

An Application and Function Analysis of Color Metaphor in English News

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Metaphor is a commonly used figure of speech in English. Metaphor of colors can help us form a more vivid cognition of things. The proper use of color metaphor in English news can increase the vividness and readability of the content, attract more readers, and expand the spread and publicity of news.

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Introduction

Metaphor is a figure of speech that is often used in English language. Properly used, metaphor can be visualized and make the language more vivid, expressive, and powerful. The use of metaphor in English news can not only play the basic role of metaphor, but also directly or indirectly reflect the certain ideology of news writers, so that readers can not only read objective news reports, but also understand the thoughts or attitudes of news writers to a certain extent.

Metaphor and Color Metaphor

In English, the word “metaphor” is derived from Greek, where “meta” means “transfer” and “phor” means “bring”. Unlike “simile”, metaphor does not use “as” or “like”, but makes a hidden comparison. For example, “The battle of consoles ended up into three kingdoms of Sony, Microsoft and Nintendo”. Here, the game console market is metaphorically a battlefield, and the market share is metaphorically three kingdoms.

Metaphor is not only a rhetorical device, but also goes beyond the scope of rhetorical devices and becomes a way of thinking to recognize the world and express thoughts and emotions. In the process of human cognition, the application and influence of metaphor can be found everywhere. After the publication of linguists Lakoff and Johnson’s book *The Metaphor We Live By*, people have realized that metaphor is one of the main cognitive abilities of human beings and one of the universal features of human language. Everyone thinks and expresses with metaphor consciously or unconsciously. Meanwhile, the rich connotations of metaphor enable it to reflect complex cultural differences.

Color cognition is an important part of human observation of the world and the acquisition of knowledge and experience. It is based on the understanding of color by many factors, such as human physiological mechanism, natural environment, and social and cultural background. The development of human language is also closely related to the perception of the external world by human senses. Almost every language on Earth has

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words for colors. Color metaphor cognition occurs naturally when we use color-related words to express or explain things. For example, in English, there is “blue chip Dow Jones Industrial Average”. In English, “blue blood” refers to aristocrats, and in Western casinos, there are three colors of chips, in which blue chips are the highest denomination, red chips are the second, and white chips the lowest. When it comes to the stock market, there comes into being “blue chip”, which makes people think of those companies with excellent performance and rich dividends. Color metaphor can help us form a more vivid cognition of things.

The Application and Function of Color Metaphor in English News

Journalistic English refers to the English used by mass media, such as English newspapers, radio, television, and news websites. As a carrier of information interaction, journalistic English is one of the most important and common forms of English language. Each publication has its own target reader group, each article has different style and type characteristics, and each news report author has his own unique writing style, but the writing of news or reports will be more or less affected by some common factors, which is the so-called “news English characteristics”. First of all, newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and websites are widely popular mass media with a wide range of audiences, so the language used in English news must adapt to the level of readers, listeners, or viewers, which is a major feature of English news—popularity. Secondly, in order to attract more audiences, the writing of news reports requires not only the detailed content of reports, but also the language should be interesting. Thirdly, out of the actual need of saving space, news report writing often requires the text to be condensed and refined. The writer should not only report as rich as possible in the shortest possible space, but also make efforts in expression skills.

Metaphor, as the most common figure of speech in English, can be found everywhere in English news. Here are some common color metaphors.

1. “Black” is associated with darkness, terror, demons, and a sense of mystery and fear. When we use this associations to explain something that originally has no color but is associated with mystery or darkness, the metaphorical cognition of color is formed. For example, “Tens of millions of prescription drugs on the black market—Criminal gangs have smuggled tens of millions of prescriptions-only drugs out of the UK’s protected supply chain, a BBC File program has discovered”. “Black market” is an illegal market, but the use of “black” can better make people understand that this is a “market” that is free from legal supervision. “Black” is also often used as a metaphor for “darkness”. There have been two pretty bad stock market crashes in the history of the United States. On Friday, September 24, 1869, the stock market plunged. That day was called “Black Friday” in English. Sixty years later, on Tuesday, October 29, 1929, the stock market plunged again. It was called “Black Tuesday” and started the Great Depression of the United States.

2. “White” in Western culture is closely related to snow and lilies, which carry cultural connotations of purity, elegance, and nobility. Near Christmas, people always look forward to the arrival of “white Christmas”. For example, “For Boston, the prospects for a white Christmas are slim but not out of the question”. But in the following news, “white” has a deeper meaning: “There is an attempt in Western circles to describe large scale infrastructure projects under the Belt and Road Initiative as ‘white elephants’ with no tangible effect on the population”. The word “white elephant” comes from India, because Indians worship elephants, especially white elephants as gods. Local laws stipulate that white elephants cannot be driven to work, let alone be slaughtered, and people who own white elephants should keep them well until they die of natural causes. However, it is expensive to raise white elephants, so people regard white elephants as a nuisance, expensive, and useless.

Therefore, the bias of Western media towards China's contributions to global economic development is quite evident.

3. "Red" is a fiery color. In English, the color is associated with anger, bloodshed, and warning. For example, "NATO's recent defense ministers' meeting in Brussels signaled more than just budgetary ambition. It marked a turning point. The alliance, long accustomed to the symbolic 2% GDP defense target, is now considering a far more aggressive figure: 5%, as proposed by the United States. For some, this represents resolve. For others, a red flag". Here, "red flag" means an alarm bell or an early warning sign. Here's another story: "Red card to FIFA: U.S. law officials—14 defendants including high-ranking officials of the FIFA were charged Wednesday by U.S. Department of Justice with racketeering, wire fraud and money laundering conspiracies, enriching themselves through the corruption of international soccer". A "red card" is used by the referee in a football match to punish a player for a serious offence by showing a red card. The player is sent off and cannot continue playing. The headline, "red card to FIFA", was concise and eye-catching, inviting readers to read the details. It turned out that 14 defendants, including senior FIFA officials, had been indicted by the US Justice Department on charges of racketeering, wire fraud and money laundering conspiracy.

4. "Green" is the color of life. As winter turns to spring, the whole world begins to look green. When people see "green", they will naturally associate it with spring, plants, and vitality. Because green has the symbolic significance of safety, environmental protection, and peace, it is loved by most nationalities in the world. For example, "One-hour blackout to go Green". There are two colors in this headline: "Blackout" means darkness, and "go Green" means "to practice environmental protection by turning off the lights for one hour". In just one sentence, the two colors are a stark contrast. In addition, all over the world, green traffic lights mean "clear to go", so "green light" can be used in everyday life to give permission for something or a plan to go ahead, for example: "China's amphibious AG600 aircraft greenlighted for mass production".

5. "Blue", on the one hand, is the embodiment of the sky and the sea, symbolizing loftiness, vastness, and depth, and is often endowed with the imagery of eternity and inclusiveness. In Chinese traditional culture, "blue" is regarded as the first of the five colors, representing stability, authenticity, and tranquility. In many other cultures, "blue" is used to represent "peace". "The country (China) has also increased its participation in various United Nations (UN) missions (from the blue helmets or peacekeeping missions to the health, education, scientific, and cultural sectors), ...". The flag of the UN is mainly in light blue, symbolizing its mission to maintain world peace. The UN stipulates that when conducting international peacekeeping missions, the military forces of each country should wear their own country's uniforms, wear their own military rank insignias, have the national flag on the left arm, and the UN flag on the right arm. To facilitate identification as peacekeeping forces, all the military units of each country wear blue helmets. These helmets have the UN logo and the English word "UN" on them. On the other hand, "blue" in English, is often used to represent "sadness" or "low spirits". This usage originated from maritime culture. Early sailors used blue flags to express mourning, which later evolved into a symbol of low spirits. "The term (blue Monday) was coined just over a decade ago to pinpoint the day—usually the third Monday in January—calculated to be the most depressing in the year. According to a formula credited to a British academic, bad weather, post-holiday debt and the failure to keep New Year's resolutions all combine to make it the most miserable day of the year." "Blue Monday" refers to a psychological state where one experiences fatigue and fear towards work due to excessive work pressure and resulting boredom. "Winter blue" refers to the depressive mood that occurs in winter due to the cold weather and reduced sunlight.

“Hotpot treat helps to beat winter blues—Though people now eat spicy Chongqing hotpot all year round, even in summer, the chilly winter offers more reasons to enjoy the mouthwatering delicacy.”

Conclusion

News reporting should follow the principles of realism, objectivity, and timeliness. In order to make news reporting more lively and interesting, more readable, attract more audiences, and expand the spread of news and publicity effect, news report writers will use a large number of rhetorical devices. Metaphor, as the most commonly used rhetorical device in English, can make news reports more vivid and concrete, make the news language concise and comprehensive, and improve the reading experience for readers. If news writers can appropriately utilize the metaphorical meanings of colors, their news report will be more vivid, more concise, and also more in line with real life.

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