

CULTURAL CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF THE CHINESE RED-RELATED COLOR TERMS UNDER THE FRAME OF CULTURAL MODEL OF COLORS¹

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Abstract:

This research attempts to study the cultural conceptualizations of red-related color terms in Chinese linguaculture, with data obtained from the contemporary East Asian Culture of China from Cultural Linguistic perspectives. The data of this research is obtained from the Beijing Language and Culture University Corpus Center (BLCU Corpus Center, BCC) Corpus (including newspapers-periodicals sub-corpus and the Weibo sub-corpus) and online database "Dictionary of Chinese Idioms". This research proposes a concept of "Chinese Cultural Model of Colors", and focuses on how the cluster of red-related cultural conceptualizations is organized and instantiated in a complex and hierarchical structure in Chinese context. A series of red-related Chinese cultural conceptualizations such as cultural metaphors and cultural schemas have been identified and instantiated with concrete examples from both synchronic and diachronic perspectives.

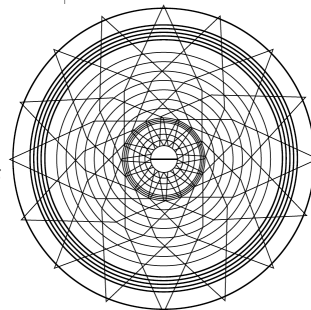
Keywords: cultural conceptualizations, cultural linguistics, cultural schemas, cultural metaphors, cultural model of colors, Chinese cultural model of red-related colors.

¹ Based on the data from modern Chinese media and traditional Chinese idioms

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1. Introduction

As a multidisciplinary area of linguistic research, Cultural Linguistics explores the relationship between language, culture and culturally constructed conceptualization (Palmer 1996; Sharifian 2003, 2011, 2015, 2017). Cultural Linguistics attempts to explore the cultural conceptualizations embodied in linguistic expressions and cultural artefacts such as painting, rituals, language, and even in silence, which constitute a multidisciplinary understanding of the collective cognition at the cultural level, namely “cultural cognition”. In fact, scholars interested in both cognition and culture have been exploring how culture and cognition interact with each other and with other systems such as language for a long time (e.g. Cole, 1996; D’Andrade, 1995; Hutchins, 1994; Shore, 1996; Strauss & Quinn, 1997).

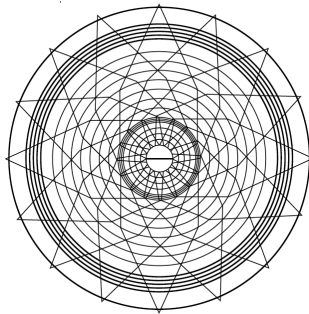
Based on the previous research, Cultural Linguistics believes that cultural cognition emerging from the interactions between the minds that constitute the cultural group and are constantly negotiated and renegotiated across generations, which therefore can be viewed as a heterogeneously distributed system with emergent properties (Sharifian, 2008, 2011, 2015, 2017).

Cultural cognition is composed of cultural schemas (e.g. D’Andrade, 1995; Malcolm & Sharifian, 2002; Rice, 1980; Shore, 1996; Strauss & Quinn, 1997), cultural categories (Lakoff, 1987; Rosch, 1978) and cultural metaphors (e.g. Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Fusaroli & Morgagni, 2013; Kövecses, 2005, 2010, 2015; Yu, 2003, 2009a, 2009b) that can be described as patterns of distributed knowledge across the cultural group. These three core theoretical constructs of Cultural Linguistics can be collectively referred to as *cultural conceptualizations* (Sharifian, 2015, 2017).

Cultural conceptualization which appears as a central notion in Cultural Linguistics cover the instantiations of cultural cognition in language as they appear in cultural schemas, cultural categories and cultural metaphors; which transmit a cultural group’s beliefs and ideas about their life, environment, religion and so on (Sharifian 2015: 477).

The present study aims to analyze the data from the contemporary East Asian culture of China, taking a Cultural Linguistic perspective. We apply the analytical framework of Cultural Linguistics (Sharifian, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2017) to the study of the cultural conceptualization of the color “hóng” (red) as a cultural salient concept and as a cultural sub-model, including numerous related cultural schemas and metaphors under the perspective of the general Chinese cultural model of color.

We will focus on the conceptual and cultural meaning of the color term “hóng” (red) in some typical sorts of lexical and syntactic patterns as is manifested in modern Chinese language and culture with a corpus approach. The color concepts, as we will show with some examples, are especially important in Chinese traditional culture, and are richly linguistically instantiated. We will also explore the traditional linguistic evidence in Chinese Traditional four-character idioms to see how the cultural conceptualizations of the color concept “hóng”(red) in today’s Chinese linguaculture embodied and instantiated its cultural cognition throughout the history.



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The data comes from the Beijing Language and Culture University Corpus Center (BLCU Corpus Center, BCC) Corpus and online database “Dictionary of Chinese Idioms”. The BCC Corpus is a large full-text retrieval corpus with 15 billion words with multiple languages, including Chinese and other languages as well. It includes several multi-domain sub-corpus such as newspapers-periodicals sub-corpus (2 billion words), literature sub-corpus (3 billion words), Weibo sub-corpus (3 billion words), and science and technology sub-corpus (3 billion words). In this research, we will especially focus on the newspapers-periodicals sub-corpus and the Weibo sub-corpus. The latter can be viewed as a reliable linguistic source including the empirical materials from the Chinese microblogging website Sina Weibo, that is widely considered as the most popular social media platforms in China. The online database “Dictionary of Chinese Idioms” is created by the Ministry of Education of Taiwan, including the most contemporary Chinese idioms, which we believe are the instantiations of cultural cognition and cultural conceptualizations being constantly negotiated and renegotiated across Chinese generations over space and time.

Thus, the present research attempts to present an important case showing how cultural conceptualization of color concepts in Chinese context work, and why the Chinese color concepts are viewed as a complex cultural model for the Chinese as a cultural group.

2. Cultural Cognition, Cultural Model and the Chinese CULTURAL MODEL OF COLORS

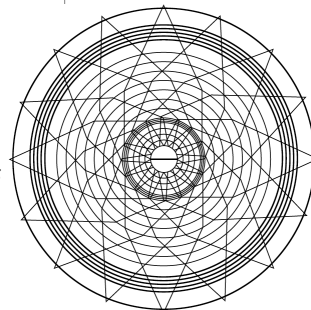
Cognition can be viewed as a property of cultural groups, which is an emergent system (e.g. Johnson, 2001) resulting from the interactions between the members of a cultural group across time and space. Emergent cultural cognition may be instantiated in various aspects of cultural texts and artefacts and heterogeneously distributed across the minds in a cultural group across the dimensions of time and space. Members of a cultural group negotiate and renegotiate their cultural cognition vertically and horizontally across generations.

As Panzarasa and Jennings put it, “it is the move from agents’ cognition to a social cognitive structure via *social interaction* that brings about a new form of collective cognition” (Panzarasa & Jennings, 2006: 404). Under the framework of Cultural Linguistics, we can claim that conceptualization and language are two integral aspects of this kind of collective cognition, and this kind of collective cognition is similar to our notion of cultural cognition. In this sense, cultural conceptualizations may be viewed as an integral aspect of cultural cognition and distributed in the minds of individuals across cultural groups.

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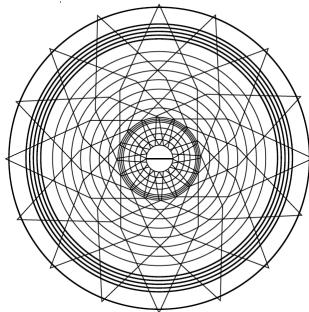
2.1 Cultural Conceptualizations and the Notion “CULTURAL MODEL OF COLORS”

As mentioned above, we use the term cultural conceptualizations to refer to the units of conceptual knowledge such as cultural schemas (e.g. D’Andrade, 1995; Malcolm & Sharifian, 2002; Rice, 1980; Shore, 1996; Strauss & Quinn, 1997), cultural categories (Lakoff, 1987; Rosch, 1978) and cultural metaphors (e.g. Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Fusaroli & Morgagni, 2013; Kövecses 2005, 2010, 2015; Yu 2009a, 2009b). Another related notion that has long been applied in cognitive anthropology and more increasingly in cognitive linguistics is cultural model (e.g. D’Andrade, 1995; D’Andrade & Strauss, 1992; Frank, 2003a; Holland & Quinn, 1987; Wolf & Simo Bobda, 2001). Cultural model, which was initially regarded as ‘folk model’ (Keesing, 1987), has been defined as “a cognitive schema that is inter-subjectively shared by a social group” (D’Andrade, 1987: 112). Strauss and Quinn (1997: 49) also maintain that “another term for cultural schemas (especially of the more complex sort) is cultural model”.

As Sharifian put it (2011: 27), we view this term as conceptualizations that hierarchically characterize higher nodes of our conceptual knowledge and that encompass a network of schemas, categories and metaphors. In this regard, as for the color terms under the frame of cultural cognition and cultural conceptualizations, we can make the observation that the color terms for a cultural group can be viewed as more general, overarching conceptualizations, or a complex cultural model in other words, which could properly be called “CULTURAL MODEL OF COLORS”.

In the context of Chinese linguaculture, it is not surprisingly if we view the national color system as a kind of cultural model. Color is one of the central concepts with rich cultural meanings, which can be viewed as instantiation of cultural cognition and cultural conceptualizations between the members of a cultural group. The study of the extended and abstract meanings of Chinese basic color term (Xing, 2008) has proved that Chinese color system follows the same evolutionary sequence discovered by Berlin and Kay (1969). Traditionally, Chinese considers only five colors basic: bái “white”, hēi “black”, chì “red”, qīng “dark blue”, and huáng “yellow” (Xing, 2008). For now, like many other languages, Chinese recognizes eleven basic color terms: bái “white”, hēi “black”, hóng “red”, huáng “yellow”, lǜ “green”, lán “blue”, huī “grey”, zōng “brown”, júhuáng “orange”, zǐ “purple” and fěnhóng “pink” (Hardin & Maffi, 1997).

It is natural that researchers in different cultures have put the concept of color at the center of attention in the field of linguistics from a neurophysiological perspective (Kay and McDaniel, 1978: 617) or from a cognitive perspective (Wierzbicka, 1990, 1996). Xing’s study provided rich materials to show how Chinese color terms have employed the same mechanisms as that of English in the development of various extended and abstract meanings (Xing, 2008). Plenty of scholars have achieved very rich results in the field of cognitive research of color terms (Chen&Qin, 2003; Li, 2003). Given its semantics and pragmatics-oriented nature, important analytical tools in Cultural Linguistics (Sharifian, 2011, 2017) such as cultural schemas, cultural categories and cultural metaphors are certainly not its main emphases, which is the topic area to be explored here.



2.2 The Main Content of Chinese CULTURAL MODEL OF COLORS

In fact, if we consider the notion “CULTURAL MODEL OF COLORS”, those color terms that are considered to be equivalent in different languages, or even language varieties, may signify different conceptualization of experience for their speakers. Color terms as a whole, or separately, can evoke some important cultural images in the mind of people in a cultural group, and such color term related images, in its turn, will evoke a number of color related cultural information and cultural schemas. Such phenomenon is particularly common in Chinese linguaculture.

Returning to Chinese linguaculture, we may refer the Chinese CULTURAL MODEL OF COLORS. The content and the relationship between these conceptualizations may be summarized as follows:

Chinese CULTURAL MODEL OF COLORS

Color related cultural categories: cultural categories such as “white”, “black”, “red”, “yellow”, “green”, “blue” etc. In fact, the color terms of different languages and cultures may not have completely equal equivalents to the Chinese related color terms, and this fact can also attribute to the features of Chinese characters and the phenomenon that two or more lexical or grammatical elements can compete for a certain semantic or grammatical function in Chinese language. Therefore, each color category in Chinese language may lead to several subcategories related to different characters and different cultural meanings. For example, there are four separate red-related cultural subcategories identified in Chinese: *chì*, *hóng*, *zhū* and *dān*. These separated subcategories appear to produce a series of red-related cultural subschemas and cultural metaphors, as we will discuss later in this research.

Color related cultural schemas: schemas that embody norms and values related to color categories such as “white”, “black”, “red”, “yellow”, “green”, “blue”, etc. Color-related cultural schemas are rich in different cultures, and many of them can be adopted in a number of other cultural categories and cultural models such as cultural model of Marriage (see Quinn, 1987). That is even more typical to China. For example, the color term *hóng* (red), which is a typical red-related cultural subcategory, can be considered to be related to several separate color related cultural schemas. For example, the red-related proposition-schemas can be partly explicated as follows, which will be discussed in the following section:

If someone or something is known by many people because he did something special, then this someone or something is very hóng (red).

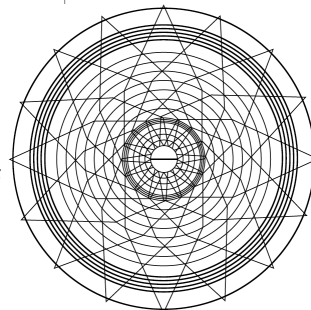
If a person wants to become hóng (red), this person must do something unusual that other people cannot do, or this person must do something better than other people do. These “something” may meet social value standards, and may not.

Many people in the society want to become hóng (red), so they try a lot of things that others cannot or dare not do, and attempt necessarily to let others know the things they did.

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Some people in the society do not want to become hóng (red), and they do not agree with those people who have already become hóng (red).

In the schemas above, the cultural metaphor TO BECOME FAMOUS OR BE WIDELY KNOWN AS hóng (RED) is identified, and we will pay attention to these red related cultural conceptualizations in this research later.

Color related cultural metaphors: conceptual metaphors that are used in relation to color terms such as “white”, “black”, “red”, “yellow”, “green”, “blue”, etc. Many colors are related to specific cultural metaphors in all languages, for example, the Chinese cultural metaphor TO BECOME FAMOUS OR BE WIDELY KNOWN AS hóng (RED) as we mentioned above. In fact, when we take into account more color related important cultural empirical materials across time and space within a cultural group such as historical texts, poetry, folk song lyrics, proverbs and idioms etc., the hidden connections between the cultural metaphors and other related cultural conceptualizations will gradually emerge. These conceptualizations and the relationship among them can form a network of these color related cultural schemas, categories and metaphors, from which we can see the path how the CULTURAL MODEL OF COLORS forms.

Back to the color term “red” in Chinese as an example, from our analysis of the data of traditional Chinese idioms, some red-related cultural metaphors can be identified, for example:

WEALTH AS RED;

THE METEORIC RISE THROUGH THE BUREAUCRACY AS RED;

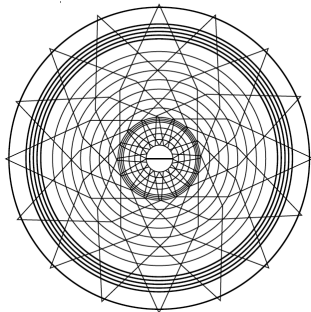
BEAUTY AS RED;

THE MORTAL LIFE AS RED; etc.

The above mentioned cultural metaphors are associated with different Chinese red-related color terms *chì*, *hóng*, *zhū* and *dān* and therefore belong to different red-related cultural subcategories. But there is an intrinsic connection between these cultural metaphors under a global level of the same CULTURAL MODEL OF RED-RELATED COLORS, and they work together on the cultural metaphor TO BECOME FAMOUS OR BE WIDELY KNOWN AS hóng (RED) and the related cultural schemas in modern Chinese linguaculture as we mentioned above. The following two sections would present a detailed analysis on this subject.

3. The Cultural Conceptualizations of hóng(red) in Contemporary Chinese Linguaculture

As mentioned above, the color terms in other languages and cultures may not have completely equal equivalents to the Chinese related color terms. Apart from *chì*, *hóng*, *zhū* and *dān* being four different red-related colors in Chinese, semantically *hóng* is a more generic term while *chì*, *zhū* and *dān* are considered more restricted within semantic fields and have more specific rhetorical functions. In modern spoken Chinese language, *hóng* is the most widely used red-related color term.



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Taking into account Chinese linguaculture and features of Chinese character, *chì*, *hóng*, *zhū* and *dān* (each one corresponds to a separate Chinese character) can also be viewed as four separate red-related cultural subcategories. Among these four cultural subcategories, *hóng* is the largest, and contains the most abundant empirical materials, including the largest number of red-related cultural conceptualizations.

According to the BCC corpus, we found a lot of empirical materials related to the cultural subcategory *hóng*. Many of them lead to the same typical red-related cultural metaphor: TO BECOME FAMOUS OR BE WIDELY KNOWN AS *hóng* (RED). For example, the following linguistic expressions we selected from the BCC corpus, which are clear instantiations of the Chinese cultural conceptualizations of *hóng* (red):

1. Nánzǐ huán yóu shìjiè 44 tiān, pāi xià jīngdiǎn jìngtóu jiǎnjí chéng piàn **bào hóng**.

A man traveled around the world for 44 days, took a series of photos, and clipped them into a film, which have suddenly become extremely *hóng*.

2. Lǐjiāwēi 9 yuè 16 rì tuīchū shǒu zhāng guóyǔ zhuānjí “gǎnxiè àirén”, zhǔdǎ gē “jiān’áo” **yī pào ér hóng**.

Li Jiawei (the name of a singer) launched her first Mandarin album "Thank You for Love" on September 16th, and the title song "TORTURE" was a hit, **quickly became extremely hóng**.

3. Zuòwéi zhōngguó bǎn “lǎoyǒuji”, píngjiè bàoxiào gěilì de táicí, yōumò chuánshén de biǎoyǎn, qián liǎng jì zài quánquó diànshìtái hé wǎngluò bō chū hòu xùnsù **cuānhóng**.

As the Chinese version of "Friends", with the hilarious and powerful line, humorous and expressive performance, the first two seasons **quickly became hóng** after broadcasting on national TV stations and the Internet.

4. Zhè jiā diàn hūrán zài shànghǎi jiù hóng le ~~měi cì dōu yào páiduì.

This store is suddenly *hóng* in Shanghai ~~ every time you have to line up when you want to buy things there.

5. Wǒ de mǔxiào zhēnxīn **yào hóng** le.

My alma mater is really **about to hóng**.

The examples (1) to (5) in general about the theme "*what is hóng*". From these examples, the red-related proposition-schemas can be identified and partly explicated as follows:

a. *If someone is known by many people because he did something special, then this person is very hóng (red).*

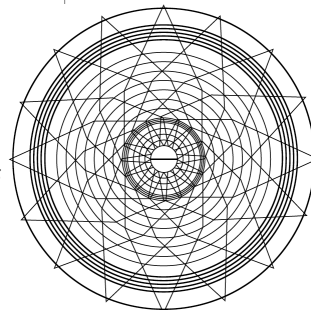
b. *If something is popular and is liked by many people, then this something is very hóng (red).*

The schemas are related to the cultural metaphor “TO BECOME FAMOUS OR BE WIDELY KNOWN AS *hóng* (RED)”, whose source concept *hóng* (RED) acts as a typical Chinese cultural category. The collocations above in the examples we found can also reflect some of the features of the concept *hóng* (RED). In (1), the two-character word

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bào hóng (explode+red) gives a meaning of **suddenly become widely known**. There are two very obvious features of the concept hóng (RED). The first one is “suddenly” or “unexpected”, the second one is “explosive” or “diffusive”:

c. If someone or something becomes hóng (red), it means that this someone or something is suddenly known or liked by many people in a very short time.

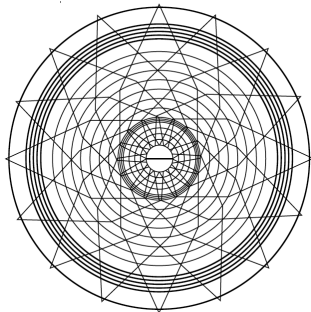
These two features can be prototypically instantiated by the four-character idiomatic expression “**yī pào ér hóng**” (**one+shot+then+red**) in (2), the word “**cuānhóng**” (**leap up+red**) in (3), and **hūrán** (**suddenly**), **yào** (**be about to**) in (4) and (5). It can also be seen that the hóng (RED) here is both a process and a result. The four-character idiomatic expression “**yī pào ér hóng**” (**one+shot+then+red**) is a very widely used expression in Chinese and is often used in blessing words in China, it means that someone or something can become popular in a very short time, like hitting a shot. The word “**cuānhóng**” (**leap up+red**) gives a similar meaning.

According to the above analysis, a mapping relationship between RED and FIRE in the context of Chinese is gradually becoming clear. In fact, it is not difficult to make the claim that the color red is a metonymy color of fire stands for the fire and the fire related things, for example a bomb or shot in (1) and (2). In other word, TO BECOME FAMOUS OR BE WIDELY KNOWN AS hóng (RED) is a linguistic instantiation of a conceptual metaphor that involves metonymic mapping in the source domain: TO BECOME FAMOUS OR BE WIDELY KNOWN AS **huǒ** (FIRE), and TO BECOME FAMOUS OR BE WIDELY KNOWN AS EXPLOSIONS. For example, a similar statement about the conceptual metaphor can easily be found in BCC corpus:

6. SBS diànshìjù pāishèdì huǒle! SBS diànshìjù de rénqì pāishè chǎngdì yě yǐnfāle dàzhòng de guānxīn.

The shooting location of the SBS TV series was huǒ (FIRE)! The popular shooting location of the SBS TV series also caused public concern.

Our research focuses on the conceptualizations of the color term hóng (RED) under the frame of the Chinese CULTURAL MODEL OF COLORS in the context of the Chinese culture. The metonymic mapping of hóng (RED) and huǒ (FIRE) and the related conceptualizations are also grounded in a special experiential basis consists of cultural experience and bodily experience (Maalej and Yu, 2011; Sharifian et al., 2008; Yu, 1998, 2008, 2009a, b). In fact, the metonymic mapping between hóng (RED) and the huǒ (FIRE) is more on the cognitive level and based on the universal bodily experience. In order to study the cultural conceptualizations of hóng (RED) under the frame of the Chinese CULTURAL MODEL OF COLORS, especially the cultural metaphor TO BECOME FAMOUS OR BE WIDELY KNOWN AS hóng (RED) and related cultural schemas, we need richer empirical linguistic material and deeper analysis.



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The following examples are about “**how to become/be hóng (RED)**”, which are also from BCC corpus:

7. Tā yǐjīng chūdào èrshí nián, yǎnguò N gè nǚ zhǔjiǎo, měi yī bù xī dōu yǒu bùtóng de gǎnjué, zhème nǚlì de rén yīdìng huì gèng **hóng**.

It has been 20 years since her debut and she has acted many female protagonists till now, each of which can give a different feeling. People like her, who work so hard, deserve to be more and more **hóng (RED)**.

8. Guānxīn tā rén, guānxīn jíjǐ de zuòfēng shì qí jìshù tiáojiàn yǐwài de yī xiàng zhòngyào tiáojiàn. Yě zhèng shì zhèyàng de pǐnzhí, ràng “xiǎo jùrén” zài xùnsù zǒu hóng NBA de tóngshí, cóng wèi liúlù chū sīháo de piāopiāorán.

The style of caring for others and caring for the collective is a kind of important characteristics apart from his technical conditions. It is this quality that makes YAO Ming rapidly becomes **hóng (RED)** in the NBA, and never shows any slightest arrogant.

9. Shì bùshì xiǎng chūmíng ā! Jiě bāng nǐ zhào zhāng xiàng fā wēibó, nǐ bàn bù mén dōu bù yòng chū, jiù kěyǐ hóng!

You want to be famous right? I can help you to take a photo and we can post it on twitter, you don't need to step out of your door and easily become **hóng (RED)**!

As it can be seen from the above examples (7) and (8), there are certain standards in Chinese culture for how to become **hóng (RED)**, which can lead to a certain proposition-schema:

d. If a person wants to become hóng (red), this person must do something unusual that other people cannot do, or this person must do something better than other people do.

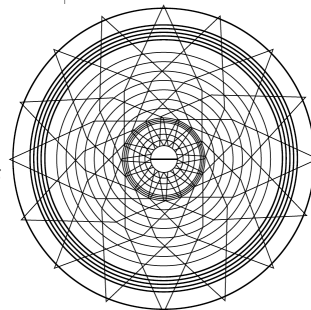
In (7), the actress has been playing for 20 years, and in each play she can give the audience a different feeling, which is very difficult for any actor or actress. She persisted for a long time and the quality of her work was on a higher level than others, so people will think that she deserves to be **hóng (RED)**. (8) is about Chinese basketball player Yao Ming. Compared with ordinary basketball players, he is not only good at basketball technique, but also cares more about others and the collective, and Chinese people think that this is one of the most important reasons for his popularity in NBA.

(9) reflects another phenomenon. Through the Internet and social networks, some people do not have to make a lot of effort, and they can be **hóng (RED)** without leaving home. However, the context behind this paragraph is ironic. In other words, many people in Chinese cultural context do not approve those people who are **hóng (RED)** through the Internet without making any effort. This is consistent with the spirit of advocating hard work and diligent in Chinese traditional culture. People have created a new word “wǎng hóng” (internet+red) to describe this type of people. Today the word “wǎng hóng” has become a high-frequency word in Chinese spoken language

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and has entered into the written language. The following example is also from BCC corpus:

10. Xiànzài de wǎng hóng gè lù niúguǐshéshén dōu yǒu.

Now the internet is full of “wǎng hóng” (internet+red), includes all kinds of ghosts and monsters

The people called “wǎng hóng” (internet+red) are able to achieve their current status, become hóng (RED) on the Internet, which means that they probably have a group of supporters. On the other hand, in the mainstream context of Chinese, this word is more likely to be a derogatory term as the example (10) shows above, meaning that quite a few people do not approve these people who are called “wǎng hóng” (internet+red). This is also illustration that the conceptualizations of the color term hóng (RED) as a kind of cultural cognition, appears to be a form of distributed cognition (Hutchins, 1994) in the sense that the cognitive structures whose interactions lead to emergent properties are distributed (albeit heterogeneously) across the minds of the members in a cultural group, across time and space (see also Hutchins, 2000).

From the analysis above and the example (10), two more proposition-schemas can be found and illustrate as follows:

e. If a person wants to become hóng (red), this person must do something unusual that other people cannot do, or this person must do something better than other people do. These “something” may meet social value standards, and may not.

f. The Internet can make a person quickly become hóng (red), but this person may not deserve what he owns if he did not pay any effort for it.

As mentioned above, through the Internet and social network, it seems that people can be hóng (red) quickly and somehow easily, but it will also involve people's attitude towards it within a cultural group. The following examples are all about people's attitude toward hóng (red) which are also selected from BCC corpus:

11. Xièxiè nǐmen, rúcǐ yòngxīn de pāishè, xiězuò, hé fēnxiǎng. Gǎnxiè wǒ de mótiè, wǒmen zhōngyú hóngle.

Thank you for the kindly and carefully shooting, writing, and sharing. Thanks to my models, we are finally going to hóng (red).

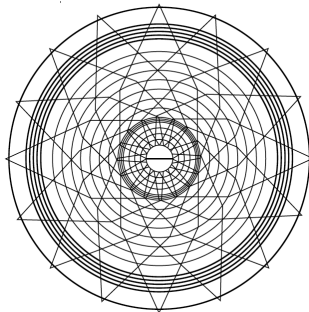
12. Zhège shēngyīn bìxū yào hóngle ~~~hěn qīngxīn de RAP, zhēn de bù gū zào ~dàjiā tīng yīxià ma!

This voice must be hóng (red) in the future~~~ Very pure RAP, not noisy at all~ Let's listen together!

13. Yīnwèi zhè tiáo wēi bó zhè liǎng rén shùnjiān bào hóng --zhìyú me, wúláo.

Because of this twitter, two people become hóng (red) instantly – How? What a boring thing.

14. Yǒu nǎo de rén huì zài zhège shíhòu chě biérén me. Yī kàn jiùshì xiǎng hóng xiǎng fēngle. Who else with brains will mention others at this time? He must be crazy about becoming someone hóng (red).



The examples (11) and (12) are very clear in linking *hóng* (red) and career success together. In (11), *hóng* (red) is a result, means that after a long time, helped by many people, thanks to the joint efforts of all members, and then the result of becoming *hóng* (red) was finally achieved. As for (12), *hóng* (red) is an expected result. The singer has a better voice than others, so people who like his voice will want him to be more and more *hóng* (red), and believing that he deserves this result. On the one hand, these two examples are also instantiations of the cultural schema d that “if a person wants to become *hóng* (red), this person must do something unusual that other people cannot do, or this person must do something better than other people do”. On the other hand, one more proposition-schema can be found here as follows:

g. To be/become hóng (red) is a kind of successful result.

This proposition-schema represents a positive attitude towards *hóng* (red), that is, towards success. But as we mentioned above in the schema f: The Internet can make a person quickly become *hóng* (red), but this person may not deserve what he owns if he did not pay any effort for it. Next, if some people who become *hóng* (red) just because of the Internet or social network without any effort, it will result in other people’s disapproval of these people being *hóng* (red), holding a negative attitude toward such situations, as is shown in (13). In addition, when some people behave that others can’t understand or are out of the ordinary, others will speculate that these behaviors are deliberately done for the sake of becoming *hóng* (red), as is shown in (14). As the following proposition-schema which can be partly explicated as:

h. If someone is hóng (red) for the reason that he is really good, then other people will probably accept it; if not, other people may feel disgusted.

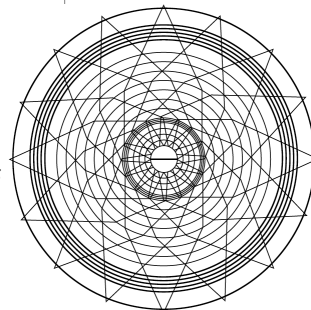
In this section, under the framework of red-related Chinese CULTURAL MODEL OF COLORS, through the analysis of some typical empirical linguistic materials, a key cultural metaphor TO BECOME FAMOUS OR BE WIDELY KNOWN AS *hóng* (RED) with rich cultural schemas have been found. According to Cultural Linguistics, emergent cultural cognition may be instantiated in various aspects of cultural texts and artefacts and heterogeneously distributed across the minds of the members of a cultural group, which can be negotiated and renegotiated vertically and horizontally across generations. In the research above, we are more concerned about synchronic linguistic materials, mostly from the modern Chinese oral and website expressions.

In order to build a more complete CULTURAL MODEL OF RED-RELATED COLORS and to explore deeper related cultural metaphors and cultural schemas, we need to select linguistic materials from a broader and diachronic perspective. The diachronic linguistic texts can provide deeper insights into the cultural patterns and cultural conceptualizations we have previously discovered. From this perspective, Chinese four-character idioms provide us the most appropriate choice, which will be the focus point in the next section.

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4. Red-related cultural conceptualizations instantiated in Chinese traditional four-character idioms

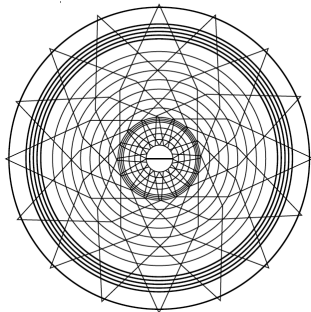
Under the framework of the CULTURAL MODEL OF RED-RELATED COLORS, the cultural conceptualizations of hóng (red) listed above partly reflected how the red-related cultural conceptualizations instantiated in modern Chinese linguaculture, but as parts of a cultural model, they need further linguistic support from the Chinese cultural salient contexts. From this perspective, Chinese four-character idioms provide us the most appropriate choice.

In short, idiomatic constructions can be described as complex symbols with specific formal, semantic, pragmatic and sociolinguistic characteristics (Langlotz, 2006). As a section of linguistics, the study of idioms in different linguacultures is of special value, which correlate with different historical epochs, histories and cultures of the people, associated with many spheres of human life activities (cultural, economic, social), reflecting the specifics of mentality, moods, customs, spirit of this or another nationality; for the meanings of the idioms are the invariant information, which can be explicated due to the semantic complications verbalized by the whole-formed units of a particular language (Kunin, 1996).

From the perspective of Cultural Linguistics, we see idioms as a storehouse of folk wisdom of linguaculture, associated with the background knowledge of the native speakers, the experiences and traditions of the nation. Idioms can play a fundamental role in creating a linguistic worldview. Idioms are rightfully considered to be the most vivid manifestation of the national-cultural specificity of the language and the reflection of the mentality of a specific linguaculture. It is idioms that incorporates the vision of the world, customs and traditions of the society, and conveys them verbally into the form of stable combination of signs.

So we choose the red-related four-character idioms to enrich the structure of the Chinese CULTURAL MODEL OF RED-RELATED COLORS as we noted above. These idioms have existed for a long time, formed in history and still active in today's Chinese language and culture. These color-related idioms can be viewed as the instantiation of cultural conceptualizations being reconceptualized over space and time in Chinese linguaculture.

As we mentioned above, the color terms in different languages and cultures may not have completely equal equivalents to the Chinese related color terms. As for the red-related color terms in Chinese, four separate red-related cultural subcategories in Chinese can be identified: chī, hóng, zhū and dān. Semantically hóng is a more generic term in modern spoken Chinese language, which is the most widely used red-related color term. However, as different cultural subcategories which are under the same cultural model, there are complex and organic enough interrelation between the categories of chī, hóng, zhū and dān. Each subcategory consists of a large number of idioms, and we will take the four red-related subcategories as a whole to select those red-related idioms, in order to tease out the red-related cultural conceptualizations incorporating the cultural metaphors and schemas identified in modern Chinese



linguaculture under the framework of Chinese CULTURAL MODEL OF COLORS in previous section.

The idioms in this research are selected from the online database “Dictionary of Chinese Idioms”, which is created by the Ministry of Education of Taiwan, including contemporary Chinese idioms. In the database, 203 expressions for the color red are identified, including 48 for *chì*, 93 for *hóng*, 38 for *zhū* and 24 for *dān*. From these idioms, some representative cultural metaphors are identified, which can be partly presented as follows.

4.1 WEALTH AS RED

The color *chì* has been an orthodox red color in traditional Chinese linguaculture, and *zhū* comes from the cinnabar, in Chinese traditional culture is also an orthodox red color, which meaning is close to that of *chì*.

The first cultural conceptualization we discuss here that one may extrapolate from the associated idioms is WEALTH AS RED. Example (15) is an illustration:

15. *zhū mén xiù hù*: red+gate+embroider+window

1. vermilion gate and richly ornamented chamber—mansion of the rich
2. wealthy family

In Chinese traditional culture, people use of *zhū mén* (Red Gate) as a cultural symbol is in a highly schematic sense connected to the cultural conceptualization of WEALTH AS RED. In Chinese classic poetry, it is not rare to compare the wealthy people's lives with that of the poor people with the help of the cultural symbol *zhū mén* (Red Gate), which is still widely used in today's Mandarin. For example:

16. *Zhūmén jiǔròu chòu, lù yǒu dòng sǐ gǔ*

Behind the red doors meat and wine went to waste while out on the road laid the bones of the frozen.

The poem above refers to the phenomenon of the gap between the rich and the poor. Here, *zhū mén* (Red Gate) represents the gate of wealthy family. In fact, the color red is such a symbol of rich families and wealth, which can be related to many parts of Chinese architecture in Chinese idioms. Examples (17) and (18) are further linguistic evidence of the idioms representing the wealthy family with the same cultural metaphor WEALTH AS RED, and the compounds in which become *zhū méng* (red roof) and *zhū lóu* (red building):

17. *bì wǎ zhū méng*: green+tile+red+roof

Gorgeous building (with) green tiles and crimson roofs.

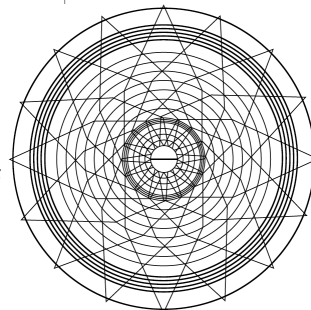
18. *huàgé zhū lóu*: painting+pavilion+red+building

Delicate and luxurious architecture.

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4.2 THE METEORIC RISE THROUGH THE BUREAUCRACY AS RED

As we noted above, the semantic meaning of the word zhū comes from the cinnabar. In this regard, at the cognitive level, the connection between cinnabar and ink makes the relationship between zhū (red) and such concepts as study and official career, thus associated with “wealth” in ancient China as well.

Therefore, the conceptualization of WEALTH AS RED can have a lower-level instantiation specified as THE METEORIC RISE THROUGH THE BUREAUCRACY AS RED. For example, it is hard to say that the legend behind the example (19) has no relationship with this cultural conceptualization:

19. zhū yī diǎn tóu: Red+clothes+nod+head

A person in red nodded; means passing an examination.

According to the Chinese traditional legend (Chen Yaowen's "Tianzhong Ji", Volume 38), Ouyang Xiu (a famous scholar of Song Dynasty) has long presided over the imperial examination. After reading each batch of the examination papers he always felt a person in red standing behind him. And he felt that if the person in red nodded his head, the article he was reading was usually qualified. Then as time went by, he gave good mark only to those articles who received the nod of the person in red behind him.

In ancient China, the imperial examination was the only way toward success. A good result in the imperial examinations means that someone will gain social status and wealth in the very near future. Next, it is evident that in Chinese traditional culture, not only does WEALTH AS RED hold true, but what is significant in Chinese traditional culture is that THE METEORIC RISE THROUGH THE BUREAUCRACY AS RED.

In this regards, the color red is clearly associated with wealth, higher social status, and success, which is in accord with the cultural conceptualization of “To be/become hóng (red) is a kind of successful result” in modern Chinese linguaculture identified in section 3 of this research.

4.3 BEAUTY AS RED

As discussed above, Chinese people are accustomed to their own peculiar way of recognition and understanding, which is clearly illustrated in Chinese language and traditional Chinese culture. And another important conceptualization identified in the data is BEAUTY AS RED. Relevant examples include (20)–(22):

20. hóng fěn jiā rén: red+pink+good+person

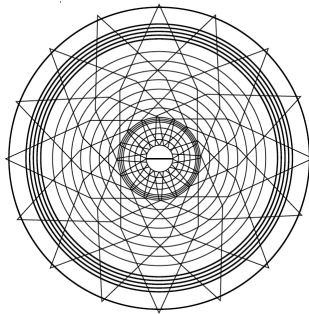
a young beauty; a gaily dressed beauty

21. Hóng xiù tiān xiāng: red+sleeve+add+fragrance

there's always a young beauty at the young man's side (while his studying)

22. Lǜ bìn zhū yán: green+sideburns+red+face

dark hair and ruddy complexion; a young beauty



Hóng fěn (red and pink), hóng xiù (red sleeve) and zhū yán (red face) all indicate young beauty. From (20)–(22), one sees that RED is an important cultural symbol in Chinese culture, as it occurs with different kinds of positive attributes to describe a young beauty in the Chinese idioms.

In addition, understanding red as a symbol of beauty is certainly analogous to FLOWER AS RED, for red can be a metonymic color of a flower standing for all the flowers, and it is quite normal in Chinese culture to compare beauty to the flowers, which embodies the positive qualities of the flower. Note also, that zhū yán is a compound in Mandarin, meaning ‘peach blossom face of a beauty/youth’. A similar meaning can also be expressed as hóng yán, which also formed by putting together ‘red’ and ‘face’, appearing in many Chinese traditional poetry, for example:

23. Yī zhāo chūn jǐn hóngyán qù, huā luò rén wáng liǎng bùzhī.

The day that spring takes wing and beauty fades , who will care for the fallen blossom or dead maid?

In fact, hóng yán usually refers to young women as a whole, and zhū yán concentrates more on the appearance of the young lady. In addition, in many cases the semantic meaning produced by zhū yán can be a positive one, while the sentiments and the feelings of inconstancy conveyed by hóng yán can be related to a negative feeling that “those beautiful things may not last long”, and those beauties may suffer many mishaps in their lives. A further cognation of the beauties which are expressed by hóng yán in Chinese linguaculture can be identified that “hóng yán is easy to pass away, and therefore should be particularly cherished”. The connotations of the two components are slightly different. A case in point is illustrated in the following example:

24. Hóng yán duō bó mìng

A hóng yán (beautiful girl) has (often) an unfortunate life; tragic end of beauties.

4.4 THE MORTAL LIFE AS RED

The third cultural conceptualization identified in the data is THE MORTAL LIFE AS RED, which is perhaps one of the essential culture-specific orientation metaphors of the color red in Chinese traditional culture. Example (25) illustrates this conceptualization:

25. Hóng chén kè mèng: red+dust+traveler+dream

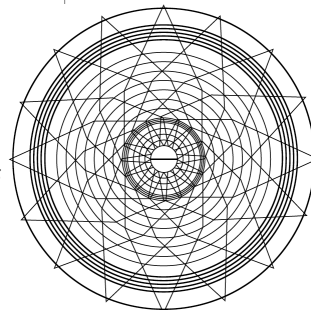
Life is but a dream.

One of the most important cultural symbols in today’s Chinese culture appears here, that is the compound hóng chén (红尘 - red dust), which has a meaning of ‘the world of mortals, human society’. Generally speaking, in Chinese culture, red is a secular color. Red related idioms are closely linked with people’s secular life. The compound hóng chén was originally a religious word which related to Buddhism and

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Taoism, but now it has already lost its religious color, and widely used in the Chinese linguaculture. People often use this compound to express their helpless feeling in front of the changeable world and life. The following examples are from lyrics of Chinese folk song and the BCC corpus:

26. **Hóngchén** a gǔngǔn, chī chī a qíng shēn, jù sǎn zhōng yǒushí.

Those deeply lovers travel in the hóngchén (red dust) together, but they do not understand there are always gathering and scattering in their life.

27. Zhídào wǒ yuè lái yuè kuà jìn niánmài, wǒ xiǎng yào de dōngxī yuè lái yuè shǎo. rúguǒ kěyǐ dehuà zhēn xiǎng líkāi zhège **hóngchén**.

When I became older and older, I found that less and less things can attract me. If I can, I really want to leave this **hóngchén** (red dust).

28. Bù jiǎndān! Nǐ jìngrán yǒu bànfa ràng tā zài rù hóngchén.

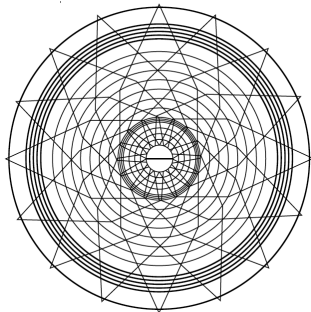
How great you are! You can find a way to get him back into the **hóngchén** (red dust).

It is evident that in Chinese culture, not only does LIFE IS A JOURNEY hold true (cf. Kövecses, 2010: 50; Lakoff, 1994: 62–63; Yu, 1998: 17–19), but significant case in Chinese culture is that life is a journey in hóng chén (red dust). In (26), hóng chén (red dust) is such a place where people don't know when they can get together or separate, and nothing can be controlled by themselves. And further, as it is shown in (27) and (28), it is not easy for everyone no matter he wants to leave or come back to the hóng chén (red dust).

The hóng chén (red dust) is closely related to people's lives. There are human joys and sorrows, as well as the wealth and success mentioned above, and also the poverty and failure on the other hand. Therefore, it can be claimed that the hóng chén (red dust) is fickle; life is fickle in Chinese linguaculture. The cultural metaphor THE MORTAL LIFE AS RED can be further identified in many other cultural categories in Chinese culture, such as Wedding, Festival and so on, which can be further discussed in the future.

In this section, four red-related cultural metaphors from Chinese traditional four-character idioms have been identified: WEALTH AS RED, THE METEORIC RISE THROUGH THE BUREAUCRACY AS RED, BEAUTY AS RED and THE MORTAL LIFE AS RED, which can all be believed to have been rooted in Chinese traditional culture for a long history and still play an important role in today's Chinese linguaculture. Among the four metaphors, the metaphor THE MORTAL LIFE AS RED can be regarded as the prototype metaphor of the other three metaphors in terms of depth and breadth. It located at one level higher than the other three in the system of red-related cultural conceptualizations.

As for the cultural metaphors WEALTH AS RED, THE METEORIC RISE THROUGH THE BUREAUCRACY AS RED and BEAUTY AS RED appearing in traditional Chinese idioms, they can also be regarded as the upper level of the metaphor TO BECOME FAMOUS OR BE WIDELY KNOWN AS hóng (RED) and related schemas in modern Chinese linguaculture that we found in the third section. From both the cognitive and



semantic point of view, WEALTH, THE METEORIC RISE THROUGH THE BUREAUCRACY and BEAUTY can also be regarded as the conditions, reasons or outcomes for FAMOUS or BE WIDELY KNOWN.

Next, in modern Chinese linguaculture, the color term *hóng* (red) can easily evoke the cultural metaphor TO BECOME FAMOUS OR BE WIDELY KNOWN AS *hóng* (RED) and the related cultural schemas as we mentioned in section 3, and these cultural conceptualizations can further evoke the conceptualizations that we ceased out in section 4 through the analysis of Chinese traditional idioms. This is an instantiation to show how the complex and dynamic cultural model within a cultural group can form throughout time and space. In the following Conclusion section, we will further discuss the issue above.

5. Conclusion

In this research, we attempt to claim a notion called “CULTURAL MODEL OF COLORS”, and further more we put the focus on the Chinese CULTURAL MODEL OF RED-RELATED COLORS, which can be viewed to include more general, overarching cultural salient conceptualizations.

The general content of CULTURAL MODEL OF COLORS can reflect a cross-language and cross-cultural universal complex structure of cultural conceptualizations. Generally it *includes color related cultural categories, color related cultural schemas and color related cultural metaphors*. Color related cultural categories can be described such as “white”, “black”, “red”, “yellow”, “green”, “blue”, etc. In Chinese context, there can also be some sub-categories under one color related category, for example the four red-related sub-categories *chì*, *hóng*, *zhū* and *dān*. Color related cultural schemas can embody norms and values related to certain color categories. Color related cultural metaphors refer to those conceptual metaphors that are used in relation to the color categories and sub-categories. Accordingly, Chinese CULTURAL MODEL OF RED-RELATED COLORS shares the same rules and structure as the general one.

Under the frame of Chinese CULTURAL MODEL OF RED-RELATED COLORS, a series of cultural conceptualizations have been identified and can be instantiated as follows:

Red-related cultural categories:

chì, *hóng*, *zhū* and *dān*.

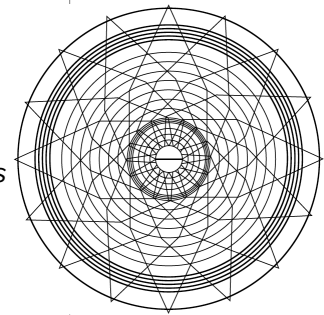
Hóng (red)-related cultural schemas (partly):

- a. *If someone is known by many people because he did something special, then this person is very hóng (red).*
- b. *If something is popular and is liked by many people, then this something is very hóng (red).*
- c. *If someone or something becomes hóng (red), it means that this someone or something is suddenly known or liked by many people in a very short time.*

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d. If a person wants to become hóng (red), this person must do something unusual that other people cannot do, or this person must do something better than other people do.

e. If a person wants to become hóng (red), this person must do something unusual that other people cannot do, or this person must do something better than other people do. These “something” may meet social value standards, and may not.

f. The Internet can make a person quickly become hóng (red), but this person may not deserve what he owns if he did not pay any effort for it.

g. To become hóng (red) is a kind of successful result.

h. If someone is hóng (red) for the reason that he is really good, then other people will probably accept it; if not, other people may feel disgusted.

Red-related cultural metaphors (partly):

a. TO BECOME FAMOUS OR BE WIDELY KNOWN AS hóng (RED)

b. WEALTH AS RED

c. THE METEORIC RISE THROUGH THE BUREAUCRACY AS RED

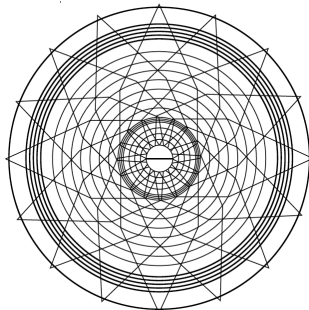
d. BEAUTY AS RED

e. THE MORTAL LIFE AS RED

It must be pointed out here that all the cultural conceptualizations listed above are based on the empirical materials we examined in this research. We claim that they are part of the Chinese CULTURAL MODEL OF RED-RELATED COLORS, however, the whole picture of the Chinese CULTURAL MODEL OF RED-RELATED COLORS does not only contain these conceptualizations we identified in this research, but need to be further refined and supplemented by some more multi-angle studies in the future.

Taking into account the above mentioned cultural metaphors identified in section 3 and section 4, the cultural metaphor THE MORTAL LIFE AS RED is located at one level higher than that of TO BECOME FAMOUS OR BE WIDELY KNOWN AS hóng (RED), WEALTH AS RED, THE METEORIC RISE THROUGH THE BUREAUCRACY AS RED and BEAUTY AS RED. What's more, cultural metaphors WEALTH AS RED, THE METEORIC RISE THROUGH THE BUREAUCRACY AS RED and BEAUTY AS RED which we teased out in traditional Chinese idioms can also be regarded to be located at one level higher than that of TO BECOME FAMOUS OR BE WIDELY KNOWN AS hóng (RED) and related schemas in modern Chinese linguaculture in the cluster of cultural conceptualizations organized in a hierarchical structure, in other words, Chinese CULTURAL MODEL OF RED-RELATED COLORS.

It is a higher mapping in the sense that the concept MORTAL LIFE is the superordinate category of WEALTH, METEORIC RISE THROUGH THE BUREAUCRACY, BEAUTY and FAMOUS/ WIDELY KNOWN, which can be seen as its subordinate-level categories, or basic-level concepts in a three-level hierarchical system (Lakoff 1987). It is the source concept RED that connects these categories, forming a CULTURAL MODEL OF RED-RELATED COLORS in Chinese context together with those red-related cultural schemas. It must be emphasised that the above-discussed



conceptualisations are not part of an old and abandoned system but have relevance to the Chinese people living in today's China, which can be easily identified in other cultural categories of Chinese linguaculture.

This study partly instantiates an example to show how Chinese CULTURAL MODEL OF RED-RELATED COLORS and general CULTURAL MODEL OF COLORS are organized. It is only an initial attempt to dig into the depth of the complexities and subtleties of the color related cultural conceptualizations and cultural models to get a glimpse of the deep recesses of the Chinese mentality. The research on the content and complex structure of the CULTURAL MODEL OF RED-RELATED COLORS is far from complete, some key features such as other cultural categories and related cultural schemas and cultural metaphors still need to be deeper explored in the future. In addition, the research framework and research methodology in this research, as well as the application of the corpus and the traditional idioms as typical synchronic and diachronic text, can be applied to a wider range in this kind of research.

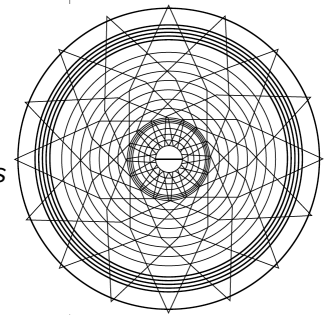
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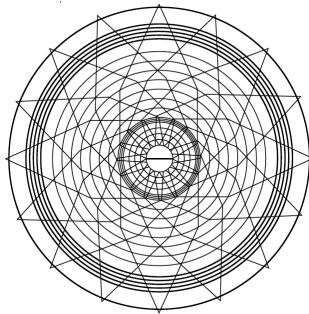
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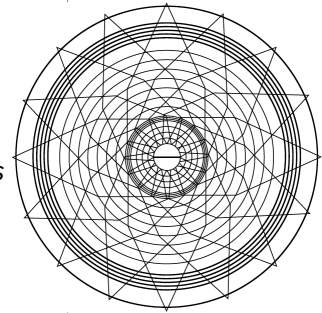
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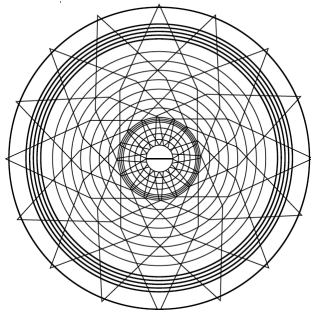
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(The translation of the data in this research is completed by the authors.)



**КУЛЬТУРНАЯ КОНЦЕПТУАЛИЗАЦИЯ ТЕРМИНОВ СО
ЗНАЧЕНИЕМ КРАСНОГО ЦВЕТА В КИТАЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ В
РАМКАХ “КУЛЬТУРНОЙ МОДЕЛИ ЦВЕТОВ”
(НА ОСНОВЕ ДАННЫХ СОВРЕМЕННЫХ КИТАЙСКИХ СМИ И
ТРАДИЦИОННЫХ КИТАЙСКИХ ИДИОМ)**

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Аннотация:

В данном исследовании авторы на основе данных, полученных с использованием подходов культурной лингвистики, на примере китайской культурной сферы предпринимают попытку к изучению культурной концептуализации терминов, имеющих отношение к красному цвету, в китайской языковой культуре.

Ключевые слова: культурные концептуализации, культурная лингвистика, культурные схемы, культурные метафоры, культурная модель цвета, Китайская культурная модель красного цвета.

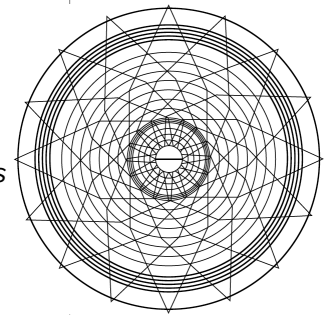
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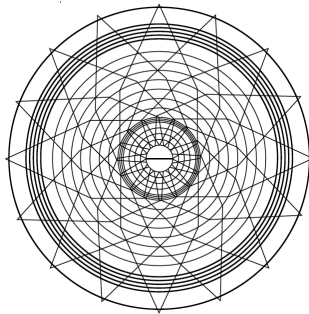
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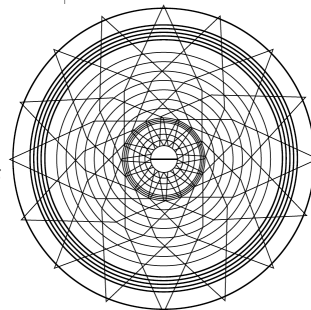
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