

Semantic and cultural analysis of the terms for *ink* in the Slavic languages

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Abstract: *Semantic and cultural analysis of the terms for 'ink' in the Slavic languages*

*This text will analyze the semantic and cultural motivation of the terms for **ink** in the Slavic languages and their dialects, followed by an etymological analysis of the corresponding terms in other European languages. The VIII Lexical volume of the General Slavic Linguistic Atlas (OLA) will be taken as a foundation; it contains the terms for **ink** in the Slavic dialects, i.e. approximately 850 settlements on the entire Slavic territory. Namely, various terms are used to refer to **ink** in the different linguistic areas of the Slavic territory, such as мастило, чернила, tinta, atrament, inkoust etc. This text will analyze their geographic distribution while presenting the semantic motivation of appropriate terms through etymological analysis. Taking the geographic distribution of the various terms for **ink** into consideration, the compatibility of areas is evident according to both the etymology of appropriate terms and the cultural influence that encompassed the appropriate semantic motivation.*

*By analyzing various terms for **ink**, my tendency is to illustrate that lexical diversity does not depend only on lexical heritage, but on other factors as well, such as civilization and culture.*

Key words: *language and culture, semantics, etymology, linguistic analysis*

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Geographical distribution

In terms of geographical distribution of the terms for *ink* in the Slavic languages and their dialects, an impressive compatibility of the areals is noted. Thus, on the entire Russian territory, the term *чернила* occurs (with several phonetic variants). On the Belarus linguistic territory, *чернило* and *чернила* are used, along with *атрамант* in several points of the western Belarus territory. On the Ukrainian language territory, more precisely in its eastern and central part, *чернило* and *чернила* appear, whereas in the west, in addition to the abovementioned terms, uses *атрамент*, *антрамент*, leaving the southwest with *тинта* dominating.

On the Polish territory, the term *atrament* dominates, while northern Poland uses *tinta*, *inkost* and *inkast*. On the Sorbian territory, *tinta* occurs. On the Czech territory, *inkoust* dominates, while Slovakia is divided: the west uses *atrament*, while the east uses *tinta*. The same form (*tinta*) appears on the entire territory of Slovenia. However, in several points, different forms, such as *ingjstri* and *črnilo* are used. On the territory of Bosnia and Croatia, *tinta* dominates. Nevertheless, *mastilo* is used in some points of Bosnia and *crnilo* is used in some points of Croatia. The form *mastilo* is dominant on the territory of Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia. In several points of Macedonia, *муреке* and *мурукун* are used, whereas the southern dialects use *каламар* and *мелан*. To complete the picture, some of the terms for *масило* will be illustrated in several European languages. Namely, English uses *ink*, German: *Tinte*, French: *encre*, Italian: *inchostro*, Spanish and Portuguese: *tinta*, while Swedish, Danish and Norwegian: *black*, *blæk* and *blekk*. In Latin, the term for *ink* is *atramentum*, Greek: *μελάνη* and Turkish : *mürekkep*. It is important to state that in two of the neighboring languages of the Slavic territory, there are accepted forms, such as *cerneală* in Romanian and *bojë* (*shkrimi*) in Albanian.

Etymological analysis

Terms such as *чернило*, *чернила*, *črnilo* and *crnilo*, derive from Proto-Slavic and Balto-Slavic adjective **сътънь*, meaning ‘black color’ (Skok 1971:277), from which the term *црнило* is formed as a loan-translation from the Latin *atramentum*.

The term *масило* is of a Proto-Slavic origin. Namely, it originates from a Proto-Slavic form **mast*, with reference to ‘color’ and , along with *maslo* (oil), derives from Proto-Slavic verbal root **maz-* ‘mazati’ (Skok 1971:383; ЭССЯ 1993: в.18).

With the exception of these two terms (*чернило* and *масило*), all terms for *ink* on the Slavic territory are of a foreign origin. Thus, the following forms: *атрамант* and *atrament*, from the Belarus, Ukrainian, Polish and Slovakian territories, derive from

the Latin term *atramentum*. *Atramentum* in Latin refers to 'ink, black pigment' which itself derives from *ater* ('black, dark; dark-colored'), (OLD, 1982). Certain types of terms, such as *inkost*, *inkast*, *inkoust* and *ingjustri*, which dominate on the Polish territory, appear in the Czech and several points of the Slovenian territory; they originate from the Latin *encaustum*, meaning 'purple or red ink', which was used by Roman emperors to sign official documents. This term is related to the ancient Greek ἔγκαιστος ('burned-in'), from ἐν 'in' + καίω ('to burn'). This term illustrates the common etymological thread with the terms **ink** in English, *encre* in French and *inchiostro* in Italian. Forms such as *tinta*, occurring in the Ukrainian, Slovakian, Polish, Sorbian, Slovenian, Bosnian and Croatian territories, result from infiltration by the German *Tinte* (*ink*) and Italian *tinta* ('dye, color, paint'). The etymology of this term leads to the Latin *tinctus* 'dyeing' deriving from the verb *tingō*, *tingere*, meaning 'color, dye'. As stated above, on the Macedonian territory, *муреке* and *мурукун* occur in several points, whereas in the southern Macedonian dialects, the form *мелан* is used, originating from the Greek term *μελάνι*, meaning 'ink'. The following forms: *муреке* and *мурукун* originate from the Turkish term for 'ink,' – *mürekkep*, and symbolize a Balkan Turkish word with Arabic origin - *muräkkäb* ('compound, mixed') (Skok 1971: 485). They can be encountered in Bosnia, Kosovo, Bulgaria and Albania as well.

Semantic motivation

Considering the etymological analysis of the various terms for 'мастило' (*ink*), the compatibility of the areals can be noticed through the cultural impacts, which include a semantic motivation. Thus, the abovementioned terms for 'мастило' (*ink*) can be mentioned under several semantic threads.

In all of the semantic threads, there is a semantic motivation 'to dye, to color', including 'color' and types of color.

1. 'to dye, to color'

The primary use of 'ink' was not related to writing, but to the possibility of 'dyeing, coloring' a material – hence the relation of 'painting' to a subsequent use of a certain liquid substances for writing.

This semantic thread encompasses the terms, such as *мастило* (from * *mazati*, to paint), and *tinta*. As stated above, the first term originates from the Proto-Slavic **mazati*, meaning 'to paint, dye color,' and the latter from the Latin *tingō*, *tingere*, meaning 'color, dye'. The forms *муреке* and *мурукун*, from '*muräkkäb*, ('compound, mixed') can be included in this category.

2. 'black color'

The use of black pigment, more precisely black color for writing, is one of the semantic motivations which, although through various terms, is encountered in a vast European territory. Thus, vastly used terms in the eastern Slavic territory and, partially on the rest of its territory, are *чернило*, *чернила*, *črnilo* and *crnilo* which, as mentioned above, originate from the Proto-Slavic and Balto-Slavic adjective **сѣрънъ* (black). The identical semantic motivation is present in the following terms: *атрамант* and *atrament*, from the Latin term *atramentum*, deriving from *ater* ('black, dark-colored'). Similarly, the form *мелан*, originating from the Greek term *μελάνι*, has an identical semantic motivation, deriving from *μέλας* ('black').

As mentioned, the introduction of *чернила* and *чернило* as 'ink' in the Slavic languages has been motivated according to the Latin term *atramentum*. It is worth mentioning that this semantic thread dominates in the Nordic languages (Swedish, Danish and Norwegian), where forms, such as *black*, *blæk* and *blekk* occur.

1. 'red color, fire'

Along with black color as a basic color for ink, the languages covered terms that derived from 'dark red, burning red' which was used as ink, as well.

This semantic thread covers terms, such as *inkost*, *inkast*, *inkoust* and *ingjustri*, which occur in the Slavic territory, as well as terms in other languages: *ink* in English, *encre* in French and *inchiostro* in Italian.

All of these terms originate from the Latin *encaustum*, meaning 'purple or red ink', which was used by the Roman Emperors to sign official documents. Although this type of ink was used primarily for official documents, its meaning developed through history.

Conclusion

From this histogram of geographical distribution and the analysis of semantic motivation of the terms for 'ink', several conclusions can be derived in the Slavic languages and dialects. Regarding the geographical distribution, the compact areals of the Slavic territory demonstrate both the linguistic and cultural history of proper ethnicities. It can be concluded that in certain Slavic languages, regarding lexicology, the linguistic heritage derives from material culture and written tradition. Thus, the following terms: *чернило*, *чернила*, *crnilo* and *mastilo*, originating from the Proto-Slavic linguistic stratum, cover a vast territory. In the remaining areals, where the

terms *атрамант*, *atrament*, *inkost*, *inkast*, *inkoust*, *ingjustri* and *tinta* occur, it is concluded that cultural impact has had a primary role for the infiltration of these terms in proper languages.

The analysis of the semantic motivation of the terms for 'ink' illustrates the expansibility and the richness of the semantic nucleuses, developed through the history of civilizations. Similarly, this analysis demonstrates that lexical variety does not depend only on the linguistic heritage, but on other factors as well, such as civilization and culture. Thus, for instance, although on the Polish territory, there is a foreign term *атрамент*, whereas on the Russian, Belarus and Ukrainian – *чернила* is used, the semantic thread that connects them is identical – 'black color'. These analyses of lexicological and cultural spheres can lead to further interesting discoveries for the cultural and linguistic tradition of the Slavic ethnicities.

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