

# COLOUR IDIOMS IN ENGLISH

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## ABSTRAK

Idiom dapat dibentuk dengan menggabungkan beberapa kata tertentu sehingga menghasilkan makna idiomatis baru. Dalam bahasa Inggris, idiom dapat dibentuk dengan menggabungkan kata yang bermakna warna dengan kata-kata yang lain sehingga terbentuklah *colour idioms*. Selain itu, kata bermakna warna yang digunakan secara individual dapat juga bermakna idiomatis dalam konteks tertentu.

Makna *colour idioms* dalam bahasa Inggris sedikit banyak dipengaruhi oleh filosofi makna warna tersebut. Selain itu, makna *colour idioms* juga dipengaruhi konvensi penutur bahasa tersebut, dalam hal ini, unsur budaya juga sangat menentukan makna sebuah idiom termasuk *colour idioms*.

Berdasarkan analisis dengan pendekatan semantis, *colour idioms* dalam bahasa Inggris dapat bermakna positif dan negatif. Meskipun demikian, beberapa *colour idioms* memiliki makna negatif dan positif sekaligus.

Kata kunci: *colour, idioms, meaning, semantics*.

### A. The Background of the Study

Language is an important means of communication. It is a universal thing in human life that has many uses, for instance, to express our feelings, our wishes, and our ideas. According to Labov, language is a form of social behavior. It is used by human being in social context to communicate their needs, ideas, and emotion to one another (1976: 183). So, it means that language is used by a group of people to conduct their daily life. Furthermore, English language is one of the famous languages in the world that becomes an international language. Therefore, it is used by the majority of people in the world.

Linguistics is a scientific study of language. One of the branches of linguistic studies is semantics. Semantics discusses meaning in language which

includes word meaning, phrase meaning, sentence meaning, and even discourse meaning. The study of idioms is included into phrase meaning. According to Dixon in Nurachman Hanafi, idiom is an expression whose meaning is different from the meaning of individual words (1986:11). It means that idiom must be seen as a unity, not by each component which forms the idiom.

The idiom could be used to make the expression more expressive and stylish. We could find idioms in literary works such as poem and prose. Furthermore, idioms are also used in daily conversation to build intimacy between the participants.

One of the kinds of idioms in English is colour idioms which use colour to express certain meanings. The meaning of colour idioms in English is the main topic of the discussion in this research.

## **B. The Source of the Data**

The data of this research are taken from the websites <http://www.english-test.net/lessons/8/index.html> and [www.englishclub.com](http://www.englishclub.com). The writer chooses these websites as a source of data because there are many colour idioms found in them. Besides that, the websites had already been visited by many browsers that could make them the valid data of the research.

## **C. Semantics**

Discussing about language means that we have to consider the elements of language which include form and meaning. If we study the meaning of words,

phrases or sentences, it means that we come to an approach of one of the branch studies of linguistics which is called semantics. Therefore, to get the accurate meaning, we have to focus on the meaning of the language itself. According to Akmajian, semantics is generally considered to be the study of meaning (and related nation) in languages; while in the field of logic, semantics is generally considered to be the study of linguistics reference and truth conditions in language (1988:236). It means that by learning semantics, people are able to understand the meaning of such a word generally and logically.

Meanwhile, Hurdford (1990:1) states that semantics is the study of meaning and all speakers have already known the meaning of all they say about. In conclusion, by learning semantics, one is capable to understand about meaning in detail.

#### **D. Meaning**

Meaning is an important part of language. So it is impossible for us to analyze idioms without discussing meaning because idioms can not be separated from meaning.

According to John Lyons, meaning is ideas or concepts which can be transferred from the mind of the speaker (1981:136). Based on that explanation, it can be seen that meaning is such a complex thing. However, meaning of one language and another language is also an arbitrary one. It could be seen, for instance, in the meaning of idioms. Eventually, the meaning of idioms is very peculiar from one language to another language. Therefore, the translation of

idioms from one language to another language would be various. Basically, idiom could not be translated word by word, but we must take into consideration some aspects of culture that could influence the meaning of such an idiom. Generally, idioms have various interpretations of meaning that are interesting to understand. Therefore, it makes idioms more interesting to analyze. The theories of meaning would support the analysis of the meanings of colour idioms as the main topic of the research.

### **E. Idioms**

Idioms are a part of the discussion in semantics structure. Basically, idioms are such a kind of phrase which has a peculiar meaning that could not be explained from the words as its parts that form it. Moreover, the meaning of idioms is also influenced by the culture and the convention of the speakers of such a language.

According to Nida and Taber, idiom is an expression consisting of several words and whose meaning cannot be delivered from the meaning of individual words, called exocentric expression (1974:202). It means that idiom can not be understood word by word, so people have to understand it as a unity.

Furthermore, Nida states that idioms are combination of words which has both literal and non-literal semantics structure but the connection between the two can not be described as representing an addition process (1974:194). It means that idioms are group of words which can produce various meanings when they are used together.

The way people create idioms is determined by culture and environment where they live. Something which is seen and felt could inspire people to create such a peculiar idiom. Therefore, idioms could be created based on something which is so familiar like colour. Actually, colour could describe one's feeling and condition. The example of idiom created from colour is as follows:

My sister's face turned *beet red* when I caught her singing in front of a mirror (01/EC)

The colour idiom *beet red* from the datum (01/EC) means '*blushed*' or '*shy*'. Usually, when someone is shy, his or her face turns red or blushed.

Generally, people use idioms to express something that other words do not express it clearly. Moreover, people often use an idiom to describe something as clearly as possible, and enrich the vocabulary and also add the novelty of language.

## **F. Colour and Its Characteristics**

Talking about the meaning of such a colour means that we must relate it to the physical and also psychological condition of human being. The darker the colour the deeper the feeling that is described.

Furthermore, colour could be used as an individual word which has connotative meaning whenever it is placed in certain context. In other words, colour as individual word has an idiomatic meaning based on the culture and convention of the speakers who use it.

The analysis of colour characteristics is defined by Kate Smith (2009; p. 1). The characteristics of each colour are related to the colour of nature. Besides that, colours could also reflect particular feeling or psychological condition. Moreover, the characteristics of colour could also be influenced by certain culture. The detailed discussions of each colour are presented in the following parts which include the characteristics of blue, green, yellow, red, brown, white, and black.

### **1. The Characteristics of Blue**

Blue is one of the popular colours which expresses masculinity. Besides that, blue also describes about nature as it represents the colour of sky and ocean. Furthermore, Smith derives some characteristics of blue colour as it is seen as trustworthy, dependable, and committed. As the collective colour of the spirit, it invokes rest and can cause the body to produce chemicals that are calming (2009; p. 1).

However, not all blues show something relaxing and calm. Electric or brilliant blues are considered more dynamic and dramatic. Somehow, blue could also describe the feeling of sadness, longing, cold or uncaring.

The darker blue like indigo is used as symbol of a mystical borderland of wisdom, self-mastery, and spiritual realization. While blue is the color of communication with others, indigo turns the blue inward to increase personal thoughts, profound insights, and instant understandings (Smith, 2009 : p.1).

In conclusion, blue colour reflects something cool and sedate. As a result, people often choose blue for resting and relaxation.

## **2. The Characteristics of Green**

If we talk about green, it means that we talk about the colour of nature. There are so many things in our surrounding that reflect green colour, such as leaves, trees, rice fields, and many kinds of plants.

In relation to psychology, Smith states that the natural greens, from forest to lime, are seen as tranquil and refreshing, with a natural balance of cool and warm (blue and yellow) undertones. Green is considered the color of peace and ecology (2009; p. 1). However, there is an "institutional" side to green, associated with illness or Government-issued that conjure up negative emotions as do the "slimy" or bilious greens (Smith, 2009: p. 1).

Based on the previous explanation, the color green affects us physically and mentally as it reflects something soothing, relaxing mentally as well as physically. Besides that, green also helps alleviate depression, nervousness and anxiety. Finally, it offers a sense of renewal, self-control, and harmony.

## **3. The Characteristics of Yellow**

Yellow is such a colour that shows cheerfulness and brightness. It is in line with Smith's opinion that yellow shines with optimism, enlightenment, and happiness. Moreover, shades of golden yellow carry the promise of a positive future and yellow will advance from surrounding colors and instill optimism and energy, as well as spark creative thoughts (Smith, 2009: p. 1).

Furthermore, Smith states that yellow is mentally stimulating as it stimulates the nervous system and activates memory. Moreover, it also encourages communication.

#### **4. The Characteristics of Red**

Red symbolizes many aspects of life. Based on negative point of view, red symbolizes anger. Meanwhile, Chinese culture considers red as a symbol of wealth and happiness. In other words, we can say that red has more personal associations than any other color.

Moreover, red is recognized as a stimulant to create exciting mood and the amount of red is directly related to the level of energy perceived. Red is also an eye-catching colour caused by its brightness.

In line with its basic characteristics Smith considers that red increases enthusiasm, stimulates energy, encourages action and confidence. Furthermore, the colour could also symbolize a sense of protection from fears and anxiety.

In conclusion, red is a very flexible colour that could be used to symbolize many aspects of life depending on some different points of view. Basically, red could raise up spirit and enthusiasm.

#### **5. The Characteristics of Brown**

Brown is such kind of colour that describes nature since it is the colour of land or earth, which reflects approachability.

Moreover, Smith also explains that the color brown affects us physically and mentally in raising feeling of wholesomeness, stability, connection with the earth. Besides that, this colour also offers a sense of orderliness (Smith, 2009: p. 1).

Based on the characteristics of the colour brown, we could conclude that brown is a very natural colour which has a strength to symbolize maturity.

## **6. The Characteristics of White**

White is such kind of colour that projects purity, cleanliness, and neutrality. We could find the dominant white at hospital and worshiping places. Moreover, white is also used for sacred occasion like wedding. In some culture, a white picket fence surrounds a safe and happy home.

Therefore, based on its use, Smith gives opinion that white aids mental clarity, encourages us to clear clutter or obstacles, evokes purification of thoughts or actions and enables fresh beginnings (2009: p. 1).

Generally, white evokes something which is pure, innocent, and clean. As a result, white is often used to project honesty and good sides of life. It is related to the characteristics of cleanliness owned by the colour..

## **7. The Characteristics of Black**

Black becomes a very popular colour which is well-liked by many people. There are some strengths owned by black such as authoritative and powerful. Furthermore, black can evoke strong emotions that could be overwhelming.

In fashion, black is a classic color for clothing possibly because it makes the wearer appear thinner and more sophisticated. Therefore, Smith draws a conclusion that black colour builds a feeling of inconspicuous, shows a restful emptiness and mysterious evoking a sense of potential and possibility (2009 : p. 1).

Since black is the darkest colour among other colours, it symbolizes power, elegance, and mystics. The negative impression of it is that black describes bad sides of life.

### **G. Method of Research**

In a scientific research, the use of certain methods is indispensable. Hillway in Surachmad states that research is a method of study by which, through the careful and exhaustive investigation of all ascertainable evidence bearing upon a definable problem, we reach a solution to that problem (1978: 25). In addition, Nazir states that the real meaning of research is to investigate again or to search again. Meanwhile, method is defined as the steps how the research is done (1988: 13-51). Thus, it implies that research method is steps or ways how a research is done to solve some problem.

The method which is applied in conducting the research is divided into type of research, technique of data collecting, and technique of data analysis. Each part will be explained in detail in the following parts.

### **H. Types of Research**

The type of research in this research is descriptive research. According to Surakhmad, descriptive method is a way used to solve topical problem by collecting, classifying, and analyzing data (1978:132). It means that descriptive method deals with some ways to solve the actual problems by collecting, classifying, and analyzing the data.

Therefore, the researcher will use descriptive method to conduct the research of colour idioms. Descriptive method is applied to make the research acceptable and reasonable.

### **I. Technique of Data Collecting**

To collect the data of the research, the researcher uses certain steps systematically. The steps of collecting the data of the research are presented as follows:

1. Selecting websites that contain colour idioms.
2. Giving sign to colour idioms found in the selected websites.
3. Classifying colour idioms based on their characteristics.
4. Rechecking the chosen data, whether there are some mistakes in order to get the validity of data.

### **J. Technique of Data Analysis**

Equivalent method is applied in the analysis to get the result of the research. These are the steps of data analysis of the research:

1. Analyzing the meaning of colour idioms found in the source of data. In this case, the researcher uses referential equivalent method. Djajasudarma (1993:60) states that referential equivalent method refers to the referent in which a piece of language occurs and embraces not only the subject-matter in hand but also the whole activity of the speaker or participant. As a

result, some of the colour idioms contain negative meaning and some others reflect a positive meaning. For example:

The builders were given the *green light* to begin the tower (41/EC).

The colour idiom *green light* has a meaning of permission to do such an activity. Thus, it contains a positive meaning.

2. Analyzing the form of colour idioms in English. To get the result of the analysis, distributional method is used. Djajasudarma (1993:60) states that distributional method is a method that uses the internal elements of a language itself to be the reference. In this case, the researcher tries to describe the kinds of the form of colour idioms in English syntactically. Thus, expansion technique would be used to analyze the form of colour idioms. For example:

I caught the *red eye* so that I would see the sunrise over the mountains (09/EC)

The datum (09) contains the colour idiom in the form of phrase. In this case, *red eye* is the example of colour idiom in the form of noun phrase. It is formed by the noun *eye* which is expanded by the colour *red*. The result of the expansion is the noun phrase *red eye* which has an idiomatic meaning.

3. Concluding the result of the analysis.

## **K. Data Analysis**

The data collected from the source of data are analyzed based on the problems of the research. Thus, the analysis is divided into the analysis of the meaning of colour idioms and the form of them. All of the data are analyzed as they are not too large in number. Thus, the researcher uses total sampling to analyze all data. The detailed analysis is presented in the following parts.

### **1. The Meaning of Colour Idioms**

The analysis of the meaning of colour idioms is related to the characteristics of the colours which are used in such idioms. Furthermore, it also explains how such a colour could describe certain psychological conditions or peculiar situations. Theories of idioms and colour are used to present the detail analysis of the meaning of colour idioms which is also influenced by culture. Furthermore, the meaning of colour idioms could also be influenced by the convention of the speakers who use them.

The analysis is divided into several parts based on each colour used in idioms. In this case, the analysis includes the positive or negative meanings which are reflected by each colour idiom. Furthermore, the analysis of the meaning of colour idiom is based on the context in which it occurs.

Besides that, the analysis of the meaning of colour idioms is also conducted based on the point of view of the description of physical characteristics, psychological condition, and certain event. In this case, the convention of the speakers and culture is also taken into consideration to determine the meaning.

Semantics and Pragmatics analysis on the meaning of colour idioms is conducted to get the detailed description of the meaning. Thus, not only the context but also the speakers are the aspects which are taken into consideration to determine the meaning of such colour idiom.

### 1.1 The Meaning of Colour Idioms Using Red

Red colour is used in colour idiom which describes the feelings, both positive feeling and the negative one. Sometimes, the meaning is also influenced by the physical performance that accompanies it.

One of the positive meanings in colour idioms using red is found in the datum (1) as follows:

My sister's face turned *beet red* when I caught her singing in front of a mirror (01/EC).

The colour idiom *beet red* describes a physical characteristic of someone who is blushed, so the cheeks show reddish colour. It shows about the feeling of shameness. However, it is categorized as a positive meaning.

On the other hand, *red* is also used to describe about a psychological condition of the feeling of anger which reflects negative meaning as it is seen in the example taken from the datum (15)

But what really made me *see red* was when I was told that I would only get an old wreck for what I was prepared to pay (15/SL).

Based on the example, someone is really mad because he or she is humiliated as he or she can not afford the thing that he or she will buy. So that, the idiom *see red* is used to show the feeling of anger.

Colour idioms are not only used to describe about psychological condition or physical characteristics but they can also describe such a peculiar event which could be a good or bad situation. It could be seen through the datum (10) as follows:

At one garage I actually *caught* one of the salesmen *red-handed* in the middle of his act, just as he was gluing back a chip of paint that had fallen off (10/SL).

Based on the example taken from the datum (10), there is one who is caught in the middle of doing something wrong, in this case, he is doing cheating by gluing back a paint of the car that had already fallen off.

The negative meaning of a certain event shown by colour idioms using red could also be seen through the datum (05) as follows:

When we were *in the red* we almost had to sell the house (05/EC).

The datum (05) uses colour idiom *in the red* which describes the situation when someone has to pay the debt by selling the house. The example taken from the datum (05) has a negative meaning because it describes such kind of trouble caused by the debt. Thus, *in the red* means in debt.

However, red colour is also used to describe spirit or energy as it is stated in the datum (11):

When relatives come to town my grandmother *rolls out the red carpet* (11/EC).

The idiom *rolls out the red carpet* has a meaning of welcoming someone by providing everything well. Furthermore, *rolls out the red carpet* could also be meant as giving preferential treatment as it is seen in the datum (12):

The manager *rolled out the red carpet* when he saw me coming (12/SL).

Both the data (11) and (12) imply positive meanings of colour idioms using red because they show such a kind of enthusiasm.

Furthermore, the other use of red in colour idioms shows something which has nothing to do with psychological condition or negative situation. It is described in the datum (09)

I caught the *red eye* so that I would see the sunrise over the mountains (09/EC).

The meaning of *red eye* in the datum (09) is a journey done late at night. Based on the example, *red eye* refers to the climber who does the climbing at night so that he or she can reach the top of the mountain at dawn. Besides that, *red eye* is commonly used in terms of flight which is scheduled late at night.

Based on its basic characteristics, red is a very flexible colour that could be interpreted from different points of view. In certain culture such as Chinese culture, red colour symbolizes prosperity and happiness. On the other hand, red could also reflect the feeling of anger. As a result, red in colour idioms reflects not only negative meaning but also positive meaning based on the context where it occurs.

## 1.2 The Meaning of Colour Idioms Using Blue

Blue is such kind of colour which is frequently used in colour idioms. Based on its physical characteristics, blue reflects calamity and sadness. Therefore, blue could be used to describe sad feelings. Some of the data represent the use of blue in colour idioms.

In literary works such as poem, prose, or even song lyrics, blue is commonly used to represent sad feeling as it is proven by the datum (16) as follows:

By the sixth weekend of looking I was understandably feeling rather *blue* (16/SL).

Feeling *blue* in the datum (16) means feeling depressed or unhappy because one cannot find what he or she is looking for.

Then, blue also symbolizes the sad feeling or longing when it is used in the colour idiom *have the blues* presented in the datum (20) as follows:

I always *have the blues* during the winter time (20/EC).

The colour idiom *have the blues* in the datum (20) shows the feeling of longing something or someone that can make someone sad too.

Despite the sad meaning owned by the colour, blue also describes a situation which is such a coincidence as it occurs in the datum (23):

I got a phone call from a long lost cousin *out of the blue* last week (23/EC).

Furthermore, blue in colour idioms could also be used to describe the activity which is so rarely done by someone. Some examples are presented to make the explanation clearer.

We only go out for dinner *once in a blue moon* (21/EC).

*Once in a blue moon*, I thought you come across a genuine bargain (22/SL).

*Once in a blue moon* which is used in the datum (21) could be interpreted as seldom. Meanwhile, *once in a blue moon* in the datum (22) contains a meaning of something which is rarely done because it is not appropriate to do. In other words, it means someone who is forced to do the thing which is actually not appropriate to do. In this case, bargaining is something which is not appropriate to do in western culture.

Based on the examples of colour idioms using blue, the colour reflects the deep feeling of sadness or longing which can be seen from the colour idiom *have the blue*. Moreover, it also symbolizes something cool and sedate. Besides that, blue could also show the frequency adverb of something which is rarely done as it is represented by the colour idiom *once in a blue moon*, or something which is just a coincidence that is shown by the colour idiom *out of the blue*. Based on the meaning which is reflected by the blue colour, the colour idioms using blue contain more negative meaning than the positive one.

### **1.3 The Meaning of Colour Idioms Using Green**

Green is a colour of nature which reflects freshness and peace. Despite the good characteristics of green, it is also used to describe illness and negative emotions. One of the examples of the use of green in colour idioms which contains negative meaning is found in the datum (42) as follows:

I am *green with envy* over Julio's new wardrobe (42/EC).

*Green with envy* used in the datum (42) describes about human characteristics of jealousy. The other colour idiom using green which has the similar meaning of envy or jealousy occurs in the datum (39)

I always wanted to go to university, but now I wish I had time to get a job, so grass is always *greener* on the other side (39/EC).

Green is associated with envy due to its negative characteristics to show negative emotions. The colour idiom *grass is always greener on the other side* means someone who is always not satisfied of what he had got and thinks that something owned by someone else is better than what he or she had already owned.

The other characteristics owned by green colour are young and not mature. Therefore, it is used in the colour idiom which is found in the datum (38):

Now, I'm a bit **green** about buying cars (38/SL).

In the example taken from the datum (38), *green* is associated with a person who is not experienced enough in certain field. As a result, he or she does not know how to do certain thing properly.

Green colour used in colour idioms could also show positive meaning as it is seen through the data (40) and (41) as follows:

The builders were given the **green light** to begin the tower (40/EC).

The colour idiom *green light* in the examples stated in the datum numbered (40) presents a positive meaning of permission to continue certain activity.

Based on the analysis, green could show both positive and negative meaning when it is used in colour idioms. The positive meaning implied in colour idioms

using green is related to the positive characteristics of green colour that could give a sense of renewal, self-control, and harmony. On the other hand, the negative meaning reflected by green like in *green with envy* is more related to the culture and convention of the user of the English language.

#### 1.4 The Meaning of Colour Idioms Using White

The colour white commonly reflects cleanliness, purity, and something good. It can be seen from some data which contain colour idioms using white colour. To make the analysis clear, we can see the data (38) and (39)

We told Grandma that her cake was delicious, which was actually a *white lie* (38/EC).

The datum (38) uses the colour idiom *white lie* which means telling a lie for the sake of goodness. It is clearly seen in the datum (38). Moreover, *white lie* could be interpreted as half truth or something which is not all true.

Actually, telling a lie is a bad deed. However, in some cases, people have to lie for something good. In this case, the colour white gives a positive meaning upon something which is naturally bad.

Despite good things related to white colour, it also reflects weakness. It can be seen from the datum (42):

But she was adamant and so in the end I decided to show the *white flag*, as it were (42/SL).

The idiom *white flag* has a meaning of surrender because one does not want to fight anymore. Definitely, it shows weakness. The nearly similar explanation could be drawn from the datum (41):

It had to be *white* at all costs (41/SL).

*White* in the datum (41) reflects weakness since it contains a meaning of cheap price. Therefore, white in the datum (41) reflects weakness. However, it still has positive meaning in which it shows a good quality.

### 1.5 The Meaning of Colour Idioms Using Black

There are two kinds of point of view about black colour, both negative and positive meaning. From the point of view of negative characteristics, black commonly describes bad things or something related to mystical things. Meanwhile, based on the positive point of view, black symbolizes something elegant, strong, and mature. To get a deeper analysis about black, some examples of the use of colour idioms using black colour are provided in this part.

The use of black to describe something negative could be seen in the data (26) as follows:

I put a *black mark* against his name — didn't think much of his reputation (26/SL).

The colour idiom *black mark* has a negative meaning of not trusting somebody because of his or her bad reputation.

Besides that, black is also used to describe the feeling of anger as it is seen in the datum (30):

But as soon as I mentioned the sort of age for the car I had in mind, he started to give me *black looks* — started to frown (30/SL).

*Black look* which occurs in data (30) means stare someone angrily. Thus *black* refers to anger.

Despite the negative meaning owned by black colour, it also has a positive meaning like in the datum (24):

The rules we gave the kids were *black and white*. No answering the phone or the door (24/EC).

The meaning of *black and white* in the sentence which occurs in the datum (24) is something which is fixed and clear.

As one of the main colours, black has various meanings when it is used in colour idioms. The negative and positive meanings of black occur in different context in which it is used.

### 1.6 The Meaning of Colour Idioms Using Brown

Just like green, brown is also considered as the colour of nature. It symbolizes earth and stability. The characteristics of brown colour are also reflected in the colour idioms in the data (33) and (34):

We saw a man in a *brown study* sitting in a small hut (33/EC).

The use of brown in the colour idiom *brown study* reflects the activity of someone who is in deep thought about something. Thus, it symbolizes stability.

As a natural colour, brown could describe such a condition which happens naturally. In other words, it happens because of the process of nature. To make it clear, the example is provided in the datum (34) as follows:

You see with the white there's *quite a bit of brown* (34/SL)

*Quite a bit of brown* has a meaning of the colour of rust. The process of rust is one of the natural phenomena. So, brown could be classified as one of the natural colours.

### 1.7 The Meaning of Colour Idioms Using Silver

Silver is such a colour that symbolizes royal things. Moreover, it also describes a good quality as it is often made jewelry. The characteristics of silver colour could be seen through the datum (36) as follows:

Keiko hasn't worked a day in her life. She was born with *a silver spoon* in her mouth (36/EC).

Silver colour in the colour idiom stated in the datum (36) reflects the royal status owned by someone as he or she was born in a royal family. Thus, silver is commonly described as one of the luxurious colours.

Such a good condition is also reflected by silver colour as it occurs in the datum (37):

But every cloud has *a silver lining* (37/SL).

The colour idiom using silver in the datum (37) is such a famous saying which means there is always a comforting or more hopeful side to a sad or difficult situation.

Based on the data, silver is used to describe something which has royal characteristics and good quality or condition. Furthermore, silver also reflects good hope.

### 1.8 The Meaning of Colour Idioms Using Golden

Similar to silver, golden is also a colour which is usually used to symbolize luxurious things due to its physical characteristics as a bright and shiny colour. Thus, it is commonly made expensive and valuable jewelry. Moreover, golden is considered more expensive than silver.

The use of golden in colour idioms is stated in the datum (38) below:

The models' conference was a *golden opportunity* for me to sell my beauty products (38/EC).

The meaning of the colour idiom *golden opportunity* is the best opportunity. Therefore, if someone gets a *golden opportunity*, he or she should take advantage from it to make progress in his or her life. Furthermore, in Chinese culture, golden symbolizes wealth and happiness so that it is commonly used as the colour of a palace or temple. Based on the fact, golden implies positive meaning.

### **1.9 The Meaning of Colour Idioms Using Yellow**

The bright colour of yellow shines optimism, happiness, and creative thoughts. Thus, yellow reflects such a bright future and good hope. Furthermore, it also stimulates energy.

On the contrary, the good characteristics of yellow are not reflected in the meaning of colour idiom using yellow in the datum (32):

It doesn't matter if you have a *yellow streak* (32/EC).

Yellow in the colour idiom in the datum (32) describes the meaning of coward which is not a good characteristic. Thus, the positive characteristics of yellow are totally changed into the negative meaning when the colour is used in the colour idiom.

### **1.10 The Meaning of Colour Idioms Using Pink**

Pink colour is usually related with something sentimental, romantic, and girly. It contains the characteristics of immaturity and cheerfulness.

The example of colour idiom using pink occurs in the datum (38):

My mom was *tickled pink* when my father brought roses home for her (38/EC).

From the example in the datum (38), we could describe the meaning of *tickled pink* as someone who is blushed because one feels so happy and sentimental. Thus, it reflects the physical characteristics of pink.

## **L. Conclusion**

The research is a kind of descriptive research which discusses about the meaning of colour idioms in English. To conduct the research, the library research is applied to get the valid data based on the topic of the research. Then, total sampling is also applied as the data are not in a great number, so that it is possible to analyze all the data.

Based on the result of the analysis, the meaning of colour idioms is related to the characteristics of the colour which is used in the idioms. However, the meaning derived from the colour idioms could be very various due to the context in which the colour idioms occur. 22 data out of 51 data reflect negative meanings, so it means they are about 43% of the total number of data. Meanwhile, 29 data out of 51 data contain positive meaning which mean 57% of the whole data.

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