



## THE PERCEPTION OF CREATIVE VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN IDIOMATICITY

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**Abstract.** For a successful verbal communication, the ability of decoding the direct and figurative meaning is essential. Idioms as a part of any language have always been an issue for the discussion among scholars. It is said that artists add life to their artworks with colours while writers “add colour” to their writings with idioms and other figurative speech that fosters creative thinking. Therefore, the article deals with the perception of figurative meaning expressed in verbal communication through the usage of colour idioms. The paper discloses a different understanding and employment of colour idioms, black and white colour in particular, in various cultural settings. The analysis reveals that not all languages possess colour idioms with the same colour element within them. It also discloses cultural aspects of three linguistic communities, one colour could be considered as the most prominent example as in three languages it refers to a completely different phenomenon.

**Keywords:** colour idioms, creative thinking, idiomaticity, perception, verbal communication.

### Introduction: Understanding communication in idiomatic expressions

To make a language more vivid and foster creative thinking, a message sender or more often a receiver has to think beyond what is written or said. The usage of idioms encourages to think out of the box allowing our imagination to see imaginary objects or concepts. The significance of idiomatic units in professional communication is the subject of studies for many scholars around the globe. Monica-Ariana Sim and Anamaria-Mirabela Pop (2015), Kazuo Nishiyama (2000), Barry Ward (2012) took a look at idioms in business communication, Svetlana Y. Pavlina (2017) analyzed idioms used in a political arena, Rita Simpson and Dushyanthi Mendis (2003) dwelled on idioms used in academic environment. It is also worth mentioning that many studies were conducted on idioms used for everyday purposes: Robert

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Hopper, Mark L. Knapp, and Lorel Scott (1981) took idioms as a means for exploration of intimate talk. Whether humanity like it or not, idioms will always play a crucial role in everyday verbal interaction, without any doubt the knowledge of how to use idioms adds to our successful communication (Sim & Pop, 2015). The present research refers to two theories – the key functions of verbal communication and the perception theory in order to reveal how the main object of our research of colour idioms are perceived and communicated to the audience of different cultures. Therefore, the research question is: What is the interdependence between colour idioms and phenomenon they denote in English, Lithuanian and Russian languages? The aim of the present research is to investigate colour idioms in English, Lithuanian and Russian languages. In order to achieve the aim, the following objectives were set:

- To collect corpus of colour idioms and determine their meanings;
- To classify colour idioms according to the phenomenon they indicate;
- To disclose similarities and differences of colour idiom meanings in three languages.

The data of the current research was analyzed both: qualitatively and quantitatively. For the qualitative part of the research, semantic analysis that deals with the meaning of linguistic units, in this case – colour idioms is performed. The comparative and contrastive data analysis is applied as the thesis aims at the identification of similarities and differences among colour idioms across the three languages. In order to calculate the frequency of occurrence in English, Lithuanian and Russian colour idioms, the quantitative analysis is carried out.

Communication serves a few functions (Hahn, Lippert, & Paynton, 2016), some of which are the key ones of verbal communication, namely:

- Communication helps people define reality;
- Communication helps people organize complex ideas and experiences into meaningful categories;
- Communication helps people think;
- Communication helps people shape their attitudes about their world.

Taking these functions into account, the questions how people perceive the defined reality, how they are capable of organizing complex ideas, how attitudes are being influenced by their understanding, complexities of the language signs, symbols as well as idiomatic expressions should be carefully considered. Verbal communication is a message that could be sent via language, it might appear in different forms: a face to face interaction, on phone, via email, skyping, using any social media as long as language is involved. The way we decode a message would design our thinking, interaction and perception of reality.

According to the perception theory, perception is a process through which knowledge of the objective world is acquired; therefore, it can reveal how this interaction is perceived (Maund, 2003; Freitas, 2014, both sources cited in Burkšaitienė, 2017). The degree of perception of idiomatic expressions in communication depends on a great variety of factors: physiological, psychological, intellectual abilities, language as well as cultural awareness. The degree of perception fosters creative interpretation of an idiom and inspires a decoder to look at the meaning in terms of creativeness and higher awareness of a particular culture. Creative verbal communication is communication that meets the listener where they are and appealing to the way they want to receive your message. It aims at facilitating better understanding of the message.

## 1. On the concept of idiom

Evidence of the presence of idiomatic expressions in every language is obvious. Relying on the list provided by James Wood (1900), the first attempt to organize already existing idiomatic units was made at the end of 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. According to the data provided by the Institute of the Lithuanian Language (2011–2013), the first dictionary of Lithuanian idioms was released only in 1977.

As idioms are encountered in everyday life and people use them unconsciously they cause a lot of misunderstandings between the speakers of different languages. As Dayan Liu (2012), idioms are culture-specific elements, hence relying on Yoko Ito (1993), idioms constantly cause communication breakdowns. Perhaps the problem of understanding and using idioms with non-native speakers lies in the definition.

The problem of defining idioms has been an object of discussions among many scholars. The root of the problem lies in its ambiguous nature and in the distinction between the phraseological unit and idioms as such. Referring to Rosemarie Gläser (1988), the terms idiomaticity and phraseology could be used interchangeably. However, this is not absolutely true as phraseology is a common term used among Eastern European linguists. In fact, in Lithuania, the term *idioma* is hardly used; linguists use the term phraseologism in most of the cases.

Another problem is that linguists still have not reached a consensus on the topic of idiomaticity. Many different cultures treat the definition of idioms differently and it is hardly possible to provide a clear definition of an idiom, which would suit all of them. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (Hornby, 2010, p. 771) provides a definition of the primary meaning of an idiom as, “a group of words whose meaning is different from the meanings of the individual words”.

Relying on Julep Gepner (1964), an idiom is a unit of phraseology, which includes set phrases of not free related word sets that should be eliminated from proverbs, sayings and aphorisms. Another characteristic feature according to Gepner (1964) is a specific bounding, which is not related to grammatical rules or lexical combinability.

According to Jennifer Seidl and W. McMordie (1978), it is important to stress the fact that idioms could be defined according to other criteria such as:

- 1) Idioms appear in formal as well as in the colloquial styles;
- 2) A whole unit possesses one meaning rather than words taken separately;
- 3) Parts of idioms are not interchangeable;
- 4) Some idioms may be characterized as illogical and ungrammatical;
- 5) Long standing traditions of usage defines the phrase as an idiom.

Geoffrey Nunberg, Ivan A. Sag and Thomas Wasow (1994) suggest identifying an idiom with the help of conventionality, inflexibility, figuration, provability, informality and affect, providing clear information how each of the preceding principles would employ the idea that a set of words is an idiom. On the other hand, they argue that all these properties are applicable to the idioms. However, the scholars try to solve the problem, which lies behind the understanding of the definition:

“Standard categorical assumptions about what makes idioms have constrained the forms of argument available to explain their behavior, and have colored the way the

properties of idioms are invoked in general grammatical argumentation. The problem with these accounts, in our view, is that they have tended to overgrammaticize the phenomena – to ask the syntactic and semantic apparatus of the grammar to explain regularities that are in fact the consequences of independent rhetorical and discursive functions of the expressions” (Nunberg et al., 1994, p. 494).

Differently from the linguists assuming that there must be many features to define an idiom, Liu Hongyong (2009) tends to characterize idioms according to three criteria only. He states that idioms must represent a semantic unity – as the whole unit possesses only one meaning; structural stability – as the lexis within idioms is not interchangeable (only in rare cases when the author wants to sound novel he may employ new words instead of familiar ones to the society); ungrammaticality of some idioms – the author dwells on the idea that some idioms may reject all grammar rules but still be recognizable and usable.

Taking into account all the definitions and features of an idiom, the current study considers a set of words as an idiom when that particular set possesses one meaning which is lost if words are taken separately, the expressions must be set syntactically and must have a particular linguistic environment to function as idioms.

## **2. Culture and idioms**

Nowadays scholars do not argue about the fact that language is a specific element representing a particular culture. As idioms are a significant part of a linguistic system they must reflect culture and be characterized as a culture specific element. The evidence for that may be numerous articles about the idiom translation problems as the idiom may suit one culture perfectly, whereas it may lose its figurativeness in the other culture.

Referring to Frank Boers (2008), idioms correspond to schemas in our brain and usually may be associated with cognitive linguistics, idioms derive from our physical experiences. Whereas each culture (even each individual!) experiences the same phenomena in a different way; idiom comprehension may vary from one culture to another. Boers (2008) also stresses that there are basic physical experiences which humanity experience in the same manner, therefore comprehension of some idioms may appear not as a challenging task.

According to Chunli Yang (2010), the geographical location of a culture plays a crucial role in idiom formation. People use language to speak about their daily life, Yang elaborates on the eating habits and stresses that the representatives of Western cultures tend to consume food which is rich in calories and is nutritious to keep the level of energy and make people feel warm, whereas those who represent Eastern cultures consume more light food and that is reflected in the linguistic system.

Differently from the linguists mentioned above, Mei Guineg (2012) argues the view it is essential to focus on the differences among cultures, he claims that all cultures have a common ground and that analysis of idioms as representatives of culture-specific elements should start with the analysis of similarities across the cultures.

The importance of theory on conceptual metaphor is extremely important while talking about idioms and their relationship with the culture. Dmitrij Dobrovol'skij and Elisabeth Piirainen (2006) state that each culture comprehends the same phenomenon in a different

manner. They carried out an analysis of number perception in the English, Lithuanian and German languages. The same phenomenon was brought out by the means of a different number, even though the cultures are not so extremely diverse. Scholars suggest the idea that all the idioms were based on one conceptual metaphor *Happy is up*, however the number were chosen differently as different numbers have a historical significance in different cultures, for instance number seven is more characteristic to Western cultures, whereas number nine is common to North-Europeans.

Zarina O. Davidyan (2009) stresses the fact that idioms not only reflect the culture but also determine it. She provides a clear example of a borrowed idiom from the Spanish language. The scholar speaks, that previously idiom which belonged only to Spanish culture found its place in the Russian. *La Sangre Azul* which has a meaning of a blue blood is accepted in the Russian language and culture, moreover, the idiom determines the value of having a type of royal blood, which would distinguish a person from other people.

Idioms as culture specific elements cause numerous problems not only in intercultural verbal communication but also in translation. Language acquisition is usually related to the acquisition of foreign culture as in many cases it helps to perceive the linguistic system in a better way. Even though each language possesses its individual traits, all languages have common elements, thus idioms as culture specific elements could be perceived in an easier way if the acquisition starts from common and comes to specific.

### **3. The perception of colour idioms in communicating an idea to different cultures**

For a long time, it was set that culture should be related to a particular area. The definition of culture used to focus on people belonging to a particular culture if they shared a land together today the concept of culture is understood in a broader sense. Anthropologists put a lot of effort to define culture, yet new studies still add new features, which would help to identify what is a culture? Referring to Margaret Mead (2003), a clear picture the term culture was provided, she refers to it as a complex of behavior, which was developed by the generation and successfully put into the following generations. Aliaksandr Birukou, Enrico Blanzieri, Paolo Giorgini and Fausto Giunchiglia (2009) collected a number of definitions of culture and provided their own; they conclude that culture must include such entities as behavior specific to a particular group of people, knowledge facts, ideas, believes and norms. Marshall H. Segall, Donald T. Campbell, and Melville J. Herskovit (1968) concluded that social scientists no longer doubt whether human perception is a culturally specific element. Relying on that it could be claimed that cultures perceive various phenomena in a different manner.

Element of colour could be considered as part of visual perception, hence relying on Segall, Campbell, and Herskovit (1968), it could be presupposed that representatives of different cultures perceive colours differently. The current study focuses on three languages: the English language, the Lithuanian and the Russian language, however it is possible to speak of two cultures only. The culture of Western world is addressed through the English language, whereas relying on the geographical location the Lithuanian and the Russian language may belong to the Eastern culture.

The idea presupposed by Herbert Zettl (1999) is a powerful explanation of the role of colour in everyday life. He stresses that colour is a strong visual code that helps us in everyday situations; it is hardly possible to imagine a map in black and white whereas colours may guide us. Therefore, colours may tell a lot about the culture we belong to.

Timothy King (2005) looked at the colour perception from a different angle, he tries to explain the perception of a visual spectrum referring back to the genetics, presupposing that with the development of human race the perception of colour had changed. Speaking of a culture, he stresses the importance of going back to the times of ancestors when the distinction of colours was comparatively small in numbers. However, referring to Denise Turner (2009), the colour distinction represented by human ancestors cannot be related to culture. He specifies that colour perception of human beings could be grouped into three classes: those, which come from our ancestors, culture-specific perception of colour and location/time-specific perception.

The evidence that colour is a culture-specific element could be supported by simple explanation of the same colour across different geographical locations. Turner (2009) in the study focused on non-European understanding of a colour, he described the meanings the colours possess in the Middle East, including Pacific Rim countries and India. Mario De Bortoli and Jesús Maroto (2008) elaborated on the topic and provided a full picture of colour perception comparing various cultures. Both scholars provide the explanation of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple and brown. Bortoli and Maroto (2008) also speak of black and white colours. Moreover, speaking of the colours it is impossible to illuminate colour perception from the psychology point of view. Hence, the explanation provides not only the meanings of colour perception from cultural point of view but also includes a psychological explanation provided by Angela Wright (2004).

Both Bortoli and Maroto (2008) and Turner (2009) agree that red colour in most of the cultures is associated with positive emotions such as love, luck, triumph, success or passion. However, it is impossible to argue that the cultures of South Africa, Latin America, Mexico as well as all Western Europe relate red to negative phenomena such as mourning, death or evil. Red also serves as a warning in Western cultures. Taking a look at description provided by Wright it comes clear that red colour could be characterized from both angles. The positive side includes courage, strength, warmth, energy or survival. Whereas, the negative features the colour may bring are related to defiance, aggression and strain.

According to Bortoli and Maroto (2008), in Europe, just like in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan is usually associated with harvest and creativity, it may also be a specific colour of a religion, just like it is in Ireland. Turner (2009) stresses that orange is also related to the religious movements in Asia, as many monks prefer this colour for their robes. In the Middle East orange is associated to the positive phenomena mostly to happiness, health or even immortality. In psychology, orange is associated with all type of comfort. However, if the colour is used in many details it may be related to frustration, immaturity and deprivation (Wright, 2004).

Bortoli and Maroto (2008) and Turner (2009) stress that yellow is mostly a positive colour. It may denote joy, royalty, courage and wisdom, but at the same time it is associated with treason in such European cultures as Spain and Portugal. Germany, Austria and Switzerland

related yellow to cowardice and persecution. Wright (2004) refers to yellow colour as an emotional colour. The description provided by the psychologist includes such positive phenomena as optimism, self-esteem, emotional strength and friendliness. The scholar also stresses the fact that yellow colour is considered to be the strongest colour psychologically. However, it should be mentioned that it may also be related to fear, depression and even suicide.

Green described by Bortoli and Maroto (2008) in most of the cultures represents positive concepts. It may be related to life, hope, virtue, new birth and money. Wright (2004) has her own opinion on the meanings green colour may possess. She stresses that at first it is a colour of balance. It brings harmony, refreshment and peace. On the other hand, it is a colour of blindness, boredom and stagnation.

An interesting fact provided by Turner (2009) about the blue colour. He indicates that the word for blue entered the language later than for the other colours. He also stresses that in India blue is linked to heaven, mercy, mystery and love. Referring to Bortoli and Maroto (2008) the colour has a universal meaning and worldwide is understood as a safe colour, however, the meaning of it varies from culture to culture. Depending on the country as well as within the same country the colour acquires different meanings, as for instance in Italy it could be associated with mourning and judging, on the other hand it could also correspond to heaven and purity. Egypt refers to blue as a representation of truth and justice. In psychology it is associated with communication, trust, calm or duty. Most probably, this meaning could be related to the one accepted worldwide the meaning of safety, as it includes all the features related to blue colour in psychology. Wright (2004) also indicates that blue is the most favorite colour of the world, yet it may be linked to unfriendliness, coldness and lack of emotion.

Purple in Brazil is referred to the colour of mourning (Bortoli & Maroto, 2008). However, according to Bortoli and Maroto (2008) in Europe the colour is related to royalty and nobility. Turner (2009) indicates that the same could be observed in Japan and China. In psychology according to Wright (2004) purple is also addressed as violet. It is related to luxury, quality, vision, truth and spiritual awareness. However, it may also be related to something cheap and nasty as well as decadence, suppression and inferiority.

Turner (2009) indicates that brown in European cultures was viewed as drab, whereas in Japan it is linked to a particular beauty. In Arabic languages brown is related to coffee, as it has the same root. Wright (2004) relates brown seriousness, reliability and support. She indicates that it may also refer to lack of humor, sophistication as well as to heaviness.

According to Bortoli and Maroto (2008), white colour is always related to the purity. It denotes marriage, angels and peace. However, this description is applicable to the Western cultures mostly. If we refer to such locations as Japan or China white acquires a new meaning, the meaning of death, funerals, unhappiness and mourning. In psychology white as well as black colour is believed to be an extreme, hence psychologists do not tend to describe them either in a positive or in a negative manner. Wright (2004) stresses that white refers to purity and hence, the concept of sterility may be negative as it is cold, unfriendly and independent.

Finally, speaking of a black colour, it is another extreme. In European cultures it is always related to death, mourning, loss. However, it is not only European cultures which see black as a negative colour, people of Thailand and representatives of Judaism associate it with bad



luck, evil and unhappiness. Wright (2004) stresses that in psychology black has a meaning of glamour, sophistication, security. Even though in the culture perception of black it is possible to observe mostly negative phenomena in psychology it is not truly so. Black may refer to depression, coldness and heaviness.

All the colours mentioned above are chosen for the analysis by many scholars. However, the choice is not random. The researchers base their findings on the classification provided by Brent Berlin and Paul Kay (1991) as they indicated the presence of basic colour terms. Generally, there are 11 basic colour terms, pink and grey are illuminated from the description above. Berlin and Kay (1991) identified the characteristics the colour term should possess in order to be named as a colour term. They stressed the importance of:

- 1) The meaning, as it should be easily recoverable from the meaning of its part (*e.g.* grayish);
- 2) The absence of signification in any other colour term;
- 3) The term could be applied to an unlimited number of objects;
- 4) It must be psychologically easy recognizable.

Taking into account all the features the same colour terms possess it is possible to draw a conclusion that the same colour denotes a different phenomenon across different cultures, hence the term culture should include not only traditions but also a geographical location as well as religious representation. To express the spread of idioms across different cultures, traditions, geographical locations, three cultures were taken for research.

#### 4. Research findings

The research paper focuses on the analysis of colour terms used within colour idioms across three languages: the English, Lithuanian and Russian. However, not all existing colours and their shades were included into the analysis. For a deeper analysis white and black colours based on the criterion of frequency were chosen.

##### 4.1. Idioms that comprise the constituent of black colour

According to the theory presupposed by Berlin and Kay (1991) the black colour is one of the first colours which is recognized by various cultures, therefore the black colour idioms could be found in all three languages under investigation. The English language has the following instances of idiomatic units with the black colour (Table 1).

Table 1. The English language idioms that comprise the constituent of black colour (source: created by authors)

(1) A black mark against someone	Something that someone has done that is disliked/ disapproved by other people
(2) A black spot	A notorious place
(3) Beaten black and blue	Physically attached and badly bruised
(4) Be in someone's black books	Be in disfavor with someone



End of Table 1

(5) Beyond the black stump	Remote uncivilized country
(6) Black and blue	Badly bruised
(7) Black and white	Ability to see complex issues in a simple terms of right and wrong
(8) Black box	Apparatus, internal operations which are mysterious
(9) Black cheque	Freedom/permission to act as one wishes/thinks necessary
(10) Black humor	Morbid, bizarre form of humor
(11) Black market	Selling of goods at illegal prices
(12) Black out	Temporary loss of consciousness
(13) Black sheep (of the family)	A member who is unsatisfactory or not up to standards
(14) Black tie	Formal evening dress;
(15) In black and white	To have written proof
(16) In the black	Do not owe anybody any money
(17) Not as black as you are painted	Not as bad as other people say

In the English language black colour refers to various phenomenon such as:

- Bad luck (1), (4), (5), (13);
- Physical appearance (3), (6), (14);
- Unrecognized extremes (2), (10), (11);
- Physical well-being (12);
- Wealth (16);
- Ability to simplify (7);
- Permission (9);
- Written evidence (15);
- Revealed phenomena (8);
- Having better qualities than expected (7).

In the Lithuanian language the following idioms were found.

Table 2. The Lithuanian language idioms that comprise the constituent of black colour (source: created by authors)

(18) Ir juoda ir balta	Visaip
(19) Į juodus purvus	Smarkiai (iškeikti)
(20) Juodas ant balto	Raštiškai/ aiškiai
(21) Juodasis auksas	Nafta/ durpės
(22) Juodu ant balto	Raštiškai
(23) Juoda balta neatskirti	Būti naiviam
(24) Juodas baltas	Bet kas
(25) Juoda burna	Įtempus visas jėgas
(26) Juodas darbas	Nusikaltimas/ nuostolinga veikla
(27) Juoda diena	Ateityje galinti būti bėda

End of Table 2

(28) Juodos dienos	Vargas
(29) Juodą duoną valgyti	Prastai maitintis
(30) Juodos duonos plutą graužti	Prastai gyventi
(31) Juodas gomurys	Tamsus, nekultūringas
(32) Juodo grūdo neužmesti	Neapkalbėti
(33) Juoda ir balta matyti	Daug išgyventi, vargti
(34) Juodos ir baltos matyti	Daug išgyventi, vargti
(35) Juodų jaučių mindžiotas	Daug vargo matęs/ niūrus/ užsidaręs
(36) Juoda katė perbėgo (taką)	Sakoma nesisekiant
(37) Juodasis kaulas	Prastos kilmės žmogus
(38) Juodai mėlynas	Labai išsigandęs/ labai blogas
(39) Juodoji mirtis	Maras
(40) Juoda naktis	Vėluma/ tamsa/ blogas gyvenimas
(41) Juoda nugara	Apie sunkų darbą
(42) Juodas vakaras	Tamsa, vėluma
(43) Juodas žmogus	Juodadarbis
(44) Juodžemis kvepia	Neilgai gyvens
(45) Kaip (juodas) jautis	Apie daug ir sunkiai dirbantį
(46) Net juoda	Labai daug
(47) Nė juodo nė balto	Nieko
(48) Nė nago juodumu	Nė kiek, visai (ne)
(49) Per nago juodumą	Kad kiek, vos
(50) Prie juodos ir prie baltos	Visaip
(51) Prie juodžemio traukia	Norisi miego
(52) Su juodu dumbliu maišyti	Nugalėti, iškeikti
(53) Už juodą arkli	Sunkiai dirbti
(54) Už žeme juodesnis	Blogai atrodantis

Lithuanians tend to relate black colour to (Table 2):

- Difficult wellbeing (28), (33), (34), (40);
- Poor nutrition (29);
- Hard work (41), (43), (45), (53);
- Danger and bad luck (26), (27), (36), (39), (44), (51);
- Personal traits (19), (23), (31), (32), (35), (37), (38), (52), (54);
- Darkness (40), (42);
- Clarity (20), (22);
- Everything (46), (25);
- Nothing (47), (48);
- Something (49);
- Anything (18), (24), (50).
- Blackness (21).

The Russian language has the following black colour idioms:

Table 3. The Russian language idioms that comprise the constituent of black colour (source: created by authors)

(55) Byt', stat' chernee nochi, tuchi	Ctat' ochen' mrachnym
(56) Videt' vse v chernom tsvete; vse kazhetsya v chernom tsvete i t.p.	Bse predstavlyaetsya ochen' mrachnym
(57) Derzhat' kogo-nibud' v chernom tele	Plokho kormit' i odevat', surovo obrashchat'sya
(58) Derzhat' kogo-nibud' v chernote	Plokho kormit' i odevat', surovo obrashchat'sya
(59) Nazyvat' chernoe belym; prinimat' chernoe za beloe i t.p	Nazyvat' durnoe khoroshim, prinimat' durnoe za khoroshee
(60) Predstavlyat', pokazyvat', vystavlyat' i t.d. kogo-, chto-nibud' v (samom) chernom vide, svete	Predstavlyat' kogo-, chto-nibud' v nepriglyadnom vide
(61) Risovat' chernymi kraskami kogo-, chto-nibud'; navodit' chernuyu krasku na kogo-, chto-nibud	Predstavlyat' kogo-, chto-nibud' v nepriglyadnom svete
(62) Chernota pod glazami	Temnye krugi, sinyaki pod glazami (ot nezdorov'ya, ustalosti)
(63) Chernym-cheren (-cherna, -cherno)	1) ochen' cherno, ochen' temno; 2) peren. ochen' mnogo
(64) Chernaya burya	Cil'nyy sukhoy veter, razvevayushchiy poverkhnostnyy sloy chernozema ili inykh pochv
(65) Chernaya doroga	Avtoguzhevaya doroga, pokrytaya smolistymi veshchestvami
(66) Chernaya kniga	V staroy shkole: kniga, kuda zapisyvalis' imena provinivshikhsya i ikh prostupki; koldovskaya, volshebnyaya kniga
(67) Chernaya kost'	O litsakh nedvoryanskogo proiskhozhdeniya
(68) Chernaya koshka probezhala, proskochila mezhdz kem-nibud'	O konflikte, vzdore
(69) Chernaya melankholiya	Podavlennoe nastroyenie
(70) Chernaya neblagodarnost', nespravedlivost'	Ochen' bol'shaya, vopiyushchaya neblagodarnost', nespravedlivost'
(71) Chernaya sila	Nechistaya sila
(72) Chernaya sotnya	Nazvanie reaktsionno-monarkhicheskikh band pogromshchikov, vznikshikh v period revolyutsii 1905–1907 gg
(73) Chernaya tropa	To zhe, chto chernotrop (v rechi okhotnikov: osennie kholoda do vypadeniya snega; dorogi v etot period, a takzhe letniy put' po chernoy zemle, v otlichie ot sannogo po snegu)
(74) Chernyy dvor	Zadny dvor, prednaznachenny dlya skota, pitsy
(75) Chernye lyudi	Cel'skoe naselenie
(76) Chernye nogi	Ochen' mrachnyy, ugryumyy
(77) Chernyy ot zagara	Posmuglevshiy na solntse

End of Table 3

(78) Chernym po belomu (napisano, napechatano)	Co vsej ochevidnost'yu, chetko, yasno
(79) Chernyy rynek, chernaya birzha	B kapitalisticheskikh stranakh – nelegal'nyy rynek, na kotorom sovershayutsya valyutnye sdelki, spekulyatsii
(80) Chernye spiski	B tsarskoy Rossii i drugikh stranakh s reaktsionnym rezhimom: a) spiski revolyutsionno nastroennykh rabochikh, nigde ne prinimaemykh na rabotu po obshchemu ugovoru vladel'tsev
(81) Chernyy-prechernyy	Ochen' chernyy

The Russian language links black colour to (Table 3):

- Negative traits, feelings and emotions (55), (56), (57), (58), (59), (60), (61), (62), (68), (69), (70), (76);
- Illegal activities (66), (72), (79), (80);
- Insignificance (67), (74), (75);
- Clarity (78);
- Mystery (71);
- Magic books (66);
- Blackness (63), (81);
- Black ground (64), (65), (73)
- Physical appearance (77).

The topic of bad luck prevails in three languages as well. Even though in the English and Lithuanian languages it is used in a direct sense, in the Russian languages bad luck could possibly be related to bad living conditions. However, speaking about bad living conditions the Lithuanian language takes the first place in the provision of black colour idioms expressing the idea of hard live or hard work.

#### 4.2. Idioms that comprise the constituent of white colour

The first level of colour recognition by the cultures also includes white colour. White colour in many situations is presented as an opposition to the black. However, in the idiom analysis this could not be accepted as fully true. The table below includes the examples of idioms in the English language.

Table 4. The English language idioms that comprise the constituent of white colour (source: created by authors)

(1) A white knight	A company making a welcome bid for another company facing unwelcome takeover.
(2) A whited sepulchre	Hypocrite/a person who is inwardly evil but outwardly professes to be virtuous
(3) Big white chief	Important person boss leader
(4) Bleed someone white	To take all of someone's money

End of Table 4

(5) Mark something with a white stone	Regard something as especially fortunate or happy
(6) Show the white feather	Appear cowardly
(7) White as a ghost	To look very pale and frightened
(8) White as a sheet	To look very pale and frightened
(9) White as snow	Very white in colour
(10) White collar worker	People whose work does not involve manual labor
(11) White elephant	Something useless
(12) White flag	Sign of surrender
(13) White heat	Extremely great heat/state of great activity, excitement or feeling
(14) White lie	Diplomatic untruth, told with good intentions
(15) White paper	A paper issued by the government to justify its position in some matter of international interests
(16) White tie	Formal evening clothes
(17) Whiter than white	Actions are always honest and moral

White colour in the English language expresses (Table 4):

- Cleanness (9), (10), (14), (15);
- Purity (9), (10);
- Emotions (2), (4), (5), (6), (7), (8), (13);
- Support (1);
- Honesty (17);
- Social status (3);
- Lack of importance (11);
- Surrender (12);
- Physical appearance (16).

The following idioms were found in the Lithuanian language.

Table 5. The Lithuanian language idioms that comprise the constituent of white colour (source: created by authors)

(18) Akis balinti	Piktai žiūrėti, baltakiuoti
(19) Akys bala	Girtauja
(20) Akis pabalinęs	Įpykęs, įsiutęs
(21) Akys pabalo	Net silpna pasidarė
(22) Balta duona	Lengvas gyvenimas
(23) Balta galva	Moteris (nuometuota)
(24) Balta varna	Kuo nors labai išsiskiriantis iš savo aplinkos žmogus
(25) Baltą akį turėti	Pykti
(26) Baltais pirštais nukaišyti	Išjuokti
(27) Baltasis auksas	Medvilnė

End of Table 5

(28) Baltasis badas	Žiemos laikas, kai gyvūnai negali rasti maisto
(29) Balti pyragai	Lengvas gyvenimas
(30) Balti raudonuoti	Gėdytis
(31) Baltoji kiaulė	Utėlė
(32) Baltoji naktis	Laikas, kai vasarą visai nesutemsta
(33) Baltomis veizėti	Šnairuoti/ pykti
(34) Baltomis veizėtis	Šnairuoti/ pykti
(35) Du baltus trečią kaip sniegą	Nieko
(36) Iš baltos veizėti	Šnairuoti/ pykti
(37) Kaip balta vilna	Nuolankus, meilus
(38) Ligi baltų musių	Negreit (padarys)
(39) Nei balto, nei juodo	Apie nieko nepalaikantį
(40) Prie balto sieto buvo	Apie nepastabų
(41) (Visų) dantys balti	Apie išorinį panašumą, vienodumą

The meanings they have are the following (Table 5):

- Emotions (18), (20), (21), (25), (30), (33), (34), (36);
- Personal traits (19), (21), (24), (26), (37), (38), (40);
- Neutrality (39);
- Nothing (35);
- Equality (41);
- Easy life (22), (29);
- Whiteness (23), (27), (28), (32);
- Parasites (31).

The Russian language has the following instances of white colour idioms.

Table 6. The Russian language idioms that comprise the constituent of white colour (source: created by authors)

(42) Belaya vorona; vyglyadet', byt', chuvstvovat' sebya beloy voronoy	O tom, kto vydelyaetsya chem-l. sredi okruzhayushchikh lyudey, nepokhozh na nikh
(43) Belaya goryachka	Psikhicheskoe rasstroystvo na pochve alkogolizma, soprovozhdayushcheesya sil'nym vobuzhdeniem i gallyutsinatsiyami
(44) Belaya kost', kostochka	O znatnom proiskhozhdenii
(45) Beloe pyatno, belye mesta	Neissledovannaya territoriya, rayon, kray; neissledovanny, neizuchenny, nereshenny vopros, nerazreshennaya problema
(46) Belye mukhi	O redko padayushchikh snezhinkakh, pervom snege
(47) Belye stikhi	Nerifmovannye stikhi
(48) Belymi nitkami shito, sshito, shityy i t.p.	O chem-l. neumelo, neiskusno, nelovko skryvaemom

End of Table 6

(49) Belyy bilet	svidetel'stvo ob osvobozhdenii ot voennoy sluzhby
(50) Belyy svet	Zemlya, mir so vsem sushchestvuyushchim na nem
(51) Belyy svet ne mil (komu-l.)	O tragicheskom mirooshchushchenii
(52) Belyy flag	Flag takogo tsveta, sluzhashchiy znakom prekrashcheniya ognya, sdachi v plen i t.p.
(53) Dela, kak sazha bela	O plokhom sostoyanii del, neudache
(54) Dovodit'/ dovesti (dokhodit'/ doyti) do belogo kaleniya	O Privodit' ili prikhodit' v sostoyanie isstupleniya, polnoy poteri samoobladaniya
(55) Na (belom) kone v"ezzhat'/ v"ekhat'	Poyavit'sya kak pobeditel'
(56) Na belyy svet ne glyadel by	O sostoyanii gnetushchey toski, apatii i t.p.
(57) Nevzvidet'/ ne videt' belogo sveta	Ostro oshchutit' bol', strakh, gnev
(58) Otlichat'/ otlichit' chernoje ot belogo	Cdelat' pravil'nyy vyvod
(59) Ckazka pro belogo bychka	Beskonechnoe povtorenie odnogo i togo zhe
(60) (Takoy,) kakogo belyy svet ne videl, ne proizvodil	Nikогда ne bylo kogo-, chego-l.

White colour in the Russian language is linked to (Table 6):

- extraordinaire (42), (60);
- emotions (51), (55), (57);
- personal traits (43), (47), (54), (59);
- success (44), (49), (55), (58).
- something hidden (48);
- bad course of events (53);
- mystery (45);
- surrender (52);
- whiteness (46);
- something positive (50).

Even though it could be considered that white colour is the opposite of black colour in linguistics it is not usually so. It had already been discussed that black colour in the English, Lithuanian and Russian languages is used to describe negative phenomenon, but so is white colour. All three languages include white into the category of a negative character building. In the English language white colour idioms express fear and being a coward, in the Lithuanian it is used to express disrespect to others in terms of postponing the performance of particular actions and being able to make fun of others and in the Russian language white is used to express bad luck of a person. Having generalized the results, we see a great variety of colour idioms used in creative verbal communication. As it is claimed that the usage of idioms makes the language more expressive and colourful, people tend to implement them in communicating an idea in a creative manner.



## Conclusions

The analysis revealed that not all languages possess colour idioms with the same colour element within them. Other colours coincide across three languages the total number of relative frequency of occurrences of the use of black, white colours indicate that all three languages adopted the first two stages of colour acquisition presupposed by Berlin and Kay (1991). The analysis of colour idioms revealed cultural aspects of three linguistic communities, some colours could be considered as the most prominent example as in three languages it refers to a completely different phenomenon. The analysis had proved the hypothesis that across three languages the meanings of colours possess a different meaning:

- Black colour is used in the majority of colour idioms across three languages. 17 instances of black colour idioms were identified in the English, 37 in the Lithuanian and 17 in the Russian language;
- White colour is found in 17 English instances, 24 Lithuanian and 19 Russian idioms;
- White colour idioms in the Russian language are related to extremes as they usually include intensifying descriptors in the meanings;
- Black and white colours are the most frequent colours in the idiom formation in the Lithuanian language. Taking into consideration the colours under analysis it could be claimed that all three languages possess colour idioms with the elements of colour terms, however they differ in distribution and meanings. Although, they are not related to the extremes, on the other hand both evoke negative emotions.

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## KŪRYBINĖS VERBALINĖS KOMUNIKACIJOS SUVOKIMAS FRAZEOLIGINIUOSE POSAKIUOSE

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### Santrauka

Gebėjimas atpažinti tiesioginės ir perkeltinės prasmės kodus yra būtinas sėkmingai verbalinei komunikacijai. Pastaruoju metu frazeologiniai posakiai, kaip neatskiriama kiekvienos kalbos tyrimų dalis, sulaukia vis daugiau tyrėjų dėmesio. Sakoma, kad menininkai pagyvina savo darbus pridėdami spalvų, rašytojai nuspalvina kūrinius vartodami frazeologizmus ir perkeltinės reikšmės žodžius, taip skatindami kūrybiškai mąstyti. Straipsnyje nagrinėjamas perkeltinių reikšmių suvokimas verbalinėje komunikacijoje vartojant frazeologizmus, kuriuose yra spalvas žyminčių žodžių. Tyrimo tikslas – iširti spalvos elementą jungiančius frazeologizmus trijose kalbose: anglų, lietuvių ir rusų. Tyrimo metu siekta nustatyti frazeologizmų reikšmes trijose kalbose, sugrupuoti frazeologizmus į semantines grupes pagal jų reikšmes, surasti jų panašumus ir skirtumus. Atlikta kokybinė ir kiekybinė analizė parodė, kad dažniausiai naudojamos spalvos trijų kalbų frazeologizmuose yra juoda ir balta. Tyrimo rezultatai leidžia teigti, kad frazeologizmai, kuriuose vartojamas spalvos elementas, atskleidžia taip pat kultūrinius lingvistinių bendruomenių aspektus. Frazeologizmų suskirstymas į semantines grupes parodė, kad grupės, kuriose nustatytas didžiausias frazeologizmų skaičius yra emocijos, asmens bruožai ir kokybė. Tyrimas patvirtino, kad tos pačios spalvos įgyja skirtingas reikšmes skirtingose kalbose.

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** frazeologizmai, kuriuose yra spalvas žyminčių žodžių, kūrybinis mąstymas, suvokimas, verbalinė komunikacija.