terms cross-linguistically points to more culture-specific phenomena. Because color exhibits both biological and linguistic aspects, it has become a largely studied domain that addresses the linguistic relativity question between language and thought. Further to elaborate the universalists' perspective on the color terms Foley (1997) asserts that undoubtedly the most influential and possibly the most robust claim of universal innate constraints on the semantic structure of certain cognitive domains have been made in the area of color terminologies, starting with the landmark study of Berlin and Kay (1969) and extended with subsequent work by them and associates vis-à-vis Berlin and Berlin (1975); Kay (1975); Kay, Berlin, and Merrifield (1991); Kay and McDaniel (1978); and MacLaury (1987, 1991, 1992). These studies have also been quoted by Khan and Chaudhry (2011) while studying the basic color categories of the rural Punjabi community in Pakistan.

In Linguistic Relativity debate, one tries to explore the relationship between language and thought, whether one's language determines the way one thinks. This question has originated a wide range of research within a variety of different disciplines, especially anthropology, cognitive science, linguistics, and philosophy. The theory of linguistic relativity (also known as the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis) can be said as most popular as well controversial in the scholarly circles. A strong version of the claim, first given by Lenneberg (1953) proposes that the structure of our language in some way determines the way we perceive the world. While the weaker version of this claim posits that language structure influences the world view adopted by the speakers of a given language, but does not determine it.

We find Berlin and Kay (1969) dominating the Universalist School of Thought in the beginning. But later on some other researches done by successors of Berlin and Kay got some importance. Like, Kay and McDaniel (1978) who claim that the semantics of basic color terms in all languages are the results of a common set of neurophysiologic processes in which differences in wavelengths of light reaching the eye are transformed into response differences in the visual nervous systems, while the other, led by Wierzbicka (1990) opposes Kay and McDaniel's (1978) claim and suggests that color concepts are anchored in certain universal identifiable human experiences, such as day, night, fire, the sun, vegetation, the sky, and the ground. Evidently, the two camps look at the same phenomenon from completely different angles, one from a neurophysiological perspective and the other from a cognitive perspective. As a result, one accuses the other of man-made connection between language and neural responses (Wierzbicka, 1990) while the other discredits its opponent's argument as observation unsupported by empirical evidence (Kay and McDaniel, 1978).

Broch (1974) mentioned that Berlin and Kay identified criteria to identify basic color category. The color terms in each language has to meet the following criteria:

- a. It is monomorphemic
- b. It is monolexic (for example, blue, but not bluish)
- c. Its signification is not included in that of any other color term (for example, crimson is a type of red)
- d. Its application must not be restricted to a narrow class of objects (for example, blonde is restricted to hair, wood)
- e. It must be psychologically salient for informants (for example, "the color of grandma's freezer" is not psychologically salient for all speakers)

While in the case of confusion Broch (1974) mentioned that Berlin and Kay also set subsidiary criteria for color naming:

- I. The doubtful form should have the same distributional potential as the previously established basic color terms (for example, you can say reddish but not salmonish)
- II. Color terms that are also the name of an object characteristically having that color are suspect, for example, gold, silver and ash
- III. Recent foreign loan words may be suspect
- IV. In cases where lexemic status is difficult to assess, morphological complexity is given some weight as a secondary criterion (for example, red-orange might be questionable)

Berlin and Kay also found that, in languages with less than the maximum eleven color categories, the colors found in these languages followed a specific evolutionary pattern. This pattern is as follows:

1. All languages contain terms for black and white.
2. If a language contains three terms, then it also contains a term for red.
3. If a language contains four terms, then it also contains a term for either green or yellow (but not both).
4. If a language contains five terms, then it contains terms for both green and yellow.
5. If a language contains six terms, then it also contains a term for blue.
6. If a language contains seven terms, then it also contains a term for brown.
7. If a language contains eight or more terms, then it contains a term for purple, pink, orange, and/or grey.

On other side, the relativists have some observations on the theory of Berlin and Kay. Including others Saundres (1995) Sahlins (1976) and Lucy (1996) are more important who challenged early prevailing perspective of universalism. Barbara Saundres (1995) believes that Berlin and Kay's theory of basic color terminology contains several unspoken assumptions and significant flaws in research methodology. Included in these assumptions is an ethnocentric bias based on traditions of Western scientific and philosophical thought. She regards the evolutionary component of Berlin and Kay's theory as "an endorsement of the idea of progress" and references Smart's belief that it is "a Eurocentric narrative that filters everything through the West and its values and exemplifies a universal evolutionary process of modernization".

Lucy (1996) one of the critics of the Universalists' argument she believes that there are problems with how linguistic analysis has been used to characterize the meanings of color terms across languages. Referential range (what a color term can refer to) and grammatical distribution (how the term can be used) are two dimensions Lucy believes are critical to defining the meaning of a term, both of which "are routinely ignored in research on color terms which focuses primarily on denotational overlap across languages without any consideration of the typical use of the terms or their formal status." He also feels that any attempt to contrast color term systems requires understanding of each individual language and the systems it uses to structure reference. The basic point, of course, is that cultural practices are a crucial mediating force in color naming and the system of basic color terms. They argued that culture must be a crucial autonomous intermediary between any innate and hence universal neurological perception of color stimuli and cognitive understanding of these. This is echoed linguistically by Wierzbicka (1990) who notes that meaning of the color term in a language cannot possibly be neural response to a color chip, but rather the cognitive understanding the native speaker of the language, has of that term: "language reflects what happens in the mind, not what happens in the brain."

The aim of current study was to analyze the worldview of *Khetran* community through color terms. *Khetran* community is inhabited in District Barkhan (Balochistan) and in Wahova in the North of District Dera Ghazi Khan (Punjab). But present study was conducted in *Khetran* community of District Barkhan. According to Longworth Dames (1904) "The *Khetran* are also a tribe of undoubtedly Indian origin, occupying a tract in the Sulaiman Mountains, between the Baloch and Pathan tribes, and still speaking their original Indian language-a dialect peculiar to themselves and akin to Sindhi and *Jatki*..." According to GOB (1906) Dr. Grierson takes *Khetrani* as a dialect spoken in Barkhan by *Khetran*, in Musa Khel by Jaffer community (though called Jafferki but the language is same). According to him, "this dialect (*Khetrani*) resembles the *Jatki* spoken in Dera Ghazi Khan District but has some peculiar terms of its own."

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Present study was conducted in *Khetran* community, District Barkhan. Twenty members of *Khetran* Community were sampled and their responses were measured. The respondents were sampled under the following selection criterion: i) *Khetrani* speaking natives; ii) have age between 30 to 50 years; and iii) have no formal education. Besides these interviews, informal discussions, and two focus group discussions (FGDs) were also conducted with the illiterate community members fulfilling the above mentioned criterion. Different color charts and different physical objects were shown to the respondents to identify these (eleven) color categories. The responses of the respondents are presented in the following section in two color groups i.e. group-I (7 colors with indigenous color terms) and group-II (remaining 4 colors with no indigenous terms).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

As mentioned earlier the main emphasis of the present study was to identify indigenous color terms in *Khetrani* language. The semantic system of *Khetrani* color terms is of very interesting nature. The respondents have identified the following colors as part of their cognition.

**Table No. 1 Basic *Khetrani* Color Terms**

S. No	Color Terms in English Language	Color Terms in <i>Khetrani</i> Language	Responses Frequency (out of 20)	Responses Percentage (out of 20)
1	Black	<i>Kala</i>	20	100 %
2	White	<i>Baga</i>	20	100%
3	Red	<i>Lakha</i>	18	90%
4	Yellow	<i>Khata</i>	19	95%
5	Green	<i>Sawa</i>	18	90%
6	Blue	<i>Neela</i>	17	85%
7	Brown	<i>Bhoora</i>	17	85%

The pragmatic use of these colors is very much relative. For instance the original meaning of the term '*lakha*' is red. But its extended meanings are culture specific and vary with reference to time and space. Indicating to a male or female, *lakha* shows that the complexion of that person is fair or white and he or she is very beautiful. This notion of *Lakha* (red) is frequently used in poetic expressions. When referring to another person or object *lakha hona* means to have strong desire of love to have that person or object. Here it implies both positive as well as negative sense. Desire of love for a person is taken as positive while desire for an object is always taken as a metaphor for greed. Also *lakha lakha hona* or *rata hona* (rat means blood and therefore *rata* means of blood or blood like finally meaning 'red') shows anger of a person, which is, not always but in some instances, when a person is without reason in anger or more angry than the actual reason, a negative aspect. On the other hand the metaphor of 'red eyes' (*lakhe akheen wala*) shows the chivalry and bravery of a person. In terms of dressing, red is specified for female in everyday life and even at special occasions like bridal dress for bride groom. But according to *Khetrani miar*<sup>1</sup> it is matter of shame for a male *Khetran* to wear red. So, we can infer from the above analysis that semantic extension is not

<sup>1</sup> *Khetrani miar* or *Balochi Ghairat* refers to a set of obligatory actions which a person must perform in order to respectfully sustain participation in that particular culture.

accidental but pragmatic and grounded in people's understanding and interpretation of the physical world.

The word *baga* means white and *chita* means shining white. *Baga buchh* shows the pureness of white or something which is very clean. So, here the term *baga buch* can also be used for other things which may be of different colors. A person who has grown white or grey hair at head, beard and mustache may be called '*baga buch*' indicating age factor, and on the other a very neat and clean person may be given the compliment of *baga buch*. The word *baga* is also used to show the degree of cowardice of a person like *baga beghairat*. But generally while addressing a parson, *baga* (male) and *bagi* (female) means a beautiful, attractive and beloved (poetically) man or woman. Here we can find that the domain of '*baga*' (white) changes in case to case. While on the other hand there is not indigenous term for the following four color terms: i) purple; ii) pink; iii) orange; and iv) grey. People identify these four colors by resembling with local physical or environmental items.

### Shades of Colors

We can also find different shades and degrees of color in *Khetran* community. Almost all the colors have different shades based on their hue, saturation and brightness. The below table shows different shades of colors:

**Table No. 2 Shades of Colors with *Khetrani* Color Terms**

Color	Shades	Description
<i>Baga</i>		White
	<i>Chita baga</i>	Shining white
<i>Kala</i>		Black
	<i>Kit kala</i>	Shining black
	<i>Kala dush</i>	Dark black
	<i>Kala dhoon</i>	Smoky black
	<i>Kala angaar</i>	Coal like black
<i>Lakha</i>		Red
	<i>Ghulabi</i>	Rose like red or pink
	<i>Lakha rut/ruta</i>	Blood like red
	<i>Kalhore</i>	Maroon
	<i>Sandoora</i>	Vermilion
<i>Sawa</i>		Green
	<i>Sawa chuchh</i>	Dark green
	<i>Sawa darakh</i>	Grape like green
	<i>Sawa tota</i>	Parrot green
	<i>Moongi sawa</i>	Moong like green
<i>Katha</i>		Yellow
	<i>Kacha katha</i>	Lemon green
	<i>Ganda katha</i>	Light shining yellow
	<i>Paka katha</i>	Orange
	<i>Dhaura katha</i>	Withered yellow
<i>Neela</i>	<i>Neela</i>	General blue
	<i>Asmani neela</i>	Sky blue
	<i>Dhaura neela</i>	Withered blue
	<i>Ferozi neela</i>	Persian blue
<i>Bhoora</i>		Brown

The other shades are *Phika* (any color having less hue, saturation and brightness), *Jharra* (combination of black, white and soil color), camel and donkey like.

### Original and Extended Meanings of *Khetrani* Color Terms

According to Janet (2008) for each color term, three types of meanings are identified: original meaning, extended meaning, and abstract meaning. Original meaning refers to the etymological meaning of the color term; extended meaning refers to the meaning extended from the original meaning through metaphor, metonymy, or other cognitive means; abstract meaning refers to the meaning that has been further abstracted from the extended meaning.

**Table No. 3 *Khetrani* Color Terms with Original and Extended Meanings**

S. No	Color	Original Meaning	Extended Meaning	English Translation	Abstract Meaning
1.	<i>Baga/Chita</i>	White Color	Baga denh	White day	Pure, clean,
			Baga beghairat	(White Coward)	Weak,
			Baga	Not involved in adultery	Morally pure and clean
			Chiti darhi	White beard	Aged person
2.	<i>Kala</i>	Black Color	Kali, kala	Adulterer (male, female)	Impure, unclear,
			Ander ta kala	Dark by inside	Keeness, illegal,
			Kali rat	dark night	Dangerous, ambiguous
			Kala angar	black like coal	Ugly
			Kala naang	Black snake	Poisonous, dangerous
3.	<i>Lakha</i>	Red	Lakha, lakhi	Red in Color (male/female)	Fair in color, beautiful,
			Laki rut	Red blood	
			Lakha ber	Red Berry	Healthy
			Lakha naang	Red Snake	Peaceful, harmless
			Lakhe akheen wala	Red eyed person	Brave man
4.	<i>Sawa</i>	Green	Saawil	Greenery	Prosperity
			Sawa/sawi	Green male/female	Dark Skinned attractive

## CONCLUSION

The *Khetran* Community recognizes seven colors i.e. White, black, red, green, yellow, blue and brown as their basic colors and stands equal to the other South Asian languages i.e. Hindi, Urdu, and Punjabi (Leach, 1974; Khan and Chaudhry, 2011). These colors have different attributes in the cognition of the people. All the extended and abstract meanings (Janet, 2008) of color terms in *Khetrani* Language can be categorized into two types: positive or negative. This is because it coincides with our understanding of the cognition between language and the physical world. Evidently, it is human nature to relate a descriptive linguistic symbol (e.g. white) to something in the physical world (e.g. milk), and then to express an opinion about the described object in the world (i.e. White milk is clean.) Due to the fact that milk is universally white and white milk is universally believed to be clean, it is inevitable for white to extend its color meaning to the “clean” meaning, which then automatically entails either a positive or a negative connotation.

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