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COLOUR SPECTRUM IN THE ENGLISH WORLDVIEW AND THE AUTHOR'S DISCOURSE

Colour semantics has been in focus of mankind since the time immemorial. People name and classify colours in various ways. Colour terms have generated a lot of contradictory opinions because of the fact that colour quality is not always manifested in exactly the same way [see: 1; 11]. The present paper is a study of semantic functions of colour adjectives in the English-Language worldview and the author's discourse. The colour value represented by adjective meets the standard in the conceptual system of the English worldview but in discourse the value changes due to the impact of the author's intention, adjective combinability in the sentence pattern and the discourse register (professional vs. non-professional). The meaning of colour adjectives is context-dependent – their gradability does not coincide with that one of other semantic groups of adjectives. Obviously, the interpretation of colour terms includes a context-dependent component in discourse. Gradability of colour terms is a semantic property intensifying levels or degrees of the quality. Unfortunately they have received relatively little attention in cognitive semantics and their standard value is taken for granted. Additionally, they are referred to gradable and non-gradable classes of adjectives. But in the process of their semantic analysis we cannot support that point of view.

Key words: colour adjective, spectrum, functional semantics, context, discourse, graduality.

КОЛЬОРОВИЙ СПЕКТР В АГЛІЙСЬКОМОВНІЙ КАРТИНІ СВІТУ ТА АВТОРСЬКОМУ ДИСКУРСІ

Стаття присвячена дослідженню функціональної семантики прикметників кольору в англійсько-мовній картині світу і структурі дискурсу. Кожен колір має свій стандарт, який є величиною незмінною, проте, вербалізований прикметником у дискурсі, його значення змінюється під впливом авторської інтенції, сполучуваності прикметника і регістру дискурсу. Це робить значення прикметника кольору контекстно залежним, а його градуальність різниться від такої інших семантичних груп прикметників у структурі дискурсу.

Ключові слова: прикметник кольору, спектр, функціональна семантика, контекст, дискурс, градуальність.

ЦВЕТОВОЙ СПЕКТР В АНГЛО-ЯЗЫЧНОЙ КАРТИНЕ МИРА И АВТОРСКОМ ДИСКУРСЕ

В центре исследования – прилагательные цвета в англо-языковой картине мира и структуре авторского дискурса. Для каждого цвета существует свой стандарт, как величина постоянная, однако, при его вербализации значение претерпевает изменение под влиянием авторской интенции, валентностных характеристик прилагательного в предложении и регистра дискурса (профессиональный vs. не профессиональный). Это вызывает контекстную зависимость значения прилагательного, а его градуальность отличается от таковой других семантических групп прилагательных в структуре дискурса.

Ключевые слова: прилагательное цвета, спектр, функциональная семантика, контекст, дискурс, градуальность.

INTRODUCTION. Aristotle viewed colour to be the product of a mixture of white and black, and this was the prevailing belief until 1666, when Newton proved that a prism could break up white light into a range of colours, which he called the spectrum, and that the recombination of these spectral colours re-created the white light. He used the seven colour names red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet for segments of the spectrum by analogy with the seven notes of the musical scale. English differentiates basic colours: *red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple*, though traditionally, there is a maximum of eleven basic colour terms in English, for instance: *red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple black, white, violet, brown, pink*. Colours can be categorized according to hue, saturation, and brightness – three attributes sufficient to distinguish one colour from all other possible perceived colours. As for the hues experts in different trades can differentiate dozens of each colour. Colour can influence our emotions, actions and our response to the subjects and objects characterized with the help of colour nomination. The objective of the present paper is a study of semantic functions of colour adjectives in the author's discourse [10, p. 156–159]. In the English language worldview we can find red, orange, yellow, green, blue purple, black and white which reveal light or dark hues [see: 1; 12]. The red colour can express energy, war, danger, strength, power, determination as well as passion, desire, and love, when dark red is associated with vigor, will power, rage, anger, leadership, courage, longing, malice, and wrath; brown red suggests stability and denotes masculine qualities; reddish brown stands for harvest and autumn. Orange combines the energy of red and the happiness of yellow. Orange represents enthusiasm, fascination, happiness, creativity, determination, attraction, success. Dark orange means deceit and distrust. Red-orange corresponds to desire, sexual passion, pleasure, domination, aggression and thirst for action. Gold evokes the feeling of prestige. The meaning of gold is illumination, wisdom, and wealth. Gold often symbolizes high quality. Dull (dingy) yellow represents caution, decay, sickness, and jealousy. Light yellow is associated with intellect, freshness, and joy. Green symbolizes growth, harmony, freshness, and fertility. Green has strong emotional correspondence with safety. Dark green is associated with ambition, greed, and yellow is the color of sunshine associated with joy, happiness, intellect. And yellow-green can indicate sickness, cowardice, discord, and jealousy. Aqua is associated with emotional healing, protection. Olive green is the traditional colour of peace. Blue is the colour of the sky and sea and symbolizes trust, loyalty, wisdom, confidence, intelligence, faith, truth, and heaven. Light blue is associated with health, healing, dark blue represents knowledge, power, integrity, and seriousness. Purple means power, nobility, luxury, and ambition, wealth and extravagance. Light purple is a good choice for a feminine design. It evokes romantic and nostalgic feelings. Dark purple evokes gloom and sad feelings and it can cause frustration. White means light, goodness, innocence, purity, and virginity; it is the colour of perfection. White also means safety, purity, and cleanliness. Black is a mysterious colour associated with fear and the unknown (black holes). It is also associated with power, elegance, formality, death, evil, and mystery [5, p. 511–521; 7:511–52].

In this paper we focus on the colour adjectives – whose gradability is a semantic property intensifying levels or degrees of the quality – because they have received relatively little attention in cognitive semantics and their standard value is taken for granted. Additionally, they are referred to gradable and non-gradable classes of adjectives. But in the process of their semantic analysis we cannot support that point of view.

STATE OF THE ART. Colour semantics has been in focus of mankind since the time immemorial. People name and classify colours in various ways. Colour terms have caused a lot of contradictory views because colour quality is not always manifested in exactly the same way [see: 1; 11]. Obviously, the interpretation of colour terms includes a context-dependent component in discourse [13, p. 259–288]. Nevertheless there is a suggestion that gradable adjectives possess a covert component of comparison [3, p. 141–145], it may be true only in case of comparison with standard value expressed by adjective. Actually the colour adjective is

gradable [6, p. 65-67] in the grammatical model of degrees of comparison: P (-o) → C (-er) → S (-est) or its analytical variant: P(-o) → C (more) → S (most). Gradability of colour adjectives is preconditioned by the complimentizer *as* or *like*. Again it must be underlined that gradability can be carried out in the range or spectrum of the standard value colour. It is evident that colour adjectives cannot follow Peter Ludlow's thesis that according "the 'common view' of attributive adjectives like 'tall', 'fast', 'large', and 'heavy' is that they express relations between objects and either some comparison class or an attribute" [8, p. 519]. The fact is that the value expressed by colour adjective is usually compared with the value standard once defined in the professional discourse of physics, unlikely the value of other gradable adjectives is vague. Accordingly, we can point out that the colour standard remains invariable in the professional discourse only in optics, physics or chemistry [9, p. 56-59]. Therein must be of a constant value, though interpreting colour adjectives in non-professional discourse is always variable, i.e. their true meaning is context-dependent due to the author's intentional meaning [cf.: 14, p. 119-146] and cannot be fixed. We share Nat Hansen's suggestion that 'radical contextualism' concerning colour adjectives needs the full range of contextual variations displayed by them either to be supported or to be rejected [4, p. 201-221]. Scholars study discourse to retrieve more information about the speaker/author and his/her differential features. Accordingly, "discourse is a social language created by particular cultural conditions at a particular time and place, and it expresses a particular way of understanding human experience" [15, p. 281; 9, p. 56-59]. The discourse theory recommends us to be very attentive to minute shifts in the character's description because discourse creates the world.

Our hypothesis is that if we can retrieve much information about the character from the colour spectrum represented in discourse to objectively describe the character and his/her environment. Colours and their meaning have been powerful symbols to humankind since the dawn of life.

INVESTIGARION. The Corpus analysis of the author's discourse [10, p. 154-156], for instance, Dan Brown's represented in his book "The Lost Symbol" is undertaken to retrieve colour adjectives expressing the author's intended meaning [see: 4].

(1) The *red* colour is modified like *bloodred* (wine) referring to the case that it could be *blood* when taking the oath (p. 3). Compare: the *red* in the phrase 'blinking red light on his voice-mail display' is a marker of warning (p. 17). The colour of the policeman's hair is *red* associated with the strength and power of his character (p. 57).

(2) The *green* granite of monolithic columns underlines harmony and ambition (p. 4).

(3) And *black* in the phrase 'a solid block of polished Belgian black marble' is associated with harmony and elegance (p. 4). But in the phrase 'the crimson wine looked almost *black* in the dim candlelight' *black* is associated with mystery [p. 6/], as well as in the phrase 'an ephemeral *black* cat' (p. 32). The synonym of *black* is the author's *charcoal* (turtleneck) refers to power and elegance and the adjective *dark* [hair] underlines the man's power. But frequently it refers to anger, evil, despair, or magic, see its combinability: black mood, black look, black heart, black magic, black humour, etc.

(4) The colour *white* in the phrase 'a blanket of *white* fog' underlines purity and cleanness of the event (p. 9), cf. : *white* in the phrase '*white* Volvo is associated with perfection (p. 28; p. 91).

And in the phrase '*white* noise' the color points out purity, i. e. "absence of any noise" (p. 55). Strictly speaking it is not a colour, but the manifestation of the presence of all colours – the complete energy of light.

(5) In the phrase '*orange* ductwork' *orange* is associated with relief (p. 510).

(6) The colour *blue* in the phrase 'blue blazer' is soothing that can be chosen for things used in the home (p. 59; p. 60).

(7) The man's eyes are *gray* (*gray-eyed* man) associated with void and emptiness (p. 5; p. 52). Gray is a true neutral colour it has a detached, isolated dull feeling.

The semantic analysis of colour terms and the entropy in the text reveals the author's strategy to link the meaning chunks into coherent discourse and underline the aggravation of the events described. We believe that if it were possible to measure the density of most colours mentioned in the text they would be much more dense than registered in physics, for instance, *blood-red*, *red* (warning) light; *crimson* wine almost *black*; *black* marble column in the *dim* basement. The referred aggravation is reached by the author using specific distribution of colour names.

To verify the hypothesis put forward we shall initiate corpus analysis of another author's fragment of discourse retrieved from "Jane's House" by R. K. Smith. First, the colours describe every-day events as the psycho-doctor mentioned 'continuity'.

(8) The colour *red* of the traffic light; *green* of the light of the intersection *gray* of the old lady's hair; *yellow* of the street lights; *white* of the tube of socks; *blue* of the bathrobe (p. 9-16).

(9) Then the colours concerning the main character's wife abruptly intensify the tragic event, for instance reminiscences, *white* (as if blood drained) of the children's faces (when they saw their mother dead); *brown* of the quilt over the dead body, the fact is that too much *brown* can make dull effect; *green* (change and transformation) of the blanket on the stretcher is associated with hospital and peace (p. 19-20).

(10) Evidently the density of the colours refers to the modality of events. We can illustrate the semantic change in the lexical meaning of the *white* colour, see its dynamics: *white* is associated with the character's irritation in the phrase 'his hands white-knuckled' (p. 11); → *white* in the phrase of 'one pair of white tube socks' denotes the usual colour (p16); → *white* of the scared children's faces (p.20) → *white* in the phrase 'deceased wife's veil and lace gown in the wedding picture' (p.20) where the colour is associated with purity and happiness of the occasion.

Let's compare the results of the colour symbolism investigation in the authors' fiction discourse with some features of colour symbolism in the professional discourse of marketing where colour plays a major role in the success of any marketing campaign. The analysis of many marketing campaign scripts helped us to reveal the following colour typology: (a) *red* attracts and holds consumer's attention (b) *blue* insures trustworthiness and being cool; (c) pink is a colour of tomwies; young femals; (d) yellow command the audience's attention; (e) green is warm and inviting, it means also health and goodwill, green is also the colour of the US money; (f) purple is the colour of royalty, perfection, elegance and prestige; (g) gold means power, wealth and prestige; (h) orange is energy and if it is the colour a company it underline its cutting-edge philosophy; (i) brown is comfort and relaxation to customers; (j) black is traditional, exiting, it often adds drama to the mood.

CONCLUSION AND PERSPECTIVES. The research is aimed to discover and reveal the author's intention of changing the world of the character with colour nominations. We tried to induce the components of the lexical meaning of colour nominations using the dictionary entries and from their distributions. The comparison of the dictionary meaning and meaning elucidated in the process the corpus analysis reveals the objectivity of our investigation. One can observe the author's intention to express various states of the character's with help of the full spectrum of the same colour giving the reader a chance to decode the true components inherent in the lexical meaning of the color adjectives. Consequently, the modeled a conceptual system is verbalized in the text/discourse common for the author and the reader, though sharing each may have some specific features.

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