

ASSOCIATIVE MEANINGS OF KISUKUMA-ENGLISH COLOUR TERMS

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Abstract

The paper analyzes Kisukuma colour terms focusing on associative meanings encoded in colours. Data on colours are analyzed using thematic analysis where they are grouped and organized in eight kisukuma colour terms namely: Yape- white, Yapi- black, Yaza- red, Ndilizu- green Luduhlu/yanga- yellow, Bhuhulu/bhululu – blue, Matalaka/madaraka- light blue and Yakhu- grey. The study establishes that kisukuma colour terms are enriched with different associative meanings which have more positive than negative meanings in sense that the uses of yapi- black and yaza- red are mostly negative. In contrast, yape-white colour, luduluh- yellow and ndilizu- green colour mostly have positive associative meanings, bhuhulu/bhululu- blue, Matalaka/madaraka- light blue and yakhu- grey had narrow meanings which were positive.

Keywords: Associative Meaning, Colour Terms, Kisukuma

INTRODUCTION

Studies on semantic universals has been a preoccupation of linguists for a long time. Among the semantic universals identified are colour. The Berlin and Kay 1969 hypothesis found that colour is a semantic universal. Studies on colour gained momentum and prominence in the Berlin and Kay hypothesis which drew up a set of universal colours. This implies that all languages, including Kisukuma, have colours which are meaningful. This finding, has been tested by researchers in African languages. Malande (2012 and 2018) saw the centrality of language and culture as dual determinants of colour meanings and choice, hence the national colour hypothesis. Malande therefore applies the dual Berlin and Kay's universality and The Sapir-Whorf's linguistic relativity in his studies. Malande (2012) studies colour terms on Kuryia goats and Masaai cows established that 'colour terms-names are language specific whose meanings are social-culturally agreed.' In addition to that, (Malande, 2018) found that Kenya political party (KPP) names colours have meanings which can be linguistically and politically manipulated for political reasons. The research established a relationship between the national official colours and those of KPP which he hypothesizes under the national colour hypothesis whose premise is to link and associate KPP colours with state-colours. The national colour hypothesis observes that any nation's political parties will often draw their own colours from the some of the colour shades or mixtures of their national colour pool.

Tekie (2020) conducted a study in Tanzania-Zanzibar, in eight successive weeks in untimely 2019. The intention of the study was to scrutinize how colourism has an effect on women's identity and ethnicity structuring in the course of the research questions; how do women in Zanzibar experience colorism in their daily lives and; how does colorism

affect their self-perception? The data was obtained by using seven semi-structured interviews and observations to women in Zanzibar.

The notions of identity and ethnicity soaked the study and the identity process theory (IPT) was utilized as a theoretical framework to scrutinize the investigation. The results suggest that colorist ideals are overriding in the social order as light and medium colours were more appreciated than dark. This was confirmed by associating light and medium skin colour, as well as relaxed and straight hair to “good” and “beautiful”.

On the other hand, colourism attested to affect women in their daily lives to diverse degrees. Respondents who matured on the mainland confessed to being more affected and expressed feelings of shamefulness or commend, in relation to skin colour. While women born and hoisted on Zanzibar, felt colourism affected their lives minimally, but recognized the presented tribulations for numerous women of example skin bleaching.

According to the IPT, a tough logic of uniqueness from mainlanders, continuity in ancient times and current identity and a high self-efficacy looked to guard self-esteem alongside presented colourist ideals; the way they value colour is chiefly affected by their experiences. Moreover, enclosure to the Zanzibar ethnic identity confirmed not to be affected by colourism, as colour was not a precondition factor to ethnicity but rather, communal land, religion, and history.

Whereas his arguments are influential in studying associative meanings of colour terms but he considered only female perception in relation to skin colour leaving out men perception as well as diverse contexts of other meanings of colour terms.

Moreover, Ijinska and Platonova (2008) add that, colour terms are the markers of a person’s sensitivity of the world; they can be easily related with certain sensations they stir in people, for instance colours such as red means emergency, love or danger, green means safe, and white means pure, etc; colour terms possess different connotations in different cultures, which basically are associated meanings.

Wierzbicka (1990) claims that colour categories are influenced by experience of given culture. The implication is that is when speakers classify and makeup the colour range; the digit of colour words and the way in which separate languages categorize the colour range may diverge. For example, Bassa, a language of Liberia, has only two terms for categorizing colours; Hui and ziza. Hui communicates approximately to the cool end of the spectrum ‘black, mauve, blue, and green’ and ziza communicates to the affectionate end of the spectrum ‘white, yellow, orange and red’.

Leech (1981) classifies meaning into conceptual meaning and associative meaning. He defines the conceptual meaning as the essential part of what language is and the central factor in verbal communication. Besides their literal senses, Kisukuma colour terms could be loaded with different associative meanings that are realized in conventional linguistic expressions such as black heart, and green plant. Additionally, Leech defines associative meaning, in comparison with conceptual meaning. It is relatively unstable and may vary according to culture, historical period, and the experience of the individual. This indeed implies that the associative meanings of a language expression are clearly distinct from its sense, denotation and reference. Seen as a thoroughly pragmatic category of meaning, the associative meanings of a language expression are defined by Allan (2007) as

pragmatic effects that arise from encyclopedic knowledge about its denotation (or reference) and also from experiences, beliefs, and prejudices about the contexts in which the expression is typically used, and this implies that most of the associative meanings assigned to colours seem to be grounded, at least to some extent, in reality.

Literature Review

Colours are semantics universal (Berlin and Kay 1969). This means that all languages have colours with their meanings. According to Anderson (2014) blue and white are colours of snow and ice in Eskimo's language; they refer to different time of winter. Blue describes winter when it is usual while white describes winter when (it is) tense. This implies that colour terms are language specific therefore, every language has its way to describe them in terms of their meanings.

Furthermore, Wierzbicka (1990) argues that colour perceptions are attached in certain universals of human experience such as day, night, fire, the sun, vegetation, the sky, and the ground (p.66). The notion is obvious in the world we live; our environment contains the blue sky, white clouds, green trees, red sun, and grey buildings, amid others. This implies that colour terms are interrelated where the physical and the abstract world are as the noticeable object of human beings that cannot subsist exclusive of human cognition. Hence, the definition of colour terms should be linked with experience of colour in culture practice. However, a language with complex culture is likely to possess more than eleven colour terms.

Furthermore, Xing (2009) contends that colour name have three categories of meanings: original meaning, extended meaning, and abstract meaning. Extended meaning and abstract meaning have wide range of experiences dependence-thus; the researchers see the application of it beyond lexicon.

Moreover, Semantic extension is said to be landed in people thoughtful and understanding of the physical world and it is not fortuitous but pragmatic because it is constantly context-dependent (Traugott2002, p. 24). Therefore, colour terms look to have a vast possibility of emergent dissimilar extended meanings and these extended meanings are termed as associated meanings.

The associative meanings are the meanings that are owned by a word and they have relationships with something beyond the denotation of a word (Allan, 2007). This implies that associative meanings have something to do with the individual mental understanding of the speaker as well as conceptual network of word among interlocutors. For example, in English culture, the word black is connected with the meaning of darkness and sadness and the word white is linked with angelic meaning.

Moreover, Iljinska and Platonova (2008) add that, colour terms are the markers of a person's sensitivity of the world; they can be easily related with certain sensations they stir in people, for instance colours such as red means emergency, love or danger, green means safe, and white means pure, etc. Colour terms possess different connotations in different cultures, which basically are associated meanings.

However, in various cultures such as African cultures they can cause different reactions, as some cultures can lack some colours but not the shades. This implies that,

meanings of colour terms are determined by culture diversity. Thus, it is a huge mistake to reduce meaning only to denotative sense. Associated meanings of colour terms are important in communication; they tell about the culture and history of a particular society and the way in which a particular society behave towards language and other aspects of the society. Marking of new senses to word need some thinking beyond ordinary language use. That is why we intended to investigate meanings of Kisukuma colour terms.

The way colour terms of a particular language are identified and exhibit their meanings have been the interest of many scholars: (Whorf, 1956; Wierzbicka, 1990; Wierzbicka, 2008), just to mention the few. Meanings of colour terms and their identification are grounded from differences in people's experiences of colour terms. Wierzbicka (1996) views that the meaning of the most basic colour terms can be seen as quotations incorporating fundamental and visually salient features of human environment: the sky, the sun, vegetation, fire, the sea, the naked earth, the earth covered with snow. Colour terms should therefore be linked to universal experience of seeing them (p.330).

Whorf (1956) claims that the identification of colour names is closely connected to socio-cultural development, which means that the progress of colour kinds settled on by levels of technological advancement and degrees of cultural multifaceted. The developed cultures or progressed community tend to offer more colour names, while the colour kinds might be less multifaceted in those cultures with less extended knowledge. This implies that the universal of colours are in terms of seeing them, that every language has colour terms. With complex culture it might appear a language to have more than eleven colour terms.

According to Leech (1974) associative meanings refer to various types of meanings that are beyond linguistic conventions themselves. This implies that there are particular characteristics ahead of the stable meaning of a word that people commonly think of it; new senses of a word in reference to the area or a way in which a word is used. For example, as for black and white, their distinction has been recognized since the ancient Greek period. Black is a colour that connotes darkness while white the colour light.

They have been symbolically related to evil and good respectively, through further symbolism dictates that goodness is pure and inspired by a divine light, whereas its opposite, evil, is impure and has an affinity with the dark (Phillip, 2003,p.22). Leech (1981) broke up associative meaning into various types of meanings: connotative, social, affective, reflective, and collective (p.12).

According to (Leech, 1974; Mwihaki, 2004) connotative meaning is the real word value of an expression that is much less stable and more indefinite than what it denotes. This implies that it is the meaning beyond the dictionary meaning of a word and has something to do with secondary senses of a mere word therefore, it is the basic and attributes other types of associative meanings. The second type of associative meaning is social meaning. Leech (1974) refers social meaning as related to the social circumstance of the speaker's culture in the way of using words in an expression, it includes many dimensions of the style and levels: dialect (geographic or socially), time (morning or evening), province (advertisement or law), modality (lecture or jokes) and etc. The implication is that people will wish to institute, adjust social relations, and preserve shared

roles when communicating. The third type of associative meaning is affective meaning. According to (Leech, 1974; Mwihiaki, 2004) refer affective meaning as the use of word to express personal feelings or attitude to the listener.

The fourth type of associative meaning is reflected meaning. Reflected meaning is the meaning that appears in cases of multi-conceptual meaning, when one sense of that word forms part of response to another (Leech, 1974).

The last type of associative meaning is collective meaning. According to (Leech, 1974; Mwihiaki, 2004) collective meaning refers to the association which a word acquires on account of meaning of the word which tends to occur in the same environment. Generally, Mwihiaki (2004) contends that the importance of colour extends beyond simple perceptual experience to cover rich symbolic functions which may differ across culture.

This means that relation between the symbols of language is a kind of relation that is acquired through different experiences and encounters in interpretations of words; not a relation between the symbols themselves. Therefore, all types of discussed meanings are used under general term “associative meanings.” Multiple interpretations of a colour terms have a very important role in creating other meanings of the vocabularies of a particular language which are typically associative.

Al-Adaileh (2012) examines the metaphoric utilization of black, white, yellow, red, green and blue; the mainly ordinary colors that are used metaphorically. The associative senses of Arabic colour words were perceived based on whether the expressions in which colour terms arise are orthophemistic, euphemistic or dysphemistic. Construction on the relevant colours, the study completed that colours have numerous orthophemistic associative senses, and their dysphemistic associative senses were more ordinary than euphemistic associative senses. Moreover, study established that the utilizations of black, yellow, red and blue were chiefly dysphemistic. On the other hand, white colour frequently had positive associative senses and green was recognized to be related with both euphemistic and dysphemistic associative senses.

Colour terms seem to have multiple senses that can be marked with positive or negative associative senses in relation to people’s expediencies in Arabic verbal communication. The question is, what about Bantu verbal communications, specifically to Kisukuma.

Malande (2018) applies the Berlin and Kay hypothesis and the Whorfian hypothesis in the study of colours. The study identified, investigated and then established the linguistic strategies employed in the KPP colour choice. The study finds that colours have both denotative and connotative senses which can be linguistically influenced for political motives. The research hypothesizes that communities often choose their possess colours from the some of the colour glooms or concoctions of their state colour pond. Furthermore, he asserts that the meanings of colours are socially agreed, such meanings are then learned or acquired from childhood necessitating people to hold an emotional attachment to them.

Malande claims that environment (context) performs a noteworthy responsibility in colour perception and is a causative reason to exploitation of sense. How we conceptualize of colour diverges and relays on cognitive establishment of colour

associations allowed out of definite relations. These relations could be related on historic, empirical and even environmental settings. For Example, white has a global sense of purity yet we have some verbal communications which do not have a word for white; they name it colourless (as for milk and water): or red (as a marker for Red Cross) may have a particular sense or association because of a historic incident such as flames, war or violence. Malande's study focuses on the meanings of colour terms in relation to political parties, this study deals with meanings of colour term in various social- cultural contexts.

Malande (2012:64) conducted a colour and name study on Masaai cows and Kuryia goats. The study established cows and goats names in the two languages were majorly determined by their skin colours among other aspects such as shape, size and sex. The animal colours had meanings which were socially or culturally negotiated.

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Theoretical Framework

In an attempt to find out "associative meaning of Kisukuma colour terms", we used the original Berlin and Kay's universality theory which was proposed in (1969) and revised by Kay, Berlin, Merrifield (2000) and Leech's theory of meaning (1981).

The proposed idea of BCT that; there are 11 basic colour categories from which every language selects its subset, for a colour to be basic it has to be general and salient and that classification of basic colours should be bottom on how they are second-hand and not their source thus, colour terms are language specific. The idea helped the researcher to establish colour terms that are found in Kisukuma.

Leech (1981) in his book, titled ‘Semantics’ presented clearly articulated typology of meanings “associative meaning” as an important type. Leech’s theory of meaning finds out that associative meanings of a word are determined by social- cultural experiences of a given community.

The proposed idea that associative meaning is less stable; not constant and differs with individual’s experiences, helped the researchers to answer a research question; what are associative meanings of Kisukuma colour terms?

METHOD

The paper employs a qualitative approach in order to elicit detailed respondent’s views, feelings and experiences on the associative meanings anchored in Kisukuma colour terms. Also, descriptive research design was employed because the researchers wanted to get detailed data from respondents through the use of semi-structured interview and focused group discussion.

The sample sizes of this study involved 24 Kisukuma native speakers’ respondents constituting 12 adults and 12 elders. Data were collected through focused group discussions and semi-structured interviews. The obtained data was then presented descriptively to meet the goal of the research.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Associative Meaning of Kisukuma Colour Terms

In relation to Leech’s tenets that associative meanings are less stable consequently, the findings reveal that Kisukuma colour terms have different associative meanings which reflect the social- cultural experiences of Sukuma. To understand the meanings marked by the colour terms, one requires knowledge of the language and culture of Wasukuma.

Kisukuma colour terms have positive and negative associative meanings. Their meanings are marked in relation to circumstances of their use. In Kisukuma colour have a lot of meanings when they are used in different context, for example red colour implies blessing when is used by traditional healer but it implies unkind when is used to describe a jealousy person or greed person. Therefore, Kisukuma colour terms are categorized into the following groups based on the associative meanings attached to them.

Positive Associative Meanings of Kisukuma Colour Terms

In Kisukuma, colour terms are used describe good things that are present in Kisukuma culture. It was found that the associative meanings of some colours are contextual hence, some colours have both negative and positive associations depending on the context.

Colours Referring to Purity

Colours of this type are associated with transparency, innocence, love and trustiness. Yapee (white) depicts innocence, fair and honesty. White colour in Kisukuma culture is usually a colour of esteem. Therefore, 'white' in most cases is the traditional colour for the brides at weddings. This implies that, it is a colour referring to purity of the newly-wedded couple just pure as the colour of milk. Furthermore, making one's name white again" refers to smearing out one's shame and getting back to purity. "White hands" denotes transparency and sincerity in carrying out various responsibilities; a person whose hands are clean associated with doing what is faithful. For example; "*Makono akwe ape*" "His hands are clean", this expression indicates that the person is innocent and clean in whatever he/she is doing in a respective area like work, marriage, divorce and the others.

Furthermore, white colour is associated with clean water, although water is colorless, when it is safe for drinking, it is described as white water. For example, *Lambo eehe genaminze ape* 'This dam contains white water' indicates that such water is free from impurities hence, it is safe to use in various domestic purposes such as drinking, cloth washing and cleaning utensils.

Colours Referring to Blessing

Blessings in Kisukuma culture are associated with various colours including white and black. A white sheep, a white cow or a white hen symbolize blessings. For example, *Ng'ombe yavyalaga ndama yape* "The cattle give birth to a white calf". A white calf, a white goat and a white hen are associated with bringing blessings to other animals, the owner of the livestock and the visitors thus, superstitiously considered as depicting a good star (lucky) in the future. Furthermore, these types of domestic animals are used in performing several rituals that bring blessings to individual families and the community at large.

Colours Referring to Superstition Beliefs

In Kisukuma culture: black, white, black and red are colours of miracles. They are mostly used by traditional healers. These colours (white, red and black) in some circumstances are perceived to have power to communicate with the spirit world hence, they possess the secret of solving various problems including healing people through miracles. For example, black clothes are associated with the spiritual powers. Traditional healers who wear black clothes are subject to possess power of healing people and bring them back to life through dreaming the source of their problems and the cure. Additionally, these types of clothes are used by traditional rain makers "*bawaje bhambula*" when performing various rituals aiming at bringing rain.

Furthermore, white clothes worn by traditional healers indicate power of healing people through demons and bringing life and hope to the clients through demonic terms "*ng'anga gomasamva*". Additionally, white colour suggests the witches who do only good deeds, for example, "*Walogi ope*" "The white witches". The expression suggests that, these types of witches are only helping people by solving their problems; their powers do not allow them to harm or kill people.

Colours Referring to Wealth

Yellow is often associated with something precious. In Kisukuma culture '*liwe go yanga*' - yellow stone symbolizes gold. Some areas like Maganzo and Mwadui that are found in Sukuma land are very famous in mining activities. Most of the Sukuma engaging in this activity are subjected to be rich people when they manage to get '*ng'ana*' big gold. For instance, the expression "*Oilaga ng'ana*" "He has got a yellow stone" suggests that a person has become rich because he has got gold.

Moreover, green colour is associated with richness in terms of crops. Most of Wasukuma are engaging in farming and livestock keeping. During rainy season when every plant turns green, they perceive themselves as rich and lucky people because green vegetation means richness; it implies enough food for their families as well as enough pasture for their cattle. For instance, "*Gonda gokwe gonelezu*" "His farm is green" suggests that the farmer and livestock keeper are expected to have good yields during harvesting season. Therefore, the owner is termed as the rich in terms of rice or corn, depending on the type of crops he has cultivated.

Furthermore, red colour is associated with type of money. Red is a specific colour of ten thousand shilling, they value this type of money because most of the livestock keepers are very reluctant to sell their cattle therefore, they have limited access to them. Those who live in villages, they mostly get this type of money during harvesting season expect for people who are engaging in cattle business. For example, the Kisukuma expression, "*Ninaga lidala lyaza*" "Give me red money". The expression suggests that a person who has access to red money ('ten thousand Tanzanian shilling') is described as rich person. The meaning of this type of money is derived from the colour of money paper. Therefore, there is high possibility for the colour that describe ten thousand to change when that of money will be printed in another colour.

Colours Referring to Good Luck

Black is associated with good omen in term of reproductive issues for female and male humans and livestock. In Kisukuma culture, a black cattle is selected when performing rituals. In most cases it is neck tied with a bell to be a leader, to open a way in solving problems at hand. For example, white sheep with black colour around its neck '*bhulugadi*' is believed to connote success, and reproductive issues in particular. Additionally, a dog with black colour on eyes and a black hen are all considered as determiners for a good luck. This implies that in Kisukuma culture, animals with such colours are very essential in determining the fortune of the family and the community. The families that have large number of such domestic animals are described as blessed families. They are respected and given priorities to arrange various activities that are related to rituals because they are assumed as good representatives of such beliefs.

Furthermore 'white night' is associated with a bright and prosperous future in the midst of various challenges such as jealousy and hatred. In Kisukuma culture, they use a term white night to describe the hope one has after long period of bad encounters. This implies that, all good things that happen as the relief when one is in deep trouble while knowing nothing to do or he/she has some means but there are some circumstances that hamper him. For instance, "*Ujiku one wabizaga gope*" "My night has become white" suggests that someone's problems are over.

Colours Referring to Life

Red colour is a colour of blood that runs in the veins of human being and therefore, it is associated with life. In Kisukuma culture a person with a lot of blood is considered healthy. For instance, the expression “*Ginu alinaminga*” “Thicker, he/she has blood” in Kisukuma culture is associated with healthy persons who are full of life.

Green is a colour of vegetation, the green plant is associated with the energy, health and immaturity of the plants. In Kisukuma culture green plant gives hope to the farmers because they expect enough harvests to be produced and thus good yield will be earned at the end of rain season. In other circumstance when plants look green, they indicate that, plants are coming to life with fresh growth. Therefore, close monitoring is needed to plants as they are still not strong enough to withstand various challenges, including heavy rainfall. This implies that; when plants look green, they suggest two meanings including good health as well as immaturity of the plants. For example, “*Mandeki gatale ganelezu*” “Corns are still green”. This expression suggests the following meanings that depend on the circumstance of use: plants need extra care because they are still immature to survive in a certain type of weather. On the other hand, it suggests the healthier plant because green is a colour of plants life.

Colours Referring to Hope

Red colour, white colour and green colour in some circumstances suggest hope in Kisukuma culture. Red as the colour of blood is associated with sacrifices through rituals in order to bring new hope in a community. For example, “*Gohadikijiwa amininga idike*”, “The blood must shed”. The expression suggests that various animals must be slaughtered to make the sacrifices to gods and spirits in order to find the solutions to various problems therefore, blood is a symbol of the salvation.

Furthermore, “white light” is associated with bright future as well as fair judgment. In Kisukuma culture white colour in term of light is used to describe good days for instant, when one expecting to receive fair judgment upon the fabricated lies once the truth is already known. Additionally white light symbolizes hope one has as in the expression “*Nengela gope gommekelaga*”, “White light illuminated him” indicates the hope people have to the person whom the expression refers to.

Additionally, green colour when referring to pasture is associated with the prospect of obtaining more livestock-based products. The pastoralists wait for their livestock to reproduce in large quantities because of easy access to pasture. This is a period of grace for pastoralists and communities around them. For example, “*Ndimi ganelezu*” “Green pasture” implies good livestock health hence, adequate yields derived from sales of livestock-related products will be obtained.

Colours Referring to Love

A white heart symbolizes kindness; i.e. someone who wishes to do good things to others. The expression “*Alinang’olo yape*”, “He has a white heart” implies that a person has true love to others; someone with no jealousy, who is not greedy and therefore, he wishes good things to happen to others.

Colours Referring to Beauty

In Kisukuma culture 'white colour', which is brightness in look is described as a colour of beauty. In Kisukuma culture men offer big bride prices for girls with white skin. Similarly, women are mostly attracted to men with white skin. The reason behind is to find a generation of white children who will bring wealth in their families through the great dowry that will be given. The implication is that black skin is not seen as a colour of beauty. Most of Sukuma men offer low bride prices to the women with black colour compared to the white colour 'pale colour'. For example, the expression, "*Nkima ope*", "White woman" suggests good looking in terms of physical appearance. In this circumstance, the person with white skin is associated with being handsome and pretty for male and female respectively.

Furthermore, *matalaka/ madaraka* "light blue" is associated with the beauty of nature. It is used to describe the beauty of the sky and the sea. For example, the Kisukuma expressions; "*Ligulu labutalaka*", "The sky is light blue" indicates that the appearance of the sky and sea are spectacular in nature and weather is expected to be beautiful.

Colours Referring Bravery

Black cloth symbolizes heroic trait. When manages to kill a lion he wear a black cloth. In Kisukuma culture, hunting is men's work, one has to demonstrate his heroic trait by wearing black sheet while holding the spear in one hand and shield on other hand. Such demonstration enable the community to honor him with various presents such as money, goat, sheep and the likes. The implication is that if a hero wears other types of clothes apart from black, the community will fail to recognize his heroic which will lead him into not being accorded the respect he deserves.

Colours Referring to Peace

Green vegetation is associated with peace. For example, the expression; "*Ng'weji go ndiilzu gosikaga*" "The green month has come" suggests the time of grace, in a sense that the farmers and the pastoralists are no longer worrying about their farms and their livestock because of good future of harvest and easy access to pasture respectively. On the other hand, green colour implies freedom '*kayagalula*'. This meaning was anchored to green colour in the time of Tanganyika independence 1961. People were celebrating Independence Day by waving green flag, since then they use green colour as symbol of peace which is determined by the efforts they have on agriculture and animal husbandry, because are the activities they depend on. The implication is that, green colour symbolize time of peace when people have adequate supply of food in their families. When plants turn green, they give them confidence to meet their family's needs.

Additionally, light blue colour "*matalaka/ madaraka*" is associated with good weather. For example, Kisukuma expression; "*Isi ya butalaka*" "The sky is light blue" implies that the weather is normal; people are free to continue with their daily activities. Hence, light blue sky symbolizes good day and peace of mind in working time.

Colours Marking Planting and Harvesting Seasons

In Kisukuma culture, green colour, yellow colour and red colour suggest planting and harvesting seasons depending on certain circumstances. Green is a colour of

vegetation and it associatively symbolizes the following; planting season, when the environment turns green during rainy season, it indicates that it is a time for farmers to start planting their crops. As in the expression, "*Isi yawizaga ya nelezu*", "The country has become green". This expression implies that it is a good time for farmers to focus on cultivating and planting.

Furthermore, green colour suggests maturity and immaturity of the fruits; being ready or not ready to be harvested. To some fruits when their colour changes to green or dark green, they suggest that they are ready to be harvested. For example, the expression; "*Tigiti labizaga lyanelezu*", "The watermelon is green" indicates that it is ripe; therefore, it is ready to be harvested. While to some of the fruits when they have green colours, they are considered to be raw fruits hence, not ready to be harvested as in the expression; "*Yembe gotale ganelezu*", "The mangoes are still green". This expression implies that the fruits are immature; hence farmers should wait until they are ready.

Moreover, yellow moon marks the end of rain season. For example, Kisukuma expression; "*Omweji goyanga*", "The moon is yellow" indicates that preparation of harvesting season has to begin as crops are expected to be ready to be harvested. Additionally, yellow colour implies the ripening of some fruits like mangoes, bananas and crops like rice as in the following expression; "*Uchele goyanga*", "Yellow rice". Furthermore, red colour is associated with ripening of some fruits. The expression, "*Liti ili lili na matunda Gaza*" "This tree has red fruits" indicates that the fruits are ripe and ready to be harvested.

Colours Referring to Soil Fertility

Yapi 'black' and yakuh 'gray' are used to describe the nature of soil. During cultivation and planting season Sukuma are attracted to farm in areas where soil looks dark and grey with expectation of having good yields during harvesting season. *Lubushi/m'bugha* 'black soil' and *ikhugu* 'clay soil' which is gray in nature are colours of soil fertility, they are attracted to cultivate on these areas because they give them sufficient yields. The implication is that Kisukuma associate these colours with good health of the plants. If the soil loses those colours, the farmers tend to shift to new areas '*kutema*'. If they have decided to stay, various efforts are done to restore the quality of the soil, for example nature manure is added to make soil black as well farms are burned to get gray colour.

Negative Associative Meanings of Kisukuma Colours

In reference positive meanings of colour terms, the findings reveal that Kisukuma colour terms also possess negative associative meanings. In this respect, the followings are the negatives associative meanings for Kisukuma colour terms:

Colours Referring to Bad Luck

Black colour and white colour are connected with bad lucky in some circumstances of uses. Black cat is associated with bad omen especially when a black cat mews loudly; under the circumstance that the cat does not belong to that family or unknown. In Kisukuma culture, a black cat refers to Satanist or devilish. Ethnically, citizens consider a black cat as an awful portent; if an individual in the morning sees a black cat, then he

abruptly senses today is a bad day or when s/he sees in the evening, he sensed as bad night. They must perform rituals and offers sacrifices to protect our families as well their properties. For instance, the expression “*Abonaga nyabu yapi*”, “He saw a black cat” suggests a person to be prepared to face some difficulties. In addition, “black day” is associated with bad fortune, it suggests hardship one faces in life circle, when someone is unsuccessful to what is doing or has bad luck. His /her day/ days are described as black day, for instance expression; “*Siku yane yapi*”, “My day is black”. Therefore, black day are also connected with “darkness”, which hinder people’s success. It implies to days of troubles, suffering and pain.

Furthermore, “a white night” symbolizes sleepless night which is accompanied by many deep thoughts of life’s difficulties one has experienced. For example, “*Nalalaga miso imwene*”, “I slept with my eyes wide open”. This expression is associated with someone who has been unable to sleep due to various challenges facing him, including lack of basic necessities or poor yields and other similar challenges.

Furthermore, white colour in terms of white hair in some circumstance may symbolize old age. Where someone has started to loss his/her energy, at this points a person becomes dependent. Respondents confirm that people with white hair are like children, they have to be helped in various activities, washing them, cultivating for them and the likes. This people are excluded in traditional manual activities while young people become in charge. This implies that in Kisukuma culture people with white hair in term of age, specifically elders are subject to be at the end of their life therefore, they need to rest for what they did in their young age.

Colour Referring to Shame, Negligence and Failure

In Kisukuma culture, white colour, red colour and black colour in some cases are associated with shame, negligence as well as failure. Kisukuma use white colour to describe different people: first, white colour describes people who have nothing in possession, poor economically and they have failed to reach their goals. Secondly, may indicate people who lack charm protection against witches as well as family and community protection against various challenges they are facing or likely to face. The implication is that white person in term of shame, failure and negligence describe people who have failed to win respect in the community in various aspect of life, including recognition, self-actualization as well as self-personality just to mention few.

In addition, black colour is associated with unpopularity something that is not seen and recognizable. In most cases Kisukuma do not consider black as a good colour. When they describe people’s physical appearances. Therefore, this colour is associated with ugliness. For instance, the expression; “*Bure ogonibitaga, onnene oyo ndeopi?*”, “Why are you passing me by? Am I black?” suggests that in some circumstances people with black face seem to be harsh, serious and do not like jokes. They are not recognized because some people fear to contact them.

Colours Referring to Hatred

Black colour is associated with unkindness, when one does bad things to others; not helping others, being jealous and the likes. People with such traits are described as people with black heart. For instance, the expression, “*Ule na ngh’olo yapi*”, “You have a black

heart” suggests unkind, jealousy and selfish that one has towards others therefore, people perceive them as helpless; their helps are associated with darkness and curse because they seemed to help by force.

Colours Referring to Death and Warning

In Kisukuma culture black colour, white colour and red colour are associated with danger and or a warning. Black cloud is a symbol of disaster, death and depression. When the clouds look dark during the rainy season, there is high possibility for the rain to be distractive. The expression; “*Ilunde lyape lyaheganaga*”, “Black cloud over showered” implies that the rain that is about to come might be to be heavy. Hence, it is not friendly to plants, human being as well their material goods. It warns people and ask them take various precautions.

Furthermore, in other circumstances “black heart” is associated with fear and warning as in the expression; “*Eng’holo yane yabizaga yapi*” “My heart has become black” this implies that one has got bad impression on a certain issue or has sensed a danger therefore, black colour is used to warn people against bad things that may happen.

Moreover, red colour in term of the blood, when is outside human is associated with danger and warning. The expression; “*Mininga akudekaga*” “The blood will be shed” implies that anything bad will happen. Hence it indicates danger. Also, red face, emotionally it is associated with anger and seriousness upon what one does not like. The expression; “*Miso yakwe yabizaga gaza*” “His eyes turned red” implies that a person is in bad mood, hence he warns people not to distract him. Similarly, wild animals with red teeth are associated to be in angry mood.

Moreover, red colour, black colour and yellow colour are associated with a certain type of a disease to humans and plants. The red colour in term of blood, black colour and the green colour when are found in human stool suggest bad sign to human health. Furthermore, yellow colour is associated with human and plant disease. When the human skin or human eyes turned yellow is associated with anemia. Additionally, in case of plants when are immature, yellow colour suggests that the plants are attacked with certain type of disease, hence they about to wither.

Colour Referring to Untidiness

Black colour is associated with dirtiness in term of the clothes as in the expression; “*Nzobe ozwalaga ngobo*” “Nzobe is wearing black clothes” suggests that ‘Nzobe’ is wearing dirty clothes

CONCLUSION

This study discussed Kisukuma colour terms focusing on associative meanings encoded in colours. Based on the findings of the study, it can be affirmed that associative meanings of colour terms are language-specific; each community has its own way of describing colour terms and their meaning. The reason behind this is that colour terms are bound to people’s experiences. Of the data, positive associative meanings in Kisukuma colour refer to conditions including; Purity; Blessing; Superstition beliefs; Wealth; Good luck; Life; Hope; Love; Beauty; Bravery; Peace; Planting and Harvesting seasons; and

Soil fertility. Meanwhile, the negative associative meanings refer to the condition of; Bad luck; Shame, Negligence and Failure; Hatred; Death and Warning; and Untidiness.

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