

LATIP 2021**International Conference on Language and Technology in the Interdisciplinary Paradigm****COMBINATORIAL-SEMANTIC SPECIFICS OF COLORATIVE
COLLOCATIONS WITH COMPONENT WHITE**

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(a) Novosibirsk State Technical University, Novosibirsk, Russian Federation, czvenger@corp.nstu.ru**Abstract**

Collocations present considerable interest for a researcher due to their wide distribution and significance in the communication process. These units are regarded as a pair or group of words that are often used together and sound natural. The article considers the colorative collocations with the component white which are used in the language of newspapers. Colour lexis is a universal phenomenon and an important axiological component of different cultures. The objective of the article is to identify the semantic, functional, syntagmatic mechanisms of their formation, as well as to discover the specific characteristics of these units. Being a component of collocations white could cause certain associations. The meaning of these units is revealed in their various combinations. This research is conducted in the framework of combinatorial linguistics that studies the linear relations of language units and their combinatorial potential. Colorative collocations are considered in this work as combinatorially determined lexical and phraseological units, which are created by the adjective type and characterized by structural-semantic integrity. Particular attention is paid to the semantic and combinatorial-syntagmatic specific for the compatibility of lexemes. The main conclusion of the article is that the formation of colorative collocations is caused by various extralinguistic and linguistic factors. These units are aimed at attracting target reader's attention, informed and encouraging reading the article. Moreover, these units have the emotional impact on the reader.

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1. Introduction

Both collocations and colour terms separately have received a lot of attention in linguistics. The relevance of the work is due to the importance of the collocations as indispensable elements of all kinds of texts, with which our utterances are very largely made. The interest in the collocations is associated with them as universal units which are inherent in all natural languages. And more regularly the term collocation tends to be regarded as typical, specific and characteristic combination of two words; (Vlavatskaya 2019).

In collocation theory within combinatorial lexicology, the colorative collocations are distinguished as special lexical units having universal and specific features (national-cultural, terminological, expressive, etc.). The colour terms make these units particularly important so far as they are surrounded by the system of associations and explanations, reflecting universal abstract concepts. The importance of colour as a linguistics phenomenon in the modern society is undeniable. And therefore the various aspects of colour lexis have been thoroughly investigated (Berlin & Kay, 1969a; Frumkina 1984).

The significance of colour as a semantic phenomenon is directly related to compatibility with different lexemes, denoting the objects and events of surrounding reality. Thus, the studying of various patterns and semantic relations is especially important in this regard. This problem is considered within the framework of combinatorial lexicology, studying word combinations that are subordinate to the specific communicative tasks under the conditions of their linear relations of words and their combinatorial potential (Vlavatskaya, 2019).

2. Problem Statement

The interest to colorative lexis is associated with the problems of lexical meanings, the description of language norms and the interpretation of the author's text. The correlation of semantics and combinability of colorative units is considered within the framework of combinatorial lexicology because combinatorics is the basic principle of the organization of all language units (Makovsky, 2006).

The ability of colour terms to be combined with other words is due to the factor of lexemes compatibility and is connected with the fact that colour as a universal phenomenon reflects the system of cultural, social, historical and other peculiarities of a certain ethnic group (Berlin & Kay, 1969b; Frumkina, 1984; Novikova & Novikov 2017). Moreover colour terms affect the semantics and pragmatics of the syntactic construction they form.

The focus of our research is the adjectival type of words combinations «*white* + noun», or colorative collocations as the type of combinatorially conditioned word combinations having an adjectival nature and including color semantics.

As a result of combinatorial processes, each language unit has syntagmatic significance, which is based on the individual meaning of words when they are combined in a linear series. Thus syntagmatic properties of a language unit should be taken into account for successful interpretation of it (Kobozeva, 2000). Moreover sememe analysis helps to establish the semantics of components and is based on the selection of semes of the unit used in the certain contexts (Sternin, 2011). The semantic-syntagmatic analysis, developed in the framework of combinatorial lexicology (Vlavatskaya, 2020), is determined by

the interest in compatibility of colorative collocations' components and helps to detect the manifestation of various connotations, lexemes actualization, the mechanisms of formation, functions etc.

3. Research Questions

The main research issue can be formulated as follows:

- To describe the concept of colorative collocations and identify the semantic, functional, syntagmatic mechanisms of their formation, as well as to discover the specific characteristics of these units.
- To reveal the combinatorial-semantic specifics of component *white* which designate various realities within the syntactic structure A + N (adj. *white* +noun).

4. Purpose of the Study

The paper goal is to reveal semantic and combinatory peculiarities of colorative collocations with the component *white* and describe their specific characteristics.

5. Research Methods

The study is based on the data from BNC (British National Corpus and COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English). The research material is colorative collocations with the component *white* which are used in the language of newspapers. Such units are considered within a large number of contexts containing different types of collocations with various restrictions, among which semantic and syntagmatic ones are predominating.

The main method of describing the material is combinatorial-semantic analysis, including contextual, sememic, functional-semantic, definitional analysis.

The combinatorial-semantic analysis (Vlavatskaya & Tsvenger 2020) is used to detect the specifics of various kinds of collocations and comprises several stages, including sememic analysis of the collocations' components, the type of their lexical meaning, the function performed by the collocation.

6. Findings

The data collected make it possible to draw some conclusions. Analysis reveals that interpretation of the collocations depends on the nouns filling the syntactic construction, as well as on semantics of the component *white*. Being used in various contexts of newspapers, collocations with the component *white* reflect different realities of modern society.

6.1. Semantic characteristics of the color term *white* as a component of colorative collocations

As a result of the sememis analysis, based on a number of explanatory dictionaries (Cambridge Dictionary; Merriam-Webster; Macmillan Dictionary) some semantic dominants in the meaning structure of component *white* have been revealed, for example:

- As a rule, the component *white* nominates the color of natural phenomena like *white clouds*, *white flowers*, *white beaches* etc.
- It denotes something light or pale in color: *white chocolate*, *white bread*, *white hair*, *white wine*
- It relates to people having light pigmentation of the skin and to their culture: *white boy*, *white voters*, *white Americans* etc.
- It relates to someone who does not intend to cause harm: *white lie* etc.
- It denotes something with milk added: *white coffee*.
- It relates to someone who is pale: *white face* (with anger or due to illness) etc.

It is obvious that the most examined collocations are widely used by native speakers and denote universals of human experience: *white supremacy*, *white wine*, *white women*, *white beard*, *white carpet*, *White House*, *white guy*, *white flesh*, *white supremacists*, *white community* etc.

At the same time, there are many collocations, which semantics is determined by the context: *white grievance*, *white swan*, *white sheep* etc. Such collocations are regarded as occasional (author's) collocations (occasional metaphoric expressions), the formation of which correlates with author's individual view of the world (Korshunova, 2017). It is necessary to analyze occasional collocations in its contextual position, because the author's word appears in context and is formed by context, very often being a text formation unit, or rather in the context of a specific situation (Gorovaya & Egorova, 2020). These units are often based on linguistic expressive means and stylistic devices as metaphor, epithet, synesthesia, etc.

For example: *My boyfriend is the **white sheep** of his family: the only one to go to college and have an actual job.* [Slate Magazine, 09.07.2019]. As it is clear from the context, the plan of content in the occasional collocation **white sheep** is much wider than the plan of the expression. This unit can be considered as the antonym to the well-known collocation *black sheep* denoting a disreputable member of a group (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/black%20sheep>). The collocation **white sheep** is created by metaphorical transference and based on author's positive attitude to a describing person. Such effect is achieved due to the axiological potential of the colour term *white*. As it is known in many cultures this colour is frequently associated with such concepts as *good*, *ideality*, *innocence*, *honesty*, thus the using of component *white* allows one to more accurately characterize the described realities.

6.2. The functions of colorative collocations with the component *white*

As the analysis revealed, the combinatorics of the colour term *white* is determined by the connotative component of the unit, which reflects its functional characteristics. The different functions are taken into consideration (Syrov, 2002; Tsvenger, 2020).

1) *The associative function* is aimed at activating a complex system of associations in the recipient's mind, forming and fixing a certain image in the person's mind. It allows one, for example, to establish the subject of the message. So, the component *white* is included in the collocations related to the well-known special terminology. For example: *SBI seeks to be '**white knight**' for Japan's regional banks* [The Financial Times, 26.01.2020]. The collocation *white knight* is associated with a person or organization that saves a company from financial difficulties. Being used in the headings it helps readers to identify the general article content.

As one can observe the associative function of collocations with component *white* used in the newspapers contributes to the certain images in the recipient's mind:

- a) component *white* in such collocations as *white Midwest*, *white background*, *white lawyers* etc. is associated with race;
- b) component *white* in the collocations *white hat*, *white knight* creates a positive image of a person who can help;
- c) collocations like *white trash*, *white supremacy* create a negative image of human beings of white race.

Also the component *white* is included in the collocations related to the well-known special terminology, for example: Just as a combination of wavelengths of light produces *white light*, and many frequencies of sound make up *white noise*, the team generated white smells from assortments of 30 different odor molecules [Medical Xpress, 11.10.2017].

- 2) The *emotional and expressive function* in certain collocations is achieved due to the contained evaluative components.

Doug Parr, chief scientist for Greenpeace UK, dismissed more large nuclear stations as "colossally expensive white elephants" where costs were always spiraling out of control. // UK risks longer dependency on fossil fuels without nuclear [The Financial Times, 21.01. 2021]. The collocation *white elephants* is used to highlight the fact that investing in such high-priced nuclear station is a waste of money because it's completely useless.

6.3. Syntagmatic relations in colorative collocations based on the syntactic structure A (*white*) + N

Thus, with respect to *the compatibility of concepts*, forming the basis of collocations, stable combinations and unstable combinations are distinguished. We consider stable combinations as units which components are regularly reproduced together in order to denote the particular phenomena like *white trash*, *white supremacy*, *white day*, *white noise*, *White House*, *White paper* etc.

The forming of unstable combinations is caused by the communicative situation's conditions, as well as by the author's intention to highlight a certain features of the described phenomena. For instance, *white family* (people who belong to the white race), *white coffee* (with milk added), *white rice* (consists of white grains), *white grievance* (a strong feeling of a person belonging to the white race, that he has been treated unfairly) etc.

According to *the lexical meaning of components*, forming the collocations, we distinguish relatively free units, which lexical meaning is quite easy to interpret, bearing in mind the meaning of the components: *white lie* (a lie that is told in order to be polite), *white meat* (a meat such as chicken or veal that is pale in colour); *white bouquet* (a bouquet which is consisted of white flowers) etc.

At the same time we distinguish *fixed collocations* like: *white horses* (a wave with a white broken crest); *white trash* (an insulting way of referring to white people who are poor and badly educated); *white elephant* (something that has cost a lot of money but has no useful purpose), etc. As we can see, it is impossible to decode the lexical meaning of such collocations from the sum of their components' meaning.

Thus, the formation of colorative collocations is caused by various extralinguistic and linguistic factors. Being used in the newspapers these units attract reader's attention, inform and encourage reading the article, as well as have emotional impact on the reader in the modern newspaper contexts.

7. Conclusion

Colour is an important part of all human experience and it is verbalized in language to denote various phenomena.

Colorative collocations are defined as combinatorially determined lexical-semantic and phraseological units, which are characterized by structural and syntactic integrity, limited by the semantics of color and used in the specific function.

The combinatorial-semantic analysis as a method of linguistic research allows revealing semantic, syntagmatic and functional mechanisms of the formation of collocations, as well as identifying their specific features.

All the foregoing can be summarised into the following statements:

- The examined colorative collocations can be considered as a valuable source of culture and mentality of a certain ethnic group. The analysis shows that the component *white* in adjectival type of words combinations (A+N) means not only the colour of the described phenomena, but reflects a complex system of associations which have both positive and negative connotations. The syntactic structure A + N allow us to get information on certain linguistic phenomena.
- While denoting colour the component *white* also performs a function of differentiation, distinguishing the same objects: *white sugar* (fully refined sugar); *white herring* (herring which is not smoked or salted); *white coffee* (coffee with milk) etc.
- The component *white* in the collocations denoting the appearance of a person closely linked to the changes of the human organism: *white beard* - as a sign of a lack of melanin, which is associated, among other things, with the aging process; *white face* – pale face due to illness or anger.
- The positive connotation of the component *white* is associated with such moral concepts as goodness, ideality, innocence, and honesty. This dominant feature determines the existence of the widely used collocations like *white hat* (person who is acting for morally good reasons), *white shoe* (a successful company which has a conservative reputation), etc.
- The component *white* also contains a negative connotation which is revealed in collocations like *white trash*, *white elephant*, etc.

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