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“RED, THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE”: COLOR METAPHORS IN ARTWORK DESCRIPTION

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Abstract. The article provides analysis of colour metaphors in artwork descriptions in Chinese and English. The author finds common symbolic features in the languages representing human emotion through the colour. The colour metaphors are compared on the example of Chinese and Russian painters' works. Key models the article suggests are “red is joy”, “white is purity”, “green is life”, “blue is sadness”, and “yellow is care”. The conclusions are of use for contrastive linguistics and practical translation.

Keywords: metaphor; colour metaphor; metaphorical model; cognitive linguistics; artwork description; criticism.

Color metaphors reflect the universal properties of languages and national specificities associated with extralinguistic factors. From language to language, the quantitative composition of the words of this group differs. National-cultural features of color designations can also be distinguished at the levels of connotative values, the ability to develop polysemy, compatibility with the names of various objects, etc.

The interest in color vocabulary is due to attempts to understand the color picture of the world of another ethnic group, since the names of the colors are a reflection of the surrounding world, individual for each people. We are interested in contrasting Chinese and Russian color metaphors in the descriptions of artwork. We would not consider the direct meaning of color terms but the metaphorical, indirect meaning these words might acquire in the descriptions of the paintings. For example, the critical text can interpret the red colour as a sign of energy and triumph of life [1].

The modern theory of metaphor claims that more abstract concepts can be understood and expressed metaphorically in spatial

terms. The central assertion of this theory is that emotions, which are very abstract in nature, are conceptualized and expressed in the form of metaphors [2]. A range of researchers analyses metaphors in different languages, revealing universal and specific features in representation of different phenomena, such as emotions, feelings, evaluation [3].

Bearing in mind the theory that a metaphor can be explained as establishing a similarity between the source and target areas, this article discusses the similarities and differences between metaphorical color designations in Chinese and Russian.

Seven colours are most often used in modern Chinese: white, red, black, yellow, green, purple and blue. Artists of China, in addition to paying special attention to harmony and unity in the use of mascara and color, also attach special importance to the independent aesthetic value of colour, especially emphasize the harmony of colours and shades of the picture. With the help of colour, artists express the main idea, convey the feelings and color of the work, fully express political trends and the way of the era.

According to the cognitive theory of metaphor, people often use colour terms to express feelings, sensations, assessment of events [4]. Let's consider the example: *这里 红包喜事 他都参加* 'red joyful events'. Red color refers to warm color tones, in China it symbolizes happiness, devotion, fiery, sensuality. Red color means blood, heart, fire, sunset, is associated with such abstract concepts as ardor, danger, triumph, opposition, explosion, joy, life. This meaning is realized in the description of Zhang Dagians's painting "Blooming Garden": *красный цвет сообщает зрителю чувство радости, торжества жизни, 紅色 - 生命的勝利* 'red is the triumph of life'.

White color symbolizes purity, justice, light, dreams, victory, joy and strength. In the traditional culture of China, the contrast of red and white is taboo from the point of view of philology, as it means the rejection and aversion of the Chinese to the material and mental. The primary meaning of this colour is: *白银* 'white silver', *雪白* 'snow white'. Metaphorical meanings: 'pure', 'bright', 'empty': *洁白, 纯白* 'pure and white', *天下白* 'the world is white, bright' [3].

Green colour refers to cold colour tones, it is in first place in the system of colour science according to the five elements, it means health, renewal, life, hope, naturalness and harmony. The 'green' metaphor is used to denote life, eternity, realizing the metaphorical model "green = life": *綠色 = 生命* (in the description of Jiang Shilong's painting "Wuxia Gorge"). Levitan's "March" description also appeals to similar images: *зелень сосен кажется уставшей от долгой зимы* 'the green of the pines looks tired of the long winter'. In Zhang Dagians's "The blooming garden" *мотив жёлтых домиков в густой зелени деревьев - повседневная жизнь гармонична и едина* 'yellow houses in the

greenery of trees - a motive of harmony and unity'.

In the description of the painting by Dmitry Kustanovich "The Son has Come for Lunch" through the introduction of shades of yellow, the feeling of warmth, kinship and love is conveyed: *жёлтый - метафора материнской любви*. We find similar metaphors in the descriptions of Levitan's "Spring is Big Water" and Dagians's "Blooming Garden": *yellow = warm* '黄色 = 温暖', *黄色 = 温暖*.

Black color refers to dark color tones, symbolizes death, crime, horror, danger, severity, adversity. Based on this, in the traditional culture of China, both white and black colors both symbolize misfortune. And in ancient times, in Chinese culture, the black color had a clear shade of mysticism, this color was considered solemn and severe.

Thus, analyzing color metaphors in the descriptions of paintings in Russian and Chinese, we find similarities based on linguistic and cognitive universals, and differences due to different cultures, religion, customs, philosophy, etc. Understanding the similarities and differences in color metaphors in Russian and Chinese are of great importance for intercultural communication.

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