

CLASSIFICATION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF MODERN CHINESE COLOR WORDS

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Abstract: According to the combination of color words, this paper mainly divides color words of modern Chinese into two categories: simple color words and synthetic color words, and on this basis, the characteristics of Chinese color words are discussed through a large number of examples. It is expected to be helpful to the research of Chinese vocabulary teaching and language contrast.

Keywords: Modern Chinese, Color Words, Classification, Characteristics

Color words are a category of words divided according to conceptual meaning, not grammatical classification. In terms of its function, it is mainly used to describe the color characteristics of various things in nature. Chinese color words are abundant in quantity. Many scholars have conducted special research on how to classify modern Chinese color words. Among them, Liu Junjie divides Chinese color words into four categories: pure color words, object color words, object pure color words, and vivid forms of pure color words from the perspective of etymology. Zhan Renfeng divides the color words into two categories: basic color words and non-basic color words, and subdivides the non-basic color words into three categories: degree color words, real color words and derived color words. Ye Jun mainly divides color words into concrete color words (including basic color words and ordinary color words) and abstract color words (including associative abstract color words and perceptual abstract color words).

Based on the combination of color words, this paper divides Chinese color words into two categories: simple color words and synthetic color words. Synthetic words can be divided into three kinds: object color words, degree color words and compound color words. On this basis, the characteristics of Chinese color words are analyzed and summarized.

I. The classification of modern Chinese color words

1. Simple color words

Simple color words consist of only one syllable, so they can also be called monosyllabic color words. For example: 红、黑、白、黄、蓝、绿、灰、紫 (red, black, white, yellow, blue, green, gray, purple) etc. These words could be independent words in ancient Chinese, but most of them have lost this use in modern Chinese. For

example, we can't say "这辆车的颜色是黑。" This kind of words representing simple colors, which contain a wide range of colors and a small number, are the basic color words in Chinese. They are used frequently, have strong stability and productivity, and can be combined with different morphemes to form new color words.

Simple color words often form new color words in two ways:

(1) By the way of "simple color words + 色", to form a more formal, nominal color words, such as: 红色、蓝色、黄色、黑色、白色 etc.

(2) In the way of "overlapping simple color words + 的", it is formed into descriptive color words, such as: 红红的、白白的、黑黑的、蓝蓝的、绿绿的 etc.

This color word, because it overlaps the simple color word, itself indicates a further degree. Therefore, it can no longer be modified by other adjectives that indicate degree, and it is more vivid than simple color words.

2. Synthetic color words

(1) Object color words

① Object noun + 色

Generally in the form of "object nouns + 色" to form nominal color words, such as: 灰色、咖啡色、小麦色、青铜色、肉色、银色、金色、土色(gray, brown, wheat, bronze, flesh, silver, gold, earth) etc.

This kind of word formation is found in many languages. The object noun representing color explains the morpheme "色" which represents the concept of color. This kind of figurative color word is the result of people "using objects to symbolize color". In the color, the morphemes that represent specific things and real things appear as "figurative bodies", which are used to explain the following colors and express the meaning of "the color like...". For example, "小麦色" means "the color likes wheat." This is the original way of producing color words in most languages, and it is also the product of human intuitive thinking. People can generate them according to their actual needs in daily communication, and it is also very convenient to use.

② Object noun + simple color words

That is, with simple color words as the center, and in front of the object nouns (or object noun phrases) with distinct personality color characteristics, the color words with distinct figurative nature are formed. For example:

象牙白、乳白、枣红、玫瑰红、豆绿、草绿、海蓝、宝石蓝、金黄、漆黑等

(Ivory white, opal white, jujube red, rose red, bean green, grass green, sea blue, gemstone blue, golden yellow, pitch black etc.)

The preceding object noun (or object noun phrase) acts as a qualifier for the following simple color word. Indicating that the color it represents resembles a specific

color of the object, thus providing a qualitative representation of the color and making it visually perceptible. These types of color words can describe the differences in color tones in a more detailed and specific way. For example: in the category of white, there are nine words such as "乳白(milky white)", "奶白(milky white)" to "象牙白(ivory white)" to express various degrees of white. In addition, influenced by the principles of phonetic harmony and economy, it is generally not possible to add "色" after polysyllabic color words. For example: "一件玫瑰红的毛衣", we do not usually say "一件玫瑰红色的毛衣".

In addition, there is another form of adjective color words that express degree, which is formed by the combination of "object nouns + simple color words". But usually there are only a few monosyllabic physical nouns, which can be followed by simple color words to form an overlapping form of physical color words. For example:

火红火红、雪白雪白、漆黑漆黑、碧绿碧绿、金黄金黄 and so on.

(2) Degree color words

Adjectives + simple color words

That is, "adjective (indicating degree and character) + simple color word". For example: 大红、鲜红、暗红、纯白、洁白、惨白、明黄、深绿、浅蓝、淡绿、嫩绿 and so on.

This form of descriptive color words often contain "深、浅、淡、暗、鲜、嫩" and other adjectives indicating degree or character. The emergence of this kind of color words is based on people's in-depth understanding of the objective attributes of color, such as hue, brightness, purity, etc. Colors not only have differences in depth, brightness, and intensity, but also have strong ambiguity and subjectivity, and also attaches a certain emotional color. Since these adjectives with different word-forming abilities already express degree meaning, they can no longer be modified by words that express degree meaning.

(3) Compound color words

① Simple color words + simple color words

It is a descriptive color word composed of two simple color words, such as: 黄绿、紫红、蓝绿、黄褐、灰白、黑紫. The former color is the auxiliary color, and the latter color is the main color. And the relationship between them are modification and being modified. For example, "灰白" is white with a hint of gray.

These two simple color words compound into a new color, in this way can form a lot of new color words, but not any two monosyllabic color words combined with each other can form a new color word that can be perceived and accepted by people. There is usually a transitional color between the two colors, and a new color may be created after mixing. For example: "黄蓝(yellow and blue)", "yellow" and "blue" after mixing

is green. Therefore, distinguishing whether a color is mixed or interspersed depends on context and understanding of the background of the object, and it is difficult to distinguish based solely on the format.

② Simple color words + affixes

The affixes of adjectival color words formed by this form are often adjectival suffixes, which include two types "simple color words + disyllabic suffixes" and "simple color words + polysyllabic suffixes".

The first type is "simple color words + two-syllable suffixes". Reduplication words complement the degree of pure color words. According to the different characters of the nouns to be modified, different double syllable words are added to form a descriptive and visually perceptive color word. For example: 黑乎乎、红彤彤、白茫茫、绿油油、蓝莹莹 and so on.

The color words of this structure are generally used to describe and depict the characteristics of color, and are often used to explain abstract colors with strong subjective meaning, which need to use association and psychological perception. Of course, color words composed of overlapping color words and adding "的" form can also express similar meanings, such as: 红红的, 白白的, 黑黑的. However, this form of color words is much inferior to the form of "simple color words + double syllable words" in terms of image and perceptivity, and these two forms of color words are also known as the overlapping form of color words.

The second type is "simple color words + polysyllabic suffixes". The polysyllabic suffixes in this structure are often three syllable morphemes, which are adjective color words formed by the forms of "simple color words+non+disyllabic morphemes expressing mood" or "simple color words+disyllabic morphemes expressing mood", such as: 红不愣登、白不拉叽、黑不溜秋、绿了吧唧 and so on.

Most of these color words come from dialect slang, which is rarely included in the "<Modern Chinese Dictionary>" and is generally limited to daily life. Moreover, most of the expressed meanings are only understandable and cannot be expressed in words. The morphemes used to indicate mood vary in different dialects. These types of words often contain derogatory connotations and are often used to modify things that are looked down upon or ashamed to talk about.

II. The Characteristics of Color Words in Modern Chinese

1. In the structure of simple color words, most scholars adhere to the three principles of stability, productivity and universality in Stalin's theory of basic words,, and identify the ten words "红、绿、蓝、青、白、黑、黄、紫、褐、灰" as the basic color words of modern Chinese.

2. In Chinese, the descriptive object color words composed of the structure of "object nouns + simple color words" will be modified by a large number of different

objects in the same color system to represent the changes in the depth of different colors. Among them, the term of crops is the most used, so it can accurately limit the color, distinguish the subtle difference of color, so that the expression of color is vivid, fully embodies the long agricultural civilization of the Han nation. For example: 山楂红、海棠红、梔子红、橘红、杏红、桃红、玫瑰红、铁锈红、酒红、荔枝红、珊瑚红、胭脂红、椒红 and so on. The type of "object noun + 色" directly involved in the formation of color words, this kind of object noun is usually something with typical color characteristics. Its own can be used as a synonym for color, such as: 灰色、咖啡色 and so on. When Chinese uses figurative color words to express such colors, it often uses figurative color nouns plus simple color words, and adds the word "color" to indicate the meaning subordination, that is, "object nouns + simple color words + 色". For example: "天+蓝+色=天蓝色≠天色", 土+黄+色=土黄色≠土色. It can be seen that the Han ethnic group understands things, are good at classifying things, and are accustomed to giving things a clear category, which shows the general thinking characteristics of the Han ethnic group.

3. In Chinese, adjective color words are formed in the form of "adjectives+simple color words", usually indicating the intensity or depth of colors. These types of words are more delicate in expression and have a strong sense of hierarchy. On the one hand, adjectives that indicate a deepening or weakening degree in the front will be very rich and can be described in detail from different perspectives, forming a large number of color words with different shades of color. On the other hand, different color words can target different objects and express a certain subjective emotion attached to describing objective things. For example, "惨白" refers to a dull and pale complexion; "洁白" refers to white that has not been contaminated by other colors; "煞白" describes a complexion that is extremely pale and devoid of blood due to fear or illness. This structure has been given emotional color to a certain extent, and has certain pertinence in use.

4. The adjectival suffixes followed by pure color words in Chinese can be disyllabic suffixes or trisyllabic suffixes. The double syllable suffix can be a reduplicated word, such as: 红彤彤、绿油油、黑乎乎、金灿灿 etc. It can also be a disyllabic word or a three syllable word, such as: 红巴渣、黑不溜秋、黑咕隆咚. Simple color words with adjective parts of speech do not change after adding suffixes, but contain rich positive and negative connotations.

5. In the overlap of color words, on the one hand, the overlapping part of Chinese is not necessarily related to the preceding words in pronunciation, but is related to the characteristics of the described thing; On the other hand, the overlap of Chinese can be before or after. For example, 黑洞洞、黑乎乎、黑漆漆、黑压压, can also be 黑黑

的、红红的、绿绿的 etc., and it is completely overlapping, and there is no necessary connection between the overlapping parts and the preceding words. The different overlapping auxiliary components of Chinese color words have different additional meanings, emotional colors, and applicable objects. Taking "黑(black)" as an example: "黑茫茫" describes an endless expanse of black (often used in the night); "黑压压" describes a dense group of people, as well as a dense or large area of things; "黑森森" describes being dark, gloomy, and terrifying.

6. In terms of the part of speech of Chinese color words, adjective color words have an absolute advantage, while noun color words have very few types and quantities in word formation. The reason for this is that the function of color words is to represent the color of things, and the object of modification is mostly nouns, playing the role of adjectives, so color words with adjective parts of speech account for the majority; There are fewer nominal color words, and generally "的" auxiliary word formation to play the role of adjectives.

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