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COLOUR SYMBOLISM AND ITS COGNITIVE-CULTURAL MESSAGE

The aim of this paper is to show that colour symbolism and colour terms can influence cognition, highlight cultural, religious differences and establish links between human activity, their emotions, their mood and psychological state. The role of colour symbolism and terms is rather significant in fiction, specifically, with the help of colour terms authors depict nature, create their heroes, discuss certain national and individual preferences, etc.

Key words: colour symbolism, cognition, idioms, proverbs, translatability

Symbolism is viewed as a literary device, the most aesthetic one that is referred to by many of the writers. It seems to be a kind of a tool which helps in conveying the messages indirectly. Animals, objects, characters and colours can be used as symbols. There are many critics and literary men who have views in symbolism and its uses; these views are differing from one critic to another which lead to appear different literary theories that help the readers to pick up the symbols easily in any literary work.

A symbol is defined as something that stands for, represents, or

denotes something else /Hall 1994/. Symbolism, or the use of symbols, involves using an object, an attitude, a belief, or a value in order to represent an abstract idea; it takes something ordinary or basic and makes it more than what it is in reality /Fadaee 2011: 19-27/.

Langer (1954) states that symbolization is the essential act of thought, and the symbol-making function is one of man's major actions, like eating, looking or moving about. It is the fundamental process of the mind, and goes on all the time. He asserts that symbol mediates know-

ion could seem unrelated to cross-cultural localization. A closer look, however, will reveal that these can be found in every society, each with some specific characteristics /De Bortoli, Maroto 2001: 3-5/.

Religion is obviously another important part of human life, particularly culture. In every religion colours have their associations, and it should be borne in mind that an inappropriate use of colour can be perceived as offensive. Green is sacred for Shiite Muslims, and the use of green should be undertaken very cautiously. In the Middle East blue is a protective colour and it can be found colouring many of the most famous mosques and also in Buddhism. In Western Culture, white is used to symbolize purity and peace. White is worn by many Muslims while attending Friday prayers. In Chinese culture white symbolizes the colour of mourning, while mourning in Western and Mediterranean countries is symbolized by black. An overabundance of white space around a small isolated image or lettering might hint at funerary meanings. Red, indigo, violet, yellow and orange are the colours of Hinduism, while red,

orange, amber, gold and purple are colours characteristic of Christianity.

A few scholars state that the use of colour is one of the means psychologists have at their disposal to analyze not only the emotional state of people in general but also of children who are very much apt to showing their emotional state through colours while painting.

In early childhood colours are used more subjectively than in a naturalistic objective way. From the age of three to six children strongly prefer colours to shapes (the opposite is true at a later stage of development). Bright red can be used by children to express anger, desire to destroy, while the black of the night can be fraught with all the depressive anguishes. The yellow of the sun can stand for a happy desire to communicate and express themselves. Younger children are attracted by strong, warm, and intense colours. As time progresses colours become less violent and softer shades appear: colours “cool down”. This process continues throughout life, with older people finding “subdued” colours more attractive. The findings about age differences in perception seem to indicate that colour intensity

should be regulated to match the taste of the targeted age category.

Colours are used and subtly handled in various psychological tests, as for instance the Luscher's colour test which is defined as a "deep" psychological test, developed for the use of psychiatrists, psychologists, physicians and those who are professionally involved with the conscious and unconscious characteristics and motivations of others. It is said not to be a parlour game. The principle of the Luscher Colour Test is that accurate psychological information can be gained about a person through his choices and rejections of colours [/http://psytests.org/luscher/fullcolor.html/](http://psytests.org/luscher/fullcolor.html/)

The Linguo-Cultural Value of Colour Terms and Their Use In Idioms and Proverbs

English is a colourful language – that is to say, colour features in many English idioms, proverbs and sayings. As human beings, we have a very developed visual sense, and this is reflected in our language. To clarify this we would like to give some examples from idioms together with their explanations in English.

- *Be true blue* - if a person/object/situation is considered to be *true blue*, it is considered genuine.

- *Beyond the black stump* - an Australian idiom indicating that even if you go as far as you can, *the black stump* is still a little further.

- *Black as Newgate's knocker* - (UK) if things are *as black as Newgate's knocker*, they are very bad. Newgate was an infamous prison in England, so its door knocker meant trouble.

- *Born to the purple* - someone who is *born to the purple* is born in a royal or aristocratic family.

- *Browned off* - to be tired of or fed up with.

- *Catch someone red-handed* - if someone *is caught red-handed*, they are found doing something wrong or illegal.

- *Feeling blue* - if you *feel blue*, you are feeling unwell mainly associated with depression or unhappiness.

- *Green around the gills* - if someone looks *green around the gills*, they look ill.

- *Grey area* - a *grey/gray area* is one where there is no clear right or wrong.

• **Scarlet woman** - this idiom is used as a pejorative term for a sexually promiscuous woman, especially an adulteress.

The above-mentioned examples come to confirm the fact that the use of colour terms makes the images of objects more flamboyant, vivid and to the point.

Now we intend to discuss some examples of proverbs with colour terms from.

There were some red faces - There were some embarrassed people.

Red sky at night, shepherds' delight, red sky in the morning, shepherds' warning - If you see a red sky at night, the weather will be good next day, but a red sky in the morning foretells bad weather.

To get the green light - to get the go-ahead (this comes from traffic lights).

He is green - He is a novice, i.e. does not quite know what he is doing. Be careful therefore, because if you say someone is green, it could mean either jealous or uninitiated, or ecologically aware, depending on the context.

• *To go green* - to become ecologically aware (green issues are

issues relating to conservation and saving the planet).

• *Seeing the world through rose-tinted glasses* - seeing things in an unrealistically benign way.

• *To be purple with rage* - to be very angry.

• *To black something out* - to erase something from your mind, or to redact something from a document.

• *To be in someone's black books* - to be in disgrace.

• *To have it in black and white* - to have something very definite (often meaning something written down).

• *So close you can see the whites of his eyes* - very close indeed.

• *To brown nose someone* - to suck up to someone (i.e. to be sycophantic in order to obtain a favour or advantage) - this is a bit rude and should not be used in front of people who are easily shocked.

Proverbs with colour terms add some flavour and spice to the speech. All colours in general, and in proverbs, in particular, have a set of symbolic meanings or emotions associated with them.

The Translatability of Colour Terms

The investigation concerning the translatability and translation of colour

terms leads to the assumption that the use of colour terms, found in idioms and proverbs, is based on a firm cultural background. It is obvious that there exists similarity of usage in Armenian. Sometimes a colour term can be translated by its equivalent, still in other cases the same idiom can contain a different colour indication in Source (English) and Target (Armenian) languages, although the meaning of the idiom can be the same. There are even cases when the corresponding Armenian idiom contains no colour term at all.

Now, we would like to discuss the most typical cases:

a) word for word translation:

as **black** as a hat - գլխարկի պես սև

as **red** as blood - արյան պես կարմիր

• as **yellow** as crow's foot - ագռավի ոտքի պես դեղին

a) equivalents in Armenian without colour indication:

• **white** lie - անմեղ ասված սուտ

• *There may be **blue** and better **blue**.* - Մարդ կա մարդ է, մարդ կա զարդ է:

• *True **blue** will never stain.* - Ազնիվ սիրտը երբեք չի վարկաբեկվի:

The same idioms and proverbs in English can appear in Armenian with a different colour indication.

• *A women's blow never gave a **black** eye.* - Կնոջ հարվածից կապտուկ չի առաջանում:

• *All cats are **grey** in the dark.* - Բոլոր կատուները մթության մեջ սև են:

c) The idioms and proverbs with the word *colour* nearly always have their equivalents in Armenian but the Armenian variant does not contain the word *colour* at all.

• *cast a false **colour** on something* - ինչ-որ բան պատկերացնել սխալ կերպով

• *come out in one's true **colours*** - ցույց տալ իրական դեմքը

• *lower one's **colours*** - դիրքերը զիջել

• *come through with flying colours* - Հաջողությամբ պսակել գործը

d) There are also many cases when the target language does not contain any colour name at all.

• ***black** out* - կորցնել գիտակցությունը

• *catch someone **red-handed*** - բռնել հանցանքի վայրում

• *between the devil and the deep blue sea* - երկու քարի արանքում լինել

• *to see pink elephants* - տեսնել երևակայական բաներ

Thus, with the help of idioms and proverbs which contain colour terms, fiction writers depict nature, create their heroes, discuss certain national and individual preferences.

Although many intrinsic properties of colours (liking, meaning associations) appear to be pan-cultural, culture greatly matters in perceiving colour terms.

Colours can symbolize different things in different cultures. While some colours may be symbolic of some certain emotions or traits in one culture, many different cultures use them to represent various other things. As far as the translatability of a colour term is concerned, it can be translated by its equivalent. Still in other cases the same idiom can contain a different colour indication in Source (English) and Target (Armenian) languages, although the meaning of the idiom can be the same. There are even cases when the corresponding Armenian idiom contains no colour term at all.

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Նաիրա Գասպարյան Կարինե Ասատրյան

Գունային սիմվոլիկան / խորհրդանիշը և նրա ճանաչողական-մշակութային ուղերձը

Սույն հոդվածը փորձում է լուսաբանել գունային սիմվոլիզմը և գունային տերմինները, որոնք մեծ ազդեցություն ունեն մարդու ճանաչողության վրա: Գունային սիմվոլիզմն ամենահաճախ օգտագործվող հնարքներից է, որը կարողանում է ընթերցողի մոտ զգայական պատկերներ առաջացնել: Գույներն օգտագործվում են առարկաներ պատկերելիս, ընթերցողի մոտ որոշակի տեսարան կամ պատկեր առավել ակնառու դարձնելու համար: Դրանք կարող են արտահայտել հերոսի ներաշխարհը, գույների միջոցով հեղինակը կարող է ներթափանցել մարդու զգացողություններ, տրամադրություն և հոգեկան վիճակ: Առանձնահատուկ ուշադրություն է հատկացվել հայերեն թարգմանությանը, առավել ուշագրավ են գունային տերմինները դարձվածքներում և ասույթներում:

Բանալի բառեր՝ գույն, գունային սիմվոլիզմ, ճանաչողություն, դարձվածք, ասույթ, թարգմանելիություն, գունային հոգեբանություն