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METAPHORIC MEANING OF ENGLISH AND KYRGYZ COLOR IDIOMS

Abstract

The current thesis focuses on the analysis of color terms used within color idioms across two languages: English and Kyrgyz pointing out their semantic peculiarities and their place in languages. Each language has been analyzed thoroughly to get a clear picture of the phenomenon color idioms may denote. The modern color system is dynamic and constantly evolving through various innovative processes. New color names arise when new areas of activity arise that need new color expressions, which mainly arise through modification of primary color names. However, some color shades are more diverse, convey a wider range of colors and are more often denoted metaphorically.

Key words: color, idiom, culture, perception, cognition, linguistics, semantics, symbolism, metaphoric, philosophy.

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МЕТАФОРИЧЕСКОЕ ЗНАЧЕНИЕ АНГЛИЙСКИХ И КЫРГЫЗСКИХ ИДИОМ ЦВЕТА

Аннотация

Данная статья посвящена анализу цветовых терминов, используемых в цветовых идиомах двух языков: английского и кыргызского, с указанием их семантических особенностей и места в сравниваемых языках. Современная цветовая система динамична и постоянно развивается благодаря различным инновационным процессам. Новые названия цветов возникают, когда возникают новые области деятельности, требующие новых цветовых выражений, которые в основном возникают в результате модификации названий основных цветов. Однако некоторые цветовые оттенки более разнообразны, передают более широкую цветовую гамму и чаще обозначаются метафорически.

Ключевые слова: цвет, идиома, культура, восприятие, познание, языкознание, семантика, символика, метафора, философия.

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АНГЛИС ЖАНА КЫРГЫЗ ТИЛИНДЕГИ ТҮС ИДИОМАЛАРДЫН МЕТАФОРАЛЫК МААНИСИ

Кыскача мазмуну

Макалa англис жана кыргыз тилдериндеги идиомалардын курамында колдонулган түс терминдерин талдап, алардын семантикалык өзгөчөлүктөрүн жана тилдердеги ор-

дун көрсөтүүгө багытталган. Заманбап түс системасы динамикалуу жана ар кандай инновациялык процесстер аркылуу тынымсыз өнүгүп турат. Жаңы түс аттары жаңы түс туюнтмаларын талап кылган жаңы иш чөйрөлөрү пайда болгондо пайда болот, алар негизинен түстөрдүн негизги аталыштарын өзгөртүү аркылуу пайда болот. Бирок, кээ бир түстөрдүн көлөкөлөрү ар түрдүү, түстөрдүн кенири спектрин берет жана көбүнчө метафоралык түрдө белгиленет.

Түйүндүү сөздөр: түс, идиома, маданият, кабылдоо, таанып билүү, лингвистика, семантика, символизм, метафора, философия.

It is generally known that human perception of the world works due to a range of different processes which show how the representatives of different cultures see the surrounding world and how they call the things around them. The process of seeing and naming the things can vary from culture to culture which makes them unique and interesting. One of these processes is the perception of color. Color designation and the word it characterizes represent a single whole, a single concept, which is perceived by each nation as a cultural fact.

The problems of color cognitions have been covered by linguists, psychologists, philosophers as (Yu. D. Apresyan, R. Barth, L. Wittgenstein, V. G. Gak, A. Mollar-Desfur, V. G. Kulpina, R. M. Frumkin, etc.), who have used various approaches in its study. Names of color have been studied in terms of their etymology and historical development, systematic approach, symbolism, semantic structure, using psycho- and ethnopsycholinguistic approaches, in terms of comparison, studied the peculiarities of their functioning in artistic and folklore works, as well as in the phraseological units of the language. The development of interest in the study of colors in terms of their linguistic relativity was first introduced in hypothesis of linguistic relativity of Seepir-Whorf. This hypothesis suggests that the structure of language affects the worldview and cognitive processes of a speakers [4, p. 23]. Thus, the structure of language has a direct influence on the perception of colors.

The beginning of the twentieth century was marked by a "color explosion". Color be-

comes a cultural and social symbol. With the development of many theories, the concept of "color" changed. It was only at the end of the XX century when it began to form its cultural, psychological and philosophical interpretations, as each branch of knowledge was enriched with its own subject of study of color systems. Modern science defines "color" as "an optical phenomenon sensory sensation created by the eye or brain" [1, p. 32]. Color doesn't have physical units of measurement, since it is not a physical variable. The objects round us are colorless, the color is created by exposure to light radiation. N. Yu. Shvedova defines color as "one of the types of colorful rainbow glow - from red to purple, and also their combinations or shades" [5, p. 728]. There are two components of colors: objective (light) and subjective (vision).

In the works of other scientists, there are other terms for the process of color designations in the language, for example: "color terms" [2, p. 20], "colorative" and "occasionalism-chromatonym" (rare words for color designations). The existence of many terms to denote one concept, we can conclude that so far linguists have not come to consensus regarding the nomination of the color designation process in language. Moreover, some of the concepts used by scientists are interchangeable. For our study, the definition of V. G. Kulpina [3, p. 78]. is most complete and accurate. Based on this definition, one can establish that color naming is a color nomination process, expressed by any means (from morpheme to superphrasal unity), having in its meaning a direct or indirect (associative) connection with the subject.

There are basic color terms which are stylistically neutral and unmotivated, abstract, generalized color terms that are most often used in speech. On the contrary, "non-primary colors are motivated and designed to convey many connotations with different emotional and stylistic coloration" [6, p. 129-130]. Saturated colors are used when it comes to strong feelings. To convey the beauty of the world, color designations are often used figuratively: (*to turn green with fear* – корккондон кубарып кетүү); (*to turn yellow with disappointment* – жинденгенден кызарып кетүү).

The color designation in a particular language and culture can characterize certain concept or it can represent a single whole. In a globalized world it has become obvious that the colors, their meaning and symbolic features are represented quite different in different cultures due to the specific ways of the world cognition of the bearers of this or that culture. With the use of color people can name things, distinguish the character of something or somebody, identify the time, space, life and many other things. A right color designation helps people learn not only about the surrounding world, but also express a due evaluative attitude to them. According to the research information it has become clear that color plays a very important role in our surrounding world, because it is always tied to certain objects, either in describing them or in giving certain characteristics, color and its relevant meaning or symbol cannot exist independently. The most interesting thing about color designation is that in different languages and cultures the designated concepts can reflect different scope and boundaries of these concepts.

The names of colors can represent different meanings because of the complexity of the whole system of conceptual notions. Only through the analysis and thorough study of the ties between color and objects, it becomes possible to understand the significant peculiarities of a particular nation and

their linguistic consciousness. The symbolic meaning of colors reflects not only the peculiarities of cultural traditions but religious beliefs as well, because people tried to reflect their own perception and view of the world through a variety of signs and symbols of color. It is also obvious that in communication people try to use different figures of speech to make their utterances more expressive, impress others or to emphasize something. One of such figures of speech is metaphor, with the help of which people can express a hidden comparison, or make a transformation of the qualities of one class of objects to other class, or create a certain image. The metaphoric notions and their semantic fullness can be expressed by a skillful use of color conceptual metaphors. To prove that idea let us study the peculiar features of color conceptual metaphors in two not kindred languages as English and Kyrgyz to show the similarities and differences in cognition of the world and naming the objects and notions connected with a white color.

First of all, it is necessary to mention that in most cultures white color is often associated with weddings and dress of a bride to symbolize her virginity, purity and innocence. This symbolic reference is partially true to English and Kyrgyz cultures, that is every bride can wear white wedding dress regardless to their virginity. It became just a tradition for weddings. But in Kyrgyz culture it is also remarkable to mention about white kerchief for a bride. When a young lady gets married a mother of her groom usually puts white kerchief on her head wishing good things like long life, happiness, wealth and have a happy family with lots of children. There are the following words in Kyrgyz language: *Биринчи байлык -ден-соолук, экинчи байлык - ак жоолук.* - it refers to the meaning of wife in a very polite way [9, с. 55]. Which can be directly translated as – primary wealth is health, secondary is white kerchief. Here white kerchief is a conceptual metaphor which means happy marriage for both – man

and woman. White color is often used in hospitals to symbolize cleanness, peace and hospitals and hospital workers use white to create a sense of sterility. Generally, health is regarded as something clean and fragile which should be treated with care and love. It was a historical tradition to wear white coat for doctors even now there is a white coat ceremony to attire to-be doctors. But in western countries many doctors avoid wearing white coat, because as they consider, it arises fear from the side of patients, and they do not want to be the reason of patients' fear of doctors and treatment. That is why many doctors prefer to wear different color than white. The same tendency is happening here in Kyrgyzstan we often see the doctors wearing blue, green and sometimes even official black. In the Kyrgyz language we also have a conceptual metaphor connected with doctors – *ак халатчан* (a person in white coat) which directly refers to a medical worker- doctor. White color is also a symbolic color of angels conveying a sense of purity, cleanliness and peacefulness. The color of the light that Angels use to appear is often just white, the color of all energy, or, as some call it, the pure source light of the Divine. [7].

Some of the positive meanings that white can convey is cleanliness, freshness, simplicity. The color white often seems like a blank slate, symbolizing a new beginning or a fresh start. For example, in the English language we have a phrase *white collar* which relates to the people who work in an office or other professional environment. However, in Kyrgyz language there is no such a word or notion, but there is a metaphoric expression *ак кол* – which means a person who doesn't do a hard, dirty work, or an unexperienced. *Ак сөөк* (white bone – a person of an aristocratic origin). *Ак сакал* (white beard – referring to an honorable, respectful elderly person). *Ак бата* (white blessing – blessing usually given by elderly respected people or by many people to those who are intended to start a new thing in their life). A metaphoric expres-

sion *white lie* - a harmless or trivial lie, especially one told to avoid hurting someone's feelings. In the Kyrgyz language we can also encounter such a phrase *Ак калп* which means the same concept as in the English language. White is also associated with low-fat foods if we say about white diet then, we refer to such products like egg's white, white beans, white oat and dairy products like milk, yogurt, curd. In the Kyrgyz language a metaphorical notion of white connected with dairy products is a little different. For instance, if we say *ак сүт* it refers not only to milk, especially if it deals with the mother's milk in expressions like *эненин ак сүтүн актоо* has very deep meaning like to be able to meet expectations of mother, be grateful for the upbringing and care of a mother. *Ак ичүү* – means to be on a dairy diet, *сүттөн ак* means absolutely innocent, clean, honest. There are some other expressions in the Kyrgyz language as *ак сөз* (white word - truth), *ак жүрөк* (white heart – honest), *ак эмгек* (white work- diligent, honest work), *ак ийилет бирок сынбайт* (white can curve but not break - honesty can be doubted but not break) for this phrase there is a good equivalent in English *make one's name white again* – which can be used as metaphorical phrases to express innocence, cleanness and honesty. We also know that white color, being bright can create a sense of space or add highlights, is often used by interior designers to make rooms seem larger and more spacious. It is not by accident that Kyrgyz people usually use white color to say about comfortable and essential dwellings as: *Ак үй* (white house – the main building of the country – the building of the parliament) this is the same with the White House (the parliament house), *ак өргө* (white house- which refers to any good housing, cozy home), *ак босого* (white doorstep a pure example of a conceptual metaphor, which means a good home, happy family, comfortable dwelling), *ак дасдаркон* (white table cloth, besides its direct meaning it has a figurative meaning – hospitality of people, the richness of the

feast), *ак жол* (white way – Kyrgyz people say it wishing good voyage to those who are going to a trip), *ак тилек* (white wish- when people want good thing to happen with them or other people like good luck), *ак ниет*, *ак дил* (white hope or desire – wish somebody good things from the bottom of the heart), *ак таңдай* (white palate – about an eloquent, gabby person and in most cases it is about poets and bards).

Beside these positive symbolic references, the color white can have negative meaning, describing cold and bland, empty and unfriendly. For example, in the Kyrgyz language there is a phrase *Ак кар, көк музда* (in white snow and blue ice – which means in very difficult, cold and freezing situations), *ак жаан* (white rain – a long unpleasant rain). *Ак барак* (white sheet of paper – meaning an empty, blank, not written sheet of paper; *Ак төөнүн карды жарылганда*. - A time of abundance, when there is plenty of everything (food, things for life); *Ак сары башыл* - Sacrificing an animal of white color, when people asked God for leniency, relief from illness or difficulties; *Ак чөп башта* — So they say when someone has made a mistake or misconduct and admits it. Confession of being mistaken; *Акка моюн сунуу* – agree with the right thing, to support the right deal;

Көзүнүн агы менен тең айлануу — To be completely subservient to someone, unquestioningly to fulfill his will; *Оозунан ак ит кирип кара ит чыгып* – Say bad words, swear at someone; *Ак койдон аңкоо* – Literally (dumber than a white lamb) - to pretend to be stupid, or not in control of the situation; *Ак көрпө жайыл* – Generous, kind, open-minded person; *Ак сөз* - truth, sooth, verity, veracity.

In addition to the neutrally negative meanings white has the meaning of sadness, illness and age. For example, in the Kyrgyz language there are some expressions which mean age like *ак сакал* (white beard – an elderly respected person, *ак чач* (white hair – can mean an age or illness connected with stress or shortage of vitamins). In the English language we can see the following expressions as *white with anger* (to be very much angry about something), *as white as a sheet* (frightened very much, speechless with fear), *white with fear* (frightened or terrified). *White elephant* (an object that is useless and may have cost a lot of money). *A white sheep* (a normal well-behaved individual among a group of discreditable individuals) [8]. *A white flag* (a piece of cloth held up to show that you accept you are defeated /a sign that you want to make peace with someone)

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