

An Analysis of Colour Metaphors of Emotions in Jimmy's Picture Book-*Turn Lift, Turn Right*

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ABSTRACT

The analysis in this paper aims to find colour metaphors in the artist Jimmy Liao's picture book *Turn Lift, Turn right*, and to use the pictures in this book to establish the relations between colour and emotions. This paper selects seven pictures of indoor scenes from this picture book, and brings forth an illustration by observing that different colours can be used as metaphor to convey different emotions. The results clearly indicate that the author Jimmy choose a large number of warm colour (such as yellow, red and orange) to present the positive emotions (like energy, passion and strength), while the cool colour (like blue and gray) to give out negative feelings (such as fear of loss, sorrow, heartbreaking).

1. Introduction

The past three decades have witnessed a profound change in metaphor studies due to the developments in cognitive linguistics: metaphor is no longer viewed as just an ornamental device, but as a basic cognitive mechanism that deeply influences humans' conceptual system and behavior (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) [8]. A conceptual metaphor is actually a basic cognitive mechanism and metaphorical language is an external representation of the human mind (Lakoff and Johnson 1980;1999) [8,9]. With the foundation of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), Various experimental studies have provided arguments for the close connection argued by the CMT between real life and metaphor from the perspective of psychology (Gibbs and Marcus, 2006) [3]. Forceville (2016) explored the study of multimodal metaphors, and suggested that metaphor not only manifest in language, but also related

to different modes such as: pictorial signs, written signs, spoken signs, gestures, sounds, musics, smells, tastes and touch [2]. Aliakbari and Khosravian (2013) also give contributions about the analysis of colour-term conceptual metaphors in Persian proverbs [1]. The conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999) also focuses on the colour-emotion associations language, and demonstrates that emotions, mood and feelings are metaphorically linked to more concrete perceptual experience such as colour [9].

In addition, in the field of emotion metaphor research, conceptualizations such as ANGER IS HEAT, ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER (Kovecses, 2000) [7] EMOTION IS LIQUID (Nhu Quynh Luu, 2013) [12], EMOTIONS ARE FORCES (Kazuko Shinohara and Yoshihiro Matsunaka, 2009) are explained clearly about emotion understanding [6]. Furthermore, Marmolejo-Ramos, Correa, and Sakarkar et al.(2017) find out that

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the positive emotion words ‘joy’ in upper spatial locations while the negative emotions such as ‘sadness’ in lower spatial locations^[11].

However, those above findings pay little attentions on the relations of colour metaphors and emotions. This paper try to use Jimmy’s picture book *Turn Left, Turn Right* as example to find out how the colour use as metaphor to convey emotions, and what types of emotion that are illustrate by colour metaphors through Jimmy’s picture books.

2. Development of Jimmy’s Illustrative Works

The name “Jimmy” comes from the English, first name of the Taiwanese illustrator and picture book writer Jimmy Liao. He has published more than 40 picture books since 1998 that have been translated into many foreign languages. His notable works include “*Turn Left, Turn Right*” “*Sound of Colors*” and “*The Starry Night*” some of which have been adapted as movies, musical theaters, television programs, and animations and have won awards. Many characters in his picture books have been applied to the production of authorized derivative goods, including music boxes, smart cards for Taipei Mass Rapid Transportation, gift cards for convenience stores, puzzles, and leather purses (Jimmy S.P.S Official Site, 2021)^[4]. All the pictures were adapted from the book-*Turn Left, Turn Right* (2018)^[10].

3. Method

In the book *Turn Left, Turn Right*, this paper choose seven pictures which contains both bed-sitting rooms of the female character and male character. All the pictures’ layout is the female’s bed-sitting room on the left page, while the male character’s bed-sitting room on the right

page. Both the rooms have one bed, one sofa, one telephone, one bedside table, one radiator, three lights, several books, some stuffed animals, one plant, two windows respectively. The main differences between the two rooms are the original colour of the sofas, the woman owns a pink single sofa, while the man owns a green single sofa. Besides, the woman also has a blue armchair and a stool with the same blue colour and a writing table. There two stools in the man’s room, one has the same pink colour with the woman’s sofa, while the other stool has the same green colour as his own sofa. Moreover, the furniture at the left corner of both rooms is not same, there is a low cabinet on the left page owned by the woman, while there is a bookshelf on the same location in the man’s room. For the differences of the windows, the left page owns curtains while there are shutters on the right page.

The colours which used in the seven indoor scenes will be evaluated and discussed one by one, try to find out what types of emotion that Jimmy wants to convey to readers from the metaphorical perspective.

4. Analyzation of Colour Metaphors in *Turn Right, Turn Left*

4.1 The First Picture

Form the pictures (see Figure 1) it can be seen the artist Jimmy choose bright light yellow as dimensional mass tone in both rooms, the walls, floors, cabinet, bookshelf, curtains, shutters all covered with the bright yellow. The white poufy could in a pale blue sky outside the window, the woman sitting in the dark blue armchair drinking coffee with a bright red cup on the left page, while on the right page the man wearing a pair of bright green socks lying on his stomach in bed, watching TV. The bright and



Figure 1. The date is 6th of October

warm colour such as yellow and white were used, which gives out the peaceful and joy emotions as Jonauskaite, Althaus, Dael, Dan-Glauser, and Mohr (2019) have observed ^[6].

For this scene appears at the beginning of the story, both the male and female character have not met yet, they don't have clear aims about future life. The author draws a small tree with many bright green with slight yellow leaves in right corner of the woman's room, and draws a plant with lush green leaves on the top of the man's TV. The green colour can be viewed as the metaphor to prefigure the development of the story was full of hope.

4.2 The Second Picture

This picture (see Figure 2) draws the night when the two characters met. Both the rooms were covered with deep blue. And based on the colour theory of Jonauskaite, Parraga, Quiblier and Mohr (2020), blue could link with the emotions of relief, admiration, contentment and pleasure ^[5]. Jimmy colour the whole picture in deep blue to indicate the beautiful affections in both characters when they first with each other. They may fall in love at the first sight.

For all the picture coloured in deep blue, the reader can only distinguish the furniture displayed in black lines. Outside the windows, the sky is light pale pink, with a big rabbit which only can be seen its one eye at the right window of the woman's room, and its back can be seen from both the windows of the man's room. There are four little white rabbits in both rooms. They are jumping, sitting with smell. The lumps on the bedside table give out a small round yellow aperture. Pink (Jonauskaite, Parraga, Quiblier and Mohr, 2020) can be related with the feelings of love, pleasure, joy, admiration and contentment ^[5]. White has the emotional power which present relief, con-

tentment, interest, pride and fear to some extent. In this picture, it can be used as a metaphor to suggest the character's affections for each other are happy, pleasant with joy, very pure and may have some uncertainty.

4.3 The Third Picture

This picture (see Figure 3) draws the similar rooms as the first picture, the main difference is the dark gray colour of the sky outside the windows. It's raining outside and the sky is coloured in dark gray with dark black clouds. For the black colour, Jonauskaite, Parraga, Quiblier and Mohr (2020) evaluate that it can be related to disappointment, disgust, sadness and fear ^[5]. This metaphor may give readers the signal that the relationship between the main characters may not go smoothly as expected. After their first met at the park, they lost each other's phone number because of the heavy rain on the way home. The small tree's leaves turn brown from green in the woman's room, and the green plant which on the man's TV also has several brown leaves in it. This brown metaphor may imply both the characters lose some energy in lives. Because brown has always been a symbol of disgust, contempt and disappointment (Jonauskaite, Parraga, Quiblier and Mohr, 2020) ^[5]. The woman and man cannot get in touch with each other, but also miss each other. This disappointment and sadness emotion is well illustrated through dark gray, black and brown colours.

4.4 The Fourth Picture

The two rooms in the picture (see Figure 4) were coloured in dark blue, the readers could only distinguish the interior furnishings from the thing dark lines of each objects, such as sofa, bed, rug, radiator, curtains, shutters, books, plant, telephone, cups and so on. There is some

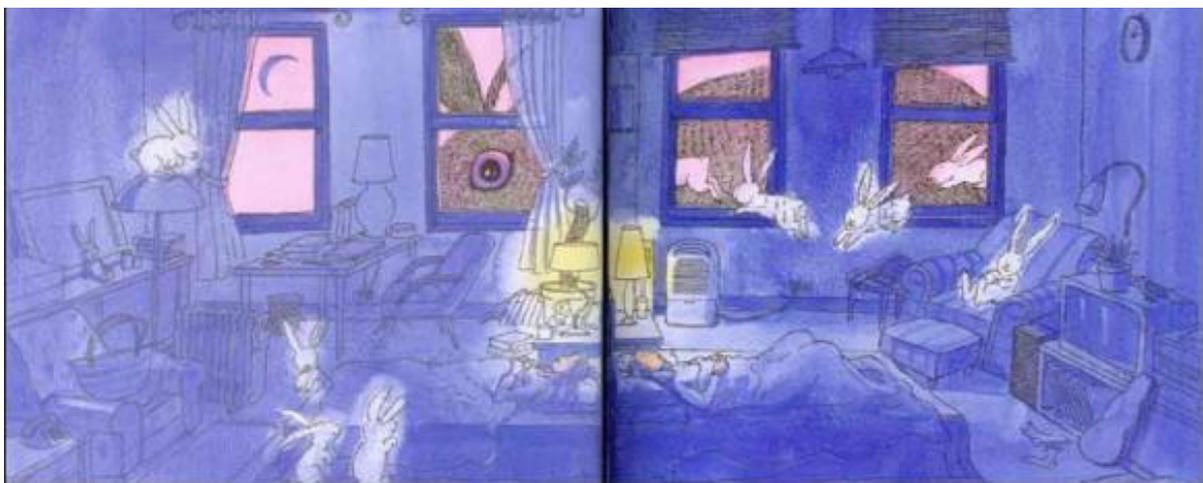


Figure 2. The date is 22nd of December



Figure 3. The date in 30th of March



Figure 4. The date is 8th of November

dark blue shadow on each stuff in both of the rooms. Outside the window there are more darker blue, even tend into black to indicate the time of deep night. Those blue and black colour which link with people's emotion of sadness and fear, act as the metaphor here to show the man and woman feel very upset. They have not seen each other for about eight months, and still cannot forget each other.

There are curved thin crescent which coloured in soft white on the up range of the windows of both rooms respectively. On the left page (see Figure 4), the woman sitting in blue coloured armchair facing a birthday cake, which dotted with colourful candles. The candle light gives out a yellow halo which is the only bright colour in the whole room. On the right page, a floor lamp stand at the corner of the room to shine a small yellow halo equal-

ly as the one on the left. The white moon colour and the yellow light colour can be viewed as the metaphor to indicate the lonely and sadly feelings of both characters, for they are the only sources of light for the whole picture.

Moreover, the colour-emotion associations which are yellow-joy, yellow-pleasure, yellow-amusement, yellow-admiration, white-relief, white-contentment (Jonaskaite, Parraga, Quiblier and Mohr, 2020) suggest that the characters may control their deep memory for each other^[5]. The yellow halos in both room may metaphorically tell the reader the hope of the future.

4.5 The Fifth Picture

The artist Jimmy put all the picture in deep blue again, with thin black lines and darker blue shadows to give out



Figure 5. The date is 6th of December

a rough sketch of the furnishings. The only bright colour in both rooms are the faces of both characters. The woman and man all wear light pale pink in their face, and they all closing eyes standing against the wall. In fact, they have no idea that they share the same wall all the time. For the wall is drawing in deep dark blue in the middle of the two pages, it often neglected by readers, so it seems that the two characters stand back to back. All pictures were splashed with patches of blue can be perceived as metaphor of sad, tired and heart broken. For they have not seen each other for almost one year, there is no bright colour in the picture may suggest that there is no hope inside the heart of the characters.

4.6 The Sixth Picture

For this picture (see Figure 6), although the main colour painted in light yellow colour again, both the rooms

were in the a messy situation. There are books, clothes and a lot of colourful little things were scattered on the bed randomly. The light blue suitcase of the woman and the brown luggage bag of the man also opened on their beds. The woman lifts a corner of the curtain, revealing the dark black sky outside. Her hand grabs a bring a tan shirt, and a pale brown coat lying on the pink sofa casually. The man puts a green shirt in his brown black bag, his claybank coat and brown black violin box lying on the sofa too. Besides, the tables, cabinet, bed sheet, bookshelf, TV stand, bedside table were coloured in light pale brown. It is worth noting that the small tree in the woman's room loses all the leaves and become dry, while the plant on the man's TV set had withered with only two brown wilting leaves.

Even though the yellow colour metaphor may give the reader positive emotions, but as brown colour per-



Figure 6. The date is 22nd of December

ceived disgust, contempt, disappointment, and regret (Jonaskaite, Parraga, Quiblier and Mohr, 2020) feelings, the pictures may want to show this metaphor to indicate the characters' negative attitude towards their future relations^[5]. Moreover, the messy coloured stuff on the beds suggest the chaotic and disordered mood of the characters. They feel disappoint and no hope about the relationships and the future life, so they pack up all the things and make a decision to leave the city.

4.7 The Seventh Picture

This is the last picture (Figure 7) of the book to illustrate the rooms of both character. The author uses the geometric perspective drawing method, to make the picture of room image coincide with a seaside image. From the picture, readers can see the floor and haft of the walls are printed in light sky-blue sea with waves and white foam. At the top of the ceilings and the top half walls, it coloured with light sky-blue as a background, and large white clouds floating in the sky. It looks like the sea picture lay on the picture of the two rooms or the rooms became transparent only with thin black graphic lines to illustrate the walls, windows. There is no furnishings, no people, no curtains or shutters in the room. You can only see a big hole in the middle wall with dark blue bricks inside. And there is a green little bird is flying through the hole. Some crushed blue bricks on the floor, and there is a blue hammer and a more dark blue nail on the left room, while a dark blue light hangs from the ceiling from the right room. The scenes from outside of the windows have large white clouds in the blue sky, which has the same colour with the bricks.

Those using of great light blue and white patches revealing the contentment, relief, admiration, pleasure and

joy emotions. Though both the characters are not in the picture, readers may receive the metaphors carried by the colour that their story is a happy one. Finally, the male character and woman character met with each other at the relic of the park, which they had met for the first time fifteen months ago, before they leave. The hole in the wall denotes that the two characters open their heart to each other.

Most strikingly, the small tree which still stands at the corner of left room became green again, with two luxuriant branches with many green leaves. On the right page, the plant which was placed on the window became green again as well, even blossom with four orange and yellow flowers. According to Jonaskaite, Parraga, Quiblier and Mohr (2020), orange can also refer to joy, amusement and pleasure. Jimmy uses the green tree, plant, small bird, and orange flowers as metaphors to demonstrate that the woman and the man have a happy ending^[5].

5. Conclusions

The advantage of Lankoff's Conceptual Metaphor Theory^[9] and Forceville's Multimodal analytical method lies not only in adding one more way of seeing colour-emotion associations^[2]; it rather a new method to evaluate the types of emotion that colour metaphors could conveyed in picture books. One example is Jimmy Liao's picture book-Turn Left, Turn Right^[11] use the bright warm colour such as yellow, light blue, white, orange, pink to express positive feelings (like joy, love, relief, admiration, pleasure and contentment), while he also use the dark cool colour (like black, gray, brown, deep dark blue) to show the sad, disappoint, fear, regret feelings of the characters. This drawing method might be handy for either those who paint picture books or who prefer to use colour to describe



Figure 7. The date is 6th of March

the emotions of the character in novels. It is hoped that the analysis results of these colour-emotion metaphors cannot only expand the depth of emotion metaphors, but also do a favor for improving multimodal discourse reading ability of Jimmy's readers. Furthermore, it can also guide people's healthy emotional awareness, and provide some useful references for the creative thinking of picture books' designers. However, further insights on the colour-emotions and metaphor in picture books are necessary.

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