

# ON THE COLOURFUL VARIETY OF COLOUR TERMS IN A HUNGARIAN DIALECT<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

*The paper discusses the basic colour term vörös (vörös) ‘red’ in the Hungarian Kolon dialect, in relation to piros, also ‘red’. At present vörös still has its function, distinguished from piros in terms of both denotation and connotation. Functional differences are also due to the fact that the cognitive processes behind the two colour terms, as shown by their respective etymologies, had different bases. The colour term vörös (vörös) goes back to vér ‘blood’, whereas piros has its source in pír ‘flush, blush’. In addition, vörös conforms in every way to the criteria of basic colour terms. However, certain signs indicate that vörös is losing ground, according to the statistical data presented in the paper, partly as a result of areal effects.*

**Keywords:** colour term, distribution of colour terms, frequency, Kolon dialect, standard Hungarian

## 1. Early research on Hungarian colour terms

Although from different perspectives and with different theoretical-methodological assumptions, both international and Hungarian investigations have long addressed the topic of colour terms. In Hungarian linguistics, interest in colour terms first appeared in the late 19th century and has continued to this day. More than half a century before the seminal work of Brent Berlin and Paul Kay was published, several papers in the journals *Magyar Nyelvőr* and *Magyar Nyelv* had been devoted to the use patterns of *piros* and *vörös* (both meaning ‘red’) (Csapodi 1899, Gárdonyi 1920, Kenedy 1921, Selényi 1948). Even after Berlin and Kay’s (1969) theory was published, these two colour terms have been at the centre of the most heated debates on colour terminology in Hungarian.

1899 saw the appearance of István Csapodi’s paper *Vörös and piros*, which, as the title suggests, discussed the usage of these two colour terms. Csapodi’s paper, which had been presented at a meeting of the Budapest Royal Association of Doctors, made the proposal that the spheres of use of *piros* and *vörös* be distinguished on the basis of scientific convention. The article listed 23 hues of *vörös* and 16 hues of *piros*. To contextualise the proposal, Csapodi (1899) enumerated four “simple” or “major colours” (*vörös* ‘red’, *sárga* ‘yellow’, *zöld* ‘green’, *kék* ‘blue’) and two “colourless colours” (*fehér* ‘white’, *fekete* ‘black’). Thus, for Csapodi (1899), *vörös* was among the four “major colours”.

Csapodi’s (1899: 203) proposal that “the *vörös* attribute be adopted to designate the red colour group turning into yellow”, was dismissed by József Gárdonyi in his paper published

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in 1920 (*Piros vagy vörös*). His main argument referred to the terms *vörösrépa* (literally ‘red beetroot’, a folk term for ‘beetroot’) and *vöröskáposzta* ‘red cabbage’. Subsequently he reached the conclusion on the basis of evidence from various sources (language records, fiction, folk songs, spoken discourse) that *piros* and *vörös* were names of the same colour, their use depending on whether the concept evoked a positive or negative, pleasant or unpleasant emotion, mood, or attitude in the individual. This implies that the choice between the two terms is not arbitrary; rather, both have their specific functions.

Chronologically the next was an article by Géza Kenedy (1921). While agreeing with Gárdonyi (1920) on the issue of the two colour terms, Kenedy (1921) was adding that the distinction between *piros* and *vörös* was made not only on an emotional basis, but rather the two “also differ in their actual colour effects, both having a real autonomy in our consciousness” (Kenedy 1921: 33). He regarded *vörös* as a basic colour term, and speculated that it would push *piros* out of existence, since the two were often mixed up in the prestigious language use of his era, with *piros* replaced by *vörös*. Today’s research data suggest precisely the opposite, however (see Section 2).

Finally, Pál Selényi’s paper in 1948 did little more than summarise the views just mentioned (Selényi 1948: 12–14).

## 2. The theory of basic colour terms by Brent Berlin and Paul Kay

1969 marked a breakthrough in international research on colour terminology. This is the year when the monograph *Basic Color Terms* was published (Berlin–Kay 1969), opening up new avenues in research on the universals of colour term lexicalisation, and also suggesting new, thought-provoking analytic possibilities with regard to the names of colours in Hungarian. Their theory refuted the previously dominant view that had seen the names of basic colours as arbitrary, language-specific, and thus supporting no universal generalisations. Berlin and Kay (1969) argued for the non-arbitrary basis of basic colour terms, showing up semantic universals behind the selection and ordering of their lexicalisation. Although the theory has faced a fair amount of criticism, most of today’s research on colour terminology still regards it as foundational.

As is well known, the number of colour terms varies significantly across cultures. However, despite the heterogeneity of cultures, basic colour terms “implement a universal list of colours, generally in a universal order of importance” (Tolcsvai Nagy 2013: 116). Further support for Berlin and Kay’s theory has come from prototype theory, commonly adopted in cognitive linguistics, which has developed similar views about the emergence of colour terms by exploring correspondences between language and general cognition. Folk categorisation (as opposed to scientific categorisation) is based on the prototype principle, and correlates strongly with naming, which was first successfully established with respect to the hierarchy of colour terms (Tolcsvai Nagy 2010: 26).

Quantitative cross-cultural differences in colour terminology are generally motivated by the level of cultural and technological development of a given society. This view is not without empirical support, as the technologically least developed societies employ the lowest number of colour terms, whereas technologically advanced societies make use of all eleven colour terms. This can also be put down to the fact that the colour spectrum has objective reality outside of our consciousness, but despite the underlying similarity of human thought across societies, cultural and technological progress necessarily gives rise to a more fine-grained classification (cf. Wardhaugh 1995: 207).

Based on the study of colour terms in 98 languages, Berlin and Kay (1969) reached the following two conclusions. Firstly, each language selects the colours to be named out of a list of 11 basic colour categories, and these are the basic colours in each language. Secondly, not all languages possess each of the 11 colour terms; however, the emergence of colour terms follows a specific order involving seven stages.

The 11 colour terms are the following.

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

When a language has only two basic colour terms, then these are always *white* and *black*. When a third one emerges, then this is *red*. A new basic colour term only appears when those to its left in the hierarchy are already part of the language (Kicsi 1988: 458). In addition, Berlin and Kay (1969) noted that some languages have more than 11 basic colour terms, e.g. with Russian having *sinij* ‘dark blue’ as well as *goluboj* ‘light blue’. The authors also assume that in Hungarian, the colour red is designated by two basic colour terms, *piros* and *vörös*, the former being the primary and the latter the secondary variant (Berlin–Kay 1969: 36).

Berlin and Kay (1969) also defined criteria for basic colour terms. A basic colour term has the following properties: 1) it is monolexemic, or at least morphologically simple, 2) it is in general and frequent use, 3) its signification is not included in that of any other term, 4) its application is not restricted to a narrow class of objects, 5) it is not a new loanword, although older borrowings are permitted (e.g. *sárga* ‘yellow’, *zöld* ‘green’, *kék* ‘blue’ in Hungarian).

### 3. Recent studies on Hungarian colour terms

Berlin and Kay’s (1969) theory was presented in detail with illustrations from Hungarian and other languages by Kicsi (1988). In his paper, the lexicalisation patterns and stages of Hungarian colour terms were highlighted with examples from the standard variety of the language, supplemented by some remarks on dialectal differences (Kicsi 1988: 456–467).

More recent studies usually take Berlin and Kay (1969) as a point of departure, and in the context of presenting the Hungarian system, they place special emphasis on *piros* and *vörös*. Unlike what we find in early research on the distinction (cf. Section 1), new investigations address the question whether both *piros* and *vörös* are basic colour terms, and if only one of them, then which one. Research has been conducted in a variety of theoretical and methodological frameworks (sociolinguistic, cognitive, contrastive and areal linguistic), whose detailed overview is beyond the scope of this paper. These frameworks have given a new impetus to research into colour terminology (cf. Barratt–Kontra 1996; Kiss–Forbes 2001, De Bie–Kerékjártó 2003, Kiss 2004, Uusküla–Sutrop 2007, Uusküla 2011, Benczes and Tóth–Czifra 2013). The researchers agree on the basic colour term status of *piros*, with the controversy surrounding *vörös* only. One group of researchers finds both *piros* and *vörös* to be basic colour terms (see e.g. De Bie–Kerékjártó 2003, Kiss 2004). Another group takes *vörös* to denote only a hue within the domain of the basic colour term *piros* (cf. Uusküla–Sutrop 2007,

Uusküla 2011, Benczes and Tóth-Czifra 2013). In one of her studies, Mari Uusküla (2011) approaches the corresponding pairs of colour terms in Hungarian and Czech (*piros*, *vörös* : *červená*, *rudá*) from an areal linguistic perspective, and reaches the conclusion that both languages have only one basic colour term for designating the colour in question, *piros* in Hungarian and *červená* in Czech, with *vörös* and *rudá* consequently not counting as basic colour terms.<sup>2</sup>

Most of the studies presented so far, including earlier investigations, are predominantly based on data from standard Hungarian. Although some papers include a limited number of remarks on the usage of dialectal colour terms (cf. Gárdonyi 1920, Kicsi 1988), the colour terms in their data sample are usually only phonologically different from their standard equivalents. Most works on dialectal colour terms were published in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Mátray 1910, Csúri 1922, Bartha 1937, Sándor 1937). Thus it would be worthwhile conducting a new survey on dialectal variation in colour terminology, since recent decades have seen unprecedented changes in the traditional society, and concomitantly also the language and culture of Hungarian villages. Furthermore, the Atlas of Hungarian Dialects (*A magyar nyelvjárások atlasza [MNYA]*, 1968–1977), considered as a treasure trove of Hungarian dialectology, and especially the five volumes of the New Hungarian Dialectal Dictionary (*Új Magyar Tájszótár [ÚMTsz]*, 1979–2010) would supply ample material for studying the Hungarian “folk” terminology of colours.

The linguistic, cultural and social situation just depicted has prompted me to explore colour terms in the Kolon dialect of Hungarian. The section below discusses data collected in 2014.

#### 4. Colour terms of the Kolon dialects

My investigations concern colour terms in the Palóc dialect of Kolon (Kolíňany, Slovakia) in the Nitra region. Based on the previously collected data and observations (I live in the village), I started the research with the hypothesis that speakers of the dialect knew and were using the standard colour terms, but would turn out to know dialectal colour terms (preserved archaisms) as well. I further assumed that these latter might bring us closer to an understanding of the hierarchy and evolution of colour terms in the Kolon dialect, and also to an account of the differences in meaning and use between *piros* and *vörös*.

In short, the research had the objective of describing the system of colour terms in the Kolon dialect.

The municipality of Kolon is a characteristic village of the Hungarian language island of the Nitra region. Its Palóc dialect and folk culture have preserved several archaic properties, which have attracted the interest of dialectologists and ethnographers since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to the 2011 census, Kolon had 1570 residents, with the Hungarian population accounting for 49,7% and the Slovaks for 43,2% (Mózes 2012).

The dominant Hungarian language variety of the village is the dialect, used most consistently by the elderly, especially the women. With this situation and the research objective in mind, I selected 10 informants (from 62 to 85 years of age) from elderly women. These

<sup>2</sup> Mari Uusküla presents the results of her research conducted in 2002–2003, involving 125 dialectal speakers in Hungary, in the paper “Terms for red in Central Europe. An areal phenomenon in Hungarian and Czech”. A similar study of colour terminology was subsequently carried out in Prague and Brno in 2007, with 52 informants (Uusküla 2011: 148–149).

informants had all been for a longer or shorter period members of the local folklore group, knew and had a habit of wearing the traditional clothes of Kolon (some even on a daily basis). Therefore I had reason to suppose that they were well aware of colour terms typical of this dialect, including archaic ones. In particular, I assumed that they would still remember the language use of their parents and grandparents, hence even more or less obsolete colour terms could be brought to the surface. The informants, who are by their own admission dominant bilingual speakers of Hungarian, responded to my questions about colour terms as part of a directed interview conducted in their homes in September 2014.

#### 4.1. Colour terms in the Kolon dialect

Answers to the first question (*Sorolja fel, milyen színneveket ismer?* ‘Please list which colour names you know’ included the 46 colour terms in Figure 1 below, here listed in order of frequency. The data were transcribed phonologically, i.e. I ignored the unrounded *á* and rounded *ā* sounds characteristic of the Palóc dialect which were systematically produced by the informants.

Order of frequency	Colour term	Frequency of occurrence
1. 12 colour terms in total:	<i>piross</i> ‘red’, <i>bordó</i> ‘claret’, <i>szürke</i> ‘grey’, <i>fehér</i> ‘white’, <i>rúzsaszínyő~rúzsaszín</i> ‘pink’, <i>zöld</i> ‘green’, <i>barna</i> ‘brown’, <i>kék</i> ‘blue’, <i>sárga</i> ‘yellow’, <i>lila</i> ‘purple’, <i>vörös</i> ‘red’, <i>fekete</i> ‘black’.	10
2. 3 colour terms in total:	<i>kávészínyő~kávésbarna</i> ‘coffee coloured~coffee brown’, <i>hamuszínyő~hamusziürke</i> ‘ash-coloured~ash-grey’, <i>narancsszínyő~narancssárga</i> ‘orange-coloured~orange-yellow’	9
3. 5 colour terms in total:	<i>vélágoskék</i> ‘light blue’, <i>sétítkék</i> ‘dark blue’, <i>tíglaszínyő</i> ‘brick-coloured’, <i>halványkék</i> ‘pale blue’, <i>ékszínkék</i> ‘sky blue’	8
4. 8 colour terms in total:	<i>lángszínyő</i> ‘flame-coloured’, <i>halványzöld</i> ‘pale green’, <i>sétítzöld</i> ‘dark green’, <i>tíglavörös</i> ‘brick red’, <i>libazöld</i> ‘goose green’, <i>világosbarna</i> ‘light brown’, <i>sétítbarna</i> ‘dark brown’, <i>gyengekék</i> ‘weak blue’	7
5. 6 colour terms in total:	<i>bézs</i> ‘beige’, <i>krémszínyő</i> ‘cream-coloured’, <i>világoszöld</i> ‘light green’, <i>katonazöld</i> ‘soldier green’, <i>szivaszínyő</i> ‘plum-coloured’, <i>füstszínyő</i> ‘smoke-coloured’	6

Order of frequency	Colour term	Frequency of occurrence
6. 7 colour terms in total:	<i>agyagszínű</i> ‘clay-coloured’, <i>drapp</i> ‘drab’, <i>fűzöld</i> ‘grass green’, <i>földszínű</i> ‘earth-coloured’, <i>aranyszínű</i> ‘gold-coloured’, <i>gyöngékék</i> ‘weak blue’, <i>borsózöld</i> ‘pea green’	5
7. 3 colour terms in total:	<i>szivakék</i> ‘plum blue’, <i>ibolyakék</i> ‘violet blue’, <i>füstszínű</i> ‘smoke-coloured’	4
8. 1 colour term:	<i>okkér</i> ‘ocher’	3
9. 2 colour terms:	<i>sárszínű</i> ‘mud-coloured’, <i>szarszínű</i> ‘shit-coloured’	1
47 colour terms in total		

Figure 1: Colour terms in the Kolon dialect in order of frequency

As we compare the frequency of colour terms in the Kolon dialect with the findings of Gábor Kiss about standard Hungarian (based on data from 98 informants), we can say that the 12 most frequent colour terms are identical, with the exception of *narancssárga* ‘orange’, which is missing from the Kolon data (cf. Kiss–Forbes 2001: 194). A similar result is obtained when these data are compared with those of Réka Benczes and Erzsébet Tóth-Czifra (2013: 129), who established the order of frequency of colour terms on the basis of the Hungarian National Corpus. This (i.e. standard and dialectal data are similar) marks one of the differences from the investigations carried out by Mari Uusküla and Urmas Sutrop, the other one concerning the frequency of *vörös*. While in my Kolon data, *vörös* is one of the 12 most frequent colour terms, it does not make it into the top 12 in Uusküla and Sutrop (2007: 108). Finally, it deserves special mention that circumscriptions substituting for colour terms in the Kolon dialect more strongly reflect folk conceptualisations derived from local knowledge, as evidenced by data which are absent from standard Hungarian (see below).

In terms of morphological structure, the 47 colour terms of the Kolon dialect include 14 monolexemes and 32 compounds.

**Monolexemes** designate either basic colours (*fehér* ‘white’, *fekete* ‘black’, *vörös* ‘red’, *piross* ‘red’, *sárga* ‘yellow’, *zöld* ‘green’, *kék* ‘blue’, *barna* ‘brown’, *lila* ‘purple’, *szürke* ‘grey’), or they are later borrowings denoting special hues (*bézs*, *bordó*, *drapp*, *okkér*; cf. Tótfalusi 2004: 109; TESz. [Historical-Etymological Dictionary of Hungarian]. 1/344, 677; 2/107–1071).

**Compounds** include circumscriptions for hues as well as paraphrases for basic colour terms.

In the case of **hues**, the first component expresses a hue of the basic colour denoted by the second component. The first component may be an adjective, or it may be a noun motivated by some perceived similarity. Typical members of the former group include *halvány-* ‘pale’, *sötét--sötét* ‘dark’, *vélágos--világos* ‘light’, cf. *vélágoskék* ‘light blue’, *sötétkék* ‘dark blue’, *halványkék* ‘pale blue’, *halványzöld* ‘pale green’, *világoszöld* ‘light green’, *sötétzöld* ‘dark green’, *sötétbarna* ‘dark brown’, *világosbarna* ‘light brown’, etc. A peculiar element not used in standard Hungarian in this way is *gyenge-* ‘weak’, as in *gyöngékék* ‘weak blue (pale blue)’.

Nominal first components of paraphrases based on perceptual similarity are related to concepts known to the entire community, cf. *borsózód* 'pea green', *fűzöd* 'grass green', *libazód* 'goose green'; *ibolyakék* 'violet blue', *szivakék* 'plum blue'; *tíglavörös* 'brick red', etc.

The second component of a compound may be a basic colour term (see above), or the adjective *-színyő* (standard *-színű*, 'coloured'). In the latter case the first component denotes a familiar concept whose choice is motivated by perceived similarity. Examples include *agyagszínyő* 'clay coloured', *földszínyő* 'earth-coloured', *krémszínyő* 'cream-coloured', *lángszínyő* 'flame-coloured', *narancsszínyő* 'orange-coloured', *sárszínyő* 'mud-coloured' and *tíglaszínyő* 'brick-coloured'.

Circumscriptions for present-day basic colour terms include *hamuszínyő* 'grey (literally ash-coloured)', *kávészínyő* 'brown (lit. coffee-coloured)', *szivaszínyő* 'blue (lit. plum-coloured)'. So far I have not managed to elicit a paraphrase for *lila* 'purple' from my informants, but Arany's monograph on the Kolon dialect does include the word *ciklaszínyő* 'beetroot-coloured' in this capacity (Arany 1944/1967: 98). The colour terms of Kolon listed above stand for four basic colour terms of today's language use which have a more recent history in the dialect (*kék* 'blue', *barna* 'brown', *lila* 'purple', *szürke* 'grey'). The circumscriptions are becoming increasingly obsolete, with elderly people still recognising and occasionally using them but even they tend to adopt the standard colour terms instead.

Let us now bring the expression *kávészínyő* 'brown' under closer scrutiny. The standard colour term *barna* 'brown' can be traced back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century in the history of Hungarian; however, in earlier periods and in dialects it was/is functioning as a synonym of *sötét* 'dark' (cf. TESz. 1/253; ÚMTsz. [New Hungarian Dialectal Dictionary] 1/352). In reference to people it continues to denote a dark colour of the skin, hair or eyes: *szib barna ember* 'nice man with brown skin, hair or eyes (lit. nice brown man'. In other words, *barna* was not a basic colour term originally, and it is a typical strategy of communities employing fewer basic colour terms that they use circumscriptions for the missing ones. The circumscriptions still in currency today can be seen as residual elements surviving from an earlier period when they occupied the positions that would be later replaced by today's standard colour terms (*kék* : *szivaszínyő*, *barna* : *kávészínyő*, *lila* : *ciklaszínyő*, *szürke* : *hamuszínyő*). However, the circumscriptions must have been applicable to a more restricted set of objects. Paraphrases expressing 'brown' have also been documented in other dialectal regions. In Martos, for example, *kávéfalu* used to mean 'brown', cf. *Kávéfalu keszkenyő vót a fejémén* 'A brown kerchief was on my head'. A 1926 record from Magyarókerke has a similar meaning, namely *kávé földű: kávéföggű* 'brown <kerchief>' (ÚMTsz.: 3/156). These data support the conclusion that instead of today's basic colour term *barna* 'brown', metaphorical circumscriptions were previously in use.

It is common phenomenon in colour terminology that when there are fewer basic colour terms, each of these spans a larger colour spectrum (cf. Kicsi 1988: 459). This is also attested in my Kolon data. In the 1970's, I noted that the oldest residents of the village were calling the colour brown *piros*, cf. *piros fazécska* 'small brown pot'. In other words, the basic colour term *piros* referred to a broader colour spectrum, also covering the region now denoted by *barna* 'brown'. This is also the likely reason for *piros* used to denote the colour of horse or cattle, cf. *piros tehén* 'brown cow', *piros ló* ('light bay horse', 'horse with a brownish colour', cf. ÉKsz. [Dictionary of the Hungarian Language] 1071; ÚMTsz. 4/501). In addition, it may motivate the expression *a húst/kalácsot pirosrá sütjük* 'we are frying the meet/baking the milk loaf [until it is] brown'.

#### 4.2. The distinction between *piros* and *vörös*

To the question *Mi a különbség a piros és a vörös között?* ‘What is the difference between *piros* and *vörös*?’, each informant began the explanation with the definition of *vörös*. The colour denoted by *vörös* (or *vörös*, as it is pronounced in Kolon) is *sötétebb, intenzívebb, élénkebb, rikítósaabb* ‘darker, more intense, more vivid, more flashy’, whereas *piros* is a *vélágosabb, kevésbé élénk, teltebb szín* ‘lighter, less vivid, richer colour’.

The next question, *Mi lehet piros, ill. vörös?* ‘What can be *piros* or *vörös*?’ was already directed at patterns of use. According to the answers,

- a) **the following can only be *piros*** (24 concepts in total): *alma* ‘apple’, *autó* ‘car’, *blúz* ‘blouse’, *bor* ‘wine’, *cipő* ‘shoe’, *csérsnye* ‘cherry’, *csinvatt* (‘woven pillow case’), *csipke* ‘lace’, *epér* ‘strawberry’, *hejkötő/hajkötő/szallag* ‘hair ribbon’, *kazmír nyagbavaló (kendő)* ‘kashmir scarf’, *labda* ‘ball’, *málna* ‘raspberry’, *muskátlı* ‘geranium’, *paradicsom* ‘tomato’, *pipacs* ‘poppy flower’, *pirospaprika* ‘red pepper’, *puszrik* (‘folk waistcoat for women’), *pünkösđ* ‘pentecost’, *reték* ‘radish’, *ribizlyi/ribizli* ‘red currant’, *szív* ‘heart’, *szoknya* ‘skirt’, *tulipán* ‘tulip’.
- b) **the following can only be *vörös*** (3 concepts in total): *csillag* ‘star’, *haj* ‘hair’, *róka* ‘fox’.
- c) **the following can be either *piros* or *vörös*** (9 concepts in total): *hús* ‘meat’, *köröm* ‘nail (on finger)’, *ló* ‘horse’, *méggy* ‘sour cherry’, *orca/arc* ‘face’, *orr* ‘nose’, *rúzsza/rózsa* ‘rose’, *száj* (‘lip’), *zászló* ‘flag’.

As we compare these data to those gathered about standard Hungarian, we may draw the conclusion that the only discrepancy (apart from concepts specific to local folk culture) concerns *bor* ‘wine’, which collocates with *vörös* in standard Hungarian, although *piros* is also documented (cf. Kiss 2004: 162). The local dialectal norm of Kolon requires the use of *piros*, however, and this is generally considered by locals to derive from Slovak linguistic influence (cf. *červené víno* ‘red wine’, in which the Slovak basic colour term *červený* is found). Alternatively, the phenomenon may be a preserved archaism as well, supported by the fact that it also occurs in dialects which have no contact with the Slovak language (see Gárdonyi 1920: 86). In any case, intense contact with the Slovak language must have reinforced the survival of the pattern.

With one exception, concepts demanding the use of *vörös* are identical to the data in Gábor Kiss’s article (2004: 162–163). The exception concerns *méggy* ‘sour cherry’, which can only be *vörös* according to Kiss’s corpus, whereas in the Kolon dialect it may be either *piros* or *vörös*. In the context of fruit descriptions, my informants from Kolon are of the opinion that *vörös* may suggest overripe state or poor quality.

In reference to parts of the human body (*orca/arc* ‘face’, *száj* ‘lip’ [in standard Hungarian, ‘mouth’], *köröm* ‘nail’, *orr* ‘nose’), the informants unanimously claim that the attribute *vörös* has a negative meaning. Some interview subjects brought up the proverb *Vörös róka, vörös ló, vörös ember egy se jó* ‘Red fox, red horse, red man: none of them is good’ in support of this view. In their opinion, *vörös orca/arc* refers to a red face resulting from anger or humiliation, whereas *piros orca/arc* designates a nice and healthy face. The informants also demonstrated the difference by comparing the verbs *elvörösödött*, *kivörösödött* and *elpirosodott*, *kipirosodott*, all of which denote the process of turning red, but with negative vs. positive connotations depending on their roots. The interview subjects believe that *vörös orr* ‘red nose’ is used to refer to a red nose resulting from drunkenness. Finally, *vörös*



*száj* ('red lip', i.e. 'strongly rouged lip') and *vörös köröm* 'red nail' designate what have until recently been highly stigmatised phenomena, receiving angry, often vulgar criticism.

## 5. Summary

To summarise what has been said above, *vörös* (*vörös*) 'red' continues to be a basic colour term in the Kolon dialect. However, certain signs indicate that it is losing ground, partly as a result of areal effects (with neighbouring languages, excepting Czech, only using one basic colour term for 'red'). At present *vörös* still has its function, distinguished from *piros* in terms of both denotation and connotation. Functional differences are also due to the fact that the cognitive processes behind the two colour terms, as shown by their respective etymologies, had different bases. The colour term *vörös* (*vörös*) goes back to *vér* 'blood', whereas *piros* has its source in *pír* 'flush, blush' (TESz. 3/1178; 3/208). In addition, *vörös* conforms in every way to the criteria of basic colour terms discussed above. The fact that this monolexic colour term has been part of Hungarian for a long time, and thus also in all probability of the Kolon dialect as well, is demonstrated by its first written record. In particular, after the records of *fehér* 'white' and *fekete* 'black' from 1055 (TESz. 1/860, 867), the next colour term to show up is *vörös* from the year 1121 (TESz. 3/1178), followed more than a hundred years later by *piros* in 1237 (TESz.3/208). Thus of the two colour terms under study, *vörös* has the earlier record. The same also goes for written records of family names, with *Veres* appearing almost a hundred years earlier than *Piros*. In the Dictionary of Old Hungarian Family Names, the earliest record of *Fekete* is from 1340, followed by *Veres* (1341), *Fehér* (1366) and *Piros* (1435) (Kázmér 1993: 354, 350, 857, 1136). These data by all means confirm the fact that *vörös* is an old basic colour term of Hungarian.

Today, the Kolon dialect includes 10 basic colour terms, namely *fehér* 'white', *fekete* 'black', *piross* 'red', *vörös* 'red', *zöld* 'green', *sárga* 'yellow', *kék* 'blue', *barna* 'brown', *szürke* 'grey' and *lila* 'purple'. *Rúzsaszínő* ~ *rúzsaszín* 'pink' and *narancsszínő* ~ *narancssárga* 'orange' fail to meet the criteria of basic colours on multiple counts. Of these two colour terms, *rúzsaszín* 'pink' is closer to becoming a basic colour term, as shown not only by its frequency but also by the fact that its hues are starting to be distinguished by the younger generation. By contrast, *narancssárga* 'orange' is only a hue in the colour spectrum of *sárga* 'yellow' for most informants. The reason may be that while the fruit name *narancs* 'orange' appears in Hungarian as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> century (TESz. 2/999), dialectal data are only available since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (ÚMTsz. 4/41). In the rural community of Kolon, the fruit itself only became generally known in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, whereafter it could finally be exploited as a cognitive basis of colour terminology.

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