

A Comparison of the Cultural Connotation of Chinese and Western Colour Words as Well as the Analysis of the Forming Causes

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ABSTRACT

In the recent decades, as a very important part of the research on the intercultural communication, the cultural connotation of Chinese and Western colour words has drawn more and more attention from most college English teachers and cultural scholars. Lots of academic thesis or research reports have been published one after another. On basis of collecting or referring to the research results of the predecessors and the colleagues, selecting the main colour words from Chinese and Western culture including red, yellow, white, green, black and so on, the thesis has made a detail comparison on the differences between the above colour words, then an elaborate analysis has been made on the forming causes of the differences in the cultural connotation between Chinese and Western colour words in order to provide the coming researchers with some conducive suggestions or references, pushing forward the development of the relevant research and the whole research of the intercultural communication.

Keywords: Comparison, Cultural connotation, Colour Words, Chinese, Western words.

1. INTRODUCTION

As everybody knows, the colour words are not only a very important part of language, but also the most collective representation of the religious belief, the social custom, the national psychology and the cultural value of the human society. Conducting the research on the comparison of the cultural connotation of Chinese and Western colour words as well as the analysis of the forming causes will be favourable to enhance the mutual understanding between the persons from different kinds of cultural background, decreasing or removing the mutual misunderstandings and even the conflicts during the process of the intercultural communication. Also, doing such research will be helpful to clarify some confusions about the cultural connotation of Chinese and Western colour words, improving the accuracy or the precision in the translation of the colour words and promoting the development of cultural psychology as well as the theory of linguistics.

2. THE DIFFERENCE OF THE CULTURAL CONNOTATION BETWEEN CHINESE COLOUR WORDS AND WESTERN COLOUR WORDS

As the carrier of the culture, every colour word has its cultural connotation. However, because of the differences between Chinese and Western culture. Even the same colour words tend to have different cultural connotations in different languages. In the following part a few colour words will be chosen to make a detail illustration on their different connotations both in Chinese culture and in Western culture.

2.1 The Red Colour

In China, when it comes to red, it is usually associated with some jubilant, festive, and pleasant situations or events. When Chinese persons celebrate the Spring Festival, they tend to paste the red couplets on the doors, and the children tend to ignite the red firecrackers to establish a cheerful

and joyous atmosphere. On the eve of the Spring Festival, most Chinese people usually send red packets on mobile phones to express the best wishes to their family members or good friends. Red is also the main colour at the Chinese marriage. In the ancient time the bride needed to wear the red covering and take the red sedan while the bridegroom also needed to wear the red wedding dress and the red flowers, riding a tall red horse. Even nowadays the bride needs to wear the red wedding dress and the wedding site must be decorated mainly with the red colour. In the bridegroom's house, the large red double happiness “囍” must be pasted on all the windows and the doors in advance to enhance the jubilant atmosphere of the whole family. If an enterprise earns the profit at the beginning of the new year, people often call it to be “开门红” in Chinese, and if the employees hold the shares of the enterprises, they will expect to receive the bonus (分红) at the end of the year. And if a person is popular with the superiors and appointed as an important position, he is often thought to be “走红” or “红的发紫” among his colleagues. If a person has become a millionaire overnight, the people around him tend to think him to be “走了鸿运” in Chinese. During the revolutionary years, red stood for the side of justice, as a result there are lots of expressions related to such a meaning as “红军”, “红色根据地”, “红星”, “红领巾”, “红小鬼” and “红色政权”. [2] While defeating the enemy in the battle, the soldiers tend to hold up a red flag in the battlefield. In the daily life, if the person is active to make a progress in politics and become remarkable in the work, he is usually regarded as “又红又专”. Red also symbolizes victory or success. In addition, red can stand for being beautiful or pretty like the following Chinese expressions such as “红装” or “红妆”, “红颜”, “红袖”. And the female intimate friend is usually called “红颜知己”.

However, in the mind of most Westerners, the red colour is mostly connected with bloodiness or violence. Therefore, there are lots of expressions related to such meanings like “the red rules with claw and tooth (残暴统治)”, “red revenge (血腥复仇)”, “a red battle(血战)”. As well, it signifies radicalization and the violent revolution like the phrases “red hot political campaign (激烈的政治运动)”, “red activities (左派激进活动)”. In addition, the red colour can stand for some dangerous or suspenseful things such as “a red alert (空袭警报)” and “a red adventure story(一个令人紧张的故事)”. And “a red flag” means a dangerous signal; in the street when the traffic lights turn red, the pedestrians and

the vehicles must stop; before the strong typhoon comes, the meteorological department will make a red weather alert. What's more, it has the meaning of being dissolute and obscene. In some Western countries, the places to make some pornographic transaction is called “the red light district (红灯区)” and “a red waste of one's youth” refer to a person's wasted and dissolute youth.

2.2 The Yellow Colour

In the Chinese traditional culture, yellow is the skin colour of the Chinese persons, as a result, it is the colour for most Chinese to take pride in, as well “Huang Emperor (黄帝)” was one of the forefathers of most Chinese people; about six or seven thousand years ago, the earliest Chinese people were discovered to live along the Yellow river and create the most splendid Chinese civilization. Thus, all the Chinese persons tend to think themselves to be “the descendant of Yan and Huang emperor(炎黄子孙)”. That is the reason why most Chinese people have worshiped or respected the yellow colour since the ancient time. In Chinese Five-Element theory, yellow stands for the soil, which has a close connection with the body organs like spleen and stomach. And the soil lies in the central position, as a result it is very important for people to keep their spleen and stomach healthy because it determines the health situation of the whole body. As well, in the ancient China, the yellow colour was also associated with the imperial power or the sovereign, therefore the emperor was usually dressed in the yellow clothes with the name of “黄袍”; the imperial edict promulgated by the emperor was called “黄榜”; “黄马褂” referred to the official dresses for the emperor of Qing Dynasty to bestow to civilian officials or martial officers and “黄门侍郎” referred to the ministers who served near the emperors every day.[1] Nowadays, when people want to go travelling or hold the wedding ceremony, it is necessary to select a fortunate date named “黄道吉日”. In addition, Yellow is also the colour of the gold as well as the ripe wheat or rice, so it is regarded as the symbol of wealth and harvest. However, sometimes the yellow colour is connected with the pornography both in Chinese culture and in Western culture, thus, there are some expressions such as “黄色小说”, “黄色电影”, “黄段子”, “黄碟”, and “黄色新闻”. In addition, in Western culture, the yellow colour also has the function of warning or alarming, as a result, the following expressions can be heard in the daily life such as “黄灯”, “黄色预警”, “黄牌警告”, and “黄页”.

2.3 The White Colour

In Chinese traditional culture, white is the colour for people to lose the last drop of blood and be exhausted. So, for most Chinese persons, it is the symbol of being ill or dead. That is why most Chinese people tend to wear white mourning apparel to show their deep sorrow when their family members or relatives go away from the world. Also it is not difficult to understand why so many people tend to take hold of the white chrysanthemum to commemorate the martyrs and honour the forefathers at Qingming Festivals. The white colour also symbolizes corruption, reactionary, and backwardness. As a result, during the war times, the enemy armies were usually called “白匪军” and the areas for the enemies to occupy were called “白区”; if the enemy troops were defeated, they had to put up the white flag for showing the surrendering. Nowadays, in the daily life, the persons with the low intelligence are often called “白痴”. And “白忙活”, “白费力” or “白干” refer to something for people to exert too much effort without obtaining any benefits or achieving any result in the end[3]. In the Chinese traditional opera, the white mask refers to the sinister and treacherous characters on the stage such as “赵高”, “曹操”, “秦桧”, “司马懿” and so on. In addition, “白骨精” means the woman with lots of cunning tricks and evil intentions. In the ancient time, if the persons had little knowledge as well as the low social status, they were often called to be “白丁”, “白身” and “白衣”. There are some other negative useful expressions associated with the white colour like “白面书生”, “小白脸”, “白班”, “白内降” and “白血病”. In Western culture, white is the colour of the new snow, the fresh milk and lily, which symbolizes purity and elegance. When Christmas comes, Westerners tend to decorate the white ornaments with the Christmas trees in their houses to establish a fair-tale and wonderful festival atmosphere. At the Western wedding ceremony, the wedding venue is mainly decorated with white colour, and the bride tends to wear a white wedding dress to signify the pure love. Also “a white person” means a person with the high moral quality, and “the white spirit” refers to the spirit of integrity. There are some other expressions associated with the white colour that have the positive meaning such as “a white soul”, “the White House”, “white collar”, “the white day”, and “the white lie”. [3]

2.4 The Black Colour

Sine the ancient time, white and black have been the symbol of light and darkness, and most of the people in the world have been struggling for pursuing the light by fighting against the dark forces. In the Chinese traditional culture, in most cases black stands for the vicious, reactionary power because it often makes lots of people feel insidious, sinister and horrible. Therefore, there are a good many expressions about the black colour that are closely connected with the above meanings such as “黑心肠”, “黑幕”, “黑帮”, “黑社会”, “黑手”, “黑店”, “黑名单” and “黑色统治”. [4] Also, it can refer to some illegal, criminal behaviors such as robbery, smuggling and murder. So, the following useful expressions can be heard from time to time like “黑货”, “黑市”, “黑钱”, “被黑了”, “走黑道”, and “黑吃黑”. However, sometimes black has the positive meaning. On the stage of Chinese traditional operas, black face is the symbol of being impartial and honest, and Bao Zheng was one of the main representative characters in China. As well, Zhang Fei and Li Kui tend to wear the black facial mask to display their justice, unselfishness and faithfulness. In Western culture, black belongs to the taboo colour, symbolizing death, ill omen, and disaster, such as “to wear black for the father”, “black words” and “a black letter day”. Also, it signifies viciousness and committing crime, such as “black men”, “a black deed”, “black guard” and “black mail”. In addition, it can stand for being shameful or disrepute like “a black mark”, “black sheep”, and “a black eye”. Furthermore, it has the meaning of disappointment and indignation such as “black dog”, “The future looks black.” and “He gives me a black look.[4] In the Bible, black symbolizes evil and demon whereas white stands for God, Christine and virtue. In the Ballet of *the Swan Lake*, the black swan stands for evil, fraud, and hostility while the white swan means purity, kindness and love. In some European or American countries, people tend to wear black clothes in the funeral or in some other formal situations to show the the mourning for the dead or the solemnity. What’s more, in most European countries, black cat is usually regarded as an unfortunate animal to bring some disaster to the people because the witches with a black cat and a broom were said to go here and there for making troubles in some Western legendary stories.

2.5 The Green Colour

In Chinese traditional culture, the green colour has two different meanings. On one hand it refers to the persons with a strong sense of justice to be ready to help the weak. As a result, in ancient China, the people who gathered in the mountain or the forest to assist the poor by robbing the wealthy were usually called “Robin Hood and his men in the forests (绿林好汉)”. On the other, the green colour has the negative meaning. After all, Robin Hood and his men belonged to the robbers who occupied a hill to act as a lord, blocking the road to rob of the passers-by and disturbing the local ordinary people. That is the reason why most Chinese tend to associate “forest outlaws (绿林)” with the evils. Besides, the green colour has the meaning of being humble or degrading. It was said all the servants had to wear the green kerchiefs in Han dynasty and after Yuan dynasty, all the prostitutes needed to wear the green headscarf to show their lower social status. In addition, the green colour denotes a improper romantic relationship between males and females in most Chinese eyes, which can be reflected with the expressions like “绿帽子(the green hat)” and “绿头巾(the green headscarf)”. [5] In Western culture, there is a close connection between green and the colour of trees as well as grasses; green is the life colour of all the plants signifying the youth, vitality and life, like “in the green wood (在青春旺盛的时代)”, “in the green(血气方刚)”, and “a green old age(老当益壮)”. The green colour also means “fresh” such as “green recollection(记忆犹新)”, “keep the memory green (永远不忘)”, “a green wound (新伤口)” and “a green hand (新手)”. Aside from the above meanings, the green colour is looked on as the symbol of peace, hope and environmental protection; the expressions with the similar meanings include “green food (绿色食品)”, “green industry (绿色产业)”, “green power (绿色能源)”, green products (绿色产品)”, and “green olive branches” have been regarded as the sign of the peace in the world during the past thousands of years. As well, the green colour has the meaning of being childish, immature and inexperienced such as “a green hand (新手)”, “a green apple (不成熟的人)”, “as green as grass (幼稚)” and “a green horn (容易上当的糊涂虫)”. Last but not least, the green colour can also convey the meaning of being jealous or envious, the usual expressions contain “the green-eyed monster (嫉妒)”, “green with envy (充满妒忌)” and “a green eye (红眼)”. [5]

2.6 Some Other Colour Words

Besides the above colour words that have been talked about, there are some other ones which are worth illustrating in detail. Here the purple, blue and pink colour words will be made a comparison on their cultural connotations between China and Western cultures. In the Chinese traditional culture, purple is regarded as the symbol of auspiciousness and nobleness which is used by Taoism and the feudal emperors. In the Chinese folk legendary, the emperor of heaven was said to live in “the Purple Microcosm Palace (紫微宫)”, and the emperors of Ming and Qing dynasty lived in “the Forbidden City (紫禁城)”. The expressions associated with purple include “(紫气) the purple atmosphere”, and “紫气东来 (the purple atmosphere coming from the east)” or “紫气东昇 (the purple atmosphere rising from the east)”, which is usually thought to be a very auspicious omen. It was said when Laozi arrived at Hangu pass by riding on a black ox, some persons were said to witness the purple atmosphere coming from the east. Similarly, the symbolic meaning of the purple is also connected with the religions and monarchy in Western culture, therefore purple is looked on as the most noble colour in the eyes of most Westerners; the relevant useful expressions contain “the purple (帝位, 王权)”, “be born in the purple (生在王侯贵族家)”, “marry in the purple (嫁到显贵人家)”, and “be raised in the purple (升到红衣主教)”.

Generally, blue is the colour of the sky, symbolizing peace, tranquility and purity. Sometimes it has the meaning of negativeness, indifference, and conservativeness. In Chinese culture, blue is a colour full of dreams and romance, signifying quietness, coldness and melancholy; the deep blue means the strong melancholy whereas the light blue stands for an innocence and a strong brightness, as a result it can be regarded as the symbol of wisdom. As well, the blue colour can be regarded as the token of being old or shabby, consequently it can't be used for decorating at the wedding or at the jubilant festival. [6] In Western culture, the blue colour represents dignity and strictness, for example, blue blood means the notable family or clan (名门望族). Similarly, blue also has the meaning of melancholy and frustration such as “blue Monday (不开心的星期一)”, “feel blue (不高兴)”, “Things look blue (事情不称心)”. In addition, blue has the meaning of suddenness or quickness, for example, “out of blue” means producing an unexpected winner (爆冷门). Furthermore, it can refer to the persons with the

power or the social status, for instance, “the blue room” means the place for American president to meet the notable guest or good friends like “the White House”. Finally, the blue colour can denote some occupations like “blue collar (蓝领)”, and it can also possess the meaning of indecency or obscenity such as “blue talk (下流的谈话)”. [5]

Actually, pink is a variant red colour, which can be thought to be a response or a regression of the red colour. In the Chinese traditional colour, pink is also called the peach blossom colour and it was usually connected with the pretty girl in ancient China. The poet from Tang Dynasty, Cu Hu left the poem “The human face and the peach blossom blend into a brilliant red together (人面桃花相映红)” where he assimilated the pretty girl to the peach blossom because the ancient girls tended to use the rouge for facial make-ups, making their faces white touched with red and looking like the peach blossom. Some other examples for the peach blossom colour to be compared to the girl include the poems written by another poet from Tang dynasty, Bai Juyi who wrote out the verses “Looking back and smiling, a thousand beauties come to life; in the imperial harem, all the beauties lose their luster (回眸一笑百媚生，六宫粉黛无颜色)”. Also, the ancient young men compared their sweet heart to “红颜知己 (a very closed girl friend)” and the illicit love affairs between males and females is usually called “桃色事件 (a petticoat affair)”. However, in Western culture, the pink colour means the essence and perfection such as “the pink of perfection (十全十美的人)”, “the pink politeness (十分的彬彬有礼)”. What’s more, it can denote the upper class of the society such as “pink lady (高格调鸡尾酒)”, “pink tea (上流社交活动)” and “a pink-collar” (高层次女秘书)”.

3. THE FORMING CAUSES OF THE DIFFERENCE OF THE CULTURAL CONNOTATIONS BETWEEN CHINESE AND COLOUR WORDS AND WESTERN COLOUR WORDS

Just like what has been said above, there exist some conspicuous distinctions of the cultural connotation between Chinese and Western colour words. However, these distinctions haven’t occurred coincidentally or accidentally, instead they are connected with lots of different kinds of elements.

3.1 The Origin of Civilization and The Geographical Environment

It is well known that Chinese civilization originates the inland area along the Yellow River. As a result, it was the Yellow River that bred Chinese civilization and the most splendid Chinese traditional culture. About six or seven thousand years ago, the earliest Chinese persons began to live in the areas along the Yellow River, engaging themselves in some agricultural activities. Such a productive mode depending on the natural environment made Chinese forefathers very sensitive to the colour. It is the thick yellow of the Yellow River, the broadness of the Loess Plateau and the golden yellow of the rape grains that have constituted the emotional dependence of the whole Chinese nations during the past thousands of years. Since Han dynasty, yellow has become the specialized colour of the emperor as well as all the monarchy, symbolizing the central authority and the paramount status, which has lasted for more than two thousand years. [7] Comparatively, the origin of Western civilization is on the shore of Mediterranean in ancient Greek, belonging to the blue oceanic civilization. It is the blue ocean water and the blue sky that have forged Westerners’ special emotion towards the blue colour. Therefore, the blue colour has taken up the dominating position in most Westerners’ mind because of its close connection with the sacredness and the rationality.

The natural weather condition is another reason for Chinese and Western people to have different colour preferences. Most Chinese areas especially the northern areas of China belong to the monsoon climate of medium latitude with the four distinctive seasons. When Autumn comes, all the fields and the mountains in the region are filled with the red crops or fruits like sorghum, dates, persimmons and hawthorns, and the long edification or influence of such a red landscape has formed Chinese persons’ special fondness of the red colour. That is the reason why the red colour has signified the happiness or fervency, auspiciousness and prosperity in the eyes of most Chinese people; the red wedding dress in the marriage, the red couplets at Spring Festival as well as the hanging red lanterns have reflected such a cultural psychology adequately. However, most European countries especially the Northern European countries lie in the area with the high latitude where the winter is long and dark with little sunlight. Consequently, the nations living there tend to adore the pure or bright

colour such as white or silver because these colors usually have a close connection with the purity and the sacredness in Western cultures, so it is understandable for the Western bride to wear the white dress at the wedding because it stands for the pure love. Conversely, in the Chinese funeral, most persons wear the white mourning clothes to express the sorrow or sadness for losing their relatives.

In addition, the closure or the openness of the geographical environment has had a deep influence on the formation of the colour connotation. Since the ancient time, China has a more closed surrounding where the eastern part is near the sea; the western part is against the mountain; the south is connected to the forest and the north is linked with the desert, which has shaped the internality of Chinese culture. As a result, Chinese colour system is very steady, which has never changed during the past thousands of years. However, in Western countries, on account of the openness of Mediterranean and the convenience of the marine transportation, the symbolic meaning of the colour words tends to take on some more mobility and variety. For example, red is the colour of the God of War, signifying bravery and strength. During the whole Middle Age, the red colour began to refer to the blood of Christianity. And in the modern political context, the red colour tends to be linked with revolution and communism. The diachronic change of the colour connotation is very obvious in Western culture.

3.2 The Religious Conviction and the Historical Heritage

The influence of religion on the colour connotation is very apparent both in China and in Western countries. In China, the cultural heritage for Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism to integrate with one another has had a far-reaching influence on people's colour perceptions. Confucianism tends to advocate the orthodox colors including cyan, red, yellow, white as well as black and look down upon the secondary colors, embodying its ethic thought to lay emphasis on the clear hierarchy. Taoism tends to adore the nature, going for cyan and white, which stands for simplicity and non-action. And the diagram of the universe in Taoism consists of white and black, denoting "Yin"(the darkness) and "Yang (the light); the alternation of white and black shows the constant motion of the universe, the mutual transition as well as the mutual inclusiveness between Yin and Yang. Buddhism tends to endow

the golden colour with the divine significance, meaning "Buddha's light shining everywhere" and "being extraordinary refined". Comparatively, Westerners' viewpoint of colour words is influenced deeply by Christianity. In the Bible, colour tends to have the special theological significance. The red colour have two different symbolic meanings, one standing for the sacred blood of Jesus Christ while sacrificing his life (meaning salvation), the other implying sin and temptation. The white colour symbolizes the purity as well as brightness of the god. Meanwhile the black colour refers to evil and darkness universally, which has a close connection with the image of Satan.

The historical heritage also has a deep influence on the color connotation in different cultures. As everybody knows, during the past thousands of years, China has been in the feudal monarchical society for a long time, which has formed a set of rigorous hierarchical colour system. Taking the yellow colour for an example, the establishment of its sacred status was closely related to "the central worship "in ancient China. According to Five-Element theory, the yellow colour belongs to the element of the earth, situating in the central part and representing the sacred royal sovereign. Since Sui and Tang dynasty, yellow has become the specialized colour for the monarchy little by little; the plain folks have been prohibited to make use of such kind of colour, and such a systematic stipulation has strengthened the authority symbol of the yellow colour. As well, in Chinese traditional culture, the purple colour becomes the symbol of dignity because of its scarcity (the difficulty of extracting the relevant dye), and the idiom "the purple atmosphere coming from the east" is originated from the description of the auspicious atmosphere in Taoism. Similarly, in Western countries, the purple colour is also noble and expensive because of its extraction from the scarce murices, thus it has become the sign of the monarchy and the bishop attire, symbolizing the authority and the power.

3.3 The Thinking Pattern, the Philosophical Thought and the Cultural Values

The difference of the cultural connotation between Chinese and Western colour words reflects the fundamental distinction of recognizing the world and expressing the opinions at a deeper level between the two different cultures. From the

ancient Greek period, Western culture began to emphasize the reasonable analysis and the scientific spirit, tending to make an exact observation and a careful classification. Such a kind of thinking pattern makes Western colour words express their meanings more directly, that is to say, Westerners tend to make use of the specific colour of the objective things to convey some abstract cultural connotation. For example, the usage of olive green as the symbol of peace is originated from the use of olive branch, and rose red's implication of love has a close connection with the colour of rose as well as its symbolic meaning. By contrast, Chinese traditional thinking pattern pays more attention to the intuitive inspiration and the total connection. Because of the deep influence of Five Element theory, some concepts such as five elements (wood, fire, soil, gold and water), five colors (cyan, red, yellow, white, black), five positions (east, south, centre, west, north) and five virtues (benevolence, justice, ritual, honesty and wisdom) are interwoven mutually, constituting a complicated symbolic system where colour is not only the description of the visual image but also the embodiment of the universe sequence as well as the ethic value. For example, green or cyan stands for the east, spring and kindheartedness; red means the south, summer and etiquette; white symbolizes the west, autumn and righteous deeds; winter signifies the north, winter and wisdom, and yellow lies in the central part, commanding the four directions. Such a connected thinking pattern can make the cultural connotation of the colour words become more plural and more intelligible.

As well as the thinking pattern, the cultural values also have the influence on the connotation of Chinese and Western colour words. It is well known that the collectivism and the social harmony are the key internal cores of Chinese traditional culture, and the use of colour is also restrained by the social convention. Taking the Chinese ancient official costume for an example, there were rigorous stipulation on the colour of the official costume with different ranks in Tang dynasty. The officials with over three grades tended to wear the purple robe; the officials with four or five grades needed to wear the red robe; the officials with six or seven grades usually wore the green costume and the officials with eight or nine grades needed to dress themselves in cyan. Here, colour has become the external sign of the social scales. However, Westerners pay more attention to individualism and self-expression; their colour choices tend to demonstrate their personal tastes rather than the

social convention. For example, most Westerners tend to make use of some more colors to manifest their individuality during Western festivals, especially at Christmas. They choose some ornaments with many different kinds of colors such as red, golden colour, and green to decorate their houses or the Christmas trees when Christmas comes. Meanwhile during the Chinese traditional festival especially at Spring Festival, most of Chinese persons tend to be fond of the red colour, wearing the red clothes or decorating their house with the red Spring Couplets or the red lanterns.

In addition, the philosophical thought also makes a deep effect on the colour connotation between China and Western countries. Influenced by the thought of "Golden Mean" in Confucianism, Chinese nations have formed the reserved and restraint aesthetic preference during the past thousands of years, being keen on the solemn and harmonious colour matching. For example, Chinese painting tries to be in pursuit of the romantic charm and the artistic conception, embodying the philosophical thought of the complement between the true and the false through the striking contrast between black and white in ink painting. By the contrast, influenced by the Greek rationalism, the Western nations have developed the outgoing and flamboyant aesthetic standard, preferring the distinctive and strong colour contrast. For example, the colour window of the gothic church has created a sacred sense with the splendid colors. Chinese Taoistic thought to pursue nothingness which can be manifested by the idioms "Great sound implies no sound; great form implies no form." makes Chinese art develop an aesthetic ideal to seek the simplicity and modesty. The black and white colors in ink painting can manifest the boundless universe sufficiently, showing the philosophical wisdom of "less is more". Conversely, influenced by Aristotle's theory of imitation which tries to seek the accurate reproduction, the Western art has developed various theories and techniques such as the impressionism's scientific exploration for colour and light. Such a philosophical difference has formed distinct heritages in the comprehension and application of the colour between China and Western countries.

4. CONCLUSION

The different cultural connotation of Chinese and Western colour words is a very constituent part of the research on the whole intercultural communication. There is a long way to go for

achieving an overall and thorough clarification and a complete understanding on the differences of the cultural connotation between Chinese and Western colour words, which needs the common effort between most cultural scholars and college English teachers. Only by doing like this, can the understanding about the cultural connotation of Chinese and Western colour words be deepened and can the research on the whole intercultural communication be enhanced and promoted further in the coming years.

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