

Lexical-semantic features of color designations in some phrasemes

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Abstract

The problem of studying adjectives with the component "color" has recently become increasingly relevant. The focus of the study is a description of the features of color naming, color perception, as well as color designations in languages of various types. Particular attention is paid to the relationship between color terms and facts of extralinguistic reality.

The purpose of this work is to conduct a comparative study of the semantics of connotative increments of color terms in the phraseology of the English language, a cognitive-pragmatic analysis of fragments of literary texts that include the "color" component, and to identify national and cultural features of the functioning of colorisms in describing a person's appearance.

Key words: phraseological units, idiomatic meaning, color, color designation, linguoculturology, language picture of the world

Introduction

During language coding, information that is most significant for a person of a given ethnocultural community is selected from an infinite information continuum. The participation of codes in the ways of implementing the means of imagery is due to a specific ethnic culture. The cultural codes associated with the archetypal representations of an ethnic group in each culture are divided. They categorize and evaluate the world in their own way. The relevance of coding determines the uniqueness of qualitative features of the characteristics of ethnoconnotes, which cause in the speaker's mind the attribution of a language sign to a certain cultural space, as well as the specifics of the ethnocultural marking of the connoted units of the lexical and phraseological funds of the language.

Thus, from the standpoint of these approaches, ethnolinguistics operates on the understanding of a person as a sub-object studying and conceptualizing reality. At the same time, the study of the language system is viewed as a supra-personal institution that studies social norms fixed in the form of language constructions (stereotypes) that are stable from a semantic or formal point of view and are supplemented by the study of speech usage (Amosova, 2003).

Ethnolinguistics shifts from the analysis of language forms to the analysis of meanings contained in speech acts and discourse. An important subject of ethnolinguistic research is the systems of spiritual values professed by individuals and collectives (as cultural communities).

Culture and words

Culture becomes not just a background for describing a language but a full-fledged object of ethnolinguistic description. In modern linguistic research, there is a constant scientific interest in the diverse analysis of the phraseological composition of languages. There is a desire of linguists to study the phraseological picture of the world (Whelan, 2005). Phraseology, today, is embarking on an integrative path of development. Stable verbal complexes attract the attention of such sciences as cognitive science in general, cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics, pragmatics, computer machine translation, linguistics, translation studies, lexicography, lexicology, lexical semantics, linguoculturology, grammar, comparative typology.

As it is known, phraseological units (hereinafter – PU) play a special role in creating a linguistic picture of the world since they are a means of mastering the world by a person, his feelings – emotions, sensations, assessments, moods are recorded, stored and recreated in them.

Hence, a phraseological picture of the world is formed – a part of the linguistic picture of the world described by means of phraseology, in which "each phraseological turn is an element of a strict system and performs certain functions in describing the realities of the surrounding reality" and emphasizes the ethnospecific features of people (the content of human existence, external and internal qualities of a person); and reflects the national specifics of the moral and moral aspect (aesthetic and ethical values) (Voevoda, 2012).

The following features of the phraseological picture of the world are noted: universality, anthropocentricity and expressiveness. R. Batsuren studied the display of universal ethnospecific features of the linguistic picture of the world in the phraseological funds of English. It is necessary to realize that in linguistics, there are several different approaches to study, having different methodological bases, and different methods, differing from each other in the degree of coverage of phraseological material. The difference in methodology is connected with the gradual transition at the end of the XX century in linguistic thought from the postulates of structuralism to the "immanent-semiological" paradigm, in which language is considered "in itself and for itself" as a system of distinctive units, to the anthropological paradigm, in which language is considered in the broad existential and conceptual context of human existence – in close connection with human consciousness and thinking, his spiritual world (Ivanova, 2011).

Within the framework of the immanent-semiological direction, two approaches to identifying the peculiarity of PU were developed.

Linguistic and foreign studies directions and linguistics have been used to indicate the existence of a non-linguistic component in the meaning of a word due to extralinguistic factors, which appeared in the works of linguists.

Within the framework of the linguistic and cultural approach, the uniqueness of the PU is expressed in the mention of certain extralinguistic realities that are characteristic of the culture and belong to the background knowledge of native speakers.

The second approach to the analysis of PU also arose within the framework of the structuralist understanding of language. It is a certain opposite of the linguo-regional approach. The comparison of PU of different languages initially provided for the identification of phraseological internationalisms, the analysis of phraseological parallelisms in different languages, the consideration of the causes of their occurrence, and the analysis of the types of equivalence of PU (Kunin, 2006). The development of a linguoculturological approach to the study of phraseology orients the researcher to study the relationship between PU and cultural signs and actualizes the meaning of a system of standards, stereotypes, and symbols to describe the specifics of the phraseological system.

Currently, a lot of linguistic and cultural studies have appeared, where the authors seek to identify certain universal concepts of any culture (such as deception and fate) in their national image, fixed in a naive picture of the world. The conceptual model is determined by analyzing its use in the language. The involvement of phraseological material and the consideration of the internal form of PU as the key to understanding the content of a particular concept of culture is a characteristic feature of the works of this direction.

Every relation between culture and language might be interpreted ambiguously. The culture of people reflects in their language. But if we understand the culture (everything that is created by man) in contrast to nature, nature (what exists besides

man), then language itself should be recognized as an element of culture, and one of the most important, it was created by a particular human society.

Therefore, when they talk about the reflection of the culture in the language of the people, they apparently mean the reflection of an extralinguistic culture in it since the language itself is a component of culture.

The question of the interaction between language and culture, in particular, the correlative relationship between the units of phraseology and the conceptual sphere of culture, in whatever version of ethnolinguistic analysis, is put forward. Human awareness of the world in speech and mental activity is at the center of interest. In accordance with this presumption, the task arises: to identify traces – most often of the innermost – embodiment in all those linguistic means and methods. In discursive practices, they preserve lines of communication with cultural concepts, serving as means of presenting certain fragments of their meaning.

Color and theories of color

Color is one of the properties of the material world, perceived as a conscious visual sensation. A particular color is assigned by a person to objects in the process of his perception. Often, a person's mood, emotions and well-being depend on color perception. It is logical to assume that research in the field of color perception is characteristic exclusively for scientists in the field of psychology. However, considering certain aspects, researchers often do not take into account the features of the formed color picture of the world of a person belonging to a particular linguistic culture.

The world around a person is presented in three forms: a real picture of the world, a cultural (or conceptual) picture of the world and a linguistic picture of the world. Let's consider each of these forms.

The real picture of the world is an objective, non-human reality. It is the world surrounding a person. The cultural (conceptual) picture of the world is a reflection of the real picture through the prism of concepts formed on the basis of human representations obtained with the help of sensory organs and passed through his consciousness, both collective and individual.

The cultural picture of the world is specific and differs among different peoples. This is due to a number of factors: geographical location, climate, natural conditions, history, social structure, beliefs, traditions, lifestyle, etc. (Kunin, 2005). The linguistic picture of the world reflects reality through the cultural picture of the world. The idea of the existence of national-specific linguistic pictures of the world originated in the German philology of the late XVIII-early XIX centuries.

First of all, we are talking about the fact that language, as an ideal, objectively existing structure, subordinates and organizes the perception of the world by its native speakers.

And secondly, that language – a system of pure meanings – forms its own world, as if glued to the real world.

It is natural for a person to nominate objects and phenomena that surround him. Hence we present a particular interest in the study of color values not only in the field of psychology but linguistics. The attitude of a person belonging to a certain culture can be most clearly revealed by examining the phraseological units that exist in the language. Phraseological units help to clearly determine what historical, intellectual and emotional load a particular culture carries (Alefirenko, 2005).

Phraseology is the science of phraseological units (phraseological units), i.e., stable combinations of words with complicated semantics that are not formed according to generating structural and semantic models of variable combinations. The phraseological foundation of the language consists of idioms and phrasemes without any stylistic restrictions. However, it is not separated by an impenetrable wall from language formations that have certain points of similarity with phraseological units.

Phraseological units take place in the lexical system of the language. Often, phraseological units are a particular way to designate objects, phenomena and situations that a person has ever encountered. We come to the conclusion that the human factor plays a huge role in the sentence and phrase formation. The vast majority of phraseological units are associated with a person, with various spheres of his activity. Due to the fact that phraseological units are an integral component of the development and formation of the language and linguoculture as a whole, there are a huge number of classifications based on criteria affecting various linguistic and cultural aspects.

The emergence of phraseology as a separate linguistic discipline is associated with the name of the Swiss linguist Charles Bally, who, for the first time, created a classification of phraseological units based on the stability criterion.

In his later work, Ch. Bally (1905) considers the usual combinations and phraseological series as intermediate types of phrases and distinguishes two main groups of combinations: 1) free combinations and 2) phraseological units, i.e. phrases, the components of which constantly used in these combinations to express the same thought, have lost any independent meaning.

Phraseological units with elements of color meanings belonging to the second group are of greater interest for the study since all the elements of these combinations exist in the language in an isolated form, but, nevertheless, they give a completely different meaning when replacing one of the components. That is, phrases with color are idiomatic only if they are indivisible. For example, if you replace one of the elements in the expression *to be red in the face* (to be beside yourself with rage), then it will no longer convey a storm of negative emotions and will lose its idiomatic meaning (Petkelite, 2011).

The first fundamental research on the theory of color appeared only in the XVII century in England. The foundations of the modern theory of color were laid by English scientists:

1. Robert Hooke (Micrography, 1665),
2. Robert Boyle (Experiments and Considerations on Colors, with a Letter Containing Observations on a Diamond that Glows in the Dark, 1664)
3. Isaac Newton (The New theory of light and color, 1672; Optics: or A Treatise on reflections, refractions, bends and colors of light, 1704).

In Europe, the main colors were considered red, yellow, blue, and later red, green, and blue. In accordance with the theory developed by I. Newton, the number of primary colors has increased to seven: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and purple. However, in everyday communication, we certainly add white and black colors, rarely mention orange, even less often purple and very rarely indigo. In this article, we will consider phraseological units with elements of colors that were the first to be reflected in human culture – white, black and red. They represent the personification of nature's components: light, darkness and fire (Zavyalova, 2007).

White

The English word *white* comes from the Old English *hwit* "*bright, radiant; pure, bright*", as well as from the Proto-Germanic *hwitaz-light*. Speaking about the concept of "*white*" in relation to human nature, this color is related to both internal and external signs of a person (hair color, face). In Old English, *white* had the meaning of morally pure (morally pure), referring to the Royalist beliefs of the late XVIII century. In American English, this color acquired the colloquial meaning of "*honorable, light*" (during the War of Independence of the United States in 1775-83. In average English,

white meant "*amiable, friendly, favorable*"). Speaking about the racial identity of a person, the white color expressed the attitude of a person toward the Caucasian race. Thus, the expression *white supremacy* dates back to the end of the XIX century and is historically conditioned (Seidl, 2003).

In modern English, the white color is associated with a positive, bright and pure beginning and describes both the physical and spiritual aspects of a person or phenomenon: white flag (white flag), means a *truce*, the *end of the conflict* (wave the white flag/show the white flag – throw out the white flag) (ibid.).

The white color in the English language picture of the world is often associated with *honesty, virtue, kindness, joy*: *white lies* (a lie for salvation, a "white" lie) mean a good deed performed in the name of salvation and preservation, in this case, of relationships (ibid.). We can most clearly trace the emergence and formation of such phraseological units on the example of a study of the English-language press:

Lying to your loved ones may seem like a sure fire way to push them away. But new research says telling white lies – specifically for the right reasons – can actually strengthen social bonds.

The idiomatic expression *white hope* has its roots at the beginning of the XIX century. It was used in relation to a white man who could break the record of the champion boxer Jack Johnson, who came from a family of slaves. Further, this expression has acquired a figurative character and is used in relation to a person or phenomenon on whom high hopes are placed:

Hobbs is also aware that Detroit City is the 'great white hope' of the home team as they bid to reverse the tide of Irish dominance.

In addition to the positive "*light and pure*" in the concept of *white* in English phraseology, the expression *white elephant* has a meaning that is completely unrelated to the above determinants. The origin of this phraseme goes back to the middle of the XIX century when the king of Siam presented a sacred white elephant as a gift, which was a great honor for his subjects, but the proper maintenance of the elephant was ruinously expensive. In modern English, the fusion of white elephant means *a burdensome thing, an expensive enterprise*, the costs of which exceed the expected benefit:

... Britain, which once led the world in nuclear reactor technology, is buying one of the craziest, most expensive white elephants imaginable: a power station which, ... will not be ready for at least another eight years to produce a comparatively small amount of the most costly nuclear electricity in the world (Golub, 2006).

Black

The English word black comes from the Old English black (dark) and from the Proto-Germanic *blakaz* (*burnt*). Thus, the black color is associated with *a smoldering fire, charred wood, extinction* and, consequently, *death*. We can definitely say that the concept of "black" carries a negative connotation associated with *destruction, evil spirits, sin and vice*: *black magic, black flag* (black flag as a pirate flag used at the end of the XVI century, indicating that there will be *no mercy*). In modern English, this phraseme is used in motorsport in order to *signal the rider to leave the site* (ibid.).

The negative connotation of black has also spread to the economic sphere of activity. *A black market* is used to refer to a black, underground market, for example, for the sale of weapons, drugs, stolen goods, etc.:

This shocking footage captures the moment a rare Amur tiger cub destined to appear on a restaurant menu was rescued from the black market.

The negative connotation also applies to the social sphere of activity. The phraseme *black sheep* is used to denote *an outcast, not held, not like everyone else*. It should be emphasized here that such a fusion is used precisely in a negative connotation and has little to do with nonconformism (the willingness of an individual to defend his personal position in cases where it contradicts the position of the majority):

The man accused of brutally killing American marketing executive Gabriela Kabrins at a luxury resort in South Africa is the troubled 'black sheep' of a billionaire family, Daily Mail Online can reveal.

It should be noted that there are a number of exceptions regarding the negative meaning of phraseological units with the component "black". For example, the combination *to be in (the) black*, oppose to *to be in the red* (to undergo material difficulties), denotes material well-being, profit, and prosperity. This is due to the fact that the concept of "black" "came" to this combination not from wildlife but appeared later. Since the beginning of the XX century, various debts and financial losses were marked with red ink, while *black ink* did not carry any negative connotation.

The green investments can put you in the black. As Community Energy Fortnight beings, investors can check out the renewable schemes offering returns of up to 13% (Steinval, 2002).

Red

The English word *red* comes from the Old English *read*, Proto-Germanic *raudaz*, which means "red, *having the color of blood, fire* and, in some cases, denoting *danger*". It is also used in relation to the physical qualities of a person: for example, describing *a red hair color*, the definition of red hair is used.

The phrase *red herring* got its meaning, being associated with dried herring, which turns red as a result of cooking. There are suggestions that such fish was used by criminals at the end of the XVII century in order to throw off the trail of bloodhounds. Then, this expression began to be used in the metaphorical sense of red herring (*something that distracts from the main question*):

UK's Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond described on Sunday the Daily Mail's allegations that a British passenger plane "had been seconds" from being struck by an Egyptian rocket last August as a "red herring" (Kay, 2003).

As already mentioned above, the red color is a symbol of danger, anxiety. For example, the expression *in (the) red* means *being in a state of serious financial losses*. The U.S. site is operating in the red. The US website is operating at a loss.

Let's consider a phrase with an element of red color associated with blood. In English, the expression *to take smb red-handed* (to catch someone in the act of a crime, to capture red-handed) literally means *to catch someone with red hands*, i.e. with hands stained with blood. This phrase has acquired a metaphorical meaning and does not always represent a crime in the literal sense:

A bus driver was caught red-handed stealing his wife's shampoo after it turned out to be a hair dye that left his hair and hands bright pink.

It should also be noted that the red color present in phraseological units is associated with *solemnity, celebration* and *honor*. So, *the red carpet* prevails at the most important events, expressing honor and respect to the participants of the celebration:

She was joined on the red carpet by her Titanic co-star Leonardo DiCaprio, who is hot favourite to finally pick up a golden statuette for his role in The Revenant (Nikitin, 2006).

Conclusion

Thus, based on the conducted research, it can be concluded that phraseological units with elements of color meanings are found everywhere in the language, not only in colloquial speech but also in journalism. They reflect the real picture of the world of the language culture. This is especially true for the basic colors that denote the main natural phenomena. These phraseological units were formed historically and acquired their idiomatic meaning based on literal designations, real events and phenomena. A relatively large number of phraseological units formed with the help of color

meanings indicate that color meanings are included in the group of lexemes with a high potential for phraseological activity.

For a more accurate translation into another language, it is necessary to remember that the gap between the synchronic and diachronic aspects of phraseology often leads to difficulties in understanding the meaning and their incorrect interpretation.

Color can be reinterpreted in metaphorical and metonymic terms as a trait inherent in a person or element. The color appears not as a denoting, naming object, process, or phenomenon, but also as their refraction in the human mind, as a sign of a process.

Studying phraseological units with color meanings, a lot about the customs of the country might be taught, also as the peculiarities of perception of certain phenomena. Color phraseological units have quite obvious motivation – their internal form, as a rule, is "speaking". The use of color terms in the composition is caused by different reasons, images, and associations, depending on the way of rethinking this term of color in a particular language.

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