

A Statistical Profile of Color Terms in Irving Stone's Biographical Novel about Vincent Van Gogh: a Corpus-Based Approach

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Abstract

The paper presents the use of corpus-based methods to investigate color terms in fiction. On the basis of Irving Stone's biographical novel about the post-impressionist painter Vincent van Gogh, *Lust for Life* (1934), which established the genre of fictionalized biographies, a comprehensive analysis of color terms has been carried out, and a statistical profile of color terms has been developed.

Corpus-based research allows for the identification and analysis of the frequency of use of lexemes and their collocations, etc., including the distribution of the frequency of color terms in the text of the novel, distributional analysis, and the study of the valence of color terms.

For the research, the capabilities of the Sketch Engine software were used. A subcorpus of the text of the novel *Lust for Life* was created, based on which a list of color terms was compiled, the frequency of color terms and their shades was found, and the distribution of frequency of use throughout the novel was determined. The results of the study are illustrated with tables, diagrams, and reproductions of the artist. The characteristic features of using color terms in the text are analyzed, and the patterns of color terms coinage by the writer in comparison with the color palette of the artist's paintings are revealed.

Keywords

Corpus-based analysis, collocate, color terms, frequency, fictionalized biographies.

1. Introduction

Colors are a professional tool for artists, their biographical fiction writers, and art scholars. This tool is complex, and multifaceted, and requires separate research on color terms. The study of artistic biographical prose about painters yields more effective results when using interdisciplinary approaches, incorporating methodologies from various fields, including the application of corpus technologies. Corpus-based studies of color terms are currently employed in applied and cognitive linguistics, literary studies, and are the subject of comparative and intermedial studies [1; 2; 3]. Within the field of corpus linguistics, color terms are also actively studied based on texts belonging to various styles and genres [4; 5]. Furthermore, they are viewed in contrastive [6; 7] and translation studies [8; 9].

Digital technologies are constantly evolving and actively used for the analysis of works of art. For example, in 2019, the results of a study on the use of the CIELab color space for analyzing the colors in Van Gogh's oil paintings were published. The main goal of the study was to propose a simple and fast method for analyzing colors in paintings, this research "is motivated by the idea that image and color science could reasonably analyze the color used in an artwork" [10; 2]. "This study used a novel method, which is identifying the color distribution of oil paintings through color volume analysis" [10; 7]. Researchers analyzed 370 oil paintings regarding their color distribution: "The right side of Figure

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1 shows the color gamut of VG's oil paintings. Many colors used in his paintings, such as light blue, light orange, yellow, light red, brown, cyan, teal, light gray, and dark gray, were compared to the left side of Figure 1, which shows the typical color gamut base on the CIEL*a*b* color space. The figure also shows that purple, pure red, and pure green were hardly used in his paintings" [10; 5].

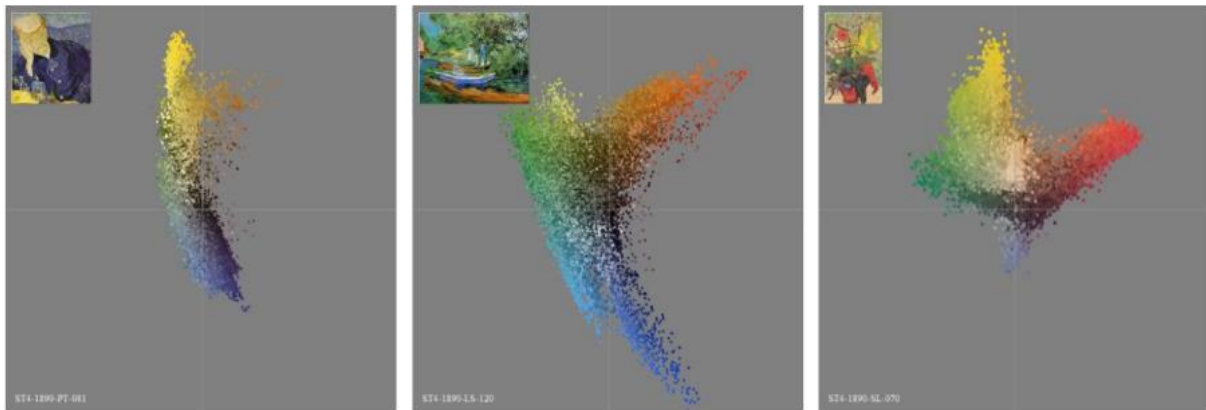


Figure 1: Sample of color distribution at CIEL*a*b* color space (bird's view).

The aim of this article is to explore the potential application of corpus methods to analyze biographical texts about painters, analyze the peculiarities of using color terms in such works, identify patterns in the creation of color terms by the writer in comparison with the color palette of the artist's canvases, and develop a statistical profile of color terms in the analyzed text.

The research material is the biographical novel by American writer Irving Stone about Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh [11]. This choice is motivated by several reasons:

1. Irving Stone is considered the founder of the genre of a biographical novel about artists. His first novel, *Lust for Life*, based on the biography of van Gogh, was published in 1934 after numerous rejections by publishers. However, it later gained widespread popularity, was translated into many languages (including Ukrainian in 2020), and laid the foundation for the genre of a biographical novel. Stone himself delivered a lecture on writing novels about artists;
2. Vincent van Gogh, the post-impressionist painter, is one of the most famous and influential colorists. In his oil, pastel, and watercolor works, he employed a rich palette of pure colors, semi-tones, and nuanced shades. Van Gogh discovered color gradually, experimenting with hues and contemplating the role of colors in painting. His canvases are studied in all art history courses;
3. The colors in van Gogh's paintings capture the attention of researchers from various fields: art history, literary studies, linguistics and translation studies, printing technology, restoration, IT technology, psychology, and more. The application of interdisciplinary methods for research can yield qualitatively new insights and findings;
4. Other biographical writers, for instance, V. Domontovych, when writing about van Gogh, also highlighted color terms, described his paintings, and carefully selected words to denote shades. This is also characteristic of screenwriters and directors who have worked on cinematic adaptations of the artist's biography;
5. To date, there are no similar corpus-based studies on color terms based on Irving Stone's biographical novel and the works of the artist. Therefore, we assume that the research methodology could be used for the analysis of other texts, and the prospects of enriching language corpora with novels about artists will significantly expand the language palette of color terms.

2. Corpus-based analysis in the study of color terms in biographical text

Corpus-based analysis, as repeatedly highlighted by researchers such as C. Meyer [13], David Temperley and Leigh VanHandel [14], P. Baker [15], M. Paquot and L. Plonsky [16], D. Glynn [17], and others, enables avoiding subjective judgments and conclusions since the findings are supported by quantitative data. Additionally, corpus tools facilitate distributional and valency analyses of words, which is especially significant for the research on color terms; searching for prototypical ideas about

color reproduced by the author of the text, in particular, those of the artists whose biographical works we are investigating.

A focus subcorpus of the text of the novel *Lust for Life* (201,305 tokens) was created in the Sketch Engine. To determine the frequency of color terms, a preliminary list of 56 color terms was compiled. The text of the novel features 23 color terms with different frequencies, see Table 1.

Table 1

The frequency of color terms in the text of Irving Stone's novel *Lust for Life*

Color	Number of hits per million tokens
black	864,36
yellow	457,02
blue	457,02
white	407,34
red	387,47
green	312,96
grey	109,29
brown	104,32
orange	74,51
violet	69,55
lemon	64,58
pink	24,84
purple	14,90
crimson	14,90
scarlet	14,90
azure	9,94
ultramarine	9,94
beige	4,97
gamboge	4,97
indigo	4,97
lavender	4,97
pearl	4,97
terra sienna	4,97

In addition, the words *colour* and *tone* are of a high frequency in the text, Table 2, which is logical and consistent with the thematic focus of the novel.

Table 2

The frequency of use of the lexeme *colour* and its coreferents in the text of Irving Stone's novel *Lust for Life*

Color	Number of hits per million tokens	COCA
colour	685,53	4,83
tone	144,06	34,07
shade	74,51	13,94
hue	4,97	3,26

It is interesting to compare the obtained results with the data presented by N. Zaslavsky, Ch. Kemp, N. Tishby, T. Regier [18] taken from the American English dataset, Figure 2, as well as with the data from the COCA, Table 3.

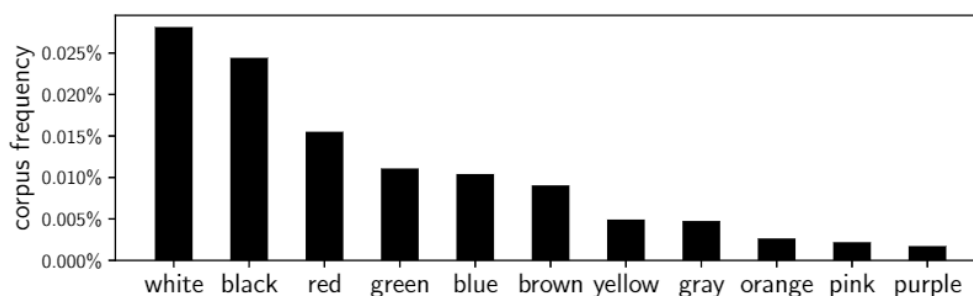


Figure 2: Frequencies of the 11 basic color terms in English from the Google n-gram.

The actual sequence of color terms on the frequency list is distinctive. In the studied novel, the color term *black* is of the highest frequency, and in the corpora used for comparison it surpasses the lexeme *white* (in Stone's novel, it is fourth); *yellow* and *blue* are second and third in frequency of use in the text of the novel *Lust for Life*, but according to N. Zaslavsky, Ch. Kemp, N. Tishby, T. Regier, and the COCA, they are fifth and seventh, respectively [18].

Table 3

The comparative table of color terms frequencies

Color	Stone Number of hits per million tokens	2019 Cognitive Neuropsychology			COCA Number of hits per million tokens
black	864,36	1	2	2	312,03
yellow	457,02	2	5	5	112,68
blue	457,02	3	7	7	44,06
white	407,34	4	1	1	371,67
red	387,47	5	3	3	170,92
green	312,96	6	4	4	129,28
gray / grey	109,29	7	8	11	11,27
brown	104,32	8	6	6	108,82
orange	74,51	9	9	8	38,17
violet	69,55	10	–	12	5,79
pink	24,84	11	–	9	32,79
purple	14,9	12	11	10	16,54

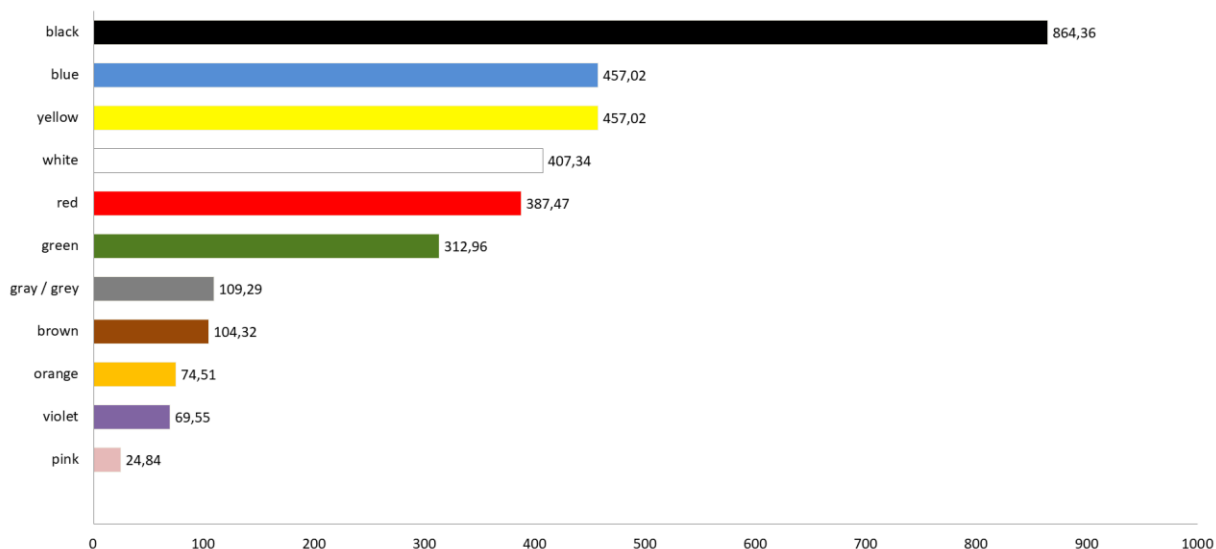


Figure 3: The frequency of color terms in the text of Irving Stone's novel *Lust for Life*

Figure 4 shows that the color term *black* is of the highest frequency in the studied novel.

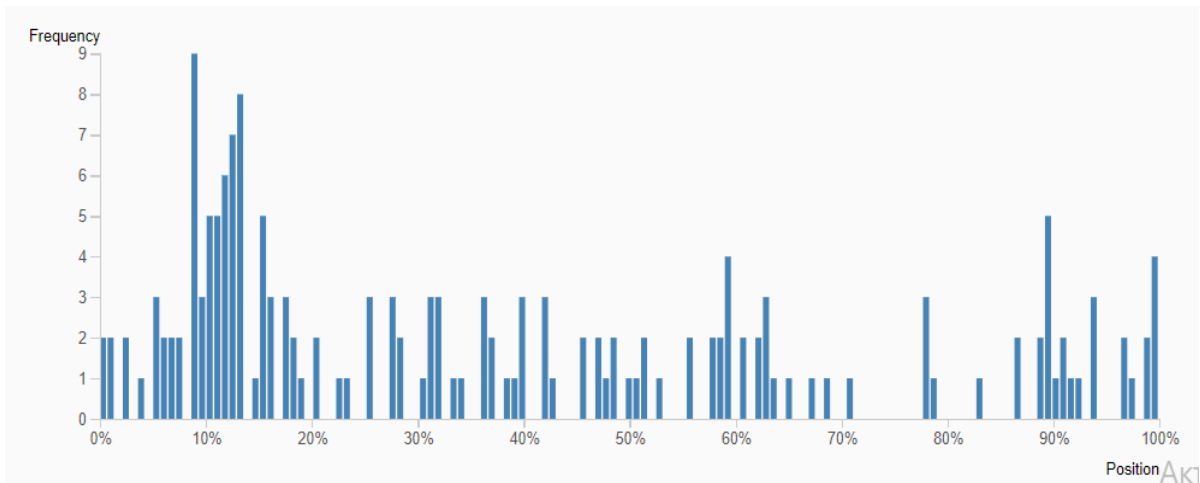


Figure 4: Distribution of hits in the corpus *black*

It is important to note that the high frequency of the color term *black* in the initial chapters of the analyzed text is its characteristic feature and can be explained by the chronological presentation of the artist’s biography and iconography in Stone’s novel. While working as a missionary in a Belgian mining town, van Gogh saw a lot of black around: mines, miners, their outfit, skin, and their way of life almost devoid of daylight and color.

The artist wrote extensively about it in his letters and depicted it in dark tones in his paintings and drawings. Consequently, the writer accurately conveyed it in the novel through color references. In these chapters, *black* is intentionally dense. Below we provide a few quotes from Stone and reproductions (Figure 5–6) of van Gogh’s works to illustrate it:

“Although Marcasse was only one of a string of seven mines owned by the Charbonnages Belgique, it was the oldest and most dangerous pit in the Borinage. <...> The tall chimneys, which once had been of yellow brick, spread tangible, black smoke over the neighbourhood twenty-four hours a day. Around Marcasse were poor miners’ huts with a few dead trees, black from the smoke, thorn hedges, dunghills, ash dumps, heaps of useless coal, and towering above it all, the black mountain. It was a gloomy spot; at first sight everything looked dreary and desolate to Vincent. “No wonder they call it the black country,” he murmured” [11; 47].

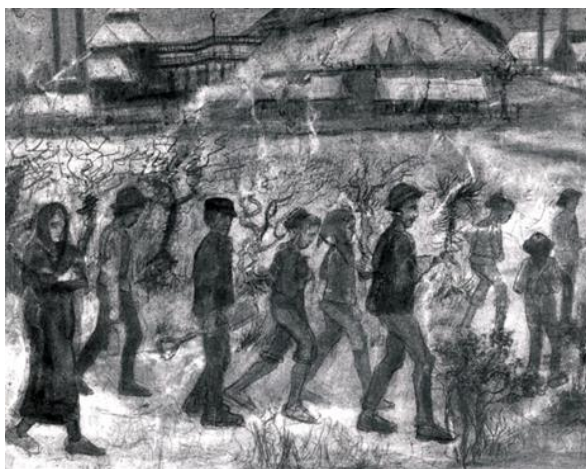


Figure 5: Van Gogh. Miners, 1880



Figure 6: Van Gogh. Miners Women Carrying Sacks (The Bearers of the Burden), 1881

“The pickers worked in coarse linen suits, filthy and black. The shoveller was usually a young boy, stark naked except for a burlap loin-cloth, his body a dull black, and the miner pushing the car through the three foot passageway was always a girl, as black as the men, with a coarse dress covering the upper part of her body. Water was leaking through the roofs of the cells, forming a grotto of stalactites. The only light was from the small lamps whose wicks were turned down low to save fuel. There was no ventilation. The air was thick with coal-dust. The natural heat of the earth bathed the miners in rivulets of black perspiration. In the first cells Vincent saw that the men could work standing erect with their picks, but as he advanced down the passageway, the cells became smaller and smaller until the miners had to lie on the ground and swing their picks from the elbow. As the hours went on, the bodily heat of the miners raised the temperature of the cells, and the coal-dust thickened in the air until the men were gasping great mouthfuls of hot, black soot” [11; 62].

The author of the novel notes that the artist paints using *charcoal* (29, 81). The diagram in Figure 4 shows that the author uses the color *black* throughout the novel, with the exception of a few chapters, but its context changes: at the end of the novel, *black* is no longer used to describe people but rather coffee, velvet, stone, hair, eyes, coat, jacket, dress, etc., which can be easily tracked using corpus analysis methods.

The frequency of the color term *brown* (104.32) is comparatively high in the novel, including its shades: *reddish brown* (4.97 per million), *curly brown* (4.97 per million), *deep brown* (4.97 per million), *dark reddish brown* (4.97 per million), *light brown* (4.97 per million).

Following the descending order of color terms frequencies in the novel, the next ones are *yellow*, *blue*, and their shades (for yellow: *lemon*, *gold*, etc.; for blue: *ultramarine*, *azure*, *indigo*, *lavender*). These color terms are significantly more frequent in the second part of the novel (see Figure 7).

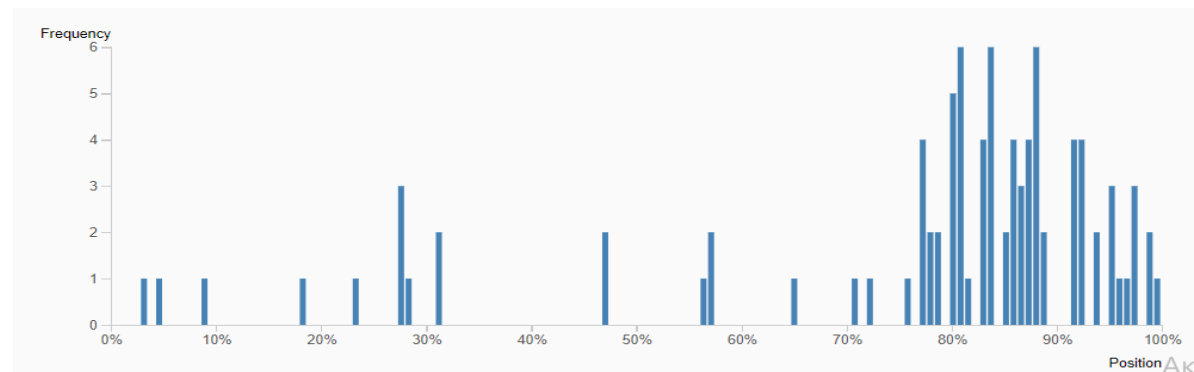


Figure 7: Distribution of hits in the corpus *yellow*

Figures 4 and 7 show that the distribution of the use of the color terms *black* and *yellow* is distinctive: *black* dominates in the initial parts of the text, while *yellow* dominates in the final parts. Throughout two-thirds of the novel, *yellow* appears rarely and with low frequency. The author seems to prefer shades of this color rather than pure color; *yellow* is used to describe the artist’s hair, sand, the waters of the Thames, paper, the sun, leaves, cheese, a lamp, and more, for example: “Both sides of the ward were lined with beds sloping downward at an angle of five degrees, each surrounded by a framework on which were hung dirty cream-coloured curtains” [11, 245]), and *bright-yellow* or *lemon-yellow* appear in the work in Arles, where the artist came in search of light for creativity and most fully manifested his talent as a colourist. The beginning of the chapter has a bright color characteristic: “The Arlesian sun smote Vincent between the eyes, and broke him wide open. It was a whorling, liquid ball of lemon-yellow fire, shooting across a hard blue sky and filling the air with blinding light. The terrific heat and intense clarity of the air created a new and unfamiliar world” [11, 270].

Concerning the shades of yellow, the following were found in the novel: *lemon-yellow* (29.81 per mln); *sulphur-yellow* (14.9 per mln); *dirty yellow* (4.97 per mln); *dark yellow* (4.97 per mln); *very yellow* (4.97 per mln); *golden-yellow* (4.97 per mln); *yellow-red* (4.97 per mln), etc. In both van Gogh’s works and Stone’s text, *yellow* becomes an accent color: “As the summer advanced, everything became burnt up. He saw about him nothing but old gold, bronze and copper, covered by a greenish azure sky of blanched heat. There was sulphur-yellow on everything the sunlight hit. His canvases were masses of bright burning yellow. He knew that yellow had not been used in European painting since the

Renaissance, but that did not deter him. The yellow pigment oozed out of the tubes onto the canvas, and there it stayed. His pictures were sun steeped, sun burnt, tanned with the burning sun and swept with air” [11, 377].

The most frequent collocation is *yellow house* (35), which is the house of his dreams, where the artist wanted to create a home for like-minded artists.



Figure 8: Van Gogh. *Wheatfield with a reaper*, 1889

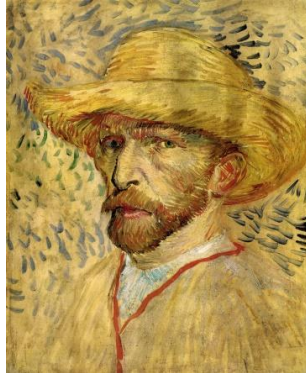


Figure 9: Van Gogh. *Self-Portrait*, 1887

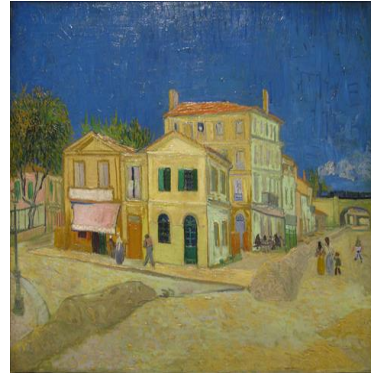


Figure 10: Van Gogh. *The Yellow House*, 1888

As already mentioned, one of the key colors in the text of the novel is *blue* (Figure 11).

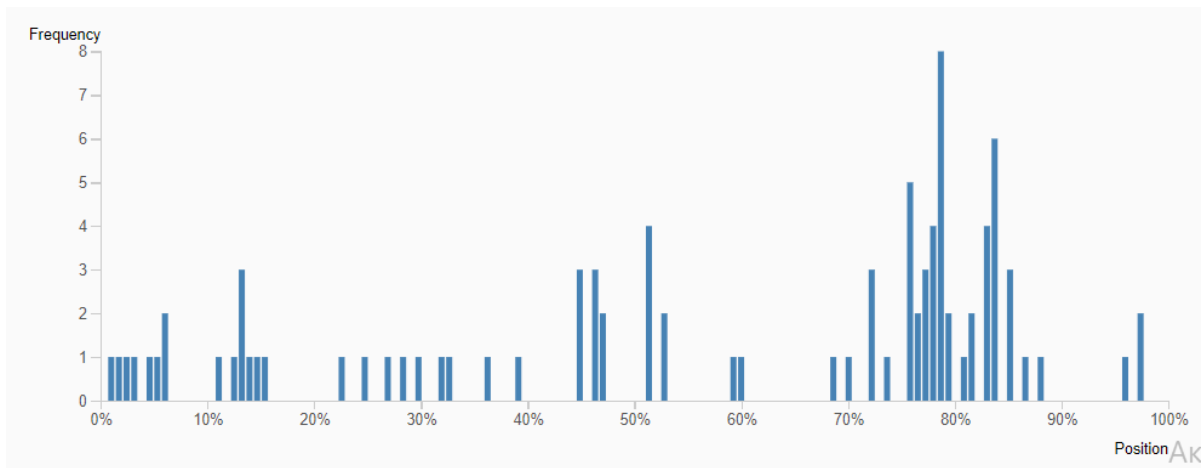


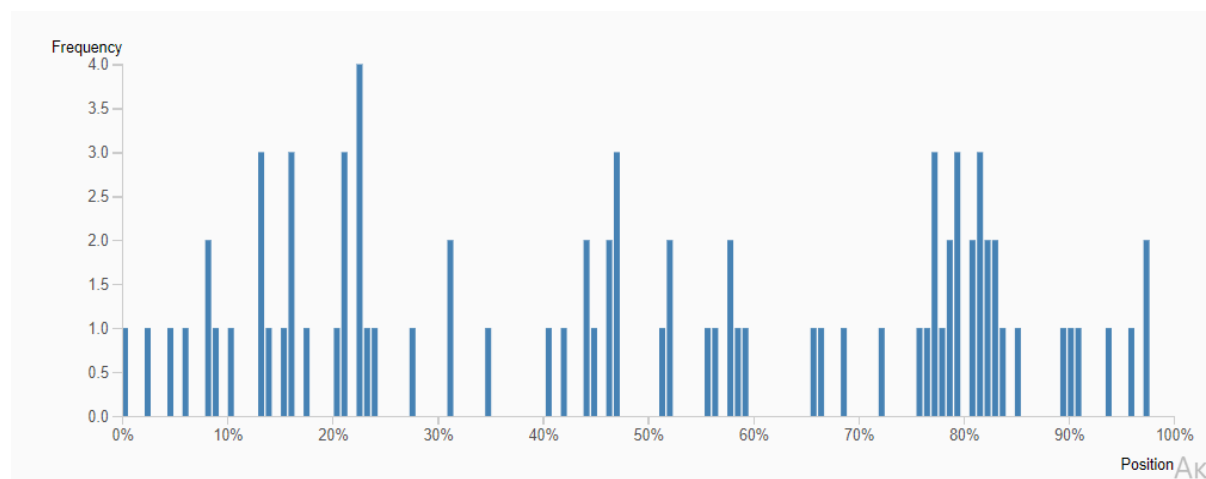
Figure 11: Distribution of hits in the corpus *blue*

In the text of the novel, we encounter a variety of shades of *blue* (Table 4). There are examples of individual authorial comparisons: “*Vincent gaped at the woman in utter bewilderment. She was young, but not a child. Her eyes were as blue as the cobalt sky of an Arlesian night, and her hair, which she wore in a great flowing mass down her back, was as lemon-yellow as the sun*” [11, 397].

Table 4The frequency of use of the shades of *blue*

Collocate	Freq	MI. log_f
prussian	4	23,07237
deep	3	9,79516
crying	2	11,547
dark	2	6,64778
forget-me-not	1	7,69079
pain-shot	1	7,69079
woof	1	7,69079
royal	1	7,69079
vacant	1	6,30449
glorious	1	5,74488
cobalt	1	5,61135
dull	1	5,49356
profound	1	5,3882
fade	1	5,3882
intense	1	5,05173
delicate	1	4,74635
pale	1	4,64627
dirty	1	4,43269
light	2	5,34655
hard	1	3,42811

The frequency of the use of the color term *white* is relatively balanced in the text of the novel, Figure 12.

**Figure 12:** Distribution of hits in the corpus *white*

The frequency of the color term *red* and the names of shades of red is relatively high in the text of the novel (Figure 13): “*Her colouring was burnt gold, her teeth, between the smiling lips, as white as an oleander seen through a blood-red vine*” [11, 397]; “*The burning lemon-yellow of the sun, the blood-red of the soil, the crying whiteness of the lone cloud over Montmajour, the ever reborn rose of the orchards...*” [11; 372].

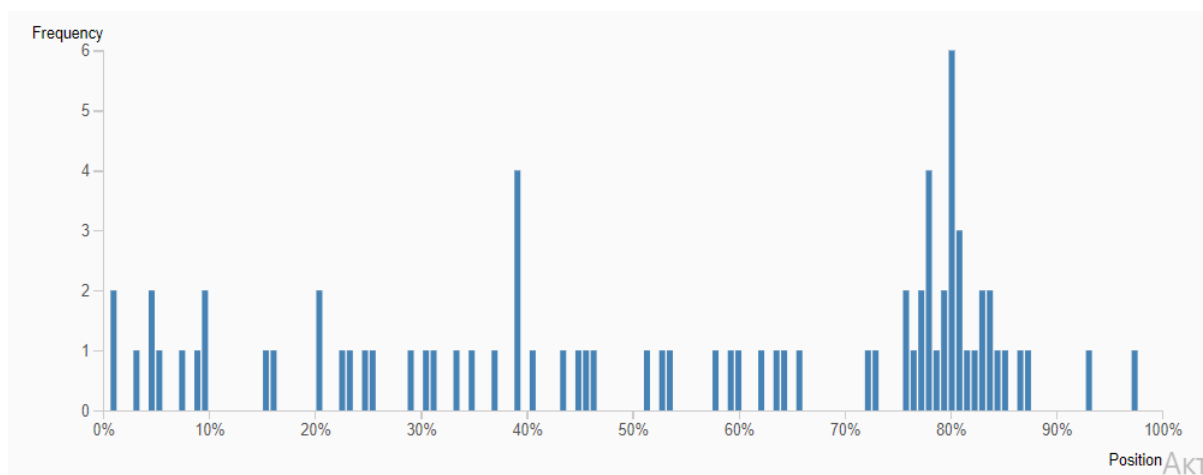


Figure 12: Distribution of hits in the corpus *red*

In 2020, a Ukrainian translation of the novel by Anna Markhovska was published [12]. The use of corpus-based methods of analysis of color terms on the material of the original text and translations also provides data for comparative conclusions and can be the subject of new research. For example, in the course of the study, we found that the frequency of the color term *red* in the translation is much lower than in the original, it is 290.05 per million tokens, while in the original it is 387.47 per million, which could be explained by the difference in the semantics of English *red* and Ukrainian *червоний*, see Table 5.

Table 5

Comparative table of the original and the translation (color term *red*)

Head 1	Irving Stone's original text	Translation into Ukrainian by Anna Markhovska
hair	<i>He snatched up a comb, tried to straighten out the tangle of wavy red hair, took Caesar de Cock's picture from the table, and flung open the door.</i>	<i>Він схопив гребінець, намагаючись розчесати сплутане руде волосся, взяв зі столу картину Цезаря де Кока й відчинив двері.</i>
	<i>Her hair was neither the corn blond nor the raw red of her country-women, but a curious intermingling, in which the fire of one had caught up the light of the other in a glowing, subtle warmth.</i>	<i>На відміну від інших тамтешніх жінок, волосся її було не пшенично-білявим чи яскраво-рудим. У ньому прецікаво поєдналися ці кольори: полум'я одного відтінку зливалось із сяйвом іншого, утворюючи м'яке тепло.</i>
beard	<i>Vincent leaned against the carriage, rivulets from his red hair streaming down his face.</i>	<i>Вінсент притулювся до екіпажа; вода струмочками стікала з його рудого волосся на обличчя.</i>
	<i>His eyes were just two black pin pricks, his cheeks had been sucked in, the circular bones under his eyes protruded, a dirty, red beard matted his face.</i>	<i>Очі його нагадували дві чорні шпильки, щоки запали, кістки під очима виступали, а обличчя прикривала брудна руда борода.</i>

	<i>He was unwashed and unkempt, his coarse, red beard splashed all over his face and neck.</i>	<i>Вінсент був невмитий і неохайний, його жорстка руда борода вкривала все обличчя й шию.</i>
fire	<i>They sat on the floor, warmed by the red glow of the stove, entwined in each other's arms.</i>	<i>Вони сиділи на долівці, зігріті багряним жаром плити, обвивши одне одного руками.</i>
sun	<i>The sun was setting red behind the pine trees, the evening sky was reflected in the pools, and the heath and yellow sand were full of harmony.</i>	<i>Багряне сонце опускалося за сосни, вечірнє небо відбивалося у ставках, а кольори пустища й жовтого піску гармонійно поєднувалися.</i>
	<i>The sun was just setting red over the fields and the peasants were trudging their weary way home.</i>	<i>Багряне сонце сідало над полем, землероби змореною ходою верталися додому.</i>
soil	<i>Behind the saplings, behind the brownish red soil was a very delicate sky, bluish grey, warm, hardly blue, all aglow.</i>	<i>За молодими деревцями, за червонясто-брунатною землею було дуже ніжне небо: сіро-голубе, тепле, ледь блакитне, повністю осяйне.</i>

3. Using color terms analysis to study the stylistics and poetics of fictionalized biographies

Biographers and art historians have devoted numerous studies to explaining how van Gogh discovered color and how it influenced his palette, themes, subjects, and technique. Stone writes: “*He quickly learned that a colorist is one who, seeing a color in nature, knows at once how to analyze it and say. «That grey-green is yellow with black, and hardly any blue»*” [11, 230].

Anna Kwiatkowska has analyzed the poetics of impressionism in Stone’s work [21, 22], and in her essay “Narration in *Lust for Life*” she also draws attention to the importance of color and chiaroscuro in Stone’s novel and their lexical manifestations: “The narrator of *Lust for Life* is aware of the significance of chiaroscuro, i.e. the distribution of light and shade. This awareness is thus duly demonstrated on the lexical level. The colour-related vocabulary is employed by him on a large scale. The colour palette enchants just like the paintings by van Gogh do. Additionally, the palette changes continuously in harmony with the changes of tones in the painter’s works <...>. Gradually the colour palette of the artist brightens and so does the verbal palette of Irving Stone: it is enriched with primitive reds, greens, hues of blue and glaring yellows <...>. There are more and more of light, clear colours even in the descriptions of the pictures that are to express sadness <...>. The colour of narration, correspondingly to the colour on the canvas, develops into an effective method for expressing the most profound feelings, individual reactions and most private opinions and views of the artist, both the painter and the hero <...>” [21, 5]. The researcher also concludes that “the change of the verbal palette of Irving Stone not only corresponds with the change of the painter’s palette but also renders the emotional transformations of the painter” [21, 6].

In this study, we focus on the color terms that reflect the painting experiments in the novel. The results of the quantitative analysis of color terms show that Stone’s text demonstrates sensitivity to van Gogh’s color palette, the writer professionally describes the names of paints, pigments, etc. that are important for the artist’s work:

“As soon as his allowance arrived from Theo — who had arranged to send fifty francs on the first, tenth, and twentieth — he would rush down to the dealer and buy large tubes of ochre, cobalt, and

Prussian blue, and smaller tubes of Naples yellow, terra sienna, ultramarine, and gamboge. Then he would work happily until the paints and the francs were exhausted, usually five or six days after the allowance arrived from Paris, and his troubles set in again” [11, 230].

The author often resorts to the ekphrastic description of the artist’s paintings, focusing more on color than on imagery or plot:

“A Zouave lad with a small face, the neck of a bull, and the eye of a tiger agreed to sit for a small sum. Vincent did a half length of him in his blue uniform, the blue of enamelled saucepans, with a braid of a faded reddish orange, and two pale lemon stars on his breast. There was a reddish cap on the bronzed, feline head, set against a green background. The result was a savage combination of incongruous tones, very harsh, common and even loud, but fitting the character of the subject” [11, 406].

I. Stone’s novel was written in the 1930s, when van Gogh’s letters went out of print, and interest in his works grew significantly. At that time, the strategies of writing a biography about artists, which was founded by I. Stone, were focused on the detailed study of biographical facts, documents, artworks, memoirs, catalogs, and albums. The biographer worked with original works or reproductions in albums. Modern digital technologies allow both authors of biographical works and researchers to group research objects according to various criteria. For example, reproductions can be grouped by genre, chronology, size, technique, and, importantly for our study, by color.

For example, filtering van Gogh’s works on the Van Gogh Museum website allows us to illustrate and confirm our findings based on corpus lexical studies of the text of the biographical novel, Figure 14-15.

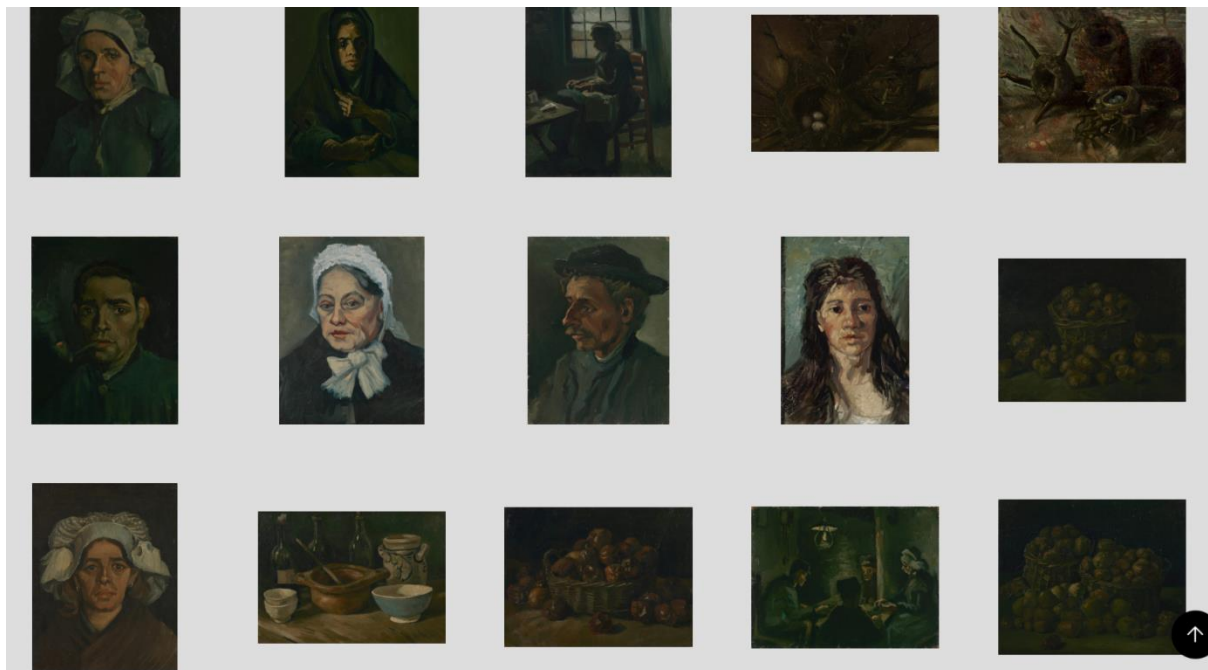


Figure 14: Paintings by Van Gogh in 1885. A screenshot from the Van Gogh Museum website

This method will help to highlight the shades of color, to see certain characteristic features, and to develop a methodology of analysis. Thus, in modern conditions, it will provide a toolkit for fiction writers, film scriptwriters, etc. to create new texts that will more accurately convey the artist’s color palette.

For intermedial studies, the analysis of the relationship between color terms and exemplars is an important aspect, primarily in terms of paintings, their colors, and shades [20, 26]. Such linguistic research can serve as a basis for literary scholars in their search for the interaction between literary and pictorial works, analysis of the poetics of a literary text describing paintings, identification of the influence of painting on the writer’s style, linguistic characteristics of the text, etc. Such an analysis can serve as a basis for translators and editors of biographical works about artists or texts about paintings,

as it can facilitate searching, identify quantitative and qualitative characteristics, explain and analyze how color terms are related to the colors and shades of the original paintings.

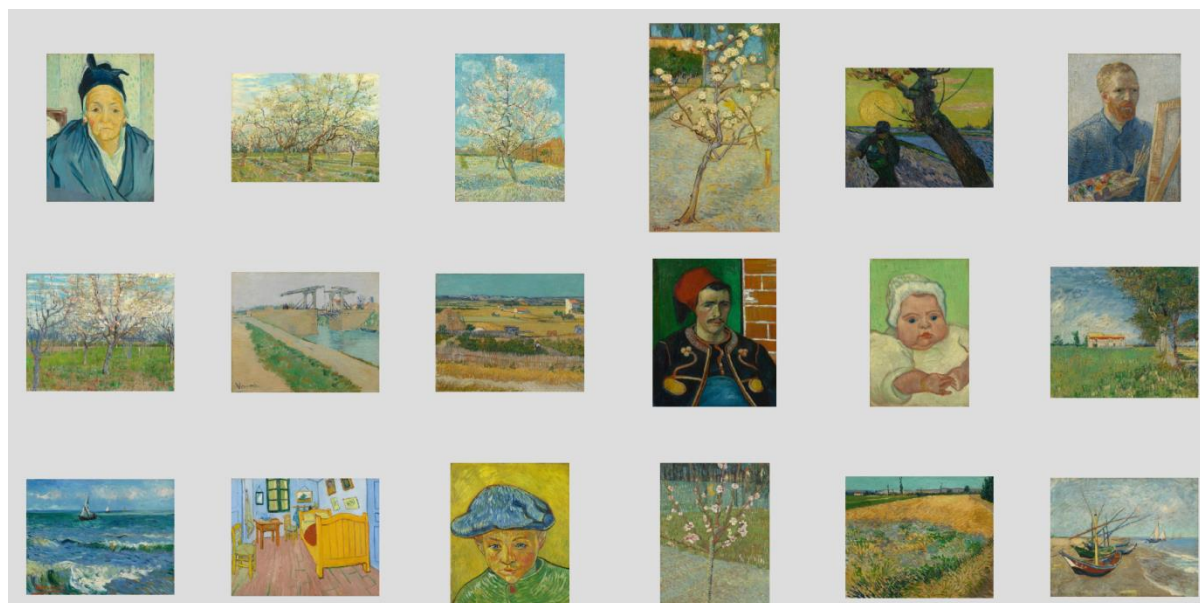


Figure 15: Paintings by Van Gogh in 1888. A screenshot from the Van Gogh Museum website

The developed methodology of corpus-based research of color terms can be applied to the analysis of other biographical novels by I. Stone, for example, *The Passionate Journey*, and *The Agony and the Ecstasy*, as well as texts from the epistolary corpus of Vincent van Gogh and other artists. The proposed algorithm of analysis can be applied to the study of biographical novels about artists in other literatures, such as *Soutine's Last Journey* by Ralph Dutli's, *Saturn (Black Images from Lives of the Goya Family Men)* by Jacek Dehnel, *Self-Portrait of an Artist in Maturity* by Mykhailo Slaboshpytskyi, *A Lonely Traveler Walks a Lonely Road* by V. Domontovych, *The Landscape Artist* by Stanislav Stetsenko, *Self-Portrait from the Imagination of Volodymyr Yavorivskyi*, *Lunia i Modigliani* by Silvia Zientek, *The Lacuna* by Barbara Kingsolver, *Girl with a Pearl Earring* by Tracy Chevalier, etc.

4. Conclusion

Corpus-based methods make it possible to compile a statistical profile of the use of color terms in the text of a literary work, to process them depending on the purpose according to a number of characteristics, in particular, to identify the dominant compatibility with different thematic groups of lexis, to comprehensively analyze their functioning in the work, to compare the frequency of color terms in other texts of a particular linguistic culture.

Thus, the profile of the studied text is formed by the following colors: *black, yellow, blue, white, red, green, grey, brown, orange, violet, etc.* It has been revealed that *black* is a dominant color term in the novel, the frequency of which is almost twice as high as the frequency of the next color – *white*. The dominance of *black* and, in general, the frequency of use of *black* and *white* differs significantly from the frequency of use of these lexemes within the English linguistic culture, in particular its American variant, which can be naturally explained by both the theme of the text and the author's creative intention. The text of the analyzed novel is characterized by a high frequency of use of such color terms as *yellow* and *blue*. It should be noted that the significance of *yellow* and *blue* is manifested in the use of a variety of shades. At the same time, the frequencies of use of *white, brown, pink, and purple* in Stone's text and in COCA are comparable.

Quantitative analysis of color terms should be combined with qualitative analysis, since a significant number of lexemes denoting color, in particular the colors of the spectrum, in addition to their direct meaning, convey figurative and symbolic meanings and are components of phraseological units, which are revealed in the course of contrastive research.

The article outlines the research strategy, methods, and algorithm of analysis that can be applied to other similar texts, primarily biographical works about painters, as well as their translations into other languages. Researchers argue that many of Van Gogh's paintings have changed color since they were created, including his *Field with Irises near Arles*, *Bedroom in Arles*, and others [see, for example, 23]. This factor needs to be taken into account by scholars and non-fiction writers, therefore, creating a database of color terms based on the artist's correspondence or other materials can facilitate the search for descriptions of paintings.

Corpus-based methods can be helpful for translators of works of fiction and other genres; editors of original works and translations who edit texts; researchers who study ideostyle of writers or analyze artworks where it is necessary to choose the most accurate shade of color; lexicographic practice; developers of software related to linguistic tasks, etc.

The prospect of our study is the translation aspect of the analysis, in particular of color terms in biographical works about van Gogh and the artist's letters and their translations using corpus-based methods.

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