

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE: THE CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS IN THE VIETNAMESE AND ENGLISH IDIOMS OF COLOURS

Bui Thi Nhi*

University of Finance and Marketing, Vietnam

*Corresponding author: bt.nhi@ufm.edu.vn; nhibui2009@gmail.com

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Abstract - This paper compares and contrasts five colours in both Vietnamese and English idioms to identify similarities and differences in the connotational meaning caused by cultural effects on their own languages. The meanings of idioms are not definitely related to grammatical rules or the lexical meaning of each word but are based on cultural features. In each culture, the meanings of colours have not only similarities but also differences. This paper clarifies the importance of culture in the language in terms of colours. That is, if one is unaware of the culture behind a language, language learners can misunderstand or distort target language meanings as evidenced by well-presented examples. Accordingly, the implication drawn is that learning any language means learning not only the grammar and the vocabulary of this language but also its own cultural elements.

Key words - Language; culture; contrastive analysis; connotational meaning; Vietnamese and English idioms of colours

1. Introduction

The relationship between language and culture has been a prime matter of concern over the last decades. Language is an integral part required for the establishment of culture and understanding culture is definitely an indispensable part of the language learning journey. It is learning the customs of society as well as the characteristics that distinguish this community from others. Taking part in conversations, people consciously or unconsciously show their identities, their belongings to a specific culture or group. By using language, people define their relationships with each other and identify themselves as part of a social group, implying that language is culture and culture is language.

Colours not only mean the description of green, red, violet or yellow based on linguistic meaning or a combination of blue and red or black and white but also feature various meaning nuances in different cultures. It is crystal clear that there are no similar languages to the same extent as the social reality. How the connotative meanings of colours in English and Vietnamese idioms are similar and different? What makes the connotative meanings of colours different? How is the relationship between culture and language? To understand this relationship, it is necessary to answer the first two questions. As a result, five colours such as black, white, red blue, green and are chosen in Vietnamese and English idioms to compare and contrast based on different sources from [1]-[4].

2. The research methods

The author analyzes and contrasts the definitions of and idioms of colours in English and Vietnamese to discover the similarities and differences of meanings in five colours (White, Black, Blue, Green, and Red). There are 120

samples of Vietnamese and English idioms and expressions in five colours collected, translated and analyzed. The samples are collected from different kinds of sources such as *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 8th Edition* [2]; *English-Vietnamese Dictionary* [3]; *Lac Viet mtd 9* [4]; *Collins English Dictionary* [6]; *Dictionary of English Language and Culture* [15]; *Color Wheel Pro-See Color Theory in Action*, [13]; N. Du, *The Tale of Kieu* [16] and from the films, folktales, daily-life conversations, and so on.

3. The relationship between language and culture

To fully understand it, the concept of each element should be clearly defined.

3.1. Definition of language

Language is an inventive product of human communication. From the very need to express the ideas of speakers and listeners to the very complicated and complex notions of abstract vocabulary items like love and peace, language turns to be an integral part of communication as [5] considers, language is the privileged medium in which people try to 'make sense' of things in the way that meaning is produced and exchanged, in the other words, language is a representational system.

Another definition is cited from [6] "A language is a structured system of communication. Language, in a broader sense, is the method of communication that involves the use of – particularly human – languages".

A deeper aspect viewed by [7] is "Languages, understood as the particular set of speech norms of a particular community, are also a part of the larger culture of the community that speaks them. Languages differ not only in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar, but also through having different "cultures of speaking". Humans use language as a way of signaling identity with one cultural group as well as differences from others. Even among speakers of one language, several different ways of using the language exist, and each is used to signal affiliation with particular subgroups within a larger culture. Linguists and anthropologists, particularly sociolinguists, ethnologists, and linguistic anthropologists have specialized in studying how ways of speaking vary between speech communities". As a result, Duranti shows that language has a close relationship with culture.

3.2. Definition of culture

The term "culture" refers to all the characteristics that a particular group of people learn to share in common [8], [9] defines culture as "the way of life and its manifestations

that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression".

In a broad sense, culture can be seen as the property of a community (the subject of culture); throughout the timeline of shaping and developing, that cultural subject has built up a gigantic collection of experiences and knowledge about the universe and humanity. Moreover, culture can be analyzed deeper into its inner values of organizing the community life and celebrating individual life. The other side of culture reflects the way the community reacts to the natural environment and other communities.

3.3. The relationship between language and culture

It should be noted that language and culture are closely linked to each other and culture is largely present everywhere and language is an essential means to convey the cultural elements. Much research on this relationship has been done and has attracted many scholars all over the world.

[10] states that "no language can exist unless it is steeped in the context of culture; and no culture can exist which does not have at its centre, the structure of natural language". Sharing the same idea with Lotman, [11] emphasizes the importance of this double consideration by asserting that language is "the heart within the body of culture," the survival of both aspects being interdependent. The close relationship between language and culture is supported by in [12], who says, "Cultural meanings are intricately woven into the texture of the language" (pp.1).

It can be said that not only language conveys direct meanings by words and structures, but also it carries the culture of its speakers. The ideal and complex relationship between language and culture shows us that language is closely related to culture that influences each other, develops together and ultimately forms what it is to be human. The interaction with language represents interaction with the culture represented by it. Thus, "Language communicates through culture and culture also communicates through language". Understanding cultural differences and the knowledge of socio-pragmatic rules of other cultures facilitates social communication and enhances friendliness or at least minimizes confrontation.

4. Contrastive analysis on the connotational meaning of colours in English and Vietnamese idioms

As mentioned above, language and culture have an interdependent relationship, and language is strongly influenced by its culture as the core value of that culture. It is clear that no culture is the same as other cultures. As a result, the connotative meaning of words in each language is both similar and different due to the effects of its culture.

Five basic colours in life mentioned in terms of the connotational meaning in English and Vietnamese idioms are black, white, blue, red, and green. Through the comparison between the two languages, cultural elements have significant effects on Vietnamese perception of colours to the understanding of the meaning of colours in English idioms and it clarifies the close relationship between language and culture.

4.1. White

According to [13], White is associated with light, goodness, innocence, purity, and virginity. It is considered to be the color of perfection.

White means safety, purity, and cleanliness. As opposed to black, white usually has a positive connotation. White can represent a successful beginning. In heraldry, white depicts faith and purity.

In advertising, white is associated with coolness and cleanliness because it is the color of snow. White is an appropriate color for charitable organizations; angels are usually imagined wearing white clothes. White is associated with hospitals, doctors, and sterility, so you can use white to suggest safety when promoting medical products. White is often associated with low weight, low-fat food, and dairy products.

Similarities:

The white colour features mostly positive meanings in both languages. According to [14], there is a special relationship between the white and the light. The white is the colour of cloud, snow and morning sunlight, so it symbolizes purity, innocence. The white also denotes good things, honesty, purity and innocence in English with the images of angles in white or white weddings or paleness (of a person) as a result of emotion or illness.

Some English idioms convey these nuances such as:

"a white lie" (a harmless or small lie, esp. one told in order to avoid hurting sb): (*lời nói dối vô hại, lời nói dối ngọt ngào*);

"a white knight" (a person or an organization that rescues a company from being bought by another company at too low a price): (*vị cứu tinh (tài chính) người/tổ chức cứu nguy cho một doanh nghiệp sắp vỡ nợ*);

"white-collar" (working in the office, connected with work in offices), Ex: *white-collar worker/ jobs (nhân viên/công việc văn phòng)*;

Many Vietnamese idioms also convey this nuance as follows:

"*thanh thiên bạch nhật*" (in broad daylight);

"*thanh bạch*" (pure and upright; poor but honest);

"*trong trắng*" (pure in 'pure conscience', virginity);

"*trắng như, trắng bệch*", (*She went as white as a sheet when she heard the news*);

"*Tâm hồn trẻ con như tờ giấy trắng*" (tâm hồn trẻ con rất trong sáng, trắng tinh như tờ giấy chưa nhem mực, cũng như chưa bị vắn đục do những cái sầy), (children are very innocent, pure).

Differences:

In some Eastern countries such as China or Vietnam, white still denotes the negative meanings. As a result, the white depicts illness, sadness, mourning in such Vietnamese idioms as *màu trắng khăn tang* (the white of mourning headband); *trắng như ma* (as white as a ghost); *tay trắng* (bare-handed); *có thể mới trắng mắt ra* (sững sờ do nhận ra một sự thật đau xót nào đó) (*being shocked when knowing the truth, especially the truth has a*

negative effect on the listener); *đêm trắng* (a sleepless night).

4.2. Black

From the perspective of [13], Black is associated with power, elegance, formality, death, evil, and mystery.

Black is a mysterious color associated with fear and the unknown (black holes). It usually has a negative connotation (blacklist, black humor, 'black death'). Black denotes strength and authority; it is considered to be a very formal, elegant, and prestigious color (black tie, black Mercedes). In heraldry, black is the symbol of grief.

Similarities:

In both Vietnamese and English idioms, the black colour features a negative meaning and the colour of darkness. According to [15], black denotes despair, death, fear, and evil force in English-speaking countries. In fairy tales, young children are frightened by the witch with a black coat or the Reaper with a black long overcoat. As a result, the black conveys the nuances of evil and darkness, which are expressed through the English idioms cited in [2], [3] as follows:

black mark: an indication that somebody has done something bad that others disapprove of (*vết đen, vết nhơ*). The public scandal left a black mark on his career.

black market: the illegal buying and selling of goods or foreign money, esp. when trade in such things is officially controlled (*chợ đen, thị trường buôn bán bất hợp pháp*). Black market goods.

Black sheep: a person who is strongly disapproved of by other members of her or his family (*người bị thành viên khác trong gia đình hay trong tập thể coi như nổi ô nhục hoặc một phần tử lạc loài, con chiên ghe*).

Blacklist: a list of people who are considered unacceptable by an organization or a government (*danh sách những người bị coi là nguy hiểm hoặc cần phải bị trừng trị, danh sách đen*). A blacklist of suspected terrorists.

A black day/week: a day/week full of sad or terrible events (*ngày/tuần đen tối, tức là toàn sự kiện đau buồn, không mong đợi*).

The same nuances of the meanings of the black colour can be found in Vietnamese idioms in such examples as

“*đôi trắng thay đen*”: (double-tongued, treacherous, false- hearted), (tráo trở, lật lọng; tốt xấu, thật giả đảo lộn). This idiom is found in Kieu’s story by Nguyen Du, “*Trong tay đã sẵn đồng tiền, Dầu lòng đôi trắng thay đen khó gì!*” [16];

gân mực thì đen gân đèn thì sáng: (who keeps company with the wolf will learn to howl); *thế lực hắc ám*, (dark force); *đen trắng phân minh; quỹ đen* (*slush fund*)

Differences:

Whereas the black colour has more different nuances of the meanings in English which depict full of anger (*black words*), “*as black as thunder*” means “*mặt tối sầm*” to express angry feeling with a threatening- looking face, for example, “What’s Mary angry about? Her face is as *black*

as thunder”;

a secret “*a CIA black operator*”; *người hoạt động bí mật của tổ chức CIA*

(of humour) intended to be funny but about tragic or terrible things, “*black humour, a black comedy*” (*hài kịch châm biếm những thói hư tật xấu*), the Vietnamese language does not denote those above -mentioned nuances.

In contrast, according to Vietnamese culture, black denotes misfortune, bad luck conveyed by the following idioms: “*vận đen*” (*misfortune*); “*phận đời đen bạc*”; “*đen bạc đồ tình*” (*Lucky at cards, unlucky in love*).

4.3. Blue

Based on [13], Blue is the color of the sky and sea. It is often associated with depth and stability. It symbolizes trust, loyalty, wisdom, confidence, intelligence, faith, truth, and heaven.

Blue is considered beneficial to the mind and body. It slows human metabolism and produces a calming effect. Blue is strongly associated with tranquility and calmness. In heraldry, blue is used to symbolize piety and sincerity.

Similarities:

Blue is considered the colour of the clear sky, river or the sea in sunlight. It is certainly the water that is viewed as the basis of life and, drawn up by the clouds, forms the deep sea. The sky gives space and peace and serenity. Consequently, the blue creates a feeling of peace, serenity or quietness. Blue has good effects on our spirit because it can make our heartbeats and breathing rate more stable and bring us a peaceful and calm feeling, which leads to relaxation and rest. As a result, the blue colour features positive meanings in the languages. The images of the blue sky, rivers or paddy fields have a comfortable, peaceful impression on people in the Vietnamese language such as “*màu xanh hòa bình*”, “*tuổi xanh*”.

Differences:

Blue, however, features a negative meaning in the English language, which expresses sadness, and depression. Here are some examples:

Don't feel so blue (*sad/depressed*).

The blues (feelings of deep sadness or depression) (*nỗi buồn, nỗi thất vọng ghê gớm*), ex: *He had an attack of the blues when he failed the final exam.*

once in a blue moon (very rarely or never) (rất hiếm khi xảy ra, một lần trong một thời gian rất dài). Ex: *I only have seen her once in a blue moon since she settled down abroad.*

scream, etc blue murder (to protest wildly and noisily) (*kêu la ãm ã, bủ lu bủ loa để phản đối điều gì*). Ex: *The union yelled blue murder when one of its members was sacked.*

sb's blue-eyed boy (a person treated with special favour by sb) (*cục cưng, vật yêu quý*). Ex: *He is a manager's blue-eyed boy.*

blue baby (a baby whose skin is blue at birth because of a fault in the heart) (*Em bé có nước da tái xanh từ lúc mới sinh do một khuyết tật của tim*).

blue blood (noble birth), a *blue-blooded family* (from royal or noble family) (*gia đình quý tộc, gia đình hoàng gia*).

blue-collar (relating to people doing practical work or work requiring physical strength) (*liên quan đến những người lao động chân tay*). Ex: *Blue-collar workers/jobs*

The Vietnamese language does not denote the above-mentioned nuances; however, it has different meanings which do not exist in English. The following examples indicate this very clearly.

“*Xanh như lá, bạc như vôi*” is very familiar to Vietnamese people, similar to another Vietnamese idiom, “*Yêu ai yêu cả đường đi, ghét ai ghét cả tông chi họ hàng*”, which means that when two people love each other, they fall head over heels in love with each other and nothing can separate them or stop them from loving each other, but unfortunately when they break up, they are badly-treated and have hatred for each other. “*Xanh như lá, bạc như vôi*” may be equivalent to “*Love me, love my dog*” in English.

“*Giận xanh mặt*” means that a person is very furious and cannot control himself/ herself. This sentence describes a person with a very angry face and in an indignant state.

According to Vietnamese culture, the blue colour symbolizes hope, optimism and bright future, therefore, the phrase “*Tình xanh*” (so-called *hopeful love*) in Vietnamese means happiness of love or has a happy ending for two lovers whereas “*Love is blue*” (*Tình buồn/Tình sầu*) refers to sorrow and suffering of love. As a result, this proves a world of difference between the nuance of the meaning in both languages.

4.4. Green

From the aspect [13], Green is the color of nature. It symbolizes growth, harmony, freshness, and fertility. Green has strong emotional correspondence with safety. Dark green is also commonly associated with money.

Green has great healing power. It is the most restful color for the human eye; it can improve vision. Green suggests stability and endurance. Sometimes green denotes lack of experience; for example, a 'greenhorn' is a novice. In heraldry, green indicates growth and hope. Green, as opposed to red, means safety; it is the color of free passage in road traffic.

Similarities:

The green colour has three main similarities in the nuance of the meaning in both languages.

Firstly, the green is considered the sign of life and the symbol of nature. The green is the colour of grass or the leaves of most plants and trees, appearing much in nature. For that reason, it symbolizes vitality and nature in both English and Vietnamese cultures, depicted clearly in the following examples:

green fingers/ green thumb (a person is good at making plants grow) (*có khiếu trồng trọt*). Ex: *My mother has green fingers*.

green politics (concerning environmental protection, supporting environmental protection as a political principle), (*chính sách thiên về bảo vệ môi trường*).

green belt (an area of open land around the city where building is strictly controlled) (*vành đai cây xanh*).

The Vietnamese language also shares the same expression such as *thành phố xanh* (green city); *môi trường xanh* (green environment); *Chiến dịch mùa hè xanh* (green summer campaign); *hành tinh xanh* (green planet); *lối sống xanh* (green lifestyle)

Secondly, green implies fear and illness. The green is used to express fatigue, weary pale countenance in English, for example, *the passengers turned quite green with sea sickness* (*Hành khách tái nhợt do say sóng*). Similarly, the Vietnamese idioms regarding the green have the same nuance of the meaning in the example as follows: “*Xanh như tàu lá chuối*”; “*Xanh như đất nhái*”; “*Mặt xanh nanh vàng*”, “*Xanh búng xanh beo*”.

Thirdly, the green expresses safety or permission. “*Green light*” conveys permission to start or to continue with a project, etc. in English, for example, *the government has decided to give the green light to the plan*. “*Green light*” also has the same meaning as “*bật đèn xanh*” in Vietnamese. “*Green man*” (a figure of a person that has a green light shining through it at traffic lights in Britain, (*tín hiệu/ hình ảnh người màu xanh sáng lên*) ở đèn giao thông cho phép người đi bộ băng qua đường một cách an toàn), ex: *the green man lights up when the traffic has stopped, to show people that it is safe to cross the road*.

Differences:

The green colour describes more other nuances of the meaning in English culture which do not exist in Vietnamese one. Green expresses inexperience and immaturity, for example, *the new trainees are still very green*. (*Những người được tập huấn mới còn non/ thiếu kinh nghiệm*); *green troops*, (*quân đội chưa qua huấn luyện*); *green hand* (*lính mới*). In addition, green means “full of envy, jealousy”, for instance, “*What a fabulous car! I'm green with envy!*” (*Tôi ghen tị quá đi*); *green-eyed monster* (envy, jealousy), (*sự đố kị, ghen tị, ghen tuông*), ex: *He has been suffering from the green-eyed monster ever since his girl friend began going out with someone else*. (*Hắn ta đang ghen kể từ khi bạn gái hắn đi chơi với anh chàng khác*). There is a common idiom in English regarding envy: “*Grass is always greener on the other side*” “*đứng núi này trông núi nọ*”.

4.5. Red

Red is the color of fire and blood, so it is associated with energy, war, danger, strength, power, and determination as well as passion, desire, and love.

Red is a very emotionally intense color. It enhances human metabolism, increases respiration rate, and raises blood pressure. It has very high visibility, which is why stop signs, stoplights, and fire equipment are usually painted red. In heraldry, red is used to indicate courage. It is a color found in many national flags.

Red brings text and images to the foreground, so it is used as an accent color to stimulate people to make quick decisions. In advertising, red is often used to evoke erotic feelings (red lips, red nails, red-light districts, 'Lady in Red', etc). Red is widely used to indicate danger (high voltage signs, traffic lights). This color is also commonly

associated with energy, so you can use it when promoting energy drinks, games, cars, items related to sports and high physical activity [13].

Similarities:

The red colour expresses love or emotion in both cultures. The following examples prove the clear similarities.

“*red-blooded*” (full of strength and energy, often sexual energy) (*mạnh mẽ cường tráng, đầy ham muốn trong mối quan hệ tình cảm*);

“*red-light district*” (*phố đèn đỏ, chốn lầu xanh*);

“*paint the town red*” (go to a lot of bars, clubs, etc. and to enjoy yourself), (*đi ra ngoài và tận hưởng dịp vui về nồng nhiệt trong các quán rượu, hộp đêm, ăn mừng*);

“*like a red rag to a bull*” (to cause someone to be enraged), (có khả năng gây ra sự bức bối, giận dữ, bạo lực, v.v.), ex: *Her remarks were like a red rag to a bull: he was furious with her*;

“*to see red*” (to be angry or aggressive) (*giận đỏ mặt*);

“*to have red ears / a red face*” (to be embarrassed), (*ngượng chín mặt*);

“*as red as a beetroot*” (*mặt đỏ như gấc* (vì lúng túng).

Also, the Vietnamese language has a lot of idioms regarding this colour to describe emotion and angry feelings such as “*giận đỏ mặt*”; “*đỏ mặt tía tai*”; “*mặt đỏ bừng bừng*”; “*mặt đỏ như Trương Phi*”.

Red also symbolizes danger or warning. Much research shows that red has physical effects on people, which increases breathing rate, blood pressure and causes tension. Consequently, red is used to draw one’s attraction and to depict hazard in languages. There are many English idioms conveying such implications, for instance, “*to raise a red flag*” (to signal that something is problematic), (*cờ đỏ dùng làm biểu trưng cho sự nguy hiểm, thí dụ trên đường bộ, đường sắt, v.v.*); In Vietnam, red is considered danger-warning signals, so the prohibition road signs, red light at level crossing, alarm buttons and so on are painted red to warn danger or to draw attention “to stop”.

In addition, red is used to call attention, conveying this nuance in many following examples. “*Red carpet*” (a strip of red carpet laid on the ground for an important visitor to walk on or when he or she arrives) (*thảm đỏ*), ex: *We must give our guests the red carpet treatment.* (*Chúng ta phải trải thảm đỏ tiếp đón khách của mình*); “*a red-letter day*” (an important day, or a day that you will remember, because of something good that happened then (*ngày vui, ngày lễ*).

Differences

In Vietnamese culture, the red colour represents happiness, good fortune, success and love. Red is considered a lucky colour because demons and evil spirits of legends are afraid of the red colour. As a result, red appears in most Vietnamese celebrations such as in wedding ceremonies, company anniversaries, longevity wishing ceremonies, etc. Especially on wedding ceremonies, red is believed to bring happiness; therefore, many wedding decorations such as dual-happiness words,

flowers, curtains, envelopes of invitation cards and costumes such as *áo dài cưới* (*traditional wedding ao dai*) are in red. Besides, on special occasions such as Tet holidays, red is considered to bring good fortune, a prosperous year, hence red parallel sentences, lanterns, lucky-money envelopes are in red. In addition, red roses represent a strong passion in love. Many Vietnamese idioms convey that nuance of the meaning such as “*số đỏ như son*”; “*gặp vận đỏ*”; “*đen bạc đỏ tình*” and so on.

In English culture, red depicts some other meanings which do not appear in Vietnamese one, as evidenced by some examples as follows:

“*to be in the red*” (to be losing money, from the accounting habit of writing deficits and losses in red ink) (*nợ tiền ngân hàng vì tiêu xài quá số tiền có trong tài khoản*.);

“*to catch someone red-handed*” (in the act of doing something wrong, such with blood on his hands after a murder or poaching game), (*bắt quả tang*);

“*Red tape*” (official rules that seem more complicated than necessary and prevent things from being done quickly, (*nạn quan liêu*), ex: *Procedures hedged about with red tape.* (*các thủ tục rắc rối vì tệ quan liêu*);

“*a red herring*” (an unimportant fact, idea, event, etc. that takes people’s attention away from the important ones), (*đánh trống lảng*), ex: *He deliberately threw a red herring into the conversation.*;

“*to be shown the red card*”, (*bị sa thải*). Ex: *He is shown the red card because disclosing the company’s secret information.*

5. Conclusion

Through contrastive analysis on the connotational meanings of colours in English and Vietnamese idioms, the findings indicate the similarities and differences between the two languages. The differences in the connotative meaning of colours are caused by the different cultural nuances of the two languages.

The relationship between language and culture is interdependent. Each language has its own cultural effects which define its meaning nuances. It is obvious that language is more than a mere system of sounds and grammar rules. A certain language always exists in close relation to its socio-cultural context. The fact is that the meanings of idioms are not definitely related to grammatical rules or the lexical meaning of each word but are based on cultural features. If one is unaware of the culture behind a language, it is possible for language learners to misunderstand or distort target language meanings as evidenced by the above-presented examples.

“*Love is blue*” is translated as “*Tình xanh*” in Vietnamese, for not capturing the cultural element in the meaning of the word “*blue*” and resting only on the linguistic meaning. In fact, it should be understood “*Tình buồn*”, because both are quite different in terms of cultural nuance. The former obviously makes us think of the happiness of love whereas the latter refers to sorrow and suffering of love. Another example is that mourning is black in English but

white in Vietnamese. In addition, “*black humour, a black comedy*” should be understood satirical comedy (*hài kịch châm biếm những thói hư tật xấu*) not (*hài kịch đen tối*) (*dirty comedy*). Similarly, “*She has been suffering from the green-eyed monster*” should be translated into “*Bà ấy có máu ghen Hoạn Thư*” (a character in Kieu’s story by Nguyen Du. Consequently, the connotative meaning of colours in English and Vietnamese idioms not only are relied on linguistic meaning but also cultural nuances.

It can be said that the culture and language are intertwined and cannot be set apart. If effective communication with a foreign audience is successful, and linguistic skills for the target language are improved, language learners must be aware of their cultural nuances. As a result, teaching and learning the language does not mean only focusing on grammar and vocabulary, which must tackle both the culture and language side by side. There are many similarities and differences in connotative meanings of colours between English and Vietnamese idioms; therefore, language learners need to be well aware of this in using the language. That is, learners ought to keep away the word-for-word translation while translating these lexemes as they are differently understood in each language, by people in each nation.

This paper only analyses and contrast the Vietnamese and English idioms of five colours. It should be better to have further research on other colours to discover the similarities and differences in meanings of colours based on the two different cultures. Language education should not focus on only teaching vocabulary and grammatical structures, that is, cultural elements should be paid much attention to students’ lessons.

The teachers should integrate cultural content into language lessons, including folktales, songs, poems, literature, and traditional customs. This allows students to learn about cultural practices, beliefs, and values while practicing language skills. Besides, it is better to provide authentic materials such as newspapers, magazines, movies, TV shows, and websites from the target culture. This exposes students to real-life language usage and cultural contexts, helping them understand cultural nuances and idiomatic expressions. Furthermore, Teachers need to encourage open cultural discussions about cultural topics, allowing students to share their perspectives, ask questions, and learn from each other’s experiences. This promotes cultural awareness, tolerance, and empathy among students. Moreover, the teachers had better organize cultural events, such as festivals, food tastings, guest speakers, or field trips to cultural institutions like museums or ethnic neighborhoods. These hands-on experiences immerse students in the target culture and provide opportunities for cultural exploration and interaction. On the other hand, students should be provided with multicultural perspectives by exploring the cultural diversity within the target language community and comparing it to students’ own cultural backgrounds. This encourages critical thinking and broadens students’ understanding of cultural similarities and differences.

By implementing these strategies, teachers can enrich language learning experiences, promote cultural understanding, and empower students to become effective communicators in multicultural contexts, and avoid regretful misunderstandings when learning and using both the Vietnamese and English languages.

This Infographic is made by GraphicSprings



Figure 1. The Big Eight Brand Colors - Psychology Behind Colors (Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/the-big-eight-brand-colors-psychology-behind-colors--476255729350293664/>)

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