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СИМВОЛИЧЕСКИЕ ЗНАЧЕНИЯ ОСНОВНЫХ ЦВЕТОВ АНГЛОСАКСОНСКОЙ КУЛЬТУРЫ*Аннотация*

В статье рассмотрены лингвокультурологический аспект формирования базовых цветообозначений англосаксонской культуры с целью выявления и приведения в качестве доказательной базы этимологических данных, а также данных исторического и культурного опыта англосаксов, связанные с цветоименованием предметов и явлений. В результате исследования, несмотря на существующую точку зрения о том, что в системе цветообозначения существует ряд универсальных черт, было успешно доказано, что в каждой культуре, в частности в англо-саксонской, представляется возможным обнаружить некие особенности, характерные исключительно для той или иной лингвоцветовой картины мира. Соответственно, была определена роль базовых цветов, формирующих цветовую картину мира, которая входит в состав языковой, отражая культурную и концептуальную картины мира.

Ключевые слова: цвет, колорема, цветоименование, лингвоцветовая картина мира, лингвокультура, англосаксонская культура, символическое значение.

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SYMBOLIC MEANINGS OF PRIMARY COLOURS IN ANGLO-SAXON CULTURE*Abstract*

The article deals with the linguistic and cultural aspect of forming basic colour names of Anglo-Saxon culture. The aim of the article is to identify and reveal as the evidential base a number of etymological data as well as those ones of historical and cultural experience of Anglo-Saxons, connected with colour naming of objects and phenomena. As a result, the existing point of view, that there is a great number of universal features that can be observed in any colour naming system, is opposed. It is successfully proved in the given paper that it is obviously possible to find certain features characteristic only for a concrete linguistic and colour picture of the world. Respectively, the role of the basic colours is defined in forming a color picture of the world which in its turn becomes a part of the language one, reflecting cultural and conceptual pictures of the world.

Keywords: colour, coloureme, colour naming, linguistic and colour picture of the world, linguistic culture, Anglo-Saxon culture, symbolical meaning.

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Introduction

From the linguistic point of view, the research of colour draws attention to itself within studying of the linguistic and cultural picture of the world. The three-level organization of the colour naming includes concepts, words and communication between them, creates the base for linguistic and cultural distinctions.

Thus, in spite of the fact that from the point of view of physics and physiology, the colour perception is supposed to be identical for all people, representatives of various cultures perceive colours in a different way. Addressing to the definition of the concept "culture", we should mention sense aspects of human practice and its results, the symbolical measurement of social events which allow individuals to live in a special world and make acts whose character is more or less clear to the society. Thus, understanding the culture as the world of meanings, it is possible to assume that colours are special meanings, too. Any person possesses a colour language and consciousness which by their nature are inseparably linked with the national culture.

Methods

Methodology of the given linguistic and cultural research of Anglo-Saxon colour naming is based on a number of etymological data as well as those ones of historical and cultural experience of Anglo-Saxons, connected with colour naming of objects and phenomena. The hypothetic and deductive, text search, and descriptive methods are used to analyze the colour vocabulary taken from *Oxford English Reference Dictionary* (2002) and *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (2009); thus, in our opinion, constituting the evidential base.

Discussion

Despite the general principles and approaches of understanding the colour phenomenon and colour perception, we can observe differences in semantics and meanings of particular tones, reflected in the lexical reproduction of colours in various ethnic cultures. For example, any culture has a colour vital triad "black – white – red" which comes down practically everywhere to the semantic hub of "birth – life – death". But the meaning of each of these colours varies depending on the ethnic and national identity of cultures. So, for example, in the western countries, the black colour is a symbol of death in opposition to the white colour which is associated with the birth of something new, while the red one in its turn appears a symbol of life.

Besides, carefully studying the phenomenon of colour, we should mention some historical tendencies of colour changes. It is known that every era has its own colours, and sometimes they are bright, saturated and sparkling, but at other times they can be pale, dark and gloomy. Some people of creative nature, such as writers and artists, feel their era rather delicately, displaying colours in a special manner in their works.

It is obvious that the allocation of associative fields is impossible without defining the etymology of colour naming words. It is so because associations are historically and culturally motivated. And, as far as we know, the process of the initial nomination is always dictated, first of all, by the environment.

Speaking about national peculiarities of the colour perception, it is necessary, first of all, to connect them with the basic concepts of the optics which studies colour and light. Physical properties of the colour perception and

sociocultural features of the colour usage are complementary. They also influence our perception and rate of the use of these or those colours [11]; [12].

In the English culture, colours were initially associated with natural phenomena or objects of the same colouring which are defined as standards, such as: *sky, soot, sun* and *blood* [5]. Later there appeared particular words to define concrete colouremes, such as: *yellow, black, white*.

It is known that in the English language the formation of the adjectives meaning colours has originated since the first tribes' migration. At the same time, colour terms of that time contained roots of the Indo-European and German languages: (modern: *red, green, blue, white*) [2, P. 136].

Further there appeared the words which united in themselves the function of a reference object, phenomenon and word-name, for example, "*blue*" + "*like a sky*" = *blue-sky colour*. R.M. Frumkina specifies that thus a large number of colouremes is formed: *lemon, opal*, etc. [6, P. 45].

As A.A. Bragina points out, the process of the formations of new colouremes took a long time. So, it took some centuries to transform the object which designated a colour into an appropriate adjective. At the same time, the English language of the 15th century observed no more than 20 of such colouremes. Due to some geographical and historical factors, that process went unevenly, therefore, cases of language borrowings became frequent. Thus, the quantity of colouremes in the language was directly ratio to the level of the English cultural development [3].

A lot of colouremes lost their etymological connection over time and began to be perceived separately (*crimson, brown*).

The next stage of the English colouremes' development was the emergence of the model "*colour + a basic noun*" / "*the colour of the + N*": *the colour of the night* [4, P. 201].

The next period of replenishment of the colour naming vocabulary can be considered the end of the 20th century where terms of colour began acquiring an absolutely new function, i.e. an advertising one. The evasion method from designation of exact colours and the focus on shades became gradually popular. The great influence on this phenomenon, undoubtedly, was rendered by the growth of the markets, trade distribution, as well as a huge range of goods and services which cannot do without bright advertising colours that attract customers' interest.

Results

In general, briefly describing some distinctions and similarities of colour naming, some common features should be noted such as universality in the organizations of a paradigm of the main terms of colour and existence of the colour naming formed from a subject (*pearl-white* – a pearl, *fiery* – a fire, *raven* – a raven, etc.) [9]; [10]. Here are some distinctions such as: peculiar to English colour naming with a metaphorically rethought meaning (*Oxford-blue, Alice-blue, hunter's pink*), one of whose parts is a toponym or an anthroponym [7].

The following paradox is interesting: together with the change of a historic system of colour naming of any culture, colour symbolism undergoes a number of changes. However, neurophysiological principles of colour perception always remain unchangeable. In other words, colour perception is identical to all nations, but colour conceptualization is various because language expresses our consciousness but not that which occurs in a retina of an eye and a brain. Thus, the linguistic and colour picture of the world can express the culture only of a certain nation because in some other culture

it will have the fundamental differences which are characteristic only of the given culture [5, P. 238–239].

So, for example, the word "*red*" has sometimes opposite interpretations in different cultures. In Britain, the red colour symbolizes emotions of confusion and rage (*to turn red with embarrassment / anger*), military groups (*the Red Berets – Claret berets, the Red Devils – Red devils, soldiers of a paraborne regiment*) [9; 10]. The military feature of the colour of red in English is historically caused and originates from the thirty years' war of *white* and *red roses* which came to the end with the marriage and domination of the red rose. In the 17th century in the British navy the red flag was introduced as a symbol of summons for a fight. Nowadays, it is the colour of uniforms of the English soldiers.

The white colour in the majority of cultures has a parallel with kindness, purity, joy and innocence (*a white pigeon, a white flag*). In the English culture, the white colour is associated with purity, innocence (*white boy* or *white son – the beloved son*), inoffensiveness (*a white lie*), professional activity (*a white-collar worker – an office worker*), festive events (*a white wedding – a wedding ceremony*), traditions (*white Christmas – traditional Christmas with the snow*), uselessness (*a white elephant – a burden*) [9]; [10].

English yellow has Indo-European roots *ghel* or *ghol* which at the same time meant both yellow and green colours. From the psychological point of view, yellow colour is considered to be the easiest and brightest, possessing stimulating and toning impacts on people's activity. In the western linguistic culture, yellow is the colour of fall, gold. Still sometimes we can come across such meanings of the yellow colour as of a disease and death. Moreover, from the Anglo-Saxon cultural point of view, the colour yellow is often used to represent a lack of courage and great danger (*yellow alert*) [9, P. 1549].

In the English culture, since ancient times the purple colour has been associated with the colour of the royalty because of the high cost of this paint (*born to the purple – born into a royal family*) [9, P. 1085].

The green colour is traditionally associated with prosperity, growth and life being connected with the image of blossoming greens and the nature on the whole. For example, in English literature and folklore green symbolizes the nature and its signs, such as: abundance and revival [8, P. 33]; [11, P. 55], vitality and freshness (*greenness*) [9, P. 578]. In its opposite meaning, we come across such meanings of the green colour as unhealthy pale in the face because of sickness, fear, etc. (*to turn green, to be green about the gills, to become green with anger, to be green with envy*, etc. [9, P. 578]) where it personifies oppression, boredom, jealousy and other negative emotions.

In the English culture, the grey colour symbolizes uncertainty, dullness, boredom and indifference (*life seems grey and joyless; a grey area – an area of uncertainty in knowledge*) as well as results of sudden fear or illness (*to turn grey*) [9, P. 580].

The black colour is traditionally associated with death, evil, mystery, and misfortune. In the English culture, the black colour expresses darkness (*black as coal*), misfortune (*a black day*), danger (*a black hole, a black spot*), disapproval, treachery (*a black list, a black ship*), illegality (*a black market*), diseases, death (*Black Death – Bubonic plague*) [9, P. 119].

Conclusion

To sum up, we certainly can speak about the contents in stereotypes of colour naming of a peculiar colour code which

is caused etymologically. The colour reflects some ways of formation in the cultural memory not only of the general, but also nationally coloured and culturally significant concepts.

Therefore, it is not possible to understand many phenomena of any culture without taking into account meanings of colours.

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