

So will English follow the history of Latin and then eventually become a dead language? Well, that is for our descendants to find out. What's happening to English now may be its own thing: it's mingling with so many more local languages than Latin ever did. Soon, when native English speakers travel abroad, one of the languages they'll have to learn may be their own.

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## УДК 81.013

*A.P. Ісаєва, студентка гр. 101-ФМ*

*А.К. Павельєва, викладач*

*Полтавський національний технічний  
університет імені Юрія Кондратюка*

## RED-COLOUR IDIOMS AND THEIR USAGE IN THE MODERN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Colours have received much attention in linguistics because of their apparently universal character. All humans with normal vision can see colours, and it follows that names will be given in order to make reference to them. But not all cultures name all colours, and the ways in which the colour spectrum itself is divided changes from language to language, culture to culture.

Colour words are loaded with attributive, connotative meanings, many of which are realised in conventional linguistic expressions such as to feel blue, to be in the pink, and to see red. The use of such phrases on an everyday basis reinforces the currency of the connotative meanings which they assume in particular cultural and linguistic settings, and the phrases themselves are often cited as evidence of the existence of colours' connotative meanings.

Of all the basic colours, *red* is the one that is most favoured in the coining of metaphorical idioms in English. The ease with which red is perceived must surely contribute to its ubiquity in the language, and its high frequency predisposes it for polysemy.

Setting aside such abstract considerations, however, the very fact that red is the colour of blood. As far as emotions are concerned, the English use red to refer to anger, embarrassment, shame, as well as physical exertion. Anger causes blood to surge to the head, making us red in the face, go red, *be red with anger/rage*, and it clouds our vision to make us *see red*. The English prefer the pink-red-purple range to express variation in intensity of the emotion.

Extreme anger can lead to crimes of passion, and murderous intent clearly lies at the origin of the phrase *to catch someone red-handed*, bloody hands serving as evidence of the perpetrator's guilt.

As Itten observes [2, p. 134], red is also the colour of revolution, because of its links with political fervour and spilled blood. In this way, the connotations extend outwards from anger of the individual to that of the collective, giving us the origins of red as the colour of revolutionaries, most notably manifested in the Communist red flag and reds. On a less revolutionary note, someone who goes out *to paint the town red* intends to cause (metaphorical) havoc in the course of enjoying an evening of pubbing and clubbing.

Anger is not restricted to humans, however. The apparent brutality of the animal kingdom, and the fight for the survival of the fittest, is expressed by red in tooth and claw; the traces of blood serving as a grim reminder of the death that is necessary if a carnivorous animal is to eat and survive. And the folk belief that bulls are angered (*see red*) by the colour red is recalled in the British and American equivalent expressions *like a red rag to a bull* and *like a red flag before a bull*.

Red as the colour of danger and warnings is related to the ease with which the colour is perceived. Thus *a red flag* can be hoisted or waved to indicate danger, such as rough seas on a bathing beach; and *a red alert* is the most serious of all alerts in military parlance.

Unrelated to the emotions is the adoption of red as the colour of authority, importance and royalty and, by extension, bureaucracy. Importance is conferred by rolling out the *red carpet* for someone – literally giving him/her a [right] royal welcome. Red tape is culturally restricted to the United Kingdom, as it refers to the pinkish-red ribbon which is traditionally used to bind official documents, and has taken on the extended (negative) meaning of overly constrictive bureaucracy.

Another metonymically-motivated meaning associated with red is found in finance, where credits are notated in black ink, and debits in red, the two distinct colours serving to differentiate and highlight the contrasting sides of the account. The expressions *in(to) the red* and *out of the red* have arisen as a result of this practice. Bleed red ink highlights not only the debt, but parallels it with the seeping away of a company's metaphorical life-blood – its finances Red ink was also used to indicate festivities in the ecclesiastical calendar, thus red letter days have no etymological connection with stamps and envelopes, but refer instead to the metonym whereby festivities were annotated in red.

*Red herrings* do not exploit colour symbolism, but, like white elephants, are metonymically motivated and culturally restricted. Smoked herring, which are a reddish-brown in colour, give off a strong odour, and are used to put blood-hounds of the scent of their quarry; so by extension, a piece of misleading information is a red herring. The proverb *red sky at night, shepherds' delight* is based on observation of meteorological phenomena, and again has no symbolic or connotative reference to the colour as such.

Colour words are an interesting and extensively studied lexical set. Their high degree of salience makes them semantically flexible, as they are easily and immediately comprehended. Colour terms can in fact cover a surprisingly wide range of the chromatic spectrum, and red-colour words are among the most often and widely used.

*Literature*

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**УДК 81'243**

*А.В. Іщенко, студентка гр. 107-Б*

*Н.Л. Орініч, викладач*

*Полтавський національний технічний  
університет імені Юрія Кондратюка*

## **SOME FACTS ON SCOTTISH GAELIC ORIGIN AND HISTORY AND IT'S DISTRIBUTION AREA NOWADAYS**

Scottish Gaelic (Scottish Gaelic: Gàidhlig) is a Celtic language native to Scotland. A member of the Goidelic branch of the Celtic languages, Scottish Gaelic, like Modern Irish and Manx, developed out of Middle Irish, and thus descends ultimately from Primitive Irish.

The 2001 UK Census showed that a total of 58,652 (1.2 % of the Scottish population aged over three years old) in Scotland had some Gaelic ability at that time, with the Outer Hebrides being the main stronghold of the language. The census results indicate a decline of 7,300 Gaelic speakers from 1991. Despite this decline, revival efforts exist and the number of younger speakers of the language has increased.

Scottish Gaelic is not an official language of the European Union, or of the United Kingdom, which does not have any de jure official languages. However, it is classed as an autochthonous language under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, which the UK government has ratified. In addition, the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 gave official recognition to the language and established an official language development body - Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

Outside of Scotland, dialects of the language known as Canadian Gaelic exist in Canada on Cape Breton Island and isolated areas of the Nova Scotia mainland. This variety has around 2000 speakers, amounting to 1.3 % of the population of Cape Breton Island.

Aside from Scottish Gaelic or Scots Gaelic the language may also be referred to simply as Gaelic. Scottish Gaelic should not be confused with Scots, which refers to the Anglic language variety traditionally spoken in the Lowlands of Scotland. Prior to the 15th century, the Anglic speech of the Lowlands was known as Inglis ("English"), with Gaelic being called Scottis ("Scottish"). From the late 15th century, however, it became increasingly common to refer to Scottish Gaelic as Erse ("Irish") and the Lowland vernacular as Scottis. Today however the word Erse in reference to Scottish Gaelic is considered pejorative.