

Color Designation of Emotions in the English Language

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Abstract: Emotions are an integral part of every human being and thus arouse genuine interest of researchers in various fields of science including linguistics. The diversity of linguistic representations of emotions has been demonstrated by many generations of researchers but there are still a lot of gaps waiting for their turn. So in this article an attempt was made to identify the ways to denote emotions through nominations of color. Besides, with the aim of a brief acquaintance with the emotional state as a whole the author offers the general characteristic of basic emotions, color designation of which was found during the study. Synonymic clusters listed in the article demonstrate lexical potential of representation of emotional states and may be used in the process of communication. Phrases, containing color designations of any emotion, form the content component representing national originality of their language conceptualization and, accordingly, attract attention with their specific nature. Thus, the article defines the range of emotions represented by means of nominations of color, the vast majority of which belong to negative emotional states.

Key words: Emotions • Color designation • Lexical representation • Basic / fundamental emotions
• Synonymic row

INTRODUCTION

Due to the fact that all people are affected by emotions to various degrees there is a necessity to study the speech behavior of the speaker manifesting his or somebody else's emotional state. Thus, the relevance of the study is due to the fact that the expression of the emotional state of the speaker is of a high social importance and is characterized by the ability to influence the person's activities. Under explicit expression of emotions communicants usually understand what emotion the person expresses or wishes to demonstrate, but there are a lot of speech and non-speech situations when one has to guess about the emotions the interlocutor is experiencing. Consequently, the study of emotions is relevant and in this work we plan to present the results of one of the aspects of expressing emotions in the English language, i.e. by means of color designation.

The study of emotions in linguistics has been conducted for a long time; emotions are one of the most difficult objects for understanding and conceptualization in language. Being a more ancient form of the reflection of reality than mediated by the speech cognitive processes, emotions are specific criteria of positive or negative perception of the world.

Emotional states being an integral part of any culture pretend to universality that is expressed in defining basic or main types of emotions that are mentioned in the studies of the famous scientists - psychologists and linguists (M.B. Arnold [1], A. Wierzbicka [2], C. Izard [3], M.I. Lazaridi [4], R. Plutchik [5] M. Brady [6], etc.). At the same time emotions have some specific features for each nation. The cultural peculiarities of expressing emotions also manifest themselves in the fact that even universal emotions, explicable in different cultures, are evaluated and understood by their representatives differently. Thus, in order to identify the specifics of emotions color designation in the English language, we used the following research methods: processing lexicographic sources, implying the analysis of the dictionary definitions of the emotional states identified in speech situations and modeling the synonymic blocks; contextual analysis that allows to follow the specifics of functioning of emotions by means of color designation.

Main Part: V.I. Shakhovsky, a famous emotiologist, notes that the representatives of different cultures "experience universal emotions: anger, joy, fear, happiness, sorrow, hatred etc." [7, 30]. Taking into account the large amount of emotions and their shades observed in the research

works of the above-mentioned scientists and also because of the limited volume of this work we will refer only to universal and fundamental emotions, denoted through color spectrum.

Theorists working with emotions qualify a certain number of emotions as fundamental. The minimal number belonging to this class equals three but the majority of psychologists determine their number from five to nine. In general, modern researchers differentiate about thirty types of fundamental emotions. Therefore, having analyzed basic emotions, considered by psychologists, we distinguish ten of them, named as such at least three times. They include the following nominations of emotions: fear, rage / anger, joy, disgust, grief / distress, shame, interest, surprise, love and contempt. Almost unanimously the researchers distinguish only the emotions of fear and anger, all the rest are not presented in all classifications and are listed according to the decreasing frequency of their nomination in the analyzed classifications.

Emotions are an integral part of the human being and speech activity. The perception of different types of information by the person varies due to the personal characteristics. Manifestation of emotions is also specific for every native speaker: some are more and some are less emotional. The expression of emotions is individual, but there are certain tendencies characteristic for particular cultures. It seems interesting to analyze the color designation of emotions in the culture of English-speaking countries.

Color psychology described in the article "Color" of Encyclopedia Britannica extends to the human perception of certain emotions in connection with some colors. Colors are divided into warm colors and cool colors, this fact already making some impact on the state of the person. Red, orange and yellow, for example, cause delight, alertness and may encourage aggression, blue and green - security, peace and tranquility, brown, gray and black - sadness, depression and melancholy [8]. It is also known that the choice of color is important in the interior for a comfortable stay in the room. The room with dominating green is calmer; blue has a positive impact on working mood etc. At the same time we should not forget about the subjectivity of color perception because of the individuality of each person.

In the 70's of the 20th century the researchers R. D'Andrade and M. Egan noted the emotional value of color, focusing on its evaluation and perception in different people. "A color can appropriately be described, for example, as 'cheerful' and 'gay', or as 'somber' and 'depressing'" [9, 49]. The authors made connection

Table 1: Basic color designations of emotions

No	Color name	Denoted emotion
1.	Red	Shame, disgrace, anger, rage, confusion
2.	Black	Anger, hatred, depression, lack of love, resentment
3.	Blue	Sadness, depression, boredom, melancholy, anger
4.	Pink	Pleasure, enjoyment
5.	Yellow	Fear, dread
6.	White	State of shock, fear, anger
7.	Green	Envy, jealousy
8.	Brown	Boredom, sadness, annoyance
9.	Grey	Sadness, indifference
10.	Purple (violet)	Anger, rage

between the color designation of emotions and ethno-cultural characteristics of the person. However, their study is oriented towards the area of psychology and physiology, taking into account the fact that the perception of color was studied through the physical ability of test subjects. As far as our work is concerned there is more emphasis on the linguistic side.

The idioms and expressions containing the nomination of a particular color were taken as the factual material. Besides, we were choosing the expressions that are used for manifestation of emotions. In the English language we met the designations of emotions by means of the following colors: red, black, blue, pink, yellow, white, green, brown, grey and purple (violet). Red and black are the ones that were most productively represented in the series of the above-mentioned colors. The fact, that practically all the mentioned colors have negative connotation in the explication of emotional states, seems to be interesting. Below is a summary table with the names of colors and denoted emotions.

Pink is the only color found in the available material by means of which positive emotions are expressed. The idiomatic expression *tickled pink* has the following meaning: be very pleased or amused [10, 1604]. Besides, we have found the meanings that convey emotions of happiness, joy, bliss, satisfaction and others having synonymic links.

I'm tickled pink / that things are rosy / and skies are blue once again...

I'm tickled pink / the moon is yellow / and I am your fellow tonight (Jack Shaindlin "I'm Tickled Pink" song).

Judging by the context of the song one may conclude that the person is experiencing positive emotions and one of the ways of expressing them is the above-mentioned phrase *tickled pink*. When compared

with the Russian language, one can mention the association with pink sunglasses, through the prism of which the person does not notice anything negative and sees everything in rainbow colors, that often do not even correspond to real perception.

In the English language one can frequently meet the color designation of one of the basic emotions finding its implementation in different nominations: annoyance, vexation, anger, being out of temper, indignation, outrage.

Roget's 21st Century Thesaurus gives a more detailed picture of *anger* representation in English: *anger, acrimony, animosity, annoyance, chagrin, choler, conniption, dander, disapprobation, distemper, enmity, exasperation, fury, gall, hatred, huff, impatience, indignation, infuriation, irascibility, ire, irritability, irritation, mad, miff, outrage, passion, peevishness, petulance, pique, rage, rankling, resentment, soreness, stew, storm, tantrum, temper, tiff, vexation, violence* [11, 35]. Thus, there are a lot of lexical ways of expressing the emotion of anger in the given culture. However, having considered the above-mentioned list, we should pay attention to the polyfunctionality of some lexemes. The same words may be used as the determinants of several emotions. For example, *pique* can reflect not only the emotion of *anger* but also *resentment* and *pride*. The similar situation is observed with other synonyms.

Anger is an emotional state that has certain protest against experienced injustice and is accompanied by the desire to eliminate it. Anger plays a vital role as a basic human experience. In spite of the negative nature of this emotion, anger is connected with the sense of justice and in some cases may help to generate strength with the aim to protect oneself and the loved ones. Being a complex emotion, anger involves several stages of development – irritation, outrage, indignation, rage and other its variations. One of the important characteristics of the given emotion is its temporality, i.e. the temporal limit of the existence of the feeling – with the time on the strength of anger gets weaker.

So, being a universal emotion, mentioned in all classifications, anger is widely presented in the area of color. For example, red is used in the expression *a red rag to a bull = like waving a red flag in front of a bull – something that is likely to make somebody very angry* (like red fabric/a rag to a bull) something making the person furious or mad. This expression goes back to the Spanish bullfighting, where the torero waves a red cloth in front of the bull to provoke it to attack. In fact, color does not have any meaning for the bull and is somewhat tentative, probably for attracting attention and the audience appeal of the bullfight itself.

The meaning of the idiom *to see red* comes to the uncontrolled reaction of anger against someone or something, such as:

John saw red when he saw his girlfriend laughing with another guy.

In this example anger is caused by another equally important emotion – jealousy, which is manifested through green. The widely known expression *green-eyed monster* goes back to W. Shakespeare's work "Othello" and is pretty often used and easily recognizable.

Another color denoting anger and rage in speech is black. For example, while describing the look with the help of this color (*black look*) the condition and emotions of the looking person become clear. Besides, the degree of anger in this context is rather clear and rage may be caused by other emotions such as envy, hatred, jealousy etc.

Going from specific to general, we should note that not only the look but the whole face may be black *to have a face as black as thunder* – in this expression one can track the direct comparison of thunder with the emotional state of the person, i.e. the meteorological metaphor to denote anger or rage is used. *To turn black (blue) in face* – probably has the same origin and is used by analogy with the previous expression. Other color means of expressing the described emotion are *purple (to be purple with rage) u white (go/turn white with rage)*. Thus, from the available examples one can see that in the English language the designation of anger, rage and other degrees of this emotional state the following colors are used: red, black, blue, violet and white.

Returning to red, we would like to consider shame as another emotion that has a physiological explanation of association with this color.

Shame is often considered to be a negative emotion that is expressed in the discrepancy between one's thoughts, actions and appearance not only to the expectations of others but to one's ideas about proper behavior and appearance.

This emotion is interpreted by lexicographers as *the feelings of sadness, embarrassment and guilt that you have when you know that something you have done is wrong or stupid* [10, 1395].

The ways to verbalize the emotion of shame can be realized through synonyms: *abashment, blot, chagrin, compunction, confusion, contempt, contrition, degradation, derision, discomposure, discredit, disesteem, dishonor, disrepute, guilt, humiliation, ignominy, mortification, obloquy, odium, opprobrium, pang, prudency, remorse, reproach, self-disgust, shame, shamefacedness, smear, stigma, stupefaction, treachery*

[11, 751]. However, these synonyms are used to express feelings explicitly while in real speech the direct nominations of experienced emotions are rare. Thus, one of the ways to express shame, embarrassment and other similar emotions is color designation. Red, as already mentioned, is the color representing the feeling in question. For example, *to go red as a beetroot*, *to go red as a beet*, *become red-faced / red in the face*, *to blush scarlet*.

The next emotion that attracted our attention was fear. One of the most important life instincts in man is the instinct of self-preservation. The result of it is, first of all, fear, which explains the large number of situations, where this emotion is expressed. Fear, being a basic emotion, shows the negative emotional state that appears when the subject receives information about the real or imagined danger.

Being an integral part of human existence, fear piques the interest of researchers of different sciences. The linguistic representation of this emotion is rather diverse. Thus, the linguistic expression of fear can be seen through the change of the intonation pattern, the use of metaphors, phraseological units, paremias, the change in sentence structure etc.

In the English language the synonymic row of this emotion is rather rich. In the English-Russian dictionary of synonyms there is the following list of synonyms: *fear, dread, fright, alarm, dismay, consternation, panic, terror, horror, trepidation* [12, 175].

The common connecting definition for the synonymic row of the emotion is presented in the following way: "the feeling caused by the evaluation of the fact as dangerous for life or well-being" [12, 175]. J.D. Apresjan offers to distinguish the above-mentioned synonyms relying on five criteria: intensity, relevance-permanence, nature, expression and causes. One considers *fear, fright, alarm* and *dismay* less strong or intense.

Roget's thesaurus, as in previous cases, gives a more detailed row of synonyms where some units could be added to different groups that is why we mention only unambiguous synonyms denoting the analyzed emotional state: *fear, alarm, awe, consternation, dismay, dread, fright, horror, nightmare, panic, phobia, reverence, terror, timidity, trembling, tremor, trepidation* [11, 337].

Let us consider the ways of manifesting fear through the color palette. For example, the expression *as white as a sheet* means extreme fear and often is used together with the expression *as if you've seen a ghost*. The phrase *white*

as a ghost, that can be used to denote fear and also painful state or just the state of shock. In addition to white that the native English speaker associates with fear, let us give examples of yellow. However, it is necessary to pay attention to the fact that yellow does not often convey the emotion that is experienced during the moment of speech, it mostly denotes the person with the inherent fear. *Yellow-bellied* - too modest, shy, afraid of everything; *a yellow streak* is used to describe fear and cowardice as the person's quality.

The emotional state of sadness, grief in the English language can be expressed by means of a large number of synonyms, so in one of the lexicographical sources we can find the following list. *Sadness – unhappiness, depression, anguish, blahs, bleakness, blue devils, blue funk, broken heart, bumner, cheerlessness, dejection, despondency, disconsolateness, dismal, dispiritedness, distress, dolefulness, dolor, downcastness, downer, dysphoria, forlornness, funk, gloominess, grief, grieving, heartache, heartbreak, heavy heart, hopelessness, letdown, listlessness, melancholy, misery, moodiness, mopes, mournfulness, mourning, poignancy, sorrow, sorrowfulness, the blues, the dumps, tribulation, woe* [11, 728].

The given emotion is determined as "the negative, emotional state, caused by an unwanted to the subject event, expectation of such an event or some unclear to the subject reasons accompanied by the loss of activity" [12, 366].

The expression *black dog* is used when speaking about bad mood and depression. Among the above-mentioned synonyms we see several phraseological units with the use of blue: *blue devils, blue funk, the blues*, besides we came across *to look / feel blue, blue study*. Consequently, having such a rich representation of this color to denote melancholy, sadness, grief and similar emotions, we can consider this tendency to be a characteristic peculiarity of the English culture. In addition to black and blue to express and denote the analyzed state brown (*in a brown study, be browned off*) and grey (*be / seem grey*) are also used.

CONCLUSION

Understanding the diversity of expressing emotions has been attracting the attention of psychologists, sociologists, psychologists and researchers of other branches of science for a long time. Linguists are not exceptions. From the point of view of linguistics emotional

states of the person were studied in the aspects of psycholinguistics, cognitive and social linguistics, field linguistics and its other areas. The objects of study were both verbal and non-verbal ways of expressing emotions in different languages.

Talking about the diversity in the forms of expressing emotions in the English speaking situations such as: direct nomination of emotions, duplication of lexis, use of synonyms, change in the intonation pattern, paraphrase, use of idiomatic expressions, etc., one can note a more detailed approach to the choice of language means, nominating the emotional state of the speaker. This indicates rather a high differentiation mode of emotions by native English speakers and the sensitivity of choice of manifesting feelings in the communication process.

The analysis of emotions was based on the expressions containing color designations and, to be more exact, from the point of the semantics of such phraseological units. We consider of analyzing the frequency of use of such expressions with the aim of distinguishing the most "live" and functioning ones for showing the dynamics of their development, which seems to be a promising direction of research in the future. Sexual differentiation in the explication of emotions in speech could be interesting from the point of view of gender linguistics. Besides, comparative and contrastive approach may be expanded by the range of emotions, manifested in speech situations of different languages. These aspects of study of the emotional states make the prospect of further researches.

Summary In linguistics there is the dichotomy between implicit vs. explicit notions where the first refers to unspoken, implied and contracted opposed to clearly expressed and expanded accordingly. The material of this study may help to understand better emotional states expressed through color designations. Most of the phrases that have the nomination of color implicitly express an emotional state, i.e. do not name the emotion itself. Explicit manifestation of emotional state by means of phrases with their color designation is extremely rare (*to be purple with rage u go/turn white with rage*). Therefore, to understand the cultural peculiarity we need to pay more attention to the study of set phrases.

On the basis of these results one may also note the tendency of color designation used for negative emotions, the only color, used to manifest a positive emotion is pink. The most productive in terms of nominations of color is the emotion of anger, to express which five colors were distinguished (red, black, blue,

purple and white). Sorrow and melancholy are the emotions with semantic similarity (black, blue, brown and gray), fear is expressed by means of white and yellow, shame and jealousy have unambiguous color designations: red and green accordingly.

Metaphorical use of color in speech has the established nature, but one has to take into account its cultural specifics. You also need to remember that translating the expression with the color designation of emotions into another language, the literal meaning may be incorrectly understood by the representatives of a different culture.

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