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THE SYMBOLISM OF COLOR IN PEOPLE'S LIVES

Introduction. The surrounding world is painted in various colors. People are used to giving a certain symbolism to every thing. Color is not an exception. With the help of color people describe the surrounding world and events and also evaluate it. Unfortunately, color symbolism does not coincide in different linguistic pictures of the world. This fact leads to confusion and misunderstandings within the framework of intercultural communication and proves relevance of a comprehensive study of the above mentioned phenomenon.

Main part. Color is one of the most interesting issues that draws the attention of researchers in many branches of science.

The goal of our scientific interest is the evaluative meanings of phraseological units with color meaning in Russian and English. We considered phraseological units with the lexemes “white”, “black”, “yellow”, “green”, “blue” and “red”.

Despite the relative universality of a particular color perception by all people in cultural traditions of different nations unconscious correspondences have developed between types of color and certain images. So “red” in the USA means danger, in France — aristocracy, in India — life and creativity, in Japan — anger and danger, in China — happiness.

In English and Russian, the following microsystems of symbolic meanings of color adjectives are distinguished:

- “good” — white, “nothing special” — gray, “bad” — black;
- “permissive” — green, “warning” — yellow, “forbidding” — red;
- “revolutionary” — red, “counter-revolutionary” — white;
- “gentle, weak, joyful” — pink, “serene” — light blue.

On the bases of mentioned above information we can draw to the following conclusion:

– white color symbolizes good qualities of a person in many cultures — nobility, moderation, peace of mind (белый голубь, белый флаг, white dove, white flag). This color is also a symbol of peace [1, p. 100];

– black color in the meaning of “bad” is reflected in the majority of idioms in Russian and Belarusian. Black color

in many cultures is associated with mourning, misfortune, symbolizes trouble, death (черная тоска, черная полоса; look on the black side (of things) — pessimistic, sad) [1, p. 104];

– green color, in addition to the meaning “permissive”, has one more meaning in Russian and English. It is a symbol of youth, naivety, joy of life. Green color also symbolizes hope, joy, youth (зеленая голова, в зеленом цвете; as green as grass — very young, inexperienced, greener нович beginner, simpleton) [2, p. 115];

– yellow in the Russian language is strongly associated with insanity. This color means bad, joyless; it can even be attributed to diseases [2, p. 111];

– red color reflects the peculiarity of the physiological process when, as a result of nervous excitement, blood rushes to the face. In the Russian language, along with the meaning of “good, bright”, the word “red” in the phraseological units is used in the meaning of “beautiful” (красная девица, красный как рак; red in the face, embarrassed, see red — to get very angry) [2, p. 102];

– blue color symbolizes infinity, eternity and truth, devotion, faith, purity, chastity, spiritual and intellectual life (голубая кровь, синяя птица) [1, p. 113].

It should be noted, however, that as a part of phraseological units, color can convey a completely different meaning. For example, in the ideom «зеленая тоска» the color “green” is an intensifier of negative evaluation. It transfers the characteristic of the conceptual sphere “color” to the conceptual sphere “phenomenon”. Thus, it describes the situation as very sad.

Conclusion. On the basis of the above mentioned facts it can be concluded that color plays an important role in a person’s perception of the surrounding world and it is able to cause certain associations. Differences in the semantic structure of color designation in Russian and English are due to national and cultural characteristics, the symbolism of color in a particular language. In both languages phraseological units with color are oriented on expressive description of a person, his moral qualities, appearance, physical disposition, actions and states. But with time the meaning of different colors can change.

References

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