

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18454/RULB.2021.26.2.12>**ОСОБЕННОСТИ ФУНКЦИОНИРОВАНИЯ КОЛОРИСТИЧЕСКИХ МЕТАФОР НЕМЕЦКОГО МЕДИЙНОГО ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОГО ДИСКУРСА ПЕРИОДА ПАНДЕМИИ**

Научная статья

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Аннотация

Статья посвящена анализу особенностей колористической метафоросистемы медиаполитического дискурса ФРГ эпохи коронавируса. В ходе исследования выявлены базовые характеристики цветового спектра современной «коронаполитической» реальности, объективированы новые актуальные социально-политические феномены периода пандемии, номинируемые образными цветовыми репрезентациями немецкого политического дискурса СМИ, проанализированы ключевые прагматические смыслы исследуемого типа цветообразов. В результате проведённого исследования целесообразно заключить, что основная цветовая палитра немецкого коронавирусного политического дискурса, моделируемая метафорическими образами, объективируется ключевыми колоронимами тёмных оттенков, а также серым, красным, жёлтым, зелёным цветами. Яркая представленность такого рода цветообозначений сопряжена с появлением абсолютно новых феноменов-реалий «ковидного» времени («коронавирус», «ковидный светофор», «зелёный паспорт»). Прагматический потенциал «коронавирусных» метафор в формате медийного политического дискурса Германии сопряжён в целом с негативным воздействием, с формированием пейоративных смыслов тревоги, беспокойства, пессимистичности, опасности, смерти.

Ключевые слова: немецкий медиаполитический дискурс, колористическая метафора, образная номинация, цветообозначение, колороним, эпоха коронавируса, пандемия, COVID-19, прагматический потенциал, коронавирус, «ковидный светофор», «зелёный паспорт».

THE PECULIARITIES OF FUNCTIONING OF COLORISTIC METAPHORS OF THE GERMAN MEDIA-POLITICAL DISCOURSE OF THE PANDEMIC PERIOD

Research article

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the analysis of the peculiarities of coloristic metaphor system of the FRG media-political discourse of the coronavirus epoch. While the investigation, the basic characteristics of the color spectrum of modern “coronapolitical” reality were revealed, new acute social-political phenomena of the pandemic period, named by the figurative color representations of the German media-political discourse were objectified, key pragmatic meanings of the type of color images under consideration were analyzed. As a result of the conducted research it is worth concluding that the basic color palette of the German coronavirus media-political discourse, modelled by metaphorical images, is objectified by key coloronyms of dark tones as well as grey, red, yellow, green colors. Pretty vivid representation of such kind of color-naming is connected with the emergence of absolutely new phenomena-realities of the “covid time”, such as (“coronavirus”, “COVID traffic lights”, “green passport”). Pragmatic potential of “coronavirus” metaphors in the format of the German media-political discourse is generally connected with the negative influence, with the forming of pejorative meanings of alarm, anxiety, pessimism, apathy, danger and death.

Keywords: German mediapolitical discourse, coloristic metaphor, figurative nomination, color-naming, coloronym, the coronavirus epoch, pandemic, COVID-19, pragmatic potential, coronavirus, “COVID traffic lights”, “green passport”.

Introduction

The Year 2020 can rightly be considered a year of global tragedies, shock and crisis. The outcome and flash like expansion of a large-scale virus COVID-19 brought to life absolutely new epoch-reality that touched upon the most different spheres of human life, including the field of politics.

The modern media-political discourse, endowed with the important ability to react currently to the changes and transformations happening in the society and to reflect them, appears not only the important translator of the significant events of the politic world in the pandemic period but also a relevant mouthpiece of acute realities connected with them.

The analysis of the contemporary scientific works showed that the coronavirus discourse in politics reveals new angles and wide perspectives for the linguistic research, because various linguopolitological problems have always been in the focus of the linguists' attention and those objectified in the discursive space of politics in the format of the narrative “coronavirus” are not an exception [1], [3], [5], [7] and etc.

The high demand for the use of figurative nominations while describing the coronavirus is connected with the system characteristics of metaphors, applied in the modern media-political rhetoric, the study of which contributes to the comprehension and reconstruction of the particular segments of the political world reality [1], [3], [4] and etc.

In the context of wide metaphorical repertoire, coloristic metaphor appears one of the highly represented categories of figurative nominations, widely used while creating the coronavirus epoch picture of the world in the German media-political sphere. Significant function of such figurative nominations in the context of acute reality is not only informative, but also

fulfills signal-affecting function, the realization of which is revealed in the governing and regulation of the mass consciousness. Such kind of postulate confirms the thesis by Budaeva D.R. [2, P. 14], Shapochkin D.V. [8, P. 53] that a color like no other symbol can appear as a relevant means of management and control.

Due to the fact that the system of color nominations of the German media-political discourse is quite dynamic in its essence and subjected to regular changes, the study of its peculiarities and regularities of functioning in the event-discursive focus «coronavirus 2020-2021» appears to us quite topical.

In the present article, the attempt has been made to investigate and analyze the corpus of current color nominations of the German media-political discourse representing COVID-19, with the aim to reveal the specific character of the color specter of the modern “coronapolitical” reality, to objectify and interpret new topical socio-political realities of the coronavirus epoch, nominated by coloristic representations, and also with the aim to determine the pragmatic potential of the studied type of metaphors.

Methods

To achieve the set of aims we have analyzed the corpus of empirical material comprising 482 metaphorical units taken from the political texts of the German electronic issues such as «Focus», «Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung», «Stern», «Stuttgarter Zeitung», «Süddeutsche Zeitung», published in the period from 01.02.2020 to 1.03.2021. In the course of the research the following methods have been used: lingua-cognitive analysis, cognitive-discursive analysis, descriptive analysis, contextual analysis, metaphorical modeling.

Discussion

As our observations have shown, the current figurative coloristic space of the FRG media-political landscape, modelling the phenomenon of the “coronavirus”, objectifies the close interconnection between the archetype COLOR and modern political reality.

The traditional symbolic colors of the German political landscape appear as basic color-naming of high frequency, characterizing the “epoch of pandemic” in the German mass media.

However, the representation and ways of functioning of the color-namings of “the covid time” in the context of German political discourse, have vividly expressed specificity, linked mainly to the novelty and insufficient study of the phenomenon “coronavirus” and objectification of the current realities connected with it.

While describing the period of the pandemic, we noticed that the colors of dark tones (dark, gloomy, somber / dunkel, düster) predominate in the coloristic metaphor system of the German mass media.

The appeal of the journalists to somber color nominations characterizing coronavirus political reality appears to us quite reasonable, because the pragmatic potential of such color characteristics exactly reflects the negative perception of the terrible, unknown, dangerous, suppressing phenomenon which is able to destroy everything on its way, and which is still invincible by no means and efforts of anybody in our reality in the whole world.

Ohne einen Frontalangriff gegen das Virus wird Corona im Jahr 2021 der einzige wahre Sieger sein... Höchstens eine noch längere dunkle Zeit [22] (Without a frontal attack on the virus in 2021 the infection will be the only real winner... At least for a long somber time.)

Since the moment of its appearing COVID-19 has immersed the whole mankind in the world of the unknown, hopelessness, darkness, and fear with the help of figurative nominations of the semantic sphere “color” in the format of the German media-political discourse.

Corona führt uns seit Monaten ins Unbekannte, ins Dunkle [16]. (During several months Corona has been leading us to the unknown, into the darkness.) To model pessimistic and threatening mood in the society while characterizing the coronavirus time in the format of the German political media discourse, the color-naming “grey”/ grau is often used. The presentation of this color in the format of German political rhetoric explicates the images of gloomy existence, hopeless and depressing future of the “troubled COVID times”: ... *und was genau bei Rot passiert, steht auch noch in grauer Zukunft [15].* (... and what exactly happens at the red light, the grey future will give the answer to this question).

Still, it is necessary to notice, that in 2021 in the color metaphor system of the FRG media-political discourse, separate positive coloristic images are starting to immerge. They give hope to people to see a light in the end of the relentless covid tunnel. Such metaphors give hope for the corona-situation stabilization in the world.

Sie (A. Merkel) "sehe ein leichtes Licht am Ende des Tunnels, aber es ist eine unglaublich schwere Zeit" [20] (She (A. Merkel) sees a slight light in the end of a tunnel, but it is incredibly difficult time.)

As it was mentioned earlier, coronavirus being unusual and new phenomenon, comprehensively touched all various spheres of the world political society and became so called “litmus test” reflecting numerous problems of the modern politics. In the context of the FRG political discourse in the chain of other problems of the world politics, COVID-19, having appeared as an indicator, particularly acutely highlighted the problem of genuine European coalition and democracy.

"Die Pandemie wird zum Lackmüstest für die Demokratie" [14] (pandemic became a litmus test for the democracy); „Ein Lackmüstest für europäische Solidarität“ [17] (a litmus test for the European coalition), Eine Pandemie als Lackmüstest [18] (the pandemic as a litmus test).

Such comparisons, implicitly connected with the color spectrum, let fix the real factual condition of the European political system and European political landscape.

In the course of the base empirical material analysis, it has been revealed that the bright richness of coloristic images of the modern German media-political discourse of the COVID-19 period is associated with the appearing and frequent actualization of the phenomenon “covid traffic lights” in the media sources.

Analyzing this reality in the linguistic aspect, it is necessary to highlight that color metaphor “traffic lights” does not appear absolutely new in the format of the FRG media-political discourse and represents a semantically complicated figurative nomination with the implicit meaning.

It is worthwhile mentioning that in its initial interpretation the figurative nomination “traffic lights” / die Ampel objectifies one of the earlier existing in the German political landscape coalitions, nomination of which is based on the combination of party colors: social-democratic (red), liberals (yellow) and the Green (green).

Actualization of the “Ampel” coloristic representation of the present coronavirus epoch in the German media-political space is associated with the emergence of a new reality in the world of modern European politics. And this is the reality of the coronavirus map, color characteristics of which reflect other symbolic senses.

Für die ganze Welt gilt ab Donnerstag ein einheitliches dreistufiges System, das man auch als Ampel beschreiben kann. Rot: Reisewarnung... Gelb: Reisewarnung light... Grün: Urlaub auf eigene Gefahr [19] (Since Thursday in the whole world the common three-level system starts working. Its functioning can be compared with the work of traffic lights. Red signifies prohibition, it warns about danger of travelling. Yellow warns about hesitation regarding trips. Green allows organizing rest at one's own risk).

Österreich hat zur Einschätzung der epidemiologischen Lage im Land die Corona-Ampel eingeführt [12]. (To estimate the epidemiological situation in the country, Austria has brought in the system of “coronavirus traffic lights”).

The system of “coronavirus traffic lights” of the European Union which started functioning on the 15th of June, 2020, appears as a set of common criteria of control for the risk zones of COVID-19 with the symbolic color coding. Following the principal of traffic lights work, countries of the EU mark the territories of the “virus zones” with classic colors: green, yellow or red judging from the epidemiological situation.

Unpredictability of the situation depending on the flash like spread of the COVID-19 among the population, is fixed by the quick change of the color on the “Ampel” traffic lights, so the FRG media space is gaudy with the diversity of color images while describing the coronavirus reality.

Aber die grüne Corona—Ampel kann auch ganz schnell auf rot springen [19] (But the green corona traffic lights can suddenly change to the red one.)

It is necessary to highlight that basic colors of “the covid traffic lights” (green / grün, yellow / gelb, red / rot), on the pages of modern German press, very quickly have gained several tint variants.

Special diversity of tints and color tones in the format of the German media-political discourse while characterizing the system of the coronavirus epoch traffic lights belongs to the red color. Being a symbol sign of special alert, danger, and notification, color image RED in separate contexts of coloristic metaphors transforms into dark red (tiefrot, dunkelrot). Actualization of this tint variant of red signals about a very high level of infection among the population in different regions of Germany.

Die Corona-Fallzahlen steigen auch in München rasant an. Die Corona-Ampel zeigt mittlerweile Dunkelrot [11] (The number of the infected with coronavirus also grows speedily in München. Meanwhile, covid traffic lights shows dark red.)

However, for marking extreme cases of troubled coronavirus situation, in the figurative coloristic repertoire of the German media political discourse, the pink color is objectified. Initially, this color image was used by Robert Koch institute and was objectified in the Press while describing tense epidemiological situation in the German town Hildburghausen.

Seit einigen Wochen ist die deutsche Corona-Karte des RKI Robert Koch-Instituts tiefrot. ... In Hildburghausen sind die Fallzahlen so hoch, dass sich der Kreis als erster beim RKI pink färbt [10] (The German covid map studied by R.Koch institute, has been staying dark red for several weeks already. In Hildburghausen a number of the infected is so high that this region is the first colored bright pink by the RKI.)

In the coloristic metaphor system of the German political discourse of the coronavirus epoch, close by its symbolic meaning to pink, purple color / lila is actualized. Presence of this color reflects extremely high statistics of the infected population.

Ganz Deutschland ist jetzt Corona-Risikogebiet – mehrere Landkreise springen von rot auf lila [13]. (All Germany nowadays presents a risk zone. Many land territories have been colored from red to purple.)

Thus, symbolic characteristics of red, pink, purple colors of the traffic lights system of the acute European political reality are associated with the aggressive coloring, vectors of danger, alert, death. Such coloristic metaphors do not create images with positive connotation.

Semantic pragmatic potential of the yellow color in the analyzed aspect is realized as a signal of warning, as a sign of keeping a waiting position and being careful.

Basic color palette of metaphors of the covid epoch of the German political discourse is also represented by the green color. Familiar positive connotations of green in German politics [6, C. 114-115] stay influential in the format of current coronavirus political discourse, key pragmatic impulses of which are allowance, safety, hope, positive mood, tranquility.

Considerable activation of green color-namings in the format of the German political discourse of the covid reality under consideration is connected not only with the objectification of the phenomenon “covid traffic lights” and its signal green color, but also with the emergence of the new social-political reality “green/covid passport” / «der grüne Pass».

In Israel können Bürger, die zwei Impfdosen gegen das Coronavirus erhalten haben, seit neuestem einen "Grünen Pass" ausgestellt bekommen [21]. (The citizens of Israel who were vaccinated twice against the coronavirus since recent time can get a “green passport”).

It is worthwhile clarifying that the “green passport” is a new kind of electronic document in Israel which is handed in to those citizens who have been vaccinated against COVID-19 and it gives them the right to habitual, without additional limits way of life.

The possibility of introducing the system of “green passport” on the territory of the EU and its separate states is actively discussed now by the politic elite of Europe, that allows to suggest that this color metaphor in the closest time will be included in the habitual stated fund of color nominations of the German media-political discourse.

Results

The held analysis of coloristic metaphor system of the FRG political discourse in the event-discursive foreshortening «pandemics 2020-2021» allowed to conclude the following:

Present situational-contextual reality of the coronavirus epoch generated a huge layer of coloristic metaphors in the format of the modern German media-political discourse. Functional purpose of figurative nominations of the covid time color is connected with their meaningful resource to influence individual consciousness, to govern and regulate people’s behavior.

Color landscape of the metaphor system of the modern FRG media-political discourse in the COVID-19 period is represented, in a considerable degree, by tints of dark tones (dunkel, düster), grey (grau), red (rot) and its tint variants (dunkelrot, tiefrot, rosa, lila), yellow, green colors.

In the row of new phenomena-realities of the German media coronavirus discourse objectified by coloristic nominations of the analyzed period, the most frequent and bright ones are the phenomena of “covid traffic lights” and “green passport”.

Coloristic “traffic lights” figurative nominations of the covid period refer to the type of representations with a high potential of metaphorical activity that is explained by a signal regulating mechanism of the three colors (red-yellow-green) influence. The triad forms a strong symbolic background to create definite emotional mood contributing to introduction of the necessary ideas into the mass consciousness.

Under the influence of new discursive circumstances, colorful figurative representations of the German coronavirus political discourse are endowed with traditional as well as with new pragmatic senses.

All in all, it is necessary to state that analyzed type of metaphors set the tone of negative influence, manifesting pejorative senses of pessimism, fear, alert, and hopelessness. Such kind of sense meanings are objectified predominantly by figurative nominations of the German political discourse, representing dark tones and grey color. Main symbolic characteristics of red color and its sense tints variants are connected with the signal of special danger. Major informative-pragmatic purpose of the yellow coloristic coronavirus color images is to signify warning. Some examples of color metaphor system of coronavirus in the context of which green coloronym is objectified make an exception. Green color preserves traditional positive semantic meanings of “allowance”, “tranquility”, “safety”, “hope”.

Conclusion

Coloristic metaphor system of coronavirus in the German media-political discourse appears as a developing system, study of which will be acute still more continuing period, due to quick changes in the discursive conditions of our time which guarantee reforming of the social-political reality as well as its language reflection. Concerning this fact, further analysis of the present segment of the linguistic field seems to us quite perspective.

Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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