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Smell of love: Olfactory metaphor in Romanic discourse

Abstract:

The paper tackles the question of smell semantics and semiotics in the context of intimate communication of sexes. The authors analyze the linguistic representation of different characteristics of woman's and man's smell, identify specific features of single lexemes' use for the transmission of olfactory sensations.

The analysis shows that the main thematic area in describing of olfactory aspect in romantic discourse is the nomination of a physiological impact on a partner who senses the existential necessity of perceiving the smell of the beloved woman or man. To verbalize this effect, metaphors are used which represent smells of sexes differently: women's smell acts as a peremptory aggressor, and the smell of a man is perceived as a tyrant who suppresses, paralyzes the woman's will.

An important means of describing female scent in romantic discourse is the so-called synesthemia that represents the smell as a life-sustaining food, as a thirst quencher or a veil enveloping the beloved person with an invisible cloud.

A special evaluation range of the beloved person's smell is represented by comparisons with flowers and fruit, traditionally presented as sources of fascinating aroma.

In conclusion, the authors construct as an example a cognitive model of female smell that connects the described linguistic facts into a logically connected scenario.

So, the woman's smell is described as her invisible clothing, it is light and inconspicuous. For the man in love it replaces the vital air, in its absence the man simply suffocates.

A man in love enjoys the smell of woman's hair and skin, which smell pleasantly like flowers and fruits, the "honest" fragrance is associated with intimate experiences.

The smell of a beloved woman is gentle, its assessment takes the entire positive scale from "good" to "divine".

In situations of passion for a woman, her smell is represented as an aggressor, it pervades the man in love, destroys his moral foundations, manipulates his biological essence. The smell is perceived as a poison that stupefies, deafens, intoxicates.

This olfactory cognitive model confirms the opinion of the smell genius P. Susskind that persuasiveness of the smell is an irrefutable, undeniable and stronger than words. The
romantic olfactory topic allows us to understand more deeply the surprising euphoric borderline state of consciousness, which we call love, and to solve the paradoxical situation of being between the subjective emotionality and rationality of the collective language.