

# OPPOSITIONS OF COLORATIVES AS A MEANS OF CREATING ANTIPHRASES

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## ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the oppositions of color terms through the prism of the Antiphrases Internet Game, based on precedent units and played by replacing all components of precedent prototypes with contrasting words. The relevance of this work is motivated by the growing interest of modern linguists in precedent phenomena, which are closely related to the collective invariant representations of national culture. They serve as background knowledge used to understand the members of the language community. The object of the study is antiphrases and their precedent prototypes with a colorative component. The purpose of this work is to find ways to implement the principle of contrast in antiphrases with coloratives. The research results demonstrate that 18 color terms are used to create antiphrases. Most frequently the lexemes, naming the primary colors of the spectrum, are subjected to contrasting substitutions, they are: dark blue, pale blue, green, red, and achromatic colors: white, black, dark and light.

**Keywords:** precedent unit, antiphrase, contrast, opposition, color term.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

With the advent of the Internet era, linguists are getting more interested in the use of precedent units and their transformations in the virtual space, which has presented the popular Internet game of antiphrases to the public. According to the rules of this game, “some participants of the game replace all components of precedent units with contrasting words, while other participants guess the initial phrases or texts” [1, p. 141]: A brave **black** wolf was sitting on an oak tree (A yellow-belly **gray** hare was hopping under a Christmas tree); Land like water, the **white** day (Soar like bonfires, the **blue** nights); The **green** locomotive jumps on and on, (The **blue** wagon runs on and on); You are writing in **black** charcoal the syllable “more” on the grass (I’m drawing in **white** chalk the word “enough” on the asphalt), etc.

The study of gaming transforms is quite relevant as the precedent units, which are the prototypes of antiphrases, “play the role of key words marking speakers’ social position, their cultural status, and serve as the foundation for collective discourse, the condition for ideological understanding and social identification, that is, are of cultural significance” [2, p. 14]. In modern linguistics, many researchers are interested in the

study of precedent phenomena and archetypes in terms of their relevance to the current language consciousness [3-7].

It should be noted that “playing with words is a universal human activity... People delight in pulling words and reconstituting them in a novel guise, arranging them into clever patterns, finding hidden meanings inside them, and trying to use them according to specially invented rules in enormous diversity” [8, 16], in antiphrases, word substitutions are not just a deliberate distortion of the precedent units’ form in order to create a puzzle, but are an expression of a new denotative or connotative meaning.

Currently, our file of antiphrases contains 3048 puzzles and 124 examples of creating a puzzle through contrasting color changes.

Modern researchers have long been focused on a group of color terms, which is actively used for analysis in such completely different areas as “elaborating methods for identifying semantic fields, etymology and history of language, describing the linguistic picture of the world and other issues of language and thinking” [9,15]. According to N. B. Bakhilina, a clear interest in color terms, displayed in modern linguistics, results from the general revival of stylistic research, and due to the fact that the vocabulary of color terms has become the subject of many linguistic works dealing with semasiology issues, in particular the issue of lexical systems, semantic fields, etc. [10, 17,18]. The study of this group of words in terms of creating Internet puzzles, based on contrast, has been carried out for the first time.

## 2.METHODS

The purpose of this study is to find out how to implement the principle of contrast in antiphrases with coloratives.

To this purpose, we used a combination of the following methods: semantic-stylistic, descriptive-analytical and the methods of component, contextual, cognitive and linguocultural analyses.

## 3.RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The game is based on a variety of precedent units, which are the main components of the national cognitive base - the entity of knowledge and ideas stored in the “head” of each member of a linguocultural community [11, p. 44-45]:

1) paremias and phraseological units: The apartment corridors are not as **black**, as **black** are the cakes (The corners in the hut are not as **red** (in Russian -nice) as **red** (nice) are the pies); To catch the **blue** hen (To let out the **red** rooster); Tied up with a **black** twine (Sewn up with a **white** thread); To soil the **white** cat till it gets black (Impossible to wash the **black** dog till it gets white);

2) names of literary works and quotations from them: **Blue** ravines of Antarctica (**Green** hills of Africa); Far from the **Red** Desert, the newlyweds died (Near the **blue** sea, an old man and an old woman lived); Everything will come back like a fog of **black** currants (Everything will pass away like a smoke of **white** apple trees);

3) titles and lyrics of musical works: A **yellowish** frilly scarf was crawling up on a raised butt (The **bluish** modest kerchief was falling off the lowered shoulders); Above the deck of a steamer, the **red** field of the jungle keeps silent about something (Under the wing of an airplane, the **green** sea of the taiga is singing about something); These

**red** tulips against the strict color of the dawn (These **yellow** roses against the gentle color of the sunset);

4) the names of films (performances, plays, etc.) and words of the characters: Universal **white** paint (Radical **black** color); A short brown-haired man in **yellow** slippers (A tall blond man in a **black** shoe); A **white** fish! A **blue** fish! Domestic, cucumber fish! (**Black** caviar! **Red** caviar! Overseas, aubergine caviar!), etc.

The comparison of antiphrase puzzles with their original prototypes revealed the following color nomination oppositions (See: Table 1).

Table1. Color Frequency Opposition Rating

Original color nominations	Colorative oppositions	The number of precedent units
white	white-black; white -gray; white - red; white - yellow	33
black	black - белый; black -grayish; black - gray	22
dark	dark - light/pale	15
blue	blue - white; blue - black; blue - red; blue- yellow; blue - violet; blue-orange; blue - green; dark blue - light blue	12
light blue	light blue -yellow; light blue -golden; light blue - red; light blue - green	9
green	green-yellow; green -black; green- scarlet; green - black; green - white; green - red	6
red	red - white; red - green; red - light blue	
light	light/pale - dark	
silver	silver - colorful; silver - clear	2
yellow	yellow - blue	
golden	golden - silvery	1
orange	orange -white	
scarlet	scarlet - orange	
black-and-white	black-and-white-colorful	
gray	gray - white	
grayish	grayish- black	
ruby	ruby - white	
inky	inky -colorful	

A quantitative analysis of the antiphrases corpus shows that 18 words naming light and color, eight of which are frequently used - white, black, dark, blue, blue, green, red, light, are subjected to contrasting substitutions when creating changeling puzzles. As you can see, among the most common ones are two pairs of usual antonyms (white - black, dark - light) and four names of the main colors of the spectrum (blue, blue, green, red). Interestingly, each of the antonymic white-black binom nominations evokes a series of contrast associations in modern Internet users. The white color can be perceived as the opposite not only to black, but also to gray, red and yellow: From a quiet hot place nine **black** goats (Into the ringing snowy farness three **white** horses);

The White River and a **Red** Lada (the Black Sea and a **White** Mercedes); A temple with a **yellow** dome at the seaside (A house with **white** shutters at the riverside). It should be noted that occasional oppositions of coloratives are solved by players not only based on color associations, but also thanks to other associative links. Thus, occasional pairs of the type light blue-blue, blue-black, green-black are based on the contrast of light and dark versions of the same color (low and high intensity manifestations of the same quality), and therefore are easily decoded when solving a changeling puzzle: **Light blue** air is different from the truth (**Blue** fog is like a hoax); **Black** snow sat down on the ground (**Blue** hoar frost lay down on the wires); **Black** kilometer (**Green** mile). In the antiphrase: There's a **yellow** alder in Garlicoriverside (Chesnokorech'ia), (There's a **green** oak in Onionseaside (Lukomorie)), the opposition of color yellow - green is associated with the opposition of yellow (withering, dying off) and green (young, full of life) leaves; besides, the decoding mechanism of the puzzle "works" thanks to the word-formational structure of the occasional lexeme Garlicoriverside formed similarly to the literary lexeme Lukomorie (cf. type-aspect opposites onion - garlic, river-sea). When creating the antiphrase A **pale** youth is standing in the front room, his hand in the pocket (A **fair** (Russian: **red**) maid is sitting in the dungeon, her plait outside), the change of the adjective fair (red) to pale is based on the polysemy of the original word (fair - 'beautiful', (red the color of blood)), and extralinguistic associations a fair maiden (beautiful and healthy) and a pale youth (unhealthy). The unusual opposition of scarlet-green color in the antiphrase In joy, the lips are **scarlet** (In trouble, the eyes are **green**) appeared due to its contact with a type-aspect pair of eyes — lips, for scarlet is associated with the somatism lips.

Primary colors of the spectrum, for example, blue - red are frequently used for contrasting colorative substitutions: A **red** plane is flying in white (broad) day (A **blue** train is rushing on a light blue night); blue - yellow: The **yellow** sun (The **light blue** moon); red - blue / orange: **Blue** Baseball Cap / Little **Orange** Head Scarf (Little **Red** Riding Hood), etc.

According to our observations, among the 124 antiphrases, the most common achromatic color opposition is black and white (46 examples), they form an "indisputable antonymic pair, since they are already distinguished by all the characteristic features of antonyms: a significant contrast, perceived by native speakers, great similarity in functioning: frequent joint occurrence in texts" [12, p. 8]. The following opposite meanings of these words are found in Ozhegov's Explanatory Dictionary [13, p. 42, 851]: 1) "the color of snow or chalk" / "the color of soot or coal": The **black** rain pours almost noiselessly, someone is right about something (The **white** snow falls almost inaudibly, no one is guilty of anything); A bunch of **black** daisies (A bouquet of **white** roses); 2) "light, as opposed to something darker, called black" / "dark, as opposed to something lighter, called white": A **black** day rose like a swarm (A **white** night fell like a cloud); The **black** moon of the jungle (The **white** sun of the desert); 3) "A man with **fair** skin" / "A man with **dark** skin"; Black dandelion for **your white** brother (White roses for my **black** sister).

When creating antiphrase puzzles, it is necessary to note the evaluation potential of the adjectives white and black in terms of their widespread use. The study of Russian proverbs and sayings makes it possible to conclude that in the paremiological background of the Russian language the white color is usually associated with positive assessments, while the word black acquires negative connotations (cf. traditional pararemas: **White** is the birch, while tar is **black**; **Black** soil bears **white** bread, etc.).

The dyad white / black, along with such oppositions as light / dark, up / down, clean / dirty, etc., are a gauge of reality in the Russian linguistic consciousness [14, p. 86]. In antiphrases, the color designations black and white can perform axiological functions: light (white) - darkness (black): Revealed by the **light** of truth (Concealed by the **darkness** of obscurity); clean (white) - dirty (black): **Clean** Monday (**Black** Friday); **Dirty** earth, a white puddle (**White** snow, gray ice); top (white) - bottom (black): Somewhere in the **underworld**, where it is always hot (Somewhere in the wide (in Russian – **white**) world, where it is always frosty); your own (white) - alien (black): You are flying on a **black** alien plane (I'm sailing on my **white** ship), etc.

In antiphrases, similar axiological evaluations are often expressed by the opposition light (clear) - dark (24 examples), contrasted on the basis of the following opposite meanings [13, p. 671, 763]: 1) "Less bright in color than others, pale, non-dark" / "Close to black in color, not bright": From the **light** grove and past him (From the **dark** forest towards him); A **pale** stallion is nobody's sunny moment (A **dark** horse is someone's finest hour); 2) "Joyful, unclouded, pleasant" / "Sad, gloomy, joyless": With a smirk, the fun night gets **darker** (With a smile, the gloomy day gets **brighter**); Three moons, three **dark** stories (Two stars, two **light** tales).

It should be noted that antiphrases, created on the basis of precedent units with color terms, involve peripheral coloratives inky, silver, dark-haired in the range of color contrasts, but such examples are rare: **Colorful** body (**Inky** soul); A **silvery** fog spent the day (A **golden** cloud spent the night); A fair-haired evening, a **dark-haired** evening (A foggy morning, a **gray** morning).

#### 4.SUMMARY

Thus, the study of color term oppositions in the mirror of the Antiphrase Internet Game suggests the following: antiphrase puzzles are created by transforming precedent units; Their prototypes are different precedent units, which are stored in the cognitive base of the national linguistic culture carriers; The most frequent oppositions used to create antiphrases, are binoms white – black and light – dark, based not only on antonymic denotative values, but also on their axiological polarity.

#### 5.CONCLUSIONS

Thus, being a reflection of the national-cultural specifics of linguistic consciousness, color terms are closely related to the psychological and mental aspects of human life, and antiphrases with a colorative component are new material for the research into the means of implementing the principle of contrast. The possibility of transforming well-known phrases with the aim of creating puzzles is closely related to their jocular nature, which allows game participants to ridicule and refute social stereotypes, fixed in the precedent units, and such intentional destruction of precedent prototypes can lead to new interpretations of old wisdoms and cause aesthetic effects.

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