

COLLOCATION AND CONNOTATION:

***A Corpus-Based Investigation Of Colour Words
In English And Italian***

by
Gillian Susan Philip

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To

M&D, M&B, and Ame

and to ENEL, who made the end so memorable

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Abstract

Many linguistic expressions are constructed around colour words: ‘see red’, ‘green with envy’, ‘whiter than white’. They appear to confirm the existence of connotative meanings, and are often cited in commentaries regarding connotative meaning. But to what extent does the functional linguistic use of these expressions correspond to their etymology? This study examines such colour-word expressions using authentic, naturally-occurring data drawn from general reference corpora in English and Italian.

The corpus evidence turns theoretical linguistic description on its head. Those expressions that are said to prove the existence of connotative meanings do nothing of the sort. In communicative acts, they are chosen for their pragmatic value, not their compositional semantic content, and display the unmistakable signs of delexicalisation. However, connotative meaning does find its way into language in use: it abounds in the many and various innovative expressions based upon those delexicalised canonical forms.

It is in translation that the full implications of delexicalisation and relexicalisation come to the fore. The realisation that conventional language is essentially delexicalised encourages the translator to work mainly with pragmatic, functional meaning. This prioritises the translation of meaning over word-form, resulting in a more faithful transmission of semantic content from one language to another.

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0 INTRODUCTION

0.1 Background

It is a commonplace that colours evoke connotative meanings. Languages are full of colour word expressions which allude to senses that lie well beyond the literal extensions of colour denotation: ‘green with envy’, ‘to have the blues’, ‘see red’. But do these conventional linguistic expressions actually express the meanings that lie at their etymological heart?

This study stems from a desire to account for the presence and use of connotative colour meaning in language use. Although it is possible to discover the origins of colour word expressions and the connotative meanings that they originate from, understanding what semantic values the colour words actually supply within these phrases in natural discourse is not such a straightforward matter. Can it rightly be claimed, for example, that the use of the phrase ‘out of the blue’ necessarily evokes the relation ‘blue = sky’? If someone is said to be ‘caught red-handed’, is blood actually involved?

Traditional research into figurative and connotative meaning has tended to focus heavily on etymology in assessing current meaning: something of an anomaly, as it mixes up the synchronic and diachronic aspects of language. The resulting analysis often results in an amalgam of unverifiable conjecture and implication alongside the scientific proper. An investigation into the meanings of colour words in current language use requires that analysis be carried out from a synchronic standpoint. For this reason general reference corpora have been chosen as the data source for this research. The use of corpora allows the meaning of language to be assessed on the basis of usage and pragmatics, rather than etymology. It can

therefore give information about language as “meaning-making activity” (Halliday 1992: 15), and not merely language as theoretical ideal.

0.2 This study

Any investigation into connotative meaning must start off by defining what those meanings are, and this Thesis is no exception. Chapter 1 takes the form of a wide-ranging overview of colour meaning from antiquity to the present day, spanning a wide range of disciplines. It offers historical-philosophical, aesthetic, anthropological, psychological and popular viewpoints, each of which sheds a different light on the topic of meaning in relation to colour words.

Chapter 2 focuses on the ways in which figurative language has been accounted for in the literature. It starts off with an investigation into different definitions of literal meaning, and establishing where literal meaning can be said to end and figurative begin. Once the principal types of non-literal meaning have been introduced, the ways in which figurative language is interpreted and processed are discussed. The various stances represented, which are predominantly psycholinguistic but also include views from cognitive linguistics, are then compared to the neo-Firthian outlook. This approach to linguistic analysis differs from the others presented in that it assesses meaning from the point of view of its pragmatic function rather than as an abstract and theoretical system.

Chapter 3 deals with the methodology adopted in the analysis of the corpus data in this research. This includes a description of the tools used to access and process the data, and a detailed description and comparison of the corpora used. The composition of the data set, and

justifications for inclusion and exclusion of conventional expressions in the two languages under study, are fully set out in this section. The methods for retrieving innovative and other non-standard forms of the conventional expressions in the data set are also demonstrated.

The results of the analysis form the content of Chapters 4-7. In the first instance, Chapter 4 recapitulates the literature presented in Chapters 1 and 2. There is discussion of the frequency of occurrence of colour words in relation to anthropological studies of colour term recognition. This is complemented by an illustration of prototypical colour recognition as manifested in linguistic structures, especially similes. The chapter closes with a demonstration of the apparent links between colour word expressions and the connotative meanings ascribed to them. With the exception of the subsection concerning prototypical colour recognition, this chapter deals exclusively with decontextualised canonical forms of the expressions. This is necessary in order to highlight the received meanings of the expressions as they appear in reference works and in the conscious language repertoire of the native speaker. Successive chapters deal exclusively with data drawn from general reference corpora.

Chapters 5 and 6 are complementary, and illustrate a progression from canonical to innovative forms of the colour word expressions. Chapter 5 investigates the notion of paradigmatic choice in three case studies, the results of which demonstrate that the meaning of figurative expressions is largely determined by differentiation of one expression from the other on the paradigmatic axis and not, as might be supposed, as a result of compositionality. It is argued that the choice to use a colour-word expression operates quite independently of any desire to use a colour word and the connotations that it can evoke. It is demonstrated that, rather than being governed by saliency, the phraseological units are delexicalised to a very great extent, and that it is the “extended unit of meaning” (Sinclair 1996: 75) that determines the selection

of one near-synonym over another. The extended unit of meaning extends beyond the boundary of the canonical form and well into the surrounding verbal context (cotext), incorporating features pertinent to the context of situation to which the expression relates.

The remainder of Chapter 5 consists of the effects of variation in canonical forms and their cotexts, which together make up the extended unit of meaning. This is further developed in Chapter 6 whose focus is the variation of colour words within the colour-word expressions and their cotexts. This section shows how the process of delexicalisation can be reversed by means of changes to the canonical forms, as variation allows connotative meanings to be activated as a kind of linguistic special effect.

Chapter 7 deals with the translation of colour words, and builds on the analytical processes and results presented in Chapters 5 and 6. Existing approaches to translation – both traditional and corpus-driven – are discussed in this chapter, and their strengths and weaknesses evaluated. Tognini Bonelli's (1996a) theoretical model for corpus-driven translation is adapted and extended to take account of the role of paradigmatic selection and the formation of units of meaning within paradigmatic sets. This new outlook on the translation process is illustrated in detail through an extended case study and a series of shorter examples. The intention of this chapter is to prove that, contrary to traditional translation doctrine, figurative language is not a 'special case' necessitating its own, specially modified theory of translation, but rather that it can and should be incorporated into any standard theory. The role of delexicalisation is seen to be central not only in the treatment of conventional language (whether literal or non-literal), but also insofar as it sets the benchmark against which novel and innovative language use must be judged. The chapter concludes with a practical

demonstration of how innovative language use can be translated accurately and effectively without the need to resort to any specially adapted theory of translation.

This investigation into the pragmatic meaning of colour words involves the analysis of a wide variety of conventional fixed expressions and collocations in two languages, with a view to accounting for the existence, distribution and extent of connotative colour meaning. While it makes no claim to describe the realisation of all connotative meaning in all languages, in offering a comprehensive treatment of one core semantic group it makes some significant observations about what actually happens in the two languages under study, and thus provides the basis for some general hypotheses regarding the nature of figurative and connotative language.

1 COLOUR MEANING IN ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC

SOURCES

*A noir, E blanc, I rouge, U vert, O bleu: voyelles
Je dirai quelque jour vos naissances latentes...*
(Rimbauld, *Voyelles*)

1.1 Introduction

Colour is a subject that has attracted attention since the very earliest times. Its manifestation and essence are discussed by Aristotle who himself cites earlier sources; the origins of colour symbolism go so far back in time that it is impossible to ascertain where they came from. As an object of study in the field of optics, colour has been studied extensively since Newton. More modern still are its applications in experimental and clinical psychology (see 1.3), most notably in the effect it has on behavioural patterns, and in the study of synæsthesia, and also in the spin-offs created by these in the wide-ranging field of colour consultancy, which covers such aspects as the effects of colour in the workplace and in marketing (1.4.1). Medicine too has found a use for colour, albeit in a somewhat unconventional way (1.4.2). Ultimately, high-level thought and considerations come to percolate through to ground level, where watered-down information mixed with opinion pervades the pages of our magazine- and internet-fed popular culture (1.4.3).

With the exception of optics, whose main object is to understand the physical realisation of colour as a visual phenomenon, the other areas mentioned above are all concerned with what colour means – either in apparently absolute terms or in a subjective, idiosyncratic sense – despite the fact that, objectively speaking, colour has no meaning as such as it is simply an

optical manifestation. For this reason Peirce (1857-1866/ 1965) placed it in the grouping that he named *qualisigns*; the group reserved for phenomena such as colour and musical tones whose nature is qualitative and devoid of inherent meaning¹. Nevertheless a very strong perception exists which refutes any suggestion that colours are semantically empty. This perception is based on the fact that colours are an extraordinarily rich source of symbolism; they are full of connotative and affective meanings which are institutionalised to a large extent by a combination of academic knowledge and mainstream culture.

Colour ‘meaning’ is often supported by citations from language, in the form of set phrases such as ‘green with envy’, ‘see red’, ‘whiter than white’. The fact that these phrases are in current language use is seen to add weight to their authority and appropriateness as examples of figurative or symbolic meanings. Linguistic evidence appeals because it is easily accessible to all, and for this reason generally goes unquestioned. But what is the connection between the figurative and symbolic meanings ascribed to colours, and the use of colour words in the language? Before examining how and to what extent figurative meanings of colour are borne out in language use (Chapters 4-6 below) let us first determine precisely what those meanings are.

1.2 Colour meaning in philosophy, aesthetics and anthropology

Although not all colour meaning is grounded in academic thought, it will be seen in 1.3 and 1.4 that the broadly scientific exerts a strong influence over the pseudo-scientific and other popular views. In the present section we deal with colour naming and recognition (1.2.1),

¹ Both colours and musical tones share similar properties, being arbitrary divisions of a continuous scale – visual and acoustic respectively – of frequency vibrations.

colour meaning in philosophical and æsthetics writings (1.2.2), and a detailed analysis of the various meanings attributed to colours over the centuries (1.2.3).

Before investigating connotative meaning, however, it is appropriate to focus on the denotative qualities of the colours themselves. It was mentioned in Footnote 1 that named colours are arbitrarily-fixed points on a continuum. Each one of these named colours encompasses a range of shades which enjoy a relationship of hyponymy with respect to the focal or 'basic' term (see below, 1.2.1)². In the next subsection, the naming of colours is examined along with the importance that this might have with regard to meanings attributed to them.

1.2.1 Colour taxonomies: the basic colours

Along with the naming of kinship terms, the naming of colours is seen to be one of the most important ontological categories among anthropological linguists. In part, this is connected with a desire to ascertain to what extent semantic universals can be said to exist. The preoccupation with the concept of universality in language that characterised much of linguistics in the 1960s created the ideal climate for carrying out research such as Berlin and Kay's (1969) groundbreaking work on colour naming. This work is important to the current study for several different reasons: it provides a well-defined framework of reference upon which to base the data to be examined (see 3.5.1.1), it also posits a sequence of acquisition of colour terms which might help account for frequency of use (4.2), and as a consequence the number of meanings and habitual collocations that a colour word might have (4.4).

² This term is also identifiable as being the prototypical colour (see discussion in 4.3.1).

Furthermore the favouring of basic colour terms over their more specific class members (i.e. ‘red’ rather than ‘crimson’ or ‘vermilion’) suggests a preference for establishing general categories with shared physical (and semantic) attributes, which will be of relevance in later discussions of colour meaning. The study’s flaws are discussed in 1.2.1.2.

1.2.1.1 Berlin and Kay’s colour categories

Berlin and Kay (1969) claimed that there were eleven basic colour terms to be found in human languages. They also stated that these came into use in languages in a fixed sequence.

The colours in their order of appearance are shown in Table 1.1:

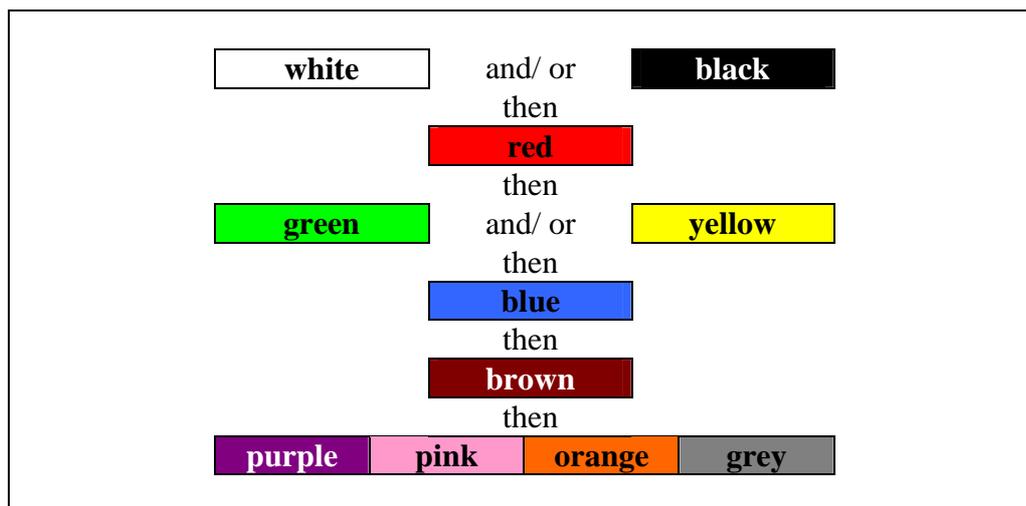


Table 1.1: Berlin and Kay’s colour categories (after Berlin and Kay 1969: 4)

This schema can be glossed as follows:

If a language has only two colors – and all languages have at least two colors – they are always white and black; if a language has three colours, the one added is red; if a fourth is added, it will be either green or yellow; when a fifth is added, it will then include both green and yellow; the sixth added is blue; the seventh added is brown; and if an eighth or more terms are added, it or they will be purple, pink, orange, or gray.

(Brown 1991: 13-14)

Or, more succinctly, “no language will acquire a blue term before black or a pink term before a blue one” (Bailey 2001: 186).

Thus it is clear that not all languages have all eleven basic colours, otherwise the sequence would be impossible to verify. No concession is made to any languages which might contain more than these eleven basic terms, because as far as Berlin and Kay are concerned there are no other basic colours possible (but see 1.2.1.2); any further colours existing in a language are therefore specific, and can be related to one of the superordinate basic colour terms. For example, ‘red’ is a basic colour term in English, whereas ‘scarlet’, ‘crimson’, ‘vermilion’ and ‘burgundy’ are specific shades of the colour. It is usual to adopt the basic term in general descriptions (a red rose, a bottle of red wine), and call the more specific terms into play only when the precise shade is important (‘a pair of burgundy shoes’, ‘blood-red nail varnish’) or for emphatic purposes (“To Isobel’s surprise he went beetroot red³”).

The basic colours correspond to light (white) and dark (black) plus the four colours which are considered primary (red, blue and yellow for pigments; red, blue and green for light). That red is (universally) the first hue to appear is explained by the fact that it is the most highly visible colour in the spectrum – it is the one that the eye perceives most clearly due to its having the longest wavelength of all colours. Green is perceived by the eye as the opposite of red, so again is easily distinguishable⁴. Yellow, as we will see below (1.3.3) has historically been

³ Citation from BNC.

⁴ Red is perceived by the short-sighted as the strongest, most visible colour, whereas green has this status for the long-sighted.

equated with green, and the two still vie for primary colour status⁵. Blue is in some languages grouped with green⁶, but is primary in terms of hue and light.

The other colours in the final group (grey, orange, pink and purple) are the ‘secondary’ colours – those obtained from mixing two primaries together – therefore it is unsurprising that they should occur after the primaries; brown, the tertiary colour, comes before these, probably because it is commonly found in nature and in the colour of hair, eyes and skin.

1.2.1.2 Criticism of the categories

Berlin and Kay’s study has not gone without its fair share of criticism. Although their findings went contrary to the established position at the time (which was that linguistic categories created the division of colours in the spectrum), no real attempt was made to account for the division of the spectrum and its subsequent naming. Allott (1974) has noted that the order of acquisition of terms appears to coincide with similar naming of them in geographically-related language families. He draws no conclusion from this other than to suggest that it might justify further research into synaesthesia (see 1.3.1), a notion that recent research in the subject has tended to reject.

One of the study’s fundamental flaws is centred around the fact that the colour categories are extremely Westernised (Lucy 1992: 186). In fact, they are even more restricted, being quite clearly based on divisions within the English language: the division of blue, for example, which is a feature of several non-Germanic European languages including Italian, Russian

⁵ Green light is primary, but colourants (paints and the like) require yellow as their primary (Bartholin 1703, Goethe 1810).

⁶ For example Welsh (Crystal 1987: 106) and the Setswana languages (Davies 1998: 433).

(Crystal 1987: 106), and Turkish (Ozgen and Davies 1998), is not taken into account even though the colours described by the separate words are considered to be as different as, for instance, red and pink are in English⁷. They are certainly not to be thought of as being two very different names for different shades of the same colour. To illustrate this point, the division of English and Italian expressions for the blue scale is shown in Table 1.2.

<i>powder blue</i>	<i>azzurro chiaro OR celeste</i>
<i>sky blue</i>	<i>azzurro/ celeste</i>
<i>light blue</i>	<i>azzurro</i>
<i>blue</i>	<i>azzurro scuro/ blu chiaro</i>
<i>royal blue</i>	<i>blu</i>
<i>dark blue</i>	<i>blu</i>
<i>navy blue</i>	<i>blu</i>

Table 1.2: Division of blue⁸ into *azzurro* and *blu*

Hungarian has two basic words for ‘red’ (Crystal 1987: 106), which again cannot be taken into account in the model. Furthermore, the categories do little or nothing to ascertain where the segmentation of the colour spectrum lies⁹: it is not enough simply to state that a language has six basic colour terms¹⁰, which implies that the remainder of the 11 colours are not recognised as being basic. Lu, for instance, argues that the colour chips used in the 1969 study were “inadequate for examining low saturation basic color terms” (1997: 4), an error which resulted in Mandarin being assigned 6 basic colours rather than the 11 which Lu claims do in fact exist. Additionally, the inferences drawn by the authors of the study were that advanced

⁷ Interestingly, Itten (1961: 135) argues that pink is actually a shade of red, and not a basic colour at all.

⁸ The English terms are intended to be merely a point of reference against which the Italian expressions can be mapped.

⁹ See Appendix 1a for a ‘tree’ model of colours, showing the differing levels of colour saturation (intensity) and shade (light or dark) in the spectrum.

¹⁰ For example in Mandarin.

civilisations had more colour words than less-advanced ones, resulting in a posited hierarchy of world languages and cultures whose basis has been questioned (Lu 1997, Lucy 1992). Clearly, the bias in favour of the authors' native language did some disservice to the overall objectivity of the study.

1.2.1.3 Colour naming and colour meaning

What relationship exists between the naming of colours and the secondary meanings that they can carry? The organisation of the natural world into categories allows us to structure our knowledge because it gives us the chance to compartmentalise information effectively. In the case of colour words, the more basic colours a language has, the more we can expect secondary meanings to become localised in smaller areas of the colour spectrum – those corresponding to each basic colour term. Conversely, the fewer words there are, the more meanings each is imbued with. This is a simple matter of arithmetic – the total number of meanings is divided by the number of colour words available. For example, in English, we have only one expression for 'blue' where several other languages have two. Blue is both the colour of the sky and of the sea, and of metaphors relating to these. In Italian, the sky is 'azzurro' and the sea is typically 'blu', thus any extended metaphorical meanings relating to the sky will be associated with 'azzurro' (and not 'blu'), and those relating to the sea will generally be associated with 'blu' (and not 'azzurro').

In the following subsection we will examine some of the meanings that have been attributed to colour concepts in philosophical writings and aesthetics. This section too is biased in favour of the 11 terms basic to English, either because the sources themselves are based on these categories, or because their translators have made them so. However, as the only difference between English and Italian basic colour terms has already been discussed in some detail, this

should not pose too great a problem.

1.2.2 Colour meaning in philosophy and aesthetics: the categorisation of colours

The subject of colour meanings has inspired many commentators right up to the present day, and in this subsection the focus is on historical perspectives. There has been a great deal written about colours and what they are thought to mean, and it is of both linguistic and philosophical interest to observe how meanings correspond between authors and epochs, and to what extent these are subsequently borne out in our use of language. In an area as fraught with potential pitfalls as connotation, the safest way to proceed is by reference to works which have some standing in academic and scientific terms. In the case of commentaries on colour, the earliest sources available are the writings of Aristotle, who makes reference to earlier scholars including Democritus (Aristotle 350BC b: I/4¹¹). While in one sense the writings of philosophers do not differ widely in respect to those of laymen, in that they are essentially opinions which are not based on experimental procedures and have no measure of scientific exactitude, their academic and historical authority give them a considerable advantage over their more humble counterparts (to be examined in 1.4). Philosophers ponder at length in order to make considered and valuable statements about meaning, whereas language users act more or less spontaneously, taking it for granted that their words will be understood as they intend them to be. Philosophers may well take language into account (though whether or not there is in fact any correlation between what is said about colour and what we use colour to say remains to be seen¹²) but most language users do not think about their speech in philoso-

¹¹ Works cited from texts obtained in electronic form will be referenced by year then section (in Roman numerals) and subsection (in Arabic numerals).

¹² This will be considered with specific reference to naturally-occurring language data in Chapters 5-7.

phical terms.

Colour meaning has not remained stationary over time. As customs and general cultural beliefs undergo a process of change, so too do specific connotative attributions. Yet colours have remained surprisingly constant in the significance that they have had in Europe over the past two millennia and beyond. Most of the views presented here correspond to one another to a great extent, essentially because instead of being entirely arbitrary, symbolic meanings of colour have a general tendency to arise through metonymical rather than purely symbolic associations. But although most of the basic colours have institutional meanings (such as the stereotypical notion that black means ‘evil’ and white ‘good’), other meanings exist too, and these are more clearly culture- or era-specific, or indeed of a thoroughly idiosyncratic nature.

The common thread which links together the multitude of writings on colour theory is that colours acquire meaning because of visual association with objects and phenomena which are themselves coloured. Yet when colours are consciously assigned to sets for philosophical purposes, for example, when a correspondence is sought between red and fire, blue and water, white and air, and yellow and earth, thus connecting the four elements with primary colours, various complications arise. This is especially true when the correspondences concern naturally-occurring phenomena which manifest themselves as different colours, such as water which can range from deep blue to emerald green *in situ*, while at the same time being colourless as far as scientists and the water-drinking population is concerned. One such set is the four elements (1.2.2.1). Others include the four humours (1.2.2.2), the four seasons, and even shapes (1.2.2.3). The arbitrariness of categorisation and the kind of overlapping meanings which result is examined in the following subsections.

1.2.2.1 Colours and the elements

Our modern mindset does not easily allow us to take alchemy seriously, peppered as it is with what we now regard as superstition. The four elements, earth, sky, air and water, have been relegated to the domain of popular culture, and are now more commonly associated with the signs of the zodiac than with anything else. Few 'serious' modern writers address these issues, because they have been trivialised by modern science, but their importance in the past is unquestioned: they were fundamental to understanding the world before the Enlightenment brought science to the fore. Theorists and philosophers applied themselves to questions concerning these categories simply because they were believed to be important. However, categories are problematic, as one always feels a compulsion to complete them, even when common sense might dictate otherwise.

As far as the elements are concerned, several sources, displaying a degree of similarity, have come down to us. The Platonic system (Gage 1993: 33) assigns blue to the air, green to water, yellow to earth, and red to fire. These correspond to our modern perception of the colours, especially if we remember that the context of their application is the Mediterranean region: the sky is blue, the water is blue-green, yellow (ochre) is the colour of the soil, and flames tend towards the orange-red end of the colour spectrum. Theon of Smyrna (Gage 1993: 33) makes only one change to Plato's categorisation, assigning yellow to both earth and fire. This changes very little but does suggest that he may have been less concerned with making each of the categories correspond to a different colour. Antiochus of Athens, despite his historical proximity to Theon of Smyrna, has very different ideas (see Table 1.3) which are more obviously restricted by his selection of primary colours. These colours are more 'primary' than Plato's are: white, black, red and yellow are the first four colours which appear in Berlin and Kay's sequence and can thus be acceptably described as primary, even though in theory

black and white are not colours¹³. Stratton suggests that the choice of white here may refer to the semi-transparent colour ‘chloron’, which represents that which “is composed of both the solid and the void” (Stratton 1917: 12), though his argument is not conclusive. Other than the assignment of red to air, the other correspondences again are based on some metonymical relationship, though on the whole these associations appear to be of a more symbolic nature than the Platonic ones are. The medieval Urso of Salerno (Gage 1993: 165) adopts yet another sequence, again one which owes much to metonymical relationships, though he adopts a set of primary colours in which green is excluded and replaced by blue.

Further proof that we are dealing here with primary colours is substantiated by the Renaissance painter Leon Battista Alberti. In his 1435 treatise *De Pictura* he identified the four primary colours as ‘ruber’ (red), ‘celestis’ (light blue), ‘viridis’ (green), and ‘cinerus color’, identified variously as dark yellow ochre (Parkhurst 1987:162) or a sort of dun or grey colour (Gage 1993:32), and he links these to the elements in a way which echoes Plato’s categories; and Leonardo da Vinci shares this colour-element categorisation, though he uses yellow in place of cinerum. That there is such a correspondence between this and the Ancients is unsurprising given the cultural ideals of the Renaissance, but should not be taken for granted in the light of the variation already described. The various colour-element theories discussed are summarised in Table 1.3.

¹³ Black and white are rightly ‘shades’ rather than ‘tones’ or ‘hues’. We can posit that this fact contributed to Plato’s choice of colour here: he was aware that true colours occurred between the extremes of black and white (see Appendix 1a for an illustration). His pupil Aristotle cites the earlier Democritus (who antedates his tutor) who had effectively realised that white is the reflection of all colours, and black the absorption: “...as Democritus does with White and Black; for he asserts that the latter is [a mode of the] rough, and the former [a mode of the] smooth.” (Aristotle 350BC b: I/4). Aristotle also talks of true colours and compound colours, pointing to the fact that notions of primacy were already firmly established at this time (Aristotle 350 BC b: I/3 (i) and 350BC a: III/2).

source	AIR	WATER	EARTH	FIRE
Plato	blue	green	yellow	red
Theon of Smyrna	blue	green	yellow	yellow
Antiochus of Athens	red	white	black	yellow
Urso of Salerno	blue	white	black	red
Leon Battista Alberti	blue	green	<i>cinerum</i>	red
Leonardo da Vinci	blue	green	yellow	red

Table 1.3: The attribution of (primary) colours to the four elements

As has already been mentioned, the arbitrariness of these categorisations increases when we take into account the fact that both the colours and the elements are primary. The implication is that some effort must be made to ensure that the fundamentals match up satisfactorily. We can see that blue is the least variable of the choices, and the one author (Antiochus of Athens) who does not use it to represent air omits it entirely from the equation. Fire is the next most stable category, taking red or yellow.

To say that the choice of colour for water depends on the primaries available is no exaggeration. Blue is often the colour assigned to water but here it has already been claimed by air, also because the blue which is considered primary is light blue, and not the more saturated blue which is associated with the sea (see discussion in 1.2.1.2). Given this, the second choice is green which is another naturally-occurring colour of water. If the primaries are those of Plato and Alberti, green must necessarily be assigned to water even though it is the colour of plant shoots springing out of the ground, and hence a possible contender for the colour of earth. The remaining primary, yellow, cannot plausibly be used to denote water. Whenever the primaries include black and white, the colourless quality of water can be represented by white, leaving black as the most suitable colour for earth.

1.2.2.2 Colours and the humours

The Hippocratic school of medicine's division of personalities into the four humours – sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric and melancholic – also has a natural progression into the field of colour symbolism. The fiery sanguine character, corresponds to blood and thus has a natural affinity with the colour red; the choleric (or bilious) and melancholic characters are caused by excessive quantities of one or other of the two colours of bile – yellow and black respectively – and these again are supposed to be the actual colours of bile. White corresponds to the slow, phlegmatic character, as it is the colour of healthy phlegm. So again we see very clearly that metonymical relationships govern the allocation of the colours; but the colours themselves must be significant if they are to correspond to the fundamental workings of the human body as perceived at the time. That Urso of Salerno, writing in the 1300s, should have adopted the same colours for the humours is simply evidence of a continuation of the Hippocratic tradition in Mediæval medicine.

1.2.2.3 Other colour categories

Other colour categories exist, but are less pervasive than the two described above. As a general rule, those encountered follow on from the association of colours to the elements. Theon of Smyrna and Antiochus both “drew up elaborate tables of correspondences” (Gage 1993: 32), relating not only their ‘basic’ colours to the elements (see Table 1.3) but also to shapes – both two- and three-dimensional – and to the seasons. Itten (1961: 120) also assigns colours to shapes, justifying this with the comment that as “shapes also have their ‘ethico-æsthetic’ expressive values”, then “form and color expressions should support each other” (Itten 1961: 120). His categories are explicitly based on the concept of primacy:

As is true of the three primary colors, red, yellow and blue, the three fundamental shapes – square, triangle and circle – may be assigned distinct expressive values.
(Itten 1961: 120)

This modern contribution to colour categories does not depart from the age-old tradition: the primary colours are identified, as are primary shapes, and these invariably coincide in number (the fourth shape for both Theon and Antioch was the octagon). It then follows that, being both fundamentals, there must exist some *a priori* connection between them, thus the correspondences are drawn up. Funnily enough, it is Itten whose argument stands up weakest to scrutiny despite its apparent sourcing in Egyptian and Chinese traditions. Both Theon and Antiochus were investigating the mathematical rules governing shape, colour, sound, and so on, in an effort to make sense of the world, and their tables were intended to summarise this information. Itten on the other hand has merely collated information from various sources in an attempt to arrive at universal absolutes, paying little if any attention to the relevant historical or cultural context in which the groupings first arose.

1.2.2.4 Discussion of colour categories

The problems created by the need to categorise are not limited to one particular group, such as the elements. What we are seeing here is a deliberate attempt to synthesise fundamental concepts – primary colours, fundamental elements, basic character traits, the seasons, fundamental shapes, and so on – into a schema proving the interrelation of both. The colours selected as primaries are all basic (Berlin and Kay 1969), but we notice that primacy itself is a flexible concept which can either admit or exclude the non-colours black and white. However the choices made in matching up the correspondences are often quite arbitrary and essentially revolve around a best-fit model rather than one which is truly representative of the world.

This is true of most colour symbolism through the ages: it is an area of paradox and contradiction, as well as natural connections, as can be seen in 1.2.3.

1.2.3 Connotation and symbolism

Widespread literacy in the West has greatly reduced our need for symbols, but many live on in our cultural knowledge. The variety of symbols that are used today is nothing compared to that of a millennium ago, in part because our education relies much less on allegory as an educational and mnemonic tool, and also because, for example, the written form ‘Boots’ is associated more readily with a chemist’s than the symbol of a pestle and mortar is. However the vestiges of symbolic meanings current long ago remain ingrained in culture and language: a woman of ill repute may still be referred to as a ‘scarlet woman’, even though the days of publicly marking adulteresses with a scarlet A are gone, and although saints’ days are no longer marked in red on a calendar, the expression ‘red letter day’ is still current. These are both opaque, metonymically-motivated symbols (see 2.2.2); in fact a very large proportion of linguistic expressions involving colour rely on metonymy (Niemeier 1998), and thus are not symbols as such. Goethe, not limiting himself to colour in language, drew a distinction between symbolic uses of colour and allegorical uses – those which rely upon some kind of initial explanation in order to be understood (Goethe 1810: 916-7). His definition of symbolic roughly corresponds to metonymically-motivated meaning; his “allegory” is properly symbolic meaning. In the following subsections some of the more pervasive symbolic meanings that have been given to colour concepts over the centuries are outlined. This provides a basis for the comparison of what is consciously stated about their meaning, and the meaning that the colour words themselves actually convey in language (see Chapters 5-6.). The colours appear in Berlin and Kay’s order of occurrence.

1.2.3.1 Black and white

Although not colours in the strictest sense, it has already been seen that black and white have been considered fundamental or primary in the past (1.2.2.1). The objections to their being labelled as colours arise from the fact that they both contain all the colours of the spectrum in combination: black absorbs all light rays, and white reflects them. As black is the colour of darkness and white the colour of light, they have been symbolically related to evil and good respectively, through further symbolism which dictates that goodness is pure and inspired by divine light, whereas its opposite, evil, is impure and has an affinity with the dark. This forms the basis for all Christian-influenced symbolism relating to these two shades, and also explains the role of both colours to express mourning, with black representing melancholy and white, the divine and heaven.

The white/ black, good/ evil distinction was also recognised by the ancient Greeks: Plato writes that “[w]hite is a colour suitable to the Gods” (360 B.C a), and the extended symbolism linking good, beauty, obedience and white together, as evil, ugliness, wilfulness and black are connected, is set out in Plato (360 B.C b). The Hippocratic association of white with the phlegmatic and black with the melancholic should also be recalled, as it persisted until well into the Mediæval period, at which time black and white as symbols of evil and good were already well-established, and were enhanced and embellished to include the religious notions of sin and purity respectively. The Classical pairings of goodness and beauty, and evil and ugliness were still in currency at this time, and black was also the colour of disease and illness, mourning and sorrow (Biggam 1993: 49).

More recent writing on colour symbolism tends to ignore black or white, probably because of the consensus view that they are not colours. Alternatively, it could be that their

overwhelming adoption as symbols of good and evil has made further commentary superfluous.

1.2.3.2 Red

The ancient Greeks based their colour theories on principles of dark and light, and this involved not only black and white, but also red. Democritus associated red with heat (Stratton 1917). Plato assigned red to the element fire in his system of correspondences of categories, (see Table 1.3) and by extension also to the pyramid or triangle, both of which have the basic form of a fire. Aristotle (350 B.C. b: I/3ii) associated red with light as it is the colour of sunlight when seen through dark clouds or smoke, and thus a dark form of light. This idea is reiterated with reference to the colours of the rainbow, as red is the first colour to arise out of the darkening of light (Aristotle 350 B.C. a: III/2). In a different context, red was associated with the sanguine humour and with blood (see 1.2.2.2).

In Byzantine art, and in religious art throughout the Middle ages, the combination of red and gold is everywhere, particularly in the depiction of haloes and divine light. As a symbol of light it recalls the Greek perspective as advanced first by Democritus, then Plato and Aristotle. Furthermore it should be mentioned that economic reasons may have been partly responsible: red pigment was extremely costly, as was gold, and it is no coincidence that these two expensive colours should be found together in depicting the king of heaven. The Byzantine lexicographer Suda places red next to the colour of light (presumably white) on his colour scale (Gage 1993: 60), as had Aristotle before him.

In medieval times, red and black were considered to be opposite colours, though to what degree this is due to the Classical symbolism (red as light) assigned beforehand can only be

surmised. In Chaucer's medieval England, red was considered to be the colour of blood, and by extension, it also referred to violence on the one hand, and good health on the other (Biggam 1993). When contrasted with white, red was a symbol of feminine beauty – probably because a pale complexion is enhanced by rosy cheeks and lips.

The Blaue Reiter group headed by Kandinsky and Marc associated red with material properties, to be conquered by the masculine blue and the feminine yellow. Their perspective was essentially one of painters – those who use hue to obtain particular effects – rather than as philosophers as such, and contributes little to red's symbolic meaning in culture as a whole. Itten (1961), writing as an artist, sets a more adventurous agenda, in that he “attempt[s] to describe the expressive potentialities of colors”. In achieving his aim, he meanders through Chinese, Egyptian and Western traditions, though the conclusions he draws are sometimes glib. For example, he states that that red is a square and the colour of matter, because the square is the Egyptian hieroglyph for ‘field’. Red is also a heavy, opaque colour (presumably through the connection with ‘matter’) which suits the “static and grave shape of the square” (Itten 1961:120). Although described as “heavy” (ibid: 120), it is also “extraordinarily flexible” (ibid: 134), and linked to warmth, where it is glowing and radiant (echoing the Greek view of red as light, warmth and fire); it is also “an expression of feverish, belligerent passion” (ibid: 134), as well as passionate physical love. Red is linked to the planet (and god) Mars, and thus to the “burning worlds of war and demons” and also to soldiers and revolutionaries. Red's range is such that it encompasses “all intermediate degrees between the infernal and the sublime” (ibid: 135).

Itten's account may seem confused, but it is also effective in gathering together the main symbolic values that red has had over the centuries, most of which are still current. Red is a

symbol of light and radiance, of fire, and perhaps of Hell for this reason. It also represents the blood of life and the blood which has been spilled in death, as well as war, passion, rage, and revolution. It is material, and indicative of wealth, because as a dyestuff, *kermes* was extremely costly. This vast array of symbolism makes red one of the most semantically productive colours as far as linguistic expressions are concerned, as can be seen in Chapter 4.

1.2.3.3 Green and yellow

Green was considered by Aristotle (350B.C. b: I/4). to be one of the three primary colours which occurred between black and white, and one of the three colours of the rainbow, alongside red and purple (350B.C. a: III/2). He put the appearance of yellow down to “contrast, for the red is whitened by its juxtaposition with green. We can see this from the fact that the rainbow is purest when the cloud is blackest; and then the red shows most yellow.” (ibid: III/4). From this statement we understand that yellow was not considered primary. This can in part be ascribed to the view expressed by Democritus (Gage 1993: 12) that leek green and sulphur yellow are two shades of the same hue, which would suggest that prototypical green at the time may well have been yellower than at present. We have already seen the attribution of these two colours to the elements (1.2.2.1). Additionally, Plato ascribed yellow to the square and the cube. Yellow, in Hippocratic medicine, corresponds to the choleric personality, though it is opportune to point out that here too the yellow intended is almost certainly a greenish-yellow¹⁴.

Yellow’s affinity to gold is mentioned by Pseudo-Dionysius (500 :196), yet he is alone in early sources in doing so. These colours are generally treated as being co-referential nowadays

¹⁴ This can be seen in expressions such as ‘verde di collera’, and ‘verde di rabbia’ in Italian: see Chapter 6.

– the OED entry for yellow reads:

A. adj. 1.a. Of the colour of gold...

In medieval times green was considered the colour of faith (Biggam 1993), and also the colour of plant life and hence newness, youth and vigour. It could also indicate promiscuity, as this is vigour in excess (Biggam 1993: 50). Yellow on the other hand, was the colour of jealousy, as it still is in most of Europe. By Shakespeare's time, green had taken its place in English (the green-eyed monster in *Othello*) whereas yellow has come to indicate cowardice, probably through a metonymical connection with the liver, which when weakened causes jaundice¹⁵.

The Blaue Reiter group, treating yellow as a primary and excluding green, ascribed softness, femininity, cheerfulness and sensuality to yellow – ideal feminine qualities, though to what extent manufactured to suit the theory is difficult to establish. Itten (1961: 132) unites yellow and gold under the same heading, ascribing them to light (especially divine light), truth, intelligence, knowledge and understanding. It is also the colour of triangles and their derivatives – all shapes composed of intersecting diagonal lines – which in turn represent thought¹⁶. Green is the colour of vegetation and nature, “fruitfulness and contentment, tranquillity and hope” as well as “the fusion and interpretation of knowledge and faith” (1961: 136).

¹⁵ Again here English has departed from much of the rest of Europe: whereas an Italian will talk about ‘having the liver’ (*avere il fegato*) to do something, English prefers ‘guts’ or ‘stomach’.

¹⁶ Compare this to the Platonic system in which the triangle was linked to red through the shape of fire.

The merging together of the colours we now recognise separately as green and yellow has had the effect of limiting the symbolism of each (see 1.2.1.3). Green has very little in the way of symbolic meaning, being used primarily to refer by metonymy to vegetation, and by extension to life, growth and fertility. The other main symbolic meanings are those of faith and hope, of jealousy (in English), and as the colour of water. Yellow is the colour of light, and by extension (in some sources) of intelligence and knowledge. It is the colour of earth and of fire, of jealousy and cowardice. Yellow can also be a symbol of gold, though this is more favoured by modern sources than by older ones.

1.2.3.4 Blue

Most, if not all, of blue's symbolic values are filtered by the core metonymically-motivated relation of blue and air: the prototypical hue corresponds to the Italian 'azzurro' (see Table 1.2) and did not encompass the darker shades which could be equated with purple (Aristotle 350 B.C. a: III/4), or black. In early sources, blue refers to the air, the sky and heaven, and thus by extension it also represents divinity. By Chaucer's time it was considered to be the colour of loyalty (Biggam 1993), probably because of the metonymic connection with the constancy of the sky (OED: 323). Until the Renaissance, darker blues were symbolically related to black, and darkness, with all the symbolism resulting from this (1.2.3.1).

The Blaue Reiter made blue the masculine colour just as yellow was for them the feminine (in contrast, Runge had made warm colours masculine because of their vitality, and cool colours feminine¹⁷). Blue was not only masculine, but also "sharp and spiritual" with a cooling (rationalising?) influence on fiery orange, its complementary colour (Gage 1993: 207).

¹⁷ In Gage (1993: 208)

Gender categorisations of this sort are reflections of male – female stereotypes and as such are clearly idealised. As with the colour categories discussed in 1.2.2.1, they are restricted by the initial choice of primary colour and the pressing need to make categories correspond to one another, regardless of whether this objectively makes sense or otherwise. Itten describes blue as passive in material terms, but active in the spiritual, hence it cannot be related to masculinity (which he ascribes to red). In addition to connotations of spirituality and introversion, he suggests that in its darker shades it “falls into superstition, fear, grief and perdition” (Itten 1961: 136), recalling the early equation of dark blue to black. He links it to circular shapes which symbolise unity and the spirit.

With one basic term for blue, the symbolisms discussed above tend to consolidate in English, though to a much lesser degree in Italian. Blue generally represents the sky and the heavens as well as faith, spirituality, constancy and loyalty. Dark blues, which in English are not prototypical, represent fear and gravity.

1.2.3.5 The remaining colours

The basic colours that remain – brown, purple, pink, orange and grey – are given very little importance in terms of their symbolism. This is mainly due to the fact that they are secondary colours, and have been equated in the past with primaries¹⁸. Purple is problematic at source level because deep red was called ‘porphurion’ in Classical texts (and is still called ‘porpora’ in Italian, and ‘cardinal red’ or ‘crimson’ in English), and yet at the same time it can be classed with the blue end of the spectrum. It was considered primary, or ‘unmixed’ in Classical writings (Aristotle 350 B.C. a: III/4), and this is probably the reason why it

¹⁸ In Aristotle 350 BC b: III/4, the rainbow is composed of only three colours.

generates more symbolism than the other mixed colours. The religious and imperial symbolism linked with purple are institutionalised, and have a similar etymology to that of red, both being costly dyes which only the rich could afford. The Church's adoption of purple at Easter time is probably responsible for the colour's symbolic connection with strong emotion – passion – whether romantic or otherwise.

The other four colours are formed by mixture, and so too are their symbolic attributes. Pink, being a colour mixed from red and white, takes on a tempered version of the symbolism attributed to red due to the presence of white¹⁹; so while red indicates fiery passion, pink recalls the sweeter romantic love. Grey is the midway point between black and white, and can temper the negativity of black. It is also the colour used to describe the nondescript as it is neither black nor white and thus lacks identity. Orange appears to be devoid of symbolism, except when it is considered to be a shade of red, in which case it can take on some of the symbolism generally attributed to bright orange-reds – fire and warmth. Brown, the tertiary colour, is a muddy mixture of all primaries. It is not mentioned in any of the sources consulted.

1.3 Colour meaning and science

Discussions of colour are not confined to the realm of philosophy and aesthetics. The study of colour is also widespread in psychology, most notably in the phenomenon of synaesthesia, which is covered in 1.3.1, and in behavioural psychology, where colour is used in a number of experiments and tests. The most relevant of these are introduced in 1.3.2.

¹⁹ The same can be said of the relationship between purple and violet.

1.3.1 Synæsthesia

In the previous section we looked at philosophical views on colours and their meanings. This section concentrates on a very different perspective, the psychological phenomenon of synæsthesia, or overlapping of the senses. It is important to compare these two very different outlooks on colour, because they demonstrate two different types of automatic colour association. Synæsthesia differs from traditional colour symbolism because it is unconscious and involuntary, highly individualised, and unpredictable. It is however constant, in that once a colour has been assigned, no other will take its place (Baron-Cohen *et al.* 1987). Furthermore, synæsthetes talk in very specific terms about the colour they see in the mind's eye, whereas the writers discussed in 1.2 have tended to use basic terms.

1.3.1.1 Kinds of synæsthesia

Not all synæsthetes experience the same kinds of sense merging. Some hear smells, or taste shapes; but by far the most common version is the visualisation of letters and numbers as colours. This is known as 'chromatic-graphemic' synæsthesia (Baron-Cohen 1996) or ideational synæsthesia (Day 1996b). Such multi-modularity is not conscious, in that it is neither invoked voluntarily nor repressible, and despite suggestions to the contrary, it is not memorised. Research conducted so far suggests that it is an overwhelmingly female-orientated phenomenon²⁰. It also predominates in left-handers, is believed to be hereditary (Cytowic 1989, 1995; Baron-Cohen 1996; Motluk 1995), and is estimated to affect approximately one person in 25,000 (Cytowic 1995). The most important aspects are that the associations experienced by the synæsthete do not change over time, are not learned, and are to all effects and purposes 'natural'.

²⁰ Baron-Cohen *et al.* 1993 report a male-female ratio of 1:8; Cytowic 1989 reports 1:3.

1.3.1.1.1 Chromatic-graphemic synaesthesia

This is the most commonly-occurring form of synaesthesia, and encompasses the automatic association of colours to letters of the alphabet, numbers, and words. These associations are extremely precise, often involving combinations of colours such as “red with a black border, or green with a yellow stripe” (Day 1996a). But the full alphabet is not necessarily involved, for example, sometimes only the vowels are coloured (ibid).

Day’s second study (Day 2000) of coloured letters deals with data from 108 informants, (as compared to 46 in the first study). The degree of constancy between individuals is consistently higher, though not proportionally so, and never exceeds 60%. Agreement on colours tends to hover around 30 – 40% in strong associations (Day 2000: 2). These figures are in themselves vaguely suggestive of there being a ‘natural’ link between colours and letters, especially if we consider the random chance of this degree of correlation. Yet Day himself refutes the notion that there is any universality in colour choice. He acknowledges that vowels in particular appear to follow recognisable trends of ‘white’/ ‘bright’ and ‘black’/ ‘dark’ (Day 2000: 1), but accepts that culture may play a substantial role in determining the associations. Citing Marks (1978: 86-89), he claims that there appears to be a tendency to correlate high and low vowels to light and dark colours respectively.

There is evidence to suggest that colour associations are hereditary, and that they can be mixed if both parents are synaesthetic (see Nabokov 1966: 35). This may account for a proportion of the correspondences reported by Day (1996a, 2000), though to precisely what extent is difficult, if not impossible to state.

Entire words can be coloured, as has been shown by Baron-Cohen *et al.* (1987). Semantically-related words show no colour relation, nor do phonologically related words, suggesting that it is the combination of individually coloured letters that influences the colours used to describe the words. This research would have to be replicated with other informants to be conclusive, however, as it only regards one person's experiences of the condition.

1.3.1.1.2 Chromatic-lexical synæsthesia

A variation on chromatic-graphemic synæsthesia is the chromatic-lexical type, where the sounds of words trigger the colour. This occurs regardless of spelling, thus 'science' and 'psychology' have the same colour, whereas 'psychology' and 'pike' are different. The existence of this type of synæsthesia casts doubt on the idea that it is linked to literacy (and therefore acquired at school age), and suggests that "it is likely to be a product of connections between speech and perception and colour vision, and therefore in principle present at birth" (Eimas *et al.* 1977, cited in Baron-Cohen 1996: 4)

1.3.1.1.3 Other synæsthesæ

The other types of synæsthesia are not relevant to this discussion of colour and language. They are discussed at length by Cytowic (1989, 1993), Baron-Cohen (1996) and Day (2000).

1.3.1.2 Colour meaning for synæsthetes

Despite the fact that there are common points of contact between synæsthetes as far as the association of colours with letters and numbers is concerned, there are no reports of these colours having any affective meaning. This sharply distinguishes synæsthesia and its view of colour from the philosophical views discussed in 1.2. Although suggestions that synæsthesia

was once a universal condition (as tentatively hypothesised by Baron-Cohen *et al.* 1993) or that indeed all babies are born with the condition (Maurer 1993) are intriguing, we simply do not know enough about the condition and its development at present. We can do little more than suspend judgement until some proof either way is produced. The major drawback of all the studies cited in this section is the lack of data which has been processed. Until wider-reaching research has been carried out, most of the inferences arrived at remain inconclusive.

If some of the symbolic values discussed in 1.2.2 were thought a little arbitrary, the colour associations reported by synaesthetes are, at least to outside observers, outlandish. Synaesthetic colour attribution has rarely any relationship with colour as it is manifested in the real world, and the very idea of an alphabetical letter being simultaneously a colour violates our perception of truth conditions. Most 'normal' symbolism is really rather conservative and formulaic, and relies to a great extent on metonymical relation (see Appendix 1b). Although the metonymies form chains, and thus become more opaque, the meanings can be appreciated and accepted, which is not typically the case for synaesthetic colour association.

1.3.2 Colour in behavioural psychology

Colour has been used in psychology for various purposes, most importantly in the Stroop test (Stroop 1935), but also in the study of behaviour and mood (Barrick *et al* 2002, Mills and French 1996) and the affective meanings of colour (Green-Armytage 1980, Veverkova 2002).

The Stroop test is a favourite tool for measuring the differences between verbal and visual processing: It “taps automatic processing of word meanings producing two simultaneous and highly competitive sources of information” (Dawkins and Furnham 1989: 384) and takes a

form similar to that in Figure 1.1. The words do not correspond to the colour they are written in, and the task to be carried out is to name the colour of the ink, not the orthographic word.

green	red	blue
red	green	blue
red	blue	green

Figure 1.1: Colour words written in coloured ink

The words are shown individually and in fairly rapid succession, either with flash cards or on a computer screen. The rationale behind using the Stroop test is to test out the saliency²¹ of words: colours are considered to be more salient than neutral words, and so should override the individual word meanings in the test. In some situations, however, this trend is reversed, for example when emotional words form the test content (Dawkins and Furnham 1989).

We will see in 1.4.1 that colour is used to predispose consumers in favour of products, and to promote feelings of tranquillity, or warmth, or cleanliness. The experiential qualities of colours are investigated in psychology in the first instance, then channelled through to areas of application, such as colour consultancy. Veverkova's (2002) follow-up to a 1968 study attempts to account for colour preference and its relationship with feelings and moods. Barrick *et al.* (2002) concentrate specifically on depression, and on the ways in which colours are perceived by sufferers. Both papers reported similar outcomes, but whereas Veverkova found that the experience of the colour in the given situation was conditioned by personality, Barrick *et al.* found that there was a link between depression and reduced colour perception.

²¹ For more on the concept of linguistic salience, see 2.3.2.

They posit the hypothesis that this reduced colour perception may not be biological but metaphorical instead, with patients attempting to express their emotions through colour meaning (Barrick *et al.* 2002). Mills and French's (1996) study on aggression in contact sports draws no conclusive evidence on the relationship between team colour and behaviour, despite a previous study which claims that a connection does in fact exist. Black jerseys were apparently directly correlated to penalties awarded in ice-hockey, though Mills and French's research was unable to prove any such consistent link.

There is a common thread running through psychological research on colour and mood, which is that personality factors outweigh the possible influence of colours. It seems that although behaviour can be modified by colours, it is more usual that the personality chooses the colour that expresses it best (Veverkova 2002). This leads us to believe that it is the underlying connotative value of colour which comes to the fore in these studies, the result being that the research findings tend to support folk beliefs. We get no closer to understanding whether these beliefs are simply grounded in our culture or if there is some element of innateness about them which goes beyond the conscious.

1.4 Other views on colour

The views set out in the previous three sections put forward various hypotheses about the relationship that exists between colour and its various secondary meanings. Yet this information is not commonly accessed at source; the average language user probably has no idea that Aristotle and Plato wrote about colour. Instead, the information is filtered, and watered down in the process, into more accessible domains of pseudo-science, where sources are unreferenced, and fact and opinion merge into one undifferentiated mass of information.

Three areas are examined in this section: colour consultancy (1.4.1), chromotherapy (1.4.2), and the general field of colour meaning in popular culture (1.4.3).

1.4.1 Colour consultancy

Colour consultancy is a direct offshoot from the discoveries made in clinical psychology experiments. As stated in 1.3.2, these experiments provide important information at a mono-cultural level, and thus can be put to useful practical use within analogous cultural contexts. Recent research has however attempted to approach the theme from an intercultural standpoint (Madden *et al.* 2000).

Packard tells of research carried out by the Color Research Institute on the different effects of colour on the packaging of detergents (1957: 19-20), and cites other research which suggests that red is more likely to catch a woman's eye and blue a man's. One hypothesis advanced in an effort to explain this is that "the majority of women shoppers leave their glasses at home or will never wear glasses in public if they can avoid it so that a package to be successful must stand out 'from the blurred confusion'."²² (in Packard 1957: 95)

Colour consultancy extends from consumerism (Packard 1957, Birren 1955) to interior decorating (Robinson 2000), clothing (Color Me Beautiful) and even web-site design (Howard Bear, no date), and essentially involves a mix of optics, perception and connotation. Optics is called upon to justify the extent to which certain colours are tiring or relaxing for the eye (Robinson 2000); bright colours such as yellow are eye-catching on a supermarket shelf

²² See note 4, page 10.

(Packard 1957: 20) but tiring as wallpaper – whether in a room or on a computer screen (Robinson 2000). Perception works at the level of the subconscious: colours are ‘warm’ or ‘cool’, ‘clean’ or ‘dirty’, and so on. Connotation invokes all of the cultural baggage relating to colours, and works on a higher level of consciousness than perception does, being learned rather than instinctive. The overall usefulness of colour consultancy is to apply the different kinds of knowledge about colours to the world in which we live, either for personal satisfaction or for commercial gain.

1.4.2 Chromotherapy

Chromotherapy is the use of colour and light for curative purposes. It allegedly has its origins in Egyptian²³, Chinese, Indian²⁴ or Babylonian²⁵ culture, and was also used by Pythagoras (Jayesh, no date). It seeks to address imbalance and illness in the body by the application (projection) of coloured light to the area, or by the application of oils or water which have been left to ‘energise’ in coloured glass bottles (the procedures are set out in Alcide 1996: 57). Chromotherapy is said to work because the vibrations produced by each colour can tune in with the vibrations of the organs, muscles, cells and nerves of the body (Institute for Chromotherapy: no date). This is the same theory which governs crystal therapy.

Although this kind of alternative medicine is easy to dismiss, it would seem that some medically-verified results have been obtained, including the discovery that premature jaundiced babies can be cured by exposure to blue light (Kaiser 1984, cited in Shibuya²⁶)

²³ Institute for Chromotherapy <http://www.ifct.net/chromo.html>

²⁴ Jayesh.net <http://www.jayesh.net/colourclass.htm>

²⁵ Damanhur http://www.damanhur.org/medicine/html/chromotherapy_.htm

²⁶ Shibuya <http://www.shibuya.com/garden/colorpsycho.html>

Alcide also cites research carried out at the Akademie für International Kultur und Wissenschaftsförderung in 1994 in which various ailments were effectively treated by chromotherapy (Alcide 1996: 55-56). A glance at the list of symptoms that particular colours are used to treat²⁷ tells us that the principal characteristics broadly correspond to the colour meanings we looked at in 1.2 and 1.3. For instance, if one displays symptoms of depression, which is associated with (dark) blue, the treatment is carried out with orange – the opposite colour – thus restoring the equilibrium caused by the excess of blue in the system (Alcide 1996: 36). In addition to this, we find that the ‘warm’ colours red, orange and yellow are used to stimulate the nervous system, and the ‘cool’ colours blue, green and violet are used to calm and soothe it. These notions correspond directly to the colour meanings outlined in 1.2.

1.4.3 Colour meaning in popular culture

Although ephemeral and of questionable reliability, articles on colours and their secret meanings (such as the supposed insights that colour preference can give on personality traits) are widespread in popular magazines and on the Internet. They are important because they are generally the first port of call for the lay person, and thus are responsible for suggesting and perpetuating much of the colour association that we take for granted. Peppered with stereotype and superstition as they are, they are nevertheless grounded in the aesthetic, philosophical and psychological discussions reviewed in 1.2 and 1.3 above. Like astrology in many respects, we are dealing with a subject which has been trivialised a great deal, and it is noticeable that many articles propose a pseudo-scientific base for their claims as a means of substantiating them, although they are united in their dearth of referenced information.

²⁷ See Alcide (1991: 31-54) and De Giorgio <http://www.deeprancenow.com/colortherapy.html>

1.4.3.1 Global Color Survey

Of special interest at this point is the Global Color Survey²⁸. This ambitious attempt to find common colour meanings across different languages and cultures is based on a short questionnaire available on the Internet. The questionnaire asks the user to assign a colour – any colour, be it basic or highly specific – to a series of connotative meanings which range from the traditional ‘bad’ and ‘pure’ to the more unusual ‘high technology’ and ‘good-tasting’. The final questions ask about particular attraction or aversion to colour, presumably in order to filter out strong prejudices one way or the other, though the precise purpose is not specified. The downside of this project is that there is no way as yet of interrogating the database, and so the data that has been collected remains unanalysed and inaccessible.

1.4.3.2 Journalism and colour meaning

Journalism no longer refers to the print media, now that the Internet has become an everyday entity for most of the population of the developed world. Electronic information sources have huge advantages over their print counterparts in their ease of accessibility, low cost and transportability, but they have considerable drawbacks too. The freedom of speech that the virtual media allow also results in unmoderated misinformation sitting quite comfortably alongside scholarly works. This occurs in print journalism too, of course, but to a much lesser extent due to the greater accountability that publishers have with regard to the content which they print. In addition, the Internet is extremely ephemeral, and texts literally appear and disappear overnight, which makes tracking references and verification of sources unnecessarily complicated.

²⁸ <http://express.colorcom.com/colorsurvey/>

In both print and electronic media the range of quality of the information is very wide, and runs the gamut from thinly disguised publicity ventures (e.g. Morton 1995) and pages full of cliché and stereotype (e.g. Hoss 1996) through articles which purport to be academic but are either entirely devoid of references (as is the case of Allott [no year]) or predominantly self-referential (for example Galejev 1999, whose eight references include four of his own publications), right up to peer-reviewed journals.

Magazine-style articles which concern colour are not infrequent in print, but they are hugely outweighed by Internet pages which deal with colour meaning in various contexts. We saw above that colour consultancy (1.4.1) and chromotherapy (1.4.2) are well-represented, and they are accompanied by symbolism pages of a more general nature, such as Howard-Bear (no date). What these pages and magazines share is their pseudo-scientific characteristics: claims are made by named 'experts' or unnamed 'sources' whose function it is to provide the 'scientific' point of view and thus give credence to the content. However their professional opinions are all too often merged with the unqualified opinions of the authors, making it impossible to distinguish between fact and unsubstantiated fiction. False inferences are habitually read into colour meaning – perhaps to make it easier to grasp, perhaps to make it somehow relevant to the readership. Expressions of the type “red is a symbol of blood, *therefore* people who favour red must be violent, aggressive and emotionally volatile” (see Hoss 1996, De Giorgio [no date]) are a misleading and unhelpful bastardisation of psychological research findings, and yet this is the type of 'knowledge' that is absorbed and generally taken for granted by the population at large.

There is a further common characteristic of journalistic commentary on colour which is of interest to this study. This was mentioned in the introduction to this Chapter, and is found in the appeals to our everyday language use in order to support the meanings that colours are said to have. For example, ‘blue’ is associated with depression, and this can be verified by the expressions ‘to feel blue’, ‘to have the blues’, and so on. In Chapters 4-6 it will be seen what relationship these statements about colour meaning have with the examples they use to support them, and how these meanings are realised in context as well as outside it.

1.5 Conclusion

It has been seen that colours have been meaningful since the earliest times. The meanings allocated over two thousand years ago have changed very little, to the extent that they now generally go unquestioned. Any suggestion that the habitual association of colour to other concepts has a root in synæsthesia is unfounded, as it has been seen that synæsthetes associate colours with other senses, such as touch and sound, and not with semantic concepts (1.4.1). Niemeier (1998) suggests that most colour association is governed by metonymy²⁹, and thus that it is not as arbitrary as it might appear to be. She explains:

Metonymies can help to disambiguate or even explain intercultural differences. As they have evolved over time and may have been handed down from generation to generation, they are often rooted in a language stage prior to the current one.
(1998: 120)

This argument is very convincing: the association of colour to entities in the natural world, such as the elements, has characterised the theories discussed throughout this chapter (see

²⁹ Metonymy is the substitution of the name of an attribute for the actual thing meant; for example, ‘The White House’ for ‘the American presidential administration’. Metonym is explained fully in 2.2.5.2.

Appendix 1b), and many other meanings arise from an extended application of these metonymies. That there is a fairly stable acceptance of colour meaning within the broadly-delimited Western cultural group is less likely to be evidence of universality (which has already been debunked in large measure) than a reflection of the predominantly metonymical motivation for colour 'symbolism'. The most important point of all is the constancy of colour symbolism through the ages, which has percolated down into our consciousness and is found in the language that we use every day. In Chapters 4-6, the theories of colour meaning discussed here are compared to linguistic expressions in English and Italian, in order to ascertain the extent to which what is said about colours and their meanings is realised in language use.

2 FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE AND PHRASEOLOGY

Examine language; what, if you except some primitive elements of natural sound, what is it all but metaphors, recognized as such or no longer recognized; still fluid and florid or now solid-grown and colourless? If these same primitive garments are the osseous fixtures in the Flesh-Garment Language then are metaphors its muscle and living integuments.

(Brown 1927: 41)

2.1 Introduction

In the previous Chapter we saw that the connotative meanings of colours are often realised in linguistic expressions and that these expressions provide evidence for the existence of some such symbolic meanings. This of course does not occur when colour words are simply denoting the physical colour of an object, but rather in figurative expressions, of which there are many both in English and Italian.

But defining non-literal uses of colour words is not straightforward. The division between literal and non-literal is anything but clear-cut, and within these broad groups there are further subdivisions which merit attention. Of interest too is the interpretation of an utterance as figurative or otherwise, and further, the meaning ascribed to a non-literal utterance, as “[t]he very same metaphorical statement...may appropriately receive a number of different and even partially conflicting readings” (Black 1993: 25).

This Chapter discusses the literature regarding definitions of literal and non-literal language, in particular metaphor, idiom and metonymy (2.2), its interpretation and processing (2.3), and

its place within corpus linguistics (2.4). This overview of various theoretical stances serves as a base both for the selection of data and its interpretation in the Chapters to follow.

2.2 Literal and non-literal language

This section outlines the main types of literal and non-literal language. In the first place, the varying definitions of ‘literal’ are presented (2.2.1), followed by the introduction of the main terminology used in discussing metaphorical and other non-literal language (2.2.2). Traditional definitions of the nature and purpose of metaphor (2.2.3) are followed by an overview and critique of the ‘contemporary theory of metaphor’ (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). To finish off, 2.2.5 deals with other categories of non-literal language that are of particular relevance to this study – idiom (2.2.5.1) and metonymy (2.2.5.2).

2.2.1 Definitions of literal language

Although this Thesis is concerned with figurative language, some consideration needs to be given to its opposite – literal language. All discussions regarding figurative language are based on contrast and comparison with the literal, though rarely is literal defined satisfactorily. If we consider Brown’s quote (above), we can see one argument emerging. This view³⁰, central to much of enlightenment philosophy, is that “all language is dead metaphor” (Partington 1998: 21); every word we use bears traces of a metaphorical origin (see 2.2.2.3.1) thus the concept of ‘literal’ is redundant. Despite the pervasive acceptance of this approach to

³⁰ In the case of this quote, Black adds that the concept is paraphrased from Carlyle (Black 1993: 20).

language, most linguists and language philosophers from Aristotle to the present day still prefer to stick to a definition of language as comprising literal expressions and non-literal (figurative, metaphorical) expressions. As Gibbs states:

Scholars often assume within the context of a single set of studies that there are two processes at work during figurative language understanding, such as literal vs. idiomatic, literal vs. metaphoric, or literal vs. ironic. Yet, if there are various types of meaning, must there be dozens of types of linguistic processes all at work, or potentially at work, when language is understood? Psycholinguists have not addressed this question primarily because they focus too narrowly on only one kind of figurative meaning against a simple view of literal meaning.

(Gibbs 2002: 467)

It is naïvely believed that there is only one kind of literal meaning. However it is more accurate to note that, according to the theoretical outlook of each study, only one kind of literal meaning is ever operational in contrast with the many different classifications of non-literal language. Scholars rarely if ever define their conception of literal, tending to regard it as a universal axiom having no need of further specification. This subsection will address the most common subdivisions of literal language – word meaning, prototypical meaning, salient meaning, and pragmatic meaning – to provide a backdrop for the various literature dealing with non-literal meaning, which is the principal focus of this Chapter.

2.2.1.1 Word meaning

The standard view of literal language is conventionally called ‘word-’ or ‘sentence- meaning’ (Grice 1968: 225; Searle 1993:84). In this very narrow definition of literal, each word has a purely denotative value. Thus literal can be defined as being the nomenclature we use to refer

to things; the most basic set of terminology that exists in a language. Word meaning has no relationship to issues involving usage or speaker meaning – it can be defined as “context-free, semantic meaning” (Gibbs 2002: 475) or, as Israel (2002: 424) puts it, “[t]he literal meaning of a word is the meaning inherent in its letters: it is the ‘plain’ meaning of a text, opposed to ‘figurative’ senses requiring a richer mode of interpretation”. It does not admit the use of untruthful language, and so excludes from its definition features of language such as hyperbole and euphemism, as well as irony and other expressions whose functional meaning deviates in any way from the pure word meaning. Word meaning forms the bare bones of language, but as communication is not restricted to denoting objects and concepts, its expressive paucity limits its use to the simplest of utterances. Consistent with this restricted view of literal language are Grice’s (1975) conversational maxims, set out in Table 2.1.

<p>Maxims of quantity Make your contribution as informative as required. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.</p> <p>Maxims of quality Do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.</p> <p>Maxim of relation Be relevant.</p> <p>Maxims of manner Avoid obscurity of expression. Avoid ambiguity. Be brief. Be orderly.</p>

Table 2.1: Conversational Maxims (Grice 1975: 45-46)

The maxims operate on the principle that communicative effectiveness is characterised by being concise, specific and truthful. This is to be contrasted with such characteristics as elaborate, vague (or ambiguous) and untruthful, which are all common to metaphorical language. Grice's maxims are grounded firmly in the concept of literal meaning as word- or sentence-meaning, which will be seen in the following subsections to be an excessively restrictive definition of literal. In spite of this, however, the maxims continue to be used as a benchmark against which the pragmatic value of utterances is measured.

2.2.1.2 Prototypical meaning

Prototypical meaning differs from word meaning in that words are understood as referring to the most typical member of the denoted class, and for this reason it is no longer purely denotative. The prototypical image conjured up by the use of a word may not correspond to the actual characteristics of the precise object being discussed, but will conform to the most typical features normally associated with it.

It can be helpful to express prototypicality in terms of tokens and types: each individual occurrence of a phenomenon (token) has some unique features, but it displays sufficient similarities with others of its type to be classed alongside them. The most commonly-occurring features among the tokens of the type are the prototypical features, and are considered to be central to the identification of the class (Cruse: 1986: 22); thus whereas the colour of blood corresponds to prototypical red, the colour of a European passport does not. In this Thesis, prototypical meaning is the preferred term for discussions regarding the meanings ascribed to colour words, as it is usual for colours to go by their general names (red, blue, green, and so on) as opposed to their specific hues (for example, crimson, cobalt, or emerald)

(see Rosch 1973). The term is not particularly common in the literature as its relevance varies in relation to the semantic area under examination.

2.2.1.3 Salient meaning

Salient meaning (see 2.3.2) goes beyond the strict definition of word meaning as core, denotative meaning, and allows extended meaning to be drawn in.

To be *salient*, meanings of words, phrases, or sentences (e.g. the conventional interpretations of idioms or proverbs) have to be coded in the mental lexicon³¹ and, in addition, enjoy prominence due to their conventionality, frequency, familiarity, or prototypicality. Meanings not coded in the mental lexicon (e.g. conversational implicatures constructed on the fly) are *nonsalient*. Coded meanings that are less familiar or less frequent are *less-salient*.

(Giora 2002: 490-91)

Whereas word meaning is essentially ‘core’ and etymologically prior, and thus based on a diachronic perspective, salient meanings are defined by notions of typicality and frequency in a synchronic perspective. Salient meanings are those we attribute to decontextualised words and phrases, such as those listed in a dictionary or mental lexicon, as explained in the citation above. In common with word meaning and prototypical meaning, salience operates independently of linguistic and situational contexts. Louw, who labels the phenomenon “full-intuitive citational meaning” (2000b: 1), emphasises that expressions “are often erroneously segmented into full intuitive meanings if they are viewed within the comfort zone of the citational example” (ibid). Salience allows language users to access what they believe to be

³¹ The concept of the ‘mental lexicon’ is essentially that every individual carries a ‘personal dictionary’ in their heads, and uses this when selecting lexis for production and when interpreting meaning. The term does not enjoy much currency in applied linguistics, often being subsumed by the related concept of ‘native speaker knowledge’.

the “conventional, frequent, typical or prototypical” meaning(s) of words, and these words reinforce their mental lexicon. However, speaker-judgements of typicality and frequency are not necessarily the best indicators of the facts of language. Saliency is based on the individual’s perception of what is typical, frequent and conventional, with the result that less semantically prominent meanings (which are nonetheless central and typical) are all too often overlooked. This point will be treated in more detail in 2.4.3.

2.2.1.4 Pragmatic meaning

Pragmatic (or ‘speaker’) meaning is concerned with the meaning that words have in use, and therefore takes into account the surrounding linguistic context as well as the extra-linguistic setting in which the words are used. Thus it effectively straddles the divide between literal and non-literal language. In allowing context a role in the formation and comprehension of meaning, pragmatic meaning is no longer bound to word meaning, though it is still “direct, plain and true” (Ariel 2002: 347). The difference between word meaning and pragmatic meaning is the difference between what is said, in terms of the literal, context-free meanings of each word form, and what the pragmatic implication is of that choice of words in a given communicative context. The acceptance of the notion of pragmatic meaning necessitates the acceptance that words can be interpreted non-literally in given situations, but that this non-literal meaning is consistent with the speaker’s intention in using the utterance. This is typically the case in indirect requests, such as “Is that the salt?”, which does not inquire after the nature of the substance but rather requires that it be passed to the speaker.

As Gibbs states:

Significant aspects of what speakers say, and not just what they totally communicate, are deeply dependent upon enriched pragmatic knowledge. ...[P]eople may indeed analyze aspects of what speakers say as part of understanding what speakers conversationally implicate.

(Gibbs 2002: 475)

Thus pragmatic, speaker-meaning is not simply concerned with the words we use but what we mean them to express, over and above their purely denotative function.

Pragmatic meaning is of central importance to this Thesis, but receives varying welcomes in the literature. In theoretical and cognitive branches of linguistics (see 2.2.2), pragmatic meaning is not admitted to the definition of literal language as it violates Grice's maxims (2.2.1.1) of truthfulness – truth conditions being a vital indicator for metaphoricity. Psycholinguistics, on the other hand, places great emphasis on the implications of speaker meaning (see 2.3), as language interpretation and processing are their main focus of enquiry. Applied linguists after the neo-Firthian tradition hold that language only has meaning when it is in use, and that it is essentially pragmatic in function (see 2.4). As the focus of this research is naturally-occurring language in context, pragmatic meaning will be seen to correspond to everyday meaning, the benchmark against which non-literal (figurative) meaning is to be compared.

For the sake of clarity, the precise type of 'literal' meaning intended in this research (word, pragmatic, prototypical or salient/full-intuitive) will be specified, the ambiguous catch-all term 'literal' being avoided where possible.

2.2.2 *Metaphor terminology*

Before examining views on metaphor, it is necessary to introduce some core terminology. Although the use of this terminology will be kept to a minimum in later Chapters, it is used extensively in the metaphor literature discussed in this Chapter. For this reason, brief explanations of the standard expressions are provided in 2.2.2.1 and 2.2.2.2. The more complicated and contentious division of ‘living’ and ‘dead’ metaphors receives more detailed treatment in 2.2.2.3.

2.2.2.1 **Topics, vehicles, targets and sources**

The core vocabulary of metaphor studies revolves around four terms – ‘topic’, ‘vehicle’, ‘target’ and ‘source’ – which are outlined briefly in this subsection. The definitions given are of a deliberately general nature, and are intended to serve merely as a point of reference for later discussions.

‘Topic’ and ‘vehicle’ (Richards 1936) are two terms which have been traditionally used to describe the meaning of linguistic metaphors. The topic of a metaphor can be glossed as “the thing which is being compared”, whereas the vehicle is “what that thing is being compared to”. Glucksberg succinctly explains how these two terms operate in creating a metaphor:

One purpose of using a metaphor is to characterize a topic of interest in terms of something else. What is that something else? In ordinary nominative metaphors, such as “*crime is a disease*,” the topic *crime* is characterized in terms of the metaphor vehicle, *disease*.

(1995: 48)

‘Vehicle’ is of course a metaphor itself in this terminology, carrying with it the imagery and conceptual baggage necessary to make sense of the metaphorical utterance’s meaning.

‘Target’ and ‘source’ have similar functions to ‘topic’ and ‘vehicle’, though they are used to refer to domains rather than word forms. The ‘target’ domain of a metaphor is the domain to which the topic belongs (‘crime’ in Glucksberg’s example); the ‘source’ domain is that to which the vehicle belongs. Thus in “The city’s crime epidemic was raging out of control” (Allbritton 1995: 40), the target domain, as well as the metaphor topic, is ‘crime’ and the source domain is ‘disease’, characterised by the vehicle ‘epidemic’.

2.2.2.2 Transparency and opacity

‘Transparency’ and ‘opacity’ are used to refer to the ease with which the meaning of a non-literal utterance can be understood. The terms are especially common in discussions regarding idioms and idiomatic expressions which are metaphorically motivated, and in the analysis of conventional, non-literal language (of which idioms form a substantial part; see Moon 1998: 22-23). Although it is usual for expressions to be divided into transparent, semi-transparent and opaque for analytical purposes, transparency-opacity is in reality a cline with no clearly-cut boundary lines, and the precise interpretation of language as transparent or otherwise is partly dependent on the hearer/reader’s personal (linguistic and extra-linguistic) experience and knowledge of the world.

Once again we find that the terminology itself is metaphorically motivated. A transparent expression allows the reader to ‘see through’ the words to arrive at the intended meaning, whereas opaque expressions are “those where compositional decoding and interpretation of

the image are practically or completely impossible without knowledge of the historical origins of the expression” (Moon 1998: 23). The middle-ground of semi-transparent expressions can be subdivided into more detailed categories where it is useful to do so, but these subdivisions essentially comprise fuzzy sets rather than absolute categories.

2.2.2.3 Living and dead metaphor

Of substantial importance to this Thesis is the traditional division of metaphor along another cline – the living-dead metaphor cline. As with the transparency-opacity cline outlined in 2.2.2.2, this is usually subdivided into a series of categories which mask the fact that the progression is divided into fuzzy sets rather than clear-cut categories. The notion that metaphors are ‘living’ or ‘dead’, or just surviving, is of immense importance to metaphor studies, which has seen several attempts at positing standard definitions of categories dividing the cline (see especially 2.2.2.3.2). No attempt is made here to set out new divisions, as the categories are not strictly relevant to the data examined in this research.

2.2.2.3.1 Dead metaphor

In labelling a metaphor as ‘dead’, we mean that it was once novel but with the passage of time has become “part of mundane conventional language, the cemetery of creative thought” (Lakoff 1987: 143). Lakoff makes a detailed subdivision of dead metaphor, identifying what he sees as four distinct types. Unfortunately he chooses not to name the types, but to refer to them by the single example that he uses to illustrate each case (‘pedigree’, ‘comprehend’,

‘dunk’, ‘grasp’); a considerable inconvenience when his theory is to be compared and contrasted with others. The four groups are identified on the basis of four criteria:

1. Absence or presence of source-domain structure (the image originally evoked by the metaphor).
2. Absence or (systematic and conventional) presence of conceptual mapping (relationship of topic to vehicle).
3. Absence or presence of linguistic mapping (from source term to target term).
4. Absence or presence in current language use of the original, literal meaning of the vehicle term.

(after Lakoff 1987: 146)

If all four criteria are absent, the metaphor is unarguably dead, as is the case with the ‘pedigree’ group. Lakoff proposes that this ‘pure’ type of dead metaphor might more usefully and accurately be described as ‘historical’ metaphor. I suggest that the label ‘etymological’ metaphor might be more appropriate, because the example given to illustrate the category, ‘pedigree’, was historically metaphorical in Old French but has never actually been metaphorical in English. Lakoff’s second division of dead metaphor (the ‘comprehend’ group) requires elements 1 and 2 to be present, with 3 and 4 absent. The third type of dead metaphor (illustrated by ‘dunk’ [in basketball terminology]) requires elements 1, 2 and 3 to be present, even if only partially or unsystematically, with only 4 being absent. The fourth type of dead metaphor (terms such as ‘grasp’, meaning ‘understand’) requires the presence of all four criteria³², though some concession is allowed for unsystematic or partial mappings. It should be noted that Lakoff’s choice of examples is based on his own definition of metaphor (see 2.2.3), and thus may not correspond to the other, more traditional designations outlined in this section.

³² Why this should be a ‘dead’ metaphor is not made clear, as it appears to display some vestiges of metaphorical life.

In the above summary it can be appreciated that a classification of metaphor based on single examples is of limited theoretical validity. However Lakoff's aim is to question the very basis for the broad use of the term 'dead metaphor' in a theory of metaphor to which he does not subscribe (see 2.2.3). For this reason he has no intention of refining his examples, nor of naming the typologies he claims to have identified.

Rather than seeing a need to refine the definition of dead metaphor, Black (1993) doubts whether dead metaphor should be considered as metaphorical at all. His view is that:

the trite opposition (itself expressed metaphorically) between 'dead' and 'live' metaphors ... is no more helpful than, say, treating a corpse as a special case of a person: A so-called dead metaphor is not a metaphor at all, but merely an expression that no longer has a pregnant metaphorical use.

(Black 1993: 25)

Although he is somewhat ruthless in his approach, Black is quite right to dismiss once-metaphorical language as no longer rightly belonging to the class. For the purposes of this study, the term 'metaphor' will not encompass dead or non-metaphors.

2.2.2.3.2 *Living metaphor*

We have seen that dead metaphors are figurative has-beens; once-innovative turns of phrase that have lost their lustre and been relegated to the ranks of the literal. Living metaphors, on the other hand, come in two broadly defined forms: the first comprises novel utterances of the sort habitually associated with poetic language, whereas the second involves more-or-less conventional expressions which continue to generate metaphorical activity to some degree.

Black, having consigned dead metaphor to his category of ‘extinct metaphors’ (1993: 25), labels his two types of living metaphor as ‘active’ and ‘dormant’, commenting at the same time that “not much is to be expected of this schema or any more finely tuned substitute” (Black 1993: 25). Active metaphors still have and use their image-invoking potential, whereas this potential usually remains inactive in dormant metaphors.

Newmark, regarding the matter from the translator’s standpoint, proposes five categories of metaphor types: ‘dead’, ‘cliché’, ‘stock’, ‘recent’, and ‘original’ (1981: 85). Casting aside dead, we find cliché defined as “the murky area between dead and stock metaphor”, words and expressions which “become clichés through inappropriate use or overuse” (ibid: 87). Stock metaphors are conventional language items which “may have cultural (cultural distance or cultural overlap), universal (or at least widely spread) and subjective aspects” (ibid: 87). Recent metaphors are “‘metaphorical’ neologisms [which] include general technical terms” (ibid: 91). Original metaphors are not defined further, their successful identification presumably being based on their unusual and striking features. They are generally found in creative language, especially poetry. (See 7.5 for more detailed treatment of metaphor translation).

Deignan, developing her model from Goatley and Lakoff, proposes that living metaphors be divided into two main groups – innovative and conventional – and that conventional metaphors should be considered differently according to whether they are ‘one-shot’ or systematic (1997: 119-20). These subdivisions of conventional metaphor correspond approximately to Newmark’s divisions: his recent metaphors would be included in Deignan’s ‘one-shot conventional metaphors’, whereas his clichés and stock metaphors are subsumed in

the ‘systematic conventional’ metaphor category.

2.2.2.3.3 *Commentary*

The most important consideration to make when identifying and classifying living metaphor seems to be related to the degree of innovation that the instance involves. Although Black is doubtful that any good can come of metaphor classification, there is a need to recognise the role that conventionality plays in our use and understanding of language. In translation, for instance, it is essential that the translator be able to assess how ‘alive’ a metaphor is so that the degree of metaphorical activity can be taken into consideration in providing an equivalent expression in another language (this point will be discussed further in Chapter 7). There are also questions to be raised regarding the more conventional division of literal and non-literal language, in which issues of conventionality play a significant, if generally unacknowledged, role. Further discussion on this point will appear in the coming sections (see especially 2.3.4 and 2.4.3).

2.2.3 *Traditional definitions of metaphor*

Metaphor has traditionally been considered to be a special kind of language; a literary device or ornament which embellishes speech and writing but which, in common with many other beautiful things, is an inessential, superfluous deviation from ‘normality’. For example, Thomas Sprat, writing in 1667, expresses his disdain for elaborate speech, stating that “*eloquence* ought to be banish’d out of all *civil Societies*, as a thing fatal to Peace and good Manners” (1667: XX, his emphasis).

Most considerations regarding the nature of metaphor follow the axiom that literal and figurative language are fundamentally different, and that within this, that literal meaning is core, primitive and pure and therefore ‘better’ than extended, metaphorical meaning. Before examining the internal divisions of metaphor, we will look briefly at some of the key views held about metaphorical language, in particular the traditional ‘substitution’ and ‘comparison’ views, as well as some more recent contributions to the subject. Issues regarding the interpretation of metaphor are dealt with in 2.3.

2.2.3.1 The substitution view

The substitution view is Aristotelian in origin, and is very much dependent on the literal/metaphorical division introduced in 2.2.1. Essentially, this view holds that a metaphor is simply an elaborate alternative for something which could be said literally; and that the literal expression would perhaps be preferable because of its centrality, core meaning and etymological primacy.

[The Royal Society] have therefore been most rigorous in putting into execution, the only Remedy, that can be found for this *extravagance*: and that has been, a constant Resolution, to reject all the amplifications, digressions and swellings of style: to return back to the primitive purity, and shortness, when men deliver’d so many *things*, almost in an equal number of *words*. They have extracted from all their members, a close, naked, natural way of speaking; positive expressions, clear senses; a native easiness: bringing all things as near the Mathematical plainness, as they can: and preferring the language of Artizans, Countrymen, and Merchants, before that, of Wits, or Scholars.

(Sprat 1667: XX, his emphasis)

The view of metaphor as rhetorical device described by Sprat is still current, and alongside aspects of the comparison view (see 2.2.3.2), tends to form the basis of the average

schoolchild's understanding of what metaphor is³³.

2.2.3.2 The comparison view

The comparison view of metaphor consists in viewing a metaphor as a truncated or ellipsed simile. Similes are explicit comparisons between two things, and typically express this likeness with comparative adverbs such as 'like' or 'as'. A familiar simile might be

My love *is like* a red, red rose

Metaphors, on the other hand, are implicit comparisons, as the comparative adverb is conspicuous by its absence. The proposition therefore no longer consists of a comparison of two things, but a mapping of the attributes of one thing onto another (this will be discussed in detail in 2.3). Thus the simile illustrated previously becomes

My love *is* a red, red rose

The apparent insignificance of the ellipsed comparative adverb actually has enormous implications for the utterance. A simile merely expresses likeness; a metaphor takes this a step further by expressing sameness, and in doing so violates truth conditions. My love is not in fact a rose, but shares certain characteristics with it. For as long as the comparison is explicit, it is made without altering the truth values of the proposition, but once the comparative operators disappear, the utterance takes on an irrefutably non-literal (untruthful) quality.

³³ The OED also supports this definition: "The figure of speech in which a name or descriptive term is transferred to some object different from, but analogous to, that which it is properly applicable".

The comparison view proposes that all metaphors are ultimately interpreted as if they were similes, even though their wording does not conform to the comparative model. Again, this is almost a school-textbook description of metaphor, somewhat overly simplistic for the purposes of linguistic investigation. Furthermore, in common with the substitution view, the metaphor is seen as being “expendable if one disregards the incidental pleasures of stating figuratively what might just as well have been said literally” (Black 1993: 27). The differences between literal and metaphorical language upon which both the substitution and comparison views are based, which are in fact far more problematic than the proponents of these views would admit, will be treated in more depth in 2.3 and 2.4.

2.2.3.3 The class inclusion view

The above definitions of metaphor are traditional, but not the only ones in existence. Glucksberg and Keysar’s (1993) class-inclusion view (see also Glucksberg and McGlone 1999) is a valid alternative both to these traditional views, and indeed to Lakoff’s ‘contemporary theory of metaphor’, which will be presented in 2.2.4. It does away with the notion that the function of metaphor is to draw comparisons between two different things (‘*x* is [like] *y*’), positing instead that ‘*x* is a kind of *y*’. In doing so, the common traits of the components of the metaphor are emphasised, and parallels are drawn which normally might not be.

It is worth emphasising that in the class-inclusion view, the superordinate class need not be interpreted literally. Glucksberg and Keysar (1993: 408) point out that although classes are

traditionally considered to be taxonomic, in the case of metaphor, they are attributive. This can be explained further:

According to our attributive categorization view, a metaphor vehicle, in the context of a specific metaphor topic, acts as a cue for the speaker to infer or construct a relevant category to which both vehicle and topic belong, with the following important constraints. The metaphor vehicle must, to some degree, epitomize or symbolize that category. The metaphor topic, by virtue of being assigned to that category, is characterized along one or more relevant dimensions.

(Glucksberg and McGlone 1999: 1546)

Whereas the literal category provides a fixed set of characteristics and hyponyms, the attributive category allows the hearer a much greater degree of interpretative flexibility which in turn aids him/her in understanding the speaker's intended meaning. Glucksberg and Keysar (1993: 416-418) add that similes too are interpreted by means of an attributive, rather than taxonomic, conceptualisation of the superordinate category. The similarity is not necessarily absolute but rather tends to operate at a more selective level whereby certain characteristics are highlighted or selected according to their appropriateness.

If we return to the metaphor form of 'my love is like a red, red rose', the class inclusion view would argue that 'my love' is indeed a kind of 'rose': the interpretation would therefore start by exploring the characteristics of roses, identifying those which can feasibly be transferred onto the concept 'my love' – considered here as being a hyponym of 'rose'. By approaching metaphor from this angle the problem of truth conditions is circumvented, because rather than identifying one thing as being the same as another, it rests on the association of common qualities. Engstrøm (1999) presents a variation of the class-inclusion view in which an *ad hoc* superordinate class is defined by the metaphor, rather than there being a pre-existing domain which imposes structure upon the metaphor. Thus 'my love' and 'red, red rose' would group

together under a new superordinate class sharing particular characteristics (perhaps ‘objects of desire’ in this case).

2.2.4 *The ‘Contemporary Theory of Metaphor’*

Whereas traditional definitions treat metaphor as a linguistic phenomenon, a paradigm shift came about with the announcement of the “Contemporary Theory of Metaphor” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, see especially Lakoff 1993). In this now widely-accepted view, metaphor has come to be classed as a mental construct; an all-pervasive structuring of the way we classify the world around us.

2.2.4.1 *Origins of the theory*

Lakoff (1993) acknowledges his intellectual debt to Reddy (1993) who devised the so-called ‘conduit metaphor’. In this ‘metaphor’, Reddy grouped together a large number of conventional linguistic expressions for the transmission and reception of information, all of which appeared to use a systematic underlying concept of transferral from one individual to another.

With a single, thoroughly analysed example, [Reddy] allowed us to see, albeit in a restricted domain, that ordinary everyday English is largely metaphorical, dispelling once and for all the traditional view that metaphor is primarily in the realm of poetic or “figurative” language. Reddy showed ... that the locus of metaphor is thought, not language, that metaphor is a major and indispensable part of our ordinary, conventional way of conceptualizing the world, and that our everyday behavior reflects our metaphorical understanding of experience.

(Lakoff 1993: 203-4)

Lakoff and his colleagues³⁴ went on to further analyse other areas of language in which conventional linguistic expressions seemed to follow systematic mappings of concepts, creating giant metaphor schemas which, it is claimed, structure our knowledge of the world. Rather than focusing on individual metaphorical expressions, these ‘conceptual’ metaphors are the sum of habitual expressions, grouped into broad conceptual categories. The contemporary theory of metaphor caused a major shift in attention away from innovative, poetic metaphor, focusing the discipline of metaphor studies onto conventional language which might otherwise not be considered to be metaphorical; in doing so, it revived interest in the notion that all language is metaphorical (see 2.2.1).

2.2.4.2 Theoretical outline

In the ‘contemporary theory’, the sum of linguistic expressions give rise to metaphor names, indicated in small capitals, such as LOVE IS A JOURNEY or ARGUMENT IS WAR³⁵. Despite their propositional appearance, these names are not intended to have propositional value (1993: 207), but rather are intended to function as mnemonic aids which illustrate how a target domain is represented in terms of a source domain. Lakoff emphasises that the source domains are necessarily superordinates of their categories (ibid: 212), observing that the conceptual structures work at the highest level of abstraction (for this reason, a mnemonic such as ARGUMENT IS BATTLE would not be a valid metaphor name). The fact that source domain concepts are superordinate categories ought not come as much of a surprise. Lexicographic practice typically defines lexical entries in terms of hyponyms and

³⁴ See appendix to Lakoff 1993 for a bibliography of the most significant contributions to this theory to that date; the other main source of writing on this subject is to be found in the journal *Metaphor and Symbol* (previously *Metaphor and Symbolic Activity*).

³⁵ For a detailed description of the origins of these macro-metaphors, see Lakoff 1986 (LOVE IS A JOURNEY) and Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 3-6 (ARGUMENT IS WAR)

superordinates, as this appears to be the easiest way to understand lexical relations. Applying the same principle to the structuring of concepts can be seen as a natural progression of this long-standing practice.

Metaphors such as LOVE IS A JOURNEY can combine with others, for example A PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A JOURNEY and A CAREER IS A JOURNEY, to create a ‘structure metaphor’ which is organised hierarchically. Lakoff calls these ‘inheritance hierarchies’ (ibid: 222 ff.), as the “‘lower’ mappings in the hierarchy inherit the structures of the ‘higher’ mappings”. The structure metaphors that Lakoff describes are a further abstraction away from the capitalised macro-metaphors derived from conventional linguistic expressions. They are said to be central to the metaphorical structuring of thought through their generation of conceptual metaphors: it is argued that the systematic mapping of target domains onto source domains (conceptual metaphor) gives rise to conventional expressions, and that these in turn form the basis of innovative metaphors arising from speaker creativity³⁶. However, as Lakoff has derived the macro-metaphors on the basis of conventional expressions, we are actually confronting a chicken-and-egg scenario: it is unclear whether the cognitive structure developed prior to the use of conventional expressions, or whether the linguistic expressions have resulted in the building up of the conceptual structure. As Keysar and Bly suggest, “[i]nstead of serving as a linguistic window onto conceptual structure, idiomatic expressions may *mirror* the content put into them” (1999: 1560, their emphasis). And as far as innovation is concerned, this could also be ascribed as easily to an adherence to semantic sets as to an appeal to some higher cognitive structure coming into play – see 2.2.5.1.3 and 2.4.

³⁶ An alternative hypothesis will be presented in 2.4.3.

2.2.4.3 Commentary

The shift in emphasis from metaphor-as-language to metaphor-as-thought has had wide-ranging consequences for the study of figurative language in the past couple of decades. By changing the definition of metaphor, Lakoff has allowed himself and others to dismiss virtually all metaphor theory predating the “discovery” (his own term) of his theory, in particular the role of literal language, which he prefers to work into his classifications of dead metaphor (2.2.2.3.1). Dead metaphor, as we have seen, comprises the systematic, conventional language which lies at the very foundations of the contemporary theory. However, it should be remembered that dead metaphor is no longer deemed to be metaphorically active, and that there is some doubt as to whether it is metaphor at all. This casts a shadow over Lakoff’s claim that the conceptual structuring demonstrated by our linguistic expressions is rooted in a deep-seated metaphorical process.

A significant fault of the ‘contemporary theory’ is the way in which conceptual metaphor mixes synchronic and diachronic aspects of language, treating as metaphorical a huge swathe of language which is no longer metaphorically active. When lumped together, the conventional expressions with which the theory is illustrated may well seem to display consistent semantic groupings of a metaphorical nature, but as these expressions are never studied in their context of use, their alleged metaphoricity cannot be put to the test. However Lakoff is not interested in the pragmatic meaning of these expressions. If he were, he might have found that the identification of conceptual metaphors is highly dependent on the individual’s perception of the meaning of the individual expressions in imagined or real contexts. Glucksberg and McGlone (1999) have provided convincing proof that individuals each take something different from an utterance. They conducted an experiment based on two mappings – LOVE IS A JOURNEY and LOVE IS A CONTAINER – and asked respondents to explain

their interpretation of the expressions. The huge inconsistencies in responses only served to highlight the degree to which the mappings are reliant on the individual's interpretation of utterances, refuting Lakoff *et al.*'s claims that they fundamentally structure our thought. Blasko too questions the "thinking of metaphor as an all-or-nothing phenomenon" (1999: 1676), again stressing the fact that individuals interpret meaning differently.

A second drawback of the theory is that it insists that the target domain is conceptualised in terms of the source domain. This can be contrasted with Glucksberg *et al.*'s class-inclusion view in which the topic is considered to be a hyponym of the vehicle (see 2.2.3.3) and Engstrøm's (1999) variation of this in which topic and vehicle create a new, *ad hoc* category. Furthermore, Vervæke and Green (1997) point out that despite the considerable number of mappings that exist for some target concepts ,including love, anger and ideas (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), the mere existence of the mappings is not sufficient to predict which one, if any, will be used in novel metaphorical utterances.

Finally, although it is fair to say that ARGUMENT IS WAR expresses the fact that arguments are often discussed using the same vocabulary as we use to discuss war, this does not necessarily mean that we conceptualise arguments as being a kind of war, nor that we necessarily talk about arguments in terms of war. Consider these two criticisms:

One problem is that the contemporary theory provides few details to help us understand the way in which different types of metaphors were understood by different people. It does not tell us which conceptual metaphor should be used under what conditions, or which metaphoric expression will be considered most apt, comprehensible, and familiar to the reader or listener. These are all important questions which any model of metaphor (and language) must address.

(Blasko 1999: 1678)

Even in domains where the etymology of conventional expressions suggests a systematic analogy (e.g., idioms for anger), there is no evidence that people routinely activate such analogies during comprehension.

(Glucksberg and McGlone 1999: 1556)

An alternative means of looking at these macro-metaphors is to consider each as being one of the possible ‘metaphor-based schemas’ (Allbritton 1993: 38) or ‘metaphor-themes’ (Black 1993: 24) that we have at our disposal. The metaphor theme we choose in any given circumstance is selected from the possible themes available to us. Put more simply, the expression we choose is selected from all the possible nearly-synonymous expressions we know, presumably because it is the most appropriate for the situation at hand. These choices may well be metonymically motivated (see 2.2.5.2), in which case ANGER AS WAR would be more appropriate when the anger demonstrates violent characteristics, ANGER AS HEAT when the individuals concerned literally get hot and bothered, but such an approach to conceptual metaphors is overlooked in the literature.

2.2.5 Other important categories of non-literal language

2.2.5.1 Idioms

2.2.5.1.1 The standard definition of idiom

Idioms are a particular type of non-literal language whose varying definitions range from the vague to the minutely detailed; as far as the scope of this research is concerned, only the

principal issues will be discussed here³⁷. Idioms are lexical anomalies, frozen or near-frozen expressions whose lexical composition belies their semantic meaning (Moon 1996: 245). The most important consideration for idiomaticity lies in the fact that the meaning of the whole “cannot be predicted from the meanings of the constituent parts” (Kövesces and Szabó 1996: 326). Barkema gives a synthetic description:

- (a) idioms are expressions which contain at least two lexical items and
- (b) the meaning of an idiom is not the combinatorial result of the meanings of the lexical items in the expression.

(Barkema 1996: 127)

Idioms are traditionally considered to be fixed or frozen expressions which display no variation in form. In actual fact, variation does occur, and is sometimes considerable; however idioms are recognised by their ‘canonical’ or ‘base’ form which is the most typical realisation of the idiom, and the form that is cited in lexicographical descriptions. The precise identification of the canonical form is not without its complications. Some idioms exist which appear to be variations of one another (‘like a red rag to a bull’/ ‘like a red flag before a bull’; ‘green fingers’/ ‘green thumb’), and can be either classed as separate idioms or as variations of one. Moon treats these as standard regional variations (1998: 120 ff. and 1995). Furthermore, defining the core of the canonical phrase can also be problematic: returning to the examples just provided, is the canonical form ‘like a red rag to a bull’, ‘a red rag to a bull’ or simply ‘red rag to a bull’? There is no standard way of resolving this matter, as can be seen from the varying treatment adopted in different dictionaries.

³⁷ Detailed treatment of terminology and classifications can be found in Makkai (1972), Gläser (1988) and Fernando (1996)

2.2.5.1.2 *Criteria for idiomaticity*

Barkema's description of idiom in 2.2.5.1.1 is somewhat simplistic, as it encompasses all sorts of expressions which are not considered idiomatic but which can belong to other classes of non-literal language such as restricted collocations and free constructions (Barkema 1996: 125-26). By way of resolving such ambiguities, more detailed models have been proposed, the most widespread being derived from Makkai (1972), as shown here:

The five properties of idiom that have been most regularly invoked are:

- (1) the meaning of an idiom is not the result of the compositional function of its constituents;
- (2) an idiom is a unit that either has a homonymous literal counterpart or at least individual constituents that are literal, though the expression as a whole would not be interpreted literally;
- (3) idioms are transformationally deficient in one way or another;
- (4) idioms constitute set expressions in a given language;
- (5) idioms are institutionalised.

(Fernando and Flavell 1981: 17)

While such a set of criteria restricts the use of the term 'idiom' to exclude the unquestionably non-idiomatic, it has been argued that it cannot account for degrees of idiomaticity, nor can it facilitate the identification of classes with similar characteristics (Barkema 1996: 125). This kind of model cannot, for example, distinguish between fixed and semi-fixed structures, nor can it indicate whether the idiom is able to withstand substitution of one or more elements. By way of addressing this deficit, Barkema proposes a multi-dimensional model in which three principal features of idioms are used together to form a detailed definition of the characteristics of any given idiom. The characteristics are applied to the idiom are set out in Table 2.2

Feature	Description	Scale adopted
compositionality	The extent to which the meaning is the combinatorial result of the basic or derived senses of the lexical items in the construction and the syntactic relations in the constituent that contains these lexical items.	fully compositional – idiomatic
flexibility	The extent to which constructions can take different grammatically possible forms.	flexible – inflexible
collocability	The degree to which it is possible to substitute a lexical item from an open class in a construction with alternatives from the same class: thus a noun is substituted by other nouns, a verb by other verbs, etc.	open – closed

Table 2.2: Multi-dimensional model of idiomaticity (Barkema 1996: 135-154)

According to the schema in Table 2.2, ‘red rag to a bull’ would be classed as idiomatic, flexible and collocationally open (its meaning is non compositional but it can withstand a fair degree of formal variation and substitution of components; see Philip 2000) whereas ‘green fingers’ is semi-compositional, inflexible and collocationally closed. The model is intended for use in corpus analysis as well as in the compilation of dictionaries and grammar reference works.

2.2.5.1.3 Idiom schemas and variation to canonical forms

In 2.2.5.1.1, idioms were said to be fixed or frozen, though it was pointed out that variation is possible. Idioms and other fixed phrases can undergo different kinds of variation, as will be

seen in Chapters 5-6. Moon, through her analysis of canonical forms and variants occurring in naturally-occurring text, goes into great detail about the lexical and syntactical variation that occurs in her corpus of examples³⁸ (1998: 120 ff.). Barkema, working in a classificatory rather than a descriptive lexicographic framework, identifies only four types, subsumed by the general term ‘flexibility’ (see Table 2.2): permutation, term selection, addition and interruption (1996: 143). It should be noted that the different types of variation often function in combination rather than as isolated phenomena (Philip 2000: 223).

Some idioms are so flexible that they put a question mark over the existence of a single ‘canonical’ form. In these cases several lexical elements can undergo substitution with another member of the same semantic class, forming clusters of semantically and syntactically similar idioms (see ‘once in a blue moon’, 5.2.1.2). Moon calls these ‘idiom schemas’ (1998: 161-170) and, she claims, their existence can help explain “(extreme) variability, evaluative content, apparent compositionality, and the ease with which allusions to [fixed expressions or idioms] or exploitations are decoded” (ibid 163). She goes on to say:

Idiom schemas represent concepts embedded in the culture and associated with particular lexicalizations. They are characterized by an underlying conceit (the relationship between tenor and vehicle) and an over-lying preferred lexical realization, usually with connoted evaluation. The exact form of words may vary or be exploited, but is still tied to the underlying conceit which provides the driving or motivating force in the [fixed expression or idiom].

(ibid.: 163)

Idiom schemas effectively bridge the gap between fully non-compositional and compositional analyses of idiom meaning, because their variability heightens awareness of a link between

³⁸ The principal types of lexical variation that she identifies and describes other than part-of-speech variation are: specificity and amplification, truncation, and reversal, as well as spelling variation, register variation, variation of variety of English, calques and non-native expressions (1998: 120-138).

the words used and the sense expressed. The connection between word, meaning and mental image will now be discussed.

2.2.5.1.4 Compositional and non-compositional meaning

Although the traditional definition holds that the meanings of idioms are not consistent with the sum of their lexical parts, there is in fact a cline of non-compositionality present whereby some idioms are more metaphorical than others. If it is necessary for speakers to “form arbitrary links between idioms and their nonliteral meanings” (Gibbs and O’Brien 1990: 36) in order to learn and understand idioms, it can be argued that their non-literal meaning, once learned, is more readily associated with the word sequence than the literal interpretation would be, much in the same way as long words are learned as units rather than as the sum of a root and various affixes. This notion would appear to be supported by much psycholinguistic research (see Gibbs 2002 for a detailed review of the literature; see also 2.3). Titone and Connine define idiomatic expressions as “highly overlearned word sequences that comprehenders have experience with as holistic units” (1999: 1655); Keysar and Bly point out that “idioms may be perfectly transparent once one learned their meaning” (1999: 1572). In both these cases, the authors imply that idioms are learned much in the same way as separate words.

If we view idioms as compositional to some extent, then we admit that part of their meaning is literal, and part is not:

[T]he ‘compositional approach’ posits that the literal meaning of an idiom’s word components are critical in the interpretation. In this view, idiomatic word sequences are semantically and syntactically analyzable, and realization of idiomatic meaning is

based upon the products of these literal analyses.

(Titone and Connine 1999: 1656)

In compositional analyses, the reader/listener may form a mental image of the idiom (as shown by Gibbs and O'Brian 1990) or may create a storyline in which to make sense of the idiom (Keysar and Bly 1999). These considerations will not be further expanded here as they belong to psycholinguistic approaches to non-literal language which are reviewed in 2.3.

2.2.5.2 Metonym

2.2.5.2.1 Standard definition

A metonymy is an association in which an entity is referred to by one of its attributes, exploiting a part-for-whole relationship. We saw in Chapter 1 that the vast majority of figurative meanings of colour words appear to be based upon metonymical relationships (see especially Neimeier 1998), which is to say that there is some physical connection between the colour used and the meaning of the term. This contrasts with metaphorical relationships, which function at the level of connotative, not denotative meaning (see above, 2.2.3).

Lakoff and Johnson explain the differences between metaphor and metonym thus:

Metaphor and metonymy are different *kinds* of processes. Metaphor is principally a way of conceiving of one thing in terms of another... . Metonymy, on the other hand, has primarily a referential function, that is, it allows us to use one entity to *stand for* another.

(1980: 36)

The example of the metaphor ‘red rag to a bull’ illustrates this description of the function of metaphor, as the expression aids the comprehension of anger and its cause. ‘Red rag to a bull’ (either as a non-compositional whole or a compositional sequence) does not constitute a part or attribute of the anger itself. On the other hand, ‘The White House’ does not facilitate comprehension, but rather stands for the concept of ‘the US government’. The presidential home is a white house, but the term refers to what goes on within its walls, where the presidential offices are located.

2.2.5.2.2 *Loose definitions of metonymy*

As can be understood from the citation in 2.2.5.2.1, metonymy and metaphor differ at the pragmatic level and involve different cognitive strategies. Metonymy involves less conceptual effort than metaphor as it relies on mnemonics and existing connections between the topic and the word(s) used to name it, whereas metaphor creates novel connections which in turn establish new conceptual relations between the topic and its vehicle. Jakobson (1956) put forward the notion that metaphor works on the paradigmatic axis, substituting a simpler and perhaps conceptually poorer expression with a richer synonym. In contrast, metonymy works on the syntagmatic axis because a series of concepts can be evoked by one well-chosen metonym. Although this is not the catholic view of the difference between the two terms, as well as being too polarised and absolute to be applicable to real instances of language, it is an informative illustration of the conceptual strategies which lie at the root of these two types of figurative language. It does, however, highlight the effect that metonymical uses of colour words have in discourse. Colours occur naturally and are consistent in their manifestation under given sets of conditions: liver disorders may well turn the skin yellow, but they will not turn it grey; most plant life is green and not red or blue. It is therefore true that a colour can

suggest something greater than itself through a fairly unambiguous physical connection with it, whereas a metaphor relies on more sophisticated relationships which may not always succeed as communicative strategies.

2.2.5.2.3 *Metonymical motivation*

Metonymical language is figurative, but its grounding in the natural world makes it appear almost literal, for the simple reason that the relationships it presumes tend to be fairly transparent. When metonymical meanings become more opaque, as a result of language and cultural changes through time, they become metaphorical as far as synchronic linguistics is concerned, but they can nonetheless be said to be metonymically-*motivated*. Niemeier's (1998) claim that colour expressions are metonymical rather than metaphorical is substantially supported by metonymically-motivated connections as well as transparent metonyms. She is quite correct to emphasise this point, as pure metaphor carries with it notions of arbitrariness which are not shared by metonym.

A further point that should be kept in mind is that metonymical connections are not particularly inventive: on the contrary, they can sometimes be energy-saving strategies. One need only think of the current meaning that 'green' has in environmental politics to note that it is easier to use this all-encompassing term than to choose from the range of more specific synonyms based on the lemmas 'environment', 'nature', and so on. It is comparable to the use of an abbreviation rather than the consistent use of a more elaborate term, in that the same meaning is transmitted in less time and with less effort, both in terms of encoding and decoding the message. It would therefore be wrong to state that figurative elements used in metonymy are entirely non-literal, as they exploit real relations rather than constructed ones.

Metaphor, on the other hand, is essentially an elaboration which involves more mental effort both in its creation and interpretation. For this reason the functions of metonymy and metaphor are fundamentally different. Metonymy is ideal for the spoken language because it can encode a series of related ideas in one expression; metaphor is more typically found in the written language – as a literary trope, but also as a conceptual device in educational and informational texts, in which mental images can aid the processes of comprehension and retention of information in the memory – because it requires more time to encode and decode³⁹. Metaphor creates a relationship between a topic and its vehicle which does not exist in the real world: movement of money on the stock exchange does not actually produce rising and falling piles of bank notes in the major trade centres of the world, but this metaphor is central to Economics discourse; electricity bears no resemblance whatsoever to water, but describing its movement in terms usually reserved for liquids creates a mental image which aids understanding of this process. In summary, metaphor is a trope which creates connections, but metonymy exploits existing connections.

2.3 Understanding figurative language: a psycholinguistic view

Psycholinguistics has contributed a great deal to the study of meaning and its comprehension. In so far as figurative language is concerned, a lot of effort has been made to understand the ways in which listeners/readers process lexical information in order to arrive at an appropriate interpretation of the speaker/author's intended meaning. This section will deal with the two theories that are the most influential at present – the 'direct access view' and the 'graded

³⁹ This is not true of conceptual metaphor, but the argument in this thesis is that such 'metaphors' are not in fact metaphorical, and thus are not being considered at this point.

saliency hypothesis’ – as well as another, perhaps less well known argument which approaches comprehension as a process of suppression of irrelevant meanings.

2.3.1 The ‘direct-access view’

The ‘direct access view’ (Gibbs 1994, 2002) assigns a crucial role to context in the process of interpreting figurative language. Context is considered to have a disambiguating and focusing role, guiding the listener/reader towards a contextually-appropriate interpretation of the figurative meaning of the polysemous language item. The view contrasts with the earlier ‘standard pragmatic view’ posited by Grice (see Giora 2002, and Gibbs 2002 for discussion) which held that figurative language was interpreted first as being literal, and subsequently as figurative. The direct access view argues instead that literal meanings are not necessarily activated before the listener/reader arrives at a figurative interpretation. It is concerned with the pragmatics of the utterance, and thus with the role of context in setting up the pragmatic situation. Its main intention is to debunk the standard pragmatic view which holds that literal and figurative language involve different interpretative strategies. Put succinctly:

The direct access view simply claims that listeners need not automatically analyze the *complete* literal meanings of linguistic expressions before accessing pragmatic knowledge to figure out what speakers mean to communicate.

(Gibbs 2002: 460)

The direct access view prompts a re-assessment of the definition of literal meaning, which is often understood as “context-free, semantic meaning” (ibid: 475). Instead, Gibbs notes that literal meaning is not merely ‘what is said’ but more importantly ‘what is implicated’, and is

thus reliant on contextual and pragmatic information⁴⁰. Since context and pragmatic knowledge therefore appear to be as important for the literal as they are for the non-literal, the question is raised as to whether traditional distinctions between these two types of language, and the ways in which they are interpreted, are in fact valid.

Simply referring to some pieces of language as “literal” and others as “figurative”, or whatever other tropes may be of interest, does not empirically establish that literal meanings are somehow different than figurative meanings, or are produced and understood by different cognitive mechanisms.

(ibid: 474)

I will return to this point in 2.3.4.

The direct access view is not without its opponents. It has been criticised for paying too much attention to the role of the context, thus overlooking the meaning of the test item (Temple and Honeck 1999). It is important to point out at this stage that context does not mean the same thing to psycholinguists and applied linguists. First of all, context is optional. The test items used – words, phrases, proverbs, and so on – are usually presented devoid of any context whatsoever, in common with the metaphor literature discussed in the previous section. In these cases, meaning is to be extracted from the test item alone. Secondly, context, when encountered, is invariably invented. The test item is inserted into what is known as a ‘biasing context’: this is an invented context which is constructed in such a way as to lead the listener/reader towards one of two possible interpretations, for example literal or figurative, expected or humorous, and so on⁴¹. Contexts may be sentence-length or longer, and

⁴⁰ The role of context and pragmatic information has long been acknowledged as fundamental for the interpretation of *non*-literal language, but not for literal language (Gibbs 2002: 475).

⁴¹ See Appendix 2 for examples of these tests. The listener/reader is asked to state which of the two possible interpretations is the correct one, in a ‘forced choice’ test situation (either/or). Free interpretation (where the

sometimes involve mini-stories and anecdotes, but they are always constructed specifically to sway the interpretation of the test item one way or another. Biasing contexts are generally used in pairs, so that one language item is presented in two different ways to elicit the two different interpretations. In the direct access view, the word ‘context’ is intended to mean ‘context of situation’ (see 2.4.1.1) rather than lexical context, hence the emphasis that is put on pragmatic appropriateness in assessing literal and non-literal language.

Proponents of the ‘graded salience hypothesis’ criticise the direct access view for apparently not being able to account for the choice of interpretation beyond the simple literal/ non-literal distinction (Giora 2002, Giora and Fein 1999, Peleg *et al* 2001). This will be discussed in 2.3.2.

2.3.2 The ‘graded salience hypothesis’

The ‘graded salience hypothesis’ (Giora 1997, Giora and Fein 1999, Peleg *et al* 2001, Giora 2002) offers a different view of interpretation. Rather than grapple with literal/ non-literal distinctions, and the role of context, this “more general view of language comprehension ... posits the priority of salient (coded, context-independent, prominent) meanings” (Giora 2002: 490). In effect, this approach marks a return to the prominence of the “context-free, semantic meaning” which Gibbs has rejected outright (2.3.1); but rather than dismiss context as irrelevant, a compromise position is stated:

subject states his/her interpretation without the presence of prompts or multiple-choice answers) is generally not sought. Glucksberg & McGlone (1999) illustrate just how different and varied free responses are in comparison with forced choice answers, casting doubt on the validity of forced-choice as a tool for measuring interpretation.

[T]he graded salience hypothesis assumes that contextual information may affect comprehension immediately. However, *such processes do not interact with lexical accessing, but run in parallel.*

(Peleg *et al.* 2001: 176, my emphasis)

The view here is that although context plays a part in the overall comprehension of a language item, it operates independently of the understanding of individual word meaning. Peleg *et al.* continue:

Our proposal is that contextual processes make up a distinct mechanism that has a predictive but not a blocking effect. Under certain conditions, this mechanism may avail the contextually appropriate concept immediately. It cannot, however, inhibit salient meanings activated independently by the lexical mechanism on encounter of the lexical stimulus.

(*ibid.*: 176)

This statement implies that although context sets up conditions for the comprehension of a given language item, the item itself may not completely fulfil those conditions and thus may trigger a different interpretation to that anticipated. This different interpretation is activated by accessing the salient meanings of the word(s) in question. Giora *et al.* argue that salience is all-pervasive, and that the successful interpretation of language items in experimental conditions is determined by the degree of saliency (high-low) of the words or expressions under examination, and not whether they are literal or figurative. For this reason it is claimed that context ultimately does not predict or contribute to intended meaning.

For Giora *et al.*, as for Gibbs, context means something created for the purposes of an experiment, not something that exists independently of test conditions. This will be seen to be of huge relevance in the later Chapters of this Thesis, where the language analysed is

inclusive of naturally-occurring context, because the interpretation of results differs considerably when data is observed rather than created for the purposes of proving or disproving a hypothesis. It is therefore difficult to assess the part played by context – in the experiments discussed up until now these have all been biasing contexts – on the comprehension of language items.

A significant fault with the presentation of the graded salience hypothesis lies in the experiments carried out to prove its validity. Replication of previous studies (in Giora 1999, 2002, Giora and Fein 1999, Peleg et al 2001) consist of studies dealing with conventional language, be it literal or figurative. These are shown to be inadequately accounted for by the direct access view, prompting subsequent experiments to be set up, which are based on novel language items in all of the papers cited. The results relating to novel utterances invariably indicate that the reader processes some of the words' literal meanings before arriving at a suitable non-literal interpretation of the new language item, and this is provided as proof that the direct access view is fundamentally flawed. The authors conclude that only the graded salience hypothesis can account for the interpretation mechanisms involved in their experiments, without caring to draw the reader's attention to the fact that the language items are substantially different. However, the type of language item itself is important for the comprehension process. Whereas Gibbs and other proponents of the direct access view⁴² have concentrated on idioms and fixed phrases (in their canonical forms), and other conventional language items (both literal and figurative), Giora has analysed both conventional and novel figurative language. The positing of the graded salience hypothesis is the result of findings which did not conform to the direct access view, nor to the standard pragmatic view: I suggest

⁴² See Gibbs 2002 for an overview of these.

that this is due to the fact that she and her colleagues have an interest in the interpretation of novel utterances as well as the conventional, and are seeking a single theory to cover both language types. The implications of this will be discussed in 2.3.4.

2.3.3 *Suppression*

Whereas the two theories discussed so far work on the assumption that meanings are activated, a further theory exists which takes the opposite view. Gernsbacher and Robertson (1999) suggest that meanings are in fact suppressed rather than triggered in the process of metaphor comprehension⁴³. Meanings are suppressed rather than eliminated as, according to the authors, elimination is a less efficient means of dealing with meaning: it has been shown in experimental conditions that the re-activation of a previously eliminated meaning requires far more effort than when the meaning was merely suppressed⁴⁴. They argue that the possible interpretations of each word-form are simultaneously present, but that only the relevant one is given prominence, thus forcing the remaining, superfluous meanings to take a back seat.

During lexical access, the cognitive mechanism of suppression attenuates the activation of superfluous lexical information that is activated when a printed word is read, or a spoken word is heard.

(Gernsbacher and Robinson 1999: 1620)

⁴³ This approach displays similarities to Black's interactive view of metaphor (Black 1993) in that a selection is made from the possible meanings that are implied by the projection of target domain qualities onto the source domain. The difference is that while Black allows for a selection of possible implications to be triggered by the metaphor vehicle, Gernsbacher and her colleagues argue that all meanings are present, but only a few are ever highlighted in a given context or situation.

⁴⁴ The authors do not go into detail regarding their definition of 'eliminated' meaning and how it objectively compares with suppressed meaning, but limit themselves to describing an experiment where meanings were eliminated at one stage, and required later (Gernsbacher and Robertson 1999: 1626).

What this means in practice is not that all meanings are present for the entire duration of a text, but that all possible meanings are active until some element in the context allows the reader/hearer to select the one which is relevant, and deselect those which are irrelevant. Extra meanings can also refer to alternative divisions of phonetic patterns when a text is spoken⁴⁵. The selection occurs simply because some contexts render particular interpretations more plausible (ibid. 1625); context in this case meaning the extended context of utterance, not just the verbal environment.

In common with Gibbs (2.3.1), Gernsbacher *et al*⁴⁶ make no distinction between literal and non-literal language in the theory of suppression: the comprehension process for both involves the same mechanisms.

The role that suppression plays in metaphor interpretation is to suppress the literal interpretation, just as the metaphorical interpretation is often suppressed when a literal interpretation is selected.

(ibid.: 1626-27)

Here, as in the direct-access model, the determining factor as far as comprehension is concerned is the context in which the language item occurs. Context before the utterance creates a semantically limiting environment which allows the correct meaning of an expression to be chosen when it is encountered; context after the utterance has a disambiguating effect, allowing irrelevant meanings to be suppressed.

⁴⁵ The authors give the following example: *new display* versus *nudist play* (ibid: 1620)

⁴⁶ See Gernsbacher and Robertson (1999) for summaries of ten of Gernsbacher's publications dealing with this subject.

2.3.4 Commentary

We have seen that there are two principal issues at stake in these theories. The first is the role of context in the experiments reported above: language items located in artificially created texts that are known as ‘biasing contexts’ (see Appendix 2) form the vast majority of experimental data from which the above theories are derived. Some scholars eliminate context altogether, feeling that it contributes little or nothing to the real focus of their research. Given that contexts are generally invented, they may well in fact be justified in feeling this way: it would take some effort on the part of a test subject to deliberately choose a negative meaning in a positively-biased context, for example, and so it is difficult to extrapolate what the implications of language comprehension would be outside the psychology lab. When verbal context is used, it is specifically created to form part of the test item. Here, the context is invented and constructed in such a way as to elicit an answer in a forced-choice format. The contexts are either verbal, taking the form of a story, or situational, describing briefly the hypothetical context in which the language item would be uttered⁴⁷. In addition to the context given to the test items, ‘context’ is also used as a catch-all term to refer to the situations in which such an item might be used by the test subject and which therefore contribute to that individual’s pragmatic knowledge and linguistic competence. This mix of imagined and constructed contexts makes it difficult to apply the results of the above experiments on a wide scale, as they focus only on the extremes of the literal-figurative cline and are unable to account for the more subtle grey area in between.

The second issue regards the different treatment that literal and non-literal language types are given. It has been seen in this section that figurative language has traditionally been seen as

⁴⁷ See Appendix 2 for illustrative examples of these two test types.

substantially different from literal language both in terms of meaning and as far as processing and comprehension are concerned. Gibbs questions this distinction, and indeed retracts his own previous use of 'literal' (Gibbs 2002: 475), no longer believing it to be compatible with the evidence of language comprehension in the direct access model. The graded salience hypothesis plays down any apparent division between literal and non-literal language, focusing instead on the degree of saliency, familiarity and conventionality of the language item in hand. And it is this factor here that really needs looking at in more detail: whereas literal and non-literal language do not appear to behave differently, these does seem to be a difference in the ways in which conventional and novel utterances are interpreted. Conventional figurative language, including familiar idioms and metaphors (Gibbs and Nyak 1991, Gibbs 1980, 2002, Giora and Fein 2002, Titone and Connine 1999; see also 2.4.3), is not difficult to interpret, because it consists of "highly overlearned word sequences that comprehenders have experience with as holistic units" (Titone and Connine 1999: 1664). Its familiarity results in it being interpreted along the same lines as individual words, whose meanings are also learned at some stage so as to make them familiar to us. In contrast, novel figurative language is more difficult to understand, as the utterance has to be identified as being non-literal in the first place, before any attempt is made to interpret the intended meaning of the new combination. The role of context is undoubtedly valuable in aiding interpretation, but the likely approach to understanding is based on most-familiar meanings first, in accordance with the graded salience hypothesis. This being said, it is difficult to ascertain from the experiments reported in the literature whether readers/listeners do in fact manage to interpret novel figurative language without prompting (in forced-choice answers). The few experiments that request free interpretation (for example, Glucksberg and McGlone 1999) demonstrate that even conventional sequences are interpreted differently by different

people, so clearly a great deal more research is required before any of the above theories can be fully accepted.

An alternative approach for understanding figurative language lies in the analysis of corpus data, rather than experiments involving human subjects. By using text data, it avoids the problems which arise through the use of examples and experiments which are specifically constructed to prove or disprove hypotheses. Furthermore, it is not subject to the idiosyncrasies of the individual subjects examined. Most importantly, though, each language item can be examined in the context in which it actually occurred, making it possible to assess the real impact of context on the meaning of an item in use. The use of corpora lies at the basis of the research carried out in this Thesis, and is discussed in detail in the next section.

2.4 Corpus linguistics and phraseology

So far this Chapter has dealt with figurative language as a fairly isolated phenomenon insofar as it is considered to be substantially and significantly different from 'normal', literal language, as well as separable from it. The examples used in the books and articles discussed above are typically constructed for the purposes of illustration, and on the whole lack linguistic and social contexts of use. When contexts appear, as in Gibbs *et al.* (2.3.2) and Giora *et al.*'s (2.3.3) work, these too are constructed for the purposes of illustration. What is to be illustrated is the differences between figurative and literal language. But does such a division really exist?

The philosophy underlying computer corpus research derives from J.R. Firth's language research in the first half of the 20th century. He was first of all opposed to dualisms, such as "mind and body, thought and its expression, form and content" (1951/1957: 90). Instead, he proposed a holistic, 'monistic' approach which was to be polysystemic, taking into account the linguistic and extra-linguistic factors which combine to create meaning (1956/1957: 90). The outcome of such a view is that the Firthian tradition of linguistic analysis favours the use of fuzzy sets and clines rather than fixed categories, and resists treating *a priori* linguistic divisions as cut and dried.

Related to this view was the importance he gave naturally-occurring language in linguistics, declaring it the discipline's true object of study:

I now suggest principles for a technique of statement which assumes first of all that the primary linguistic data are pieces, phrases, clauses, and sentences within which the word must be delimited and identified.

(Firth 1948/1957: 121)

This is related to monism, as when constructed examples are discussed, they are inevitably illustrative of the theory that they are said to support. Naturally-occurring text is much less obliging. The analysis of authentic language puts question marks over traditionally-accepted linguistic divisions because although it can support them, it can just as easily refuse to confirm them, or worse, provide substantial evidence against them. Corpus linguistics in the Firthian tradition therefore gives prime importance to the contextual features surrounding a language element, starting with the most basic level of word co-occurrence – collocation.

2.4.1 *Contextual meaning*

The first stage in understanding meaning lies in recognising how words combine in collocation. Collocation at its simplest is the habitual co-occurrence of words in forming compounds and other fixed combinations. It also refers indirectly to the co-occurrence of terms that occur together because the things they refer to also occur together – “One of the meanings of *night* is its collocability with *dark*, and of *dark*, of course, collocation with *night*” (Firth 1951/1957: 196). Collocation is identified through the study of text, where its repetition can be quantified, unlike ‘study’ through intuition and introspection which relies more on salience and semantic prominence, as the psycholinguistic studies above (2.3) suggest.

The use of computer corpora makes collocation immediately recognisable, as the wealth of corpus linguistics literature proves, and it has shifted the emphasis of linguistic enquiry from the single word to words in their habitual combinations. As far as figurative meaning is concerned, data-based studies show that it is not the individual word that takes on a non-literal meaning, but that its context determines its interpretation, confirming Firth’s hypothesis that “each word when used in a new context is a new word.” (1951/1957: 190). Deignan has shown how different meanings of words attract different collocational patterns, so ‘shoulder’ in its denotative meaning collocates with words relating to posture, but in its metaphorical meanings collocates frequently with the ‘burden’ and ‘responsibility’ semantic groups (1999: 185-189). Such differentiation at the collocational level is not possible to determine without recourse to data. By making use of a large corpus, Deignan has been able to show how different meanings are realised in a homogeneous data set, rather than restrict

her study to hand-selected examples (which, as has been noted above (see especially 2.2.4.1), is the standard practice in most metaphor studies.

2.4.1.1 Context of situation

In 2.3.4, the experimental procedures used in psycholinguistics were criticised for not taking adequate account of the importance of context. Context, for Firthian linguistics, is not merely the verbal environment (cotext), but also the situational factors accompanying the verbal activity – the ‘context of situation’. Firth’s concept of the contextual theory, borrowed from the sociologist Malinowski, is set out thus:

A context of situation for linguistic work brings into relation the following categories:

A. The relevant features of participants: persons, personalities.

(i) The verbal action of the participants.

(ii) The non-verbal action of the participants.

B. The relevant objects.

C. The effect of the verbal action.

Contexts of situation and types of language function can then be grouped and classified.

(Firth 1950: 182)

In the contextual theory, each linguistic utterance is seen to acquire significance not just in itself but with respect to the situation in which it occurs. If these pragmatic features are overlooked, it is impossible to evaluate fully the meaning of the language used. In later Chapters (see especially 5.2.1 and 7.4), it will be seen how this context of situation combines with the more readily-accessible cotext in analysing the meaning of figurative expressions.

2.4.2 Phrasal fixity and variability

Collocation and its grammatical counterpart, colligation, have been the mainstay of corpus linguistics research since its beginnings, and receive a great deal of attention as they are relatively easy to identify using computer retrieval software (see Chapter 3). But they do not represent the full extent of the ‘unit of meaning’ (Sinclair 1996). The unit of meaning extends beyond the individual word, encompassing its collocates and colligates, and further into abstraction, incorporating the word’s preference for certain semantic groups in its context, and, ultimately, the pragmatic function of the utterance as realised through the ‘semantic prosody’ (Louw 1993, Sinclair 1996).

2.4.2.1 Semantic preference

Natural language involves not just the co-occurrence of words, such as ‘dark’ and ‘night’ but also the co-occurrence of semantic groups – ‘dark’/ ‘black’/ ‘grey’ and ‘night’/ ‘evening’, for example. This is a looser definition of collocation, which Sinclair (1996) calls ‘semantic preference’, and is an acknowledgement of the fact that word combinations are not necessarily fixed. In fact, variation in ‘fixed’ structures appears to be the norm in natural language (Sinclair 1996: 83), despite illusions of fixity perpetuated by lexicographers. The identification of the semantic preference of a word is essential to understanding its complete meaning, as not only does this constitute the habitual environment in which the word is found, but it is also the source of the contextual information that native speakers have at their disposal, allowing them to use the word appropriately.

Variation is a characteristic of everyday language, but can also be a device used in specific language context, especially journalism, as can be seen in Partington's discussion of exploitations of fixed phrases in newspaper headlines (1998: 122ff.), and Moon (1998; see also 2.2.5.1.1 and 2.2.5.1.3 above), who dedicates a great deal of attention to the types of variation that occur in fixed expressions and idioms, most of which occurs in newspaper text.

2.4.2.2 The idiom principle

Sinclair's view of variability is not specific to any text type. His proposal is that there are two broad tendencies in language – the 'open choice' and 'idiom' principles (1991: 109-112). The 'open-choice' principle is that upon which most grammatical description is based (ibid. 190).

It is:

...a way of seeing language text as the result of a very large number of complex choices. At each point where a unit is completed (a word or a phrase or a clause), a large range of choice opens up and the only restraint is grammaticality.

This is probably the normal way of seeing and describing language. It is often called the 'slot-and-filler' model, envisaging texts as a series of slots which have to be filled from a lexicon which satisfies local restraints. At each slot, virtually any word can occur.

(Sinclair 1991: 109)

Grammars tend to be based on the underlying notion that language is organised by grammar elements which have a fixed rule-based order, and lexical elements, free of any constraint, which are inserted in the spaces left for them by the 'structure' words. This can be contrasted with the phraseologically orientated 'idiom principle' which favours the selection of chunks of language rather than single words:

The principle of idiom is that a language user has available to him or her a large number of semi-preconstructed phrases that constitute single choices, even though they might appear to be analysable into segments.

(ibid: 110)

The idiom principle overrides the open-choice principle in that the internal grammar of a phrase is established together with the lexical elements rather than as a sequence of independent choices. The resulting whole is interpreted as a single language choice, and the variation which can occur to the grammar and lexis in such a pre-constructed phrase is limited to maintaining its meaning in a given linguistic context (see Philip 2000 for a detailed illustration of such variation). Hunston sums up the idiom principle thus:

The essence of [the idiom principle] is that meaning is expressed, not by individual words but by phrases, and that it is phrases that can be said to have meaning, not individual words.

(Hunston 2000: 234)

The principles represent the extremes of a linguistic cline ranging from purely denotative word-meaning at one end (the ‘terminological tendency’, Sinclair 1996: 82) to the exploitation of ready-made language chunks of varying fixity at the other (the ‘phraseological tendency’, *ibid.*). What corpus research continues to reiterate is that repeated patterns are more likely to be the norm in language use than one-word-at-a-time selection, leading to the conclusion that language is more inclined to be phraseological than terminological.

Such a revelation has yet to establish a foothold in mainstream metaphor studies. We have seen above (2.2) that theoretical linguistics favours the notion of word-meaning through the relationship of concepts to single words, thus taking a terminological stance with regard to the words it describes, and psycholinguistics (2.3), though purportedly aware of the relevance of

context, prefers to construct it artificially. On the other hand, Deignan, who is one of the few metaphor scholars using general reference corpora, has shown that context plays a determining role in ascertaining whether a word (or indeed, a multi-word expression) is literal or otherwise (1997, 1999), using an essentially phraseological approach based on collocational patterning. Her analysis disproves some of Lakoff *et al.*'s claims with regard to conceptual metaphor, finding that the collocational pull operating between some words is highly restricted and cannot be extended to the entire semantic groups to which they belong.

2.4.2.3 Semantic prosody

The final, and least tangible, element of the extended unit of meaning, is the semantic prosody, “a consistent aura of meaning with which a form is imbued by its collocates” (Louw 1993: 157). This often manifests itself in aspects such as polarity and modality (obligation, uncertainty, and so on), and it does so in a much more consistent and analytically observable fashion than mere connotation, which is subjective and intuitive. It is at its most detectable when it is negative, an observation which led Whitsitt (2000) to question its validity, though Louw suggests that the overwhelming preponderance of negative prosodies derives from the tendency for human beings to talk about bad things rather than good things (1993: 171). But just as other types of prosody do exist, it is also true that not every word has a recognisable or strong semantic prosody. Stubbs (2001) puts forward the related notion of ‘discourse prosody’, which is more firmly located in the pragmatic value of the utterance, rather than the “aura of meaning” proposed by Louw; this term will be used in the analyses to follow where no semantic prosody can be reliably detected.

2.4.3 *Delexicalisation*

The focus of the unit of meaning is undeniably pragmatic, and can be seen as a continuation of the Firthian tradition of meaning as function in context, which has been overlooked in cognitive and theoretical linguistics. By focusing on pragmatic meaning, the word under examination is almost swamped by other relevant contextual information, as it becomes clear that its meaning is dependent on these other elements, and not on some central semantic core within it. Traditional views of non-literal language do not acknowledge this, preferring to isolate the term from such external ‘noise’. But there is more to the notion of the unit of meaning than simple co-occurrence. The combined effect of strings of words is called the ‘idiom principle’ by Sinclair because, just as is the case with idioms, the combined meanings of the words are not equal to the overall meaning of the chunk. The mismatch is much more evident in proper idioms, where the meaning of the whole is palpably different from the meaning of the parts, and often violates truth conditions (see above, 2.2.1.4 and 2.2.3.2). The effect of combination in everyday language is more recognisable as a phenomenon that is known as ‘semantic bleaching’ (Israel 2002) or, in corpus linguistics, as ‘delexicalisation’⁴⁸:

In its extreme form, delexicalisation can be defined as the reduction of the independent lexical content of a word, or group of words, so that it comes to fulfil a particular function but has no meaning apart from this to contribute to the phrase in which it occurs.

(Partington 1993: 183)

⁴⁸ This term was initially used to refer to verbs whose function was structural rather than semantic, such as ‘take’ in ‘take a look’ and ‘give’ in ‘give a slap’. This is also known as ‘grammatical metaphor’ (Halliday 1994: 342-3). Delexicalisation has since taken on a more general meaning, and is used to describe any language chunk which is semantically ‘washed out’.

As Sinclair (1991: 113) states, “normal text is largely delexicalized, and appears to be formed by the exercise of the idiom principle, with occasional switching to the open-choice principle”. Thus our largely phraseological language use is also largely delexical, and the meanings of words we use are heavily dependent on context. If this is indeed the case, then the study of metaphor should rightly involve the examination of the contexts in which metaphorical utterances occur. Louw (2000b) argues strongly in favour of such an approach, criticising Lakoff *et al.*'s construction of a metaphor theory that uses invented and opportunistically-collected examples, which have no context of utterance nor function in discourse. The effect of this kind of data is, according to Louw, to artificially inflate the semantic value of the words under study, making them appear to be metaphorical when their contextualisation might suggest otherwise. This occurs because the standard presentation of metaphor data, involving lists of semantically related one-off examples, carries with it the implication of repeated events, and draws attention to the highlighted words or semantic groups because of their proximity in the context of the example list. The effect is much the same as that which a poet creates when s/he builds a metaphor through the reiteration of concepts in a poem. Repetition and proximity create ties between words and concepts, and although it is the poet's prerogative to create imagery and symbolism through careful juxtaposition of related terms and concepts, when a scholar does the same, intentionally or not, the inferences made can be misleading.

Louw proposes that, rather than a cline from innovative to dead metaphor, language operates along a cline from ‘full intuitive citational meaning’ (which can be roughly equated with ‘salient’ or ‘prominent’ meaning), through to the ‘delexical, phraseological, textual meaning’ of language in context: see Table 2.3.

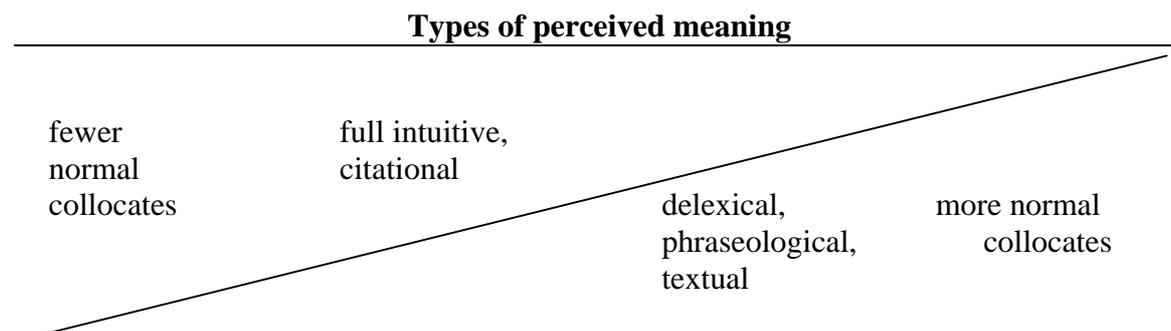


Table 2.3: Cline of lexical and delexical meaning (Louw 2000b: 15)

In this view, those words and expressions which are not clearly metaphorical or symbolic are deemed to lie on the delexical end of the scale, as they demonstrate features of patterning which are frequent and/or typical. The less conventional the collocation, the more likely it is to be interpreted according to its full semantic meaning. Therefore, Louw is positing delexicalisation as a central element in a process of de-literalisation. Delexicalised utterances are not figurative; on the contrary, they are no longer able to exert their full meaning potential, let alone support secondary meanings.

2.5 Summary

We have seen that the terminology used to discuss non-literal language is problematic. The difficulties that exist in defining ‘literal’ obviously exacerbate an already delicate area. Should ‘literal’ refer to the etymologically prior meaning or to the salient and prominent meanings of current language use? The answer to this question lies in the choice between diachronic and synchronic linguistics. Etymology has very limited relevance to synchronic linguistics, so a definition of ‘literal’ based on etymology is unhelpful. Salience and prominence concern

frequency and familiarity, but do not enter into the literal – non-literal scale. In this study, ‘literal’ will be used to mean denotative meaning, irrespective of etymology, familiarity or pragmatics.

‘Metaphor’ too can be attributed various meanings, all established in contrast to ‘literal’ meaning. The lengthy discussions about ‘dead metaphor’ rightly belong to diachronic linguistics, despite the fact that they are all too often found within purportedly synchronic theories. This is the case with Lakoff (1987), who goes into great detail about the etymology of words in order to determine the extent of their ‘deadness’, and yet who often fails to involve historical and cultural beliefs to account for the phrases upon which his conceptual metaphors are based (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; see especially 231-233). He discusses diachronic metaphors in a synchronic framework, and synchronic dead metaphors in a diachronic perspective. Black (1993) takes a more pragmatic view of dead metaphor, which is echoed in Louw’s theory of progressive delexicalisation: if a metaphor is no longer active, it cannot be considered to be a metaphor. This is repeated by Halliday (1994: 342) who stresses that “[i]f something is said to be metaphorical, it must be metaphorical by reference to something else”, offering the term ‘congruence’ for wording which does not involve transferred or metaphorical meaning (ibid.).

Related to the notion of ‘dead’ metaphors is that of ‘conceptual metaphor’. This fairly recent meaning of ‘metaphor’ has achieved a high level of acceptance in linguistics, and is often championed as being ‘true’ metaphor. However, this belief holds much less sway in the corpus linguistics literature than elsewhere, as data analysis continues to challenge the statements made in theoretical and cognitive metaphor studies. The terms ‘metaphor’ and ‘metaphorical’ will be used in this study only when transferred meanings are intended,

cognitive metaphor being largely cast aside. As this thesis does not intend to redefine terminology and class boundaries, the general terms ‘figurative’ and ‘non-literal’ language will be used throughout for expressions which are not fully metaphorical. ‘Dead metaphor’ is not considered to be metaphorical at all, and for this reason will be described as ‘figurative’ or ‘non-literal’, where some metaphorical activity is still traceable, and otherwise as ‘delexical’, in accordance with Louw’s cline of metaphoricity (3.3). ‘Delexical’ shifts the focus towards the pragmatic value of language, and favours naturalness and typicality over the literal-metaphorical cline.

Louw’s cline of progressive delexicalisation brings us back to the notion of typicality and conventionality standing in opposition to atypicality and innovation, raised in 2.3.4 above. The absence of context in traditional metaphor studies has led to conventional utterances being labelled metaphorical, albeit less metaphorical than innovative utterances, and this has been shown by Deignan (1997, 1999a, 1999b) to be misleading. We saw in 2.3 that psycholinguistic research places considerable value on context, and that in doing so it has been possible to question some of the traditional assumptions regarding metaphorical meaning (see 2.3 and 2.2.3.3). Furthermore, it has led scholars to note the differences that occur during the mental processing of metaphorical language and that of literal language: when the metaphorical language is innovative, it involves longer processing times than the same expression in a literally-biasing context, but little if any difference is noted when the metaphorical language is conventional, irrespective of the context in which it is located. Attention to delexical forms in corpus analysis has shown that the language patterning of conventional expressions is highly consistent, and that the familiarity brought by lexical co-occurrence brings with it a certain contempt for the semantic value of each word in the delexicalised string. If we take all these strands into consideration, we may find that the

traditional division between literal and non-literal language has been misguided. The evidence strongly suggests that the differences lie somewhere along the cline relating to innovative and conventional language.

3 CORPUS LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGE DATA

... it is certainly the best plan, if one wants to appreciate the position of any language, to start with some connected texts of tolerable length...
(Jespersen 1922: 87)

3.1 Introduction

Linguistics has a rather uncertain history with regard to the use, and misuse, of data. We saw in Chapter 2 that psycholinguists and cognitive linguists tend not to make use of naturally-occurring data, preferring to create their own. Corpus linguistics is a social science, however, not a cognitive one, and hence it is essentially based on the analysis of data. This Chapter deals with the practical and methodological issues surrounding the use of corpora in research, from technical matters regarding access to data and the various tools used in corpus analysis (3.2) and the characteristics of the corpora used in this study (3.3) to the methods used in data analysis (3.4). A description and definition of the data analysed in this study can be found in 3.5.

3.2 Working with corpora

In this section we look at the principal elements of the interface that allows the user to access the data held within the computer. These are discussed in two main subsections; 3.2.1 deals with tools used to search the corpus – the KWIC concordance and its advantages over the retrieval of data in sentence format (3.2.1.1), the role of word lists and statistical calculations

of collocation (3.2.1.2), and other forms of lexical profiling (3.2.1.3). Preparation and annotation of the language data by lemmatising and tagging are addressed in 3.2.2.

3.2.1 Searching corpora

Corpus data, being stored electronically, calls for particular software to facilitate its retrieval and analysis. This section introduces the standard software tools used in corpus research, with particular relevance to those used in this study.

3.2.1.1 The KWIC concordance

The most important feature of the corpus is the concordance line, and the majority of corpora, including the Bank of English and CORIS, are viewed in KWIC (Key Word In Context) format⁴⁹. KWIC allows the analyst to read the data vertically, scanning down pages for repeated patterns around the central node word(s). These patterns can be identified quickly and easily on the vertical axis because repetitions effectively appear in column-like blocks down the page (see Table 3.1). In contrast, sentence-concordances require traditional, horizontal reading techniques, which make the analysis more laborious (see Table 3.2). When the node is not centred, the patterns forming around it do not appear as the word-clumps that are so characteristic of the KWIC concordance.

Although sentences are easier to read and firmly situate each example in its context⁵⁰, they distract the analyst away from searching for repeated language events. The KWIC

⁴⁹ One of the more high-profile exceptions to this general rule is the online BNC, where each instance of the word(s) under study can instead be retrieved by sentence-long concordances.

⁵⁰ For ease of comprehension, the individual corpus citations presented in this study will appear in sentence format.

concordance focuses on the node and words to the immediate left and right by reducing the overall context length; and the repetition down the page of the central node draws the eye down the page, in a vertical act of reading, rather than the horizontal manner which is normal for texts (Tognini Bonelli 2000a: 96). This vertical scanning of contexts suppresses the informational content, and in so doing fosters the retrieval of repeated linguistic patterns.

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g to do. It was a full-on white wedding, very traditional, which feels
give up dreams of a big white wedding and settle for Gretna Green. <
om the Western ideal of a white wedding. <subh> Siauliai, Lithuania <s
y plane had vanished, the white wedding marquee became the gathering p
mousine. <p> Deedee had a white wedding and two-point-five kids. She n
hurch, they marry for the white wedding, for the social display - much
e has always dreamed of a white wedding in 100-seater Clyne Chapel nea
would love to have a big white wedding and get married at Clyne Chape
</dt> EVERY girl wants a white wedding -- but few go to Fiona Thornew
own. We had a traditional white wedding in a church. Our honeymoon was
She also donned virginal white wedding undies and a lacy, purple set.
a whole new meaning to a white wedding when she married on a snow-cov
21, is dreaming of a big white wedding to fiance Lee, a mechanic. She
f she goes ahead with her white wedding she will cheapen the concept o
tton will NOT be having a white wedding -if they decide to tie the kno
th Tony, but plans a full white wedding in church once it is finalised
that Rachael dreamt of a white wedding. <p> Long said: `When we were
ough and Rachael wanted a white wedding. We just wanted to live in pea
in. `I've done the hoo-ha white wedding thing, so I think you can rule

```

Table 3.1: Concordance of 'white wedding' (random sample) – KWIC format

It can be seen from the examples in Table 3.1 that the KWIC concordance facilitates, for instance, the identification of the indefinite article as the most common collocate (14 occurrences), in contrast to 3 definite articles and one possessive pronoun. The repetition of lexical items too is greatly facilitated: 'white weddings' are 'big' (3), 'traditional' (2), and things that people 'dream of having' (4) or 'would love to have' (1); they take place in 'church' (2) or 'chapel' (2). All this information can of course be gathered from the sentence-concordance in Table 3.2 (below), but it is less immediately identifiable, and therefore takes much more time to process.

It was a full-on white wedding, very traditional, which feels strange looking back.

So maybe the best insurance against disaster is to give up dreams of a big white wedding and settle for Gretna Green.

The traditional dress and church ceremony of this marrying couple varies little from the Western ideal of a white wedding.

On Saturday as news emerged that the Kennedy plane had vanished, the white wedding marquee became the gathering point for the clan to pray once again that their family would be spared more torment.

Deedee had a white wedding and two-point-five kids.

Although a lot of people still marry in church, they marry for the white wedding, for the social display - much less for the kind of religious significance of the deal.

Catherine, 30, has told friends she has always dreamed of a white wedding in 100-seater Clyne Chapel near her childhood home.

She often said she would love to have a big white wedding and get married at Clyne Chapel.

EVERY girl wants a white wedding -- but few go to Fiona Thornewill's lengths.

We had a traditional white wedding in a church.

She also donned virginal white wedding undies and a lacy, purple set.

Uptown girl CHRISTIE BRINKLEY gave a whole new meaning to a white wedding when she married on a snow-covered mountain.

Jo, 21, is dreaming of a big white wedding to fiance Lee, a mechanic.

Marriage is supposed to symbolise a deep love between two people but if she goes ahead with her white wedding she will cheapen the concept of marriage for everyone else.

BIG Brother lovers Tom mcdermott and Claire Strutton will NOT be having a white wedding -if they decide to tie the knot at all.

Wendy said she was still locked in a bitter divorce battle with Tony, but plans a full white wedding in church once it is finalised.

But he claimed the pair planned a new life, and that Rachael dreamt of a white wedding.

We planned to marry as soon as my divorce came through and Rachael wanted a white wedding.

`I've done the hoo-ha white wedding thing, so I think you can rule that out," she said.

Table 3.2: Concordance of 'white wedding' (random sample) – sentence format

3.2.1.2 Word lists

As well as concordance-line examples of the data held within the corpus, the software interfaces of both the Bank of English and CORIS also offer word-list facilities which show collocations listings for the nodes under study. The significant collocates – those which are included in the calculation – are those which occur within a five-word span around the node. This seemingly small number of words in the context of the node actually defines the limit of the influence of word co-occurrence in most cases, the context which occurs beyond this boundary rarely having any affect on the patterning of the node word in question (Clear 1993: 276).

In both in the Bank of English and CORIS, collocations listings are available in three formats – raw frequency, t-score, and mutual information (MI). Raw frequency gives us no comparison between the attested number of co-occurrences and the expected number, and thus gives no information regarding the statistical significance of the collocation. T-score is the default option for the collocater program in both corpora. It calculates the significance of the collocation through a formula based on the standard deviation of the observed and expected frequencies of the co-occurring words (for the formula and brief discussion, see Barnbrook 1996: 97-98). MI does not use a standard deviation but rather a log-likelihood calculation of the observed and expected frequencies (see *ibid*: 98-100 for more detail). These different statistical calculations yield different results, with MI giving slightly more prominence to lexical items which are more information-rich than grammatical and structural items. This can be seen clearly in the results shown in Tables 3.3a (t-score) and 3.3b (MI). Although the results are different – the MI calculation of the top 20 collocates omits grammatical words such as articles, pronouns and prepositions which are relatively prominent

in the t-score calculation – both significance measures are valid, and it can be helpful to observe both in order to arrive at a clear picture of the importance of the collocations.

1.	white	126	11.196524
2.	a	88	7.002894
3.	dress	24	4.889586
4.	big	14	3.629657
5.	traditional	11	3.288344
6.	church	8	2.778094
7.	her	11	2.663763
8.	had	12	2.527452
9.	gown	6	2.447269
10.	full	5	2.090126
11.	in	29	1.986662
12.	married	4	1.953995
13.	wanted	4	1.879131
14.	she	7	1.759833
15.	dresses	3	1.725903
16.	cake	3	1.721640
17.	want	4	1.712849
18.	i	14	1.709323
19.	wearing	3	1.699626
20.	long	4	1.675887

Table 3.3a: Top 20 t-score collocates for 'white wedding'

1.	gown	6	10.008875
2.	dress	25	8.986883
3.	white	135	8.624997
4.	marry	7	8.344866
5.	dresses	3	8.039408
6.	cake	3	7.279469
7.	display	7	7.013867
8.	traditional	11	6.774913
9.	church	8	5.713379
10.	married	5	5.665011
11.	wearing	3	5.640284
12.	big	15	5.062603
13.	social	7	4.776010
14.	wants	3	4.315294
15.	couple	3	4.136683
16.	wanted	4	3.949345
17.	full	5	3.838345
18.	having	3	3.099578
19.	thing	3	3.085337
20.	want	4	2.700854

Table 3.3b: Top 20 MI score collocates for 'white wedding'

3.2.1.3 Lexical profiling

One step further on from the 'simple' collocations listings just described is word profiling. This is not necessarily common to all corpora, as it is much more complex from a computational point of view. The picture-view facility (see Krishnamurthy 2000: 36-39) displays not only the collocating words right and left of the node, but presents them in descending order of frequency according to position (see Table 3.4).

a	a	white wedding	dress	the	the
the	big	white wedding	in	and	a
of	traditional	white wedding	and	a	was
in	the	white wedding	at	church	i
had	her	white wedding	gown	<p>	to
for	and	white wedding	to	i	it
with	long	white wedding	thing	to	in
her	full	white wedding	cake	just	with
wearing	000	white wedding	dresses	is	but
s	<hl>	white wedding	<p>	of	as
to	s	white wedding	</hl>	will	their
have	no	white wedding	i	with	married
and	be	white wedding	for	from	more
an	of	white wedding	because	their	village
want	on	white wedding	but	which	church
having	thought	white wedding	a	her	<hl>
wants	their	white wedding	we	seal	s
wanted	beautiful	white wedding	is	s	that
<p>	its	white wedding	were	that	this
<hl>	fourth	white wedding	gowns	<bl>	for

Table 3.4: Picture collocations listing for ‘white wedding’ (t-score)

The calculation of ‘picture’ cannot process multi-word nodes⁵¹, though the only problem that can arise as a result of this is that some of the important collocational information further away from the node can be lost, because one (or more than one) position is occupied by a component of the multi-word node (in Table 3.4, there are only two ‘useful’ columns to the left, but three to the right). The advantage of this format is that it reduces the immediate context to a list of most significant items, and allows the collocational information to be interpreted by syntactical position as well as by frequency. It is especially useful when working with larger phraseological units such as those analysed in this study. CORIS has no such facility and the analyst is thus limited to collocations lists such as those described in 3.2.1.2.

⁵¹ In the example provided in Table 3.4, the word ‘NODE’, which usually replaces the search-term, has been substituted by the actual word (‘wedding’), and the only collocate at node –1 position (one space to the left of the node), ‘white’, has been added to the central node for ease of reading.

3.2.2 Data mark-up

Up to this point, we have discussed the bare bones of the corpus – its textual composition and the most commonly-used tools for accessing that text. It is pretty safe to say that all corpus software packages have some form of the tools described in the previous subsection, even though some might offer only a limited choice of, for example, statistical measures for collocation frequencies. This subsection deals with more elaborate tools which are applied to the data itself, rather than to the query software.

Mark-up is a sophisticated form of text encoding. Whereas the latter does not go beyond the surface representation of the text (indications of font face, or sentence and paragraph boundaries, for example), mark-up adds information that was not present in the original text⁵². The next subsections outline the principal features of two tools⁵³ which are used to annotate data: lemmatisation (3.2.2.1), and part-of-speech (POS) tagging (3.2.2.2).

3.2.2.1 Lemmatisation

A lemmatiser enables the analyst to retrieve the various forms of a single lemma in one search procedure. The advantages that this tool has are considerable, even for a language such as English which has relatively few forms of each lemma (usually fewer than ten). For an inflected language such as Italian, the advantages are far more tangible, as each of the six main verb tenses conjugates differently for each person (1st, 2nd and 3rd person singular and plural), in addition to nouns and adjectives (including the past participle) which inflect for

⁵² Most researchers are in agreement that the mark-up should not permanently alter the original text – what Sinclair calls the “clean text policy” (1991: 21-22) – and that it should be possible to ‘switch off’ the annotated corpus and return to the raw text at any time.

⁵³ A third tool, parsing, is not discussed here as it is not pertinent to this study.

gender (male/ female) and number (singular/ plural). Searching for these individually is extremely laborious and makes the search for common language patterns very difficult.

Lemmatisation groups together word forms that belong to the same lemma head. Unfortunately, this can sometimes result in unrelated meanings of words being lumped together: for example, the search ‘viola@’ in Italian would include the colour ‘purple’, the flower ‘violet’, the musical instruments ‘viola’ and ‘viol’, as well as all words derived from the verb ‘violate’. This problem can be resolved in part by allocating POS tags to word forms and then using a tagger to retrieve those required.

3.2.2.2 Tagging

Tagging involves the allocation of POS tags to each word form that occurs in the corpus. This allocation is very general, as each word form is assigned all the possible grammatical functions that it can have in its decontextualised state. For example, the Italian word form ‘viola’ (3.2.2.1) is labelled as noun, adjective and verb, a situation which does little to resolve the ambiguities outlined in 3.2.2.1⁵⁴. This rather crude assignment of POS tags is the starting point for a more refined analysis which calculates the probable word class of each word according to its context within the sentence. No tagger is 100% accurate, but levels of accuracy tend to be in the region of around 93%-95% (Tamburini 2000: 69). Of course, levels of accuracy also depend on the detail of analysis required, so for example a tagger which groups together proper nouns, count nouns and uncount nouns under the umbrella term ‘noun’ will be more successful at identifying that class than a tagger which treats them as three separate classes.

⁵⁴ However, as superfluous data can always be discarded after hand-sorting, it is better for it to be included in the initial data obtained by this automated procedure.

3.2.2.3 Mark-up tools used in this research

The advantages of tagging the corpus text are most evident when the corpus is very large, as the tool allows the analyst to select a particular grammatical function of a word-form from its total number of occurrences. This can considerably reduce the total number of concordance lines to be analysed, in some cases by more than half. In the case of the 450m Bank of English, such advantages speak for themselves. The Bank of English is fully tagged, and allows the analyst not only to search for a specific POS for a word-form, but also to search for all forms of a verb (thus combining the lemmatiser and tagger tools). This whittling down of superfluous data results in a more efficient and speedy analysis, especially when irregular verbs are involved (for example, ‘go’ in ‘go red’, 7.4.1.4). The ‘CORISTagger’ (Tamburini 2000) is not operational at present, so ‘lemmatised’ searches are in reality restricted to the ‘wild card’ symbol (@). This makes it necessary to carry out several searches for the individual forms of a lemma. When the ‘CORISTagger’ becomes available, it will greatly speed up and simplify the retrieval of the numerous inflected forms that exist for each lemma in Italian.

The Bank of English is extensively, but ‘loosely’ tagged (see Clear *et al.* 1996). This means that the tag set favours the retention of several tags for a single word form whenever there is any doubt regarding its classification⁵⁵. ‘Loose’ mark-up counters any temptation to put automation before accuracy, and puts the onus on the human analyst to decide whether or not to include those instances which the computer was unable to classify with confidence. Having

⁵⁵ A case in point is the word-form ‘blush’ (7.4.1.2): a search for all occurrences of ‘blush’ as a verb includes the noun ‘blush’ (the cosmetic more commonly known as ‘blusher’). The inability of the computer to classify the word exclusively as a noun caused it to appear in the verb-only search, as well as in a noun-only search.

to discard unnecessary examples by hand may well be a time-consuming procedure, but it is favourable to missing examples which are not retrieved in a more rigidly-tagged data set

3.3 Corpora used in this study

This study is bilingual, and makes use of the two largest general reference corpora currently available for the two languages concerned. The corpora are comparable in many ways, but do have their differences. The content of the corpora are discussed in 3.3.1, and matters relating to the retrieval and processing of the data in 3.3.2.

3.3.1 Comparison of the Bank of English and CORIS: composition

Most multilingual corpus research makes use of data which has been translated or constructed along guidelines that ensure that their textual content is equivalent. When corpora are built from the same texts – original and translated – to form two corpora which contain the same texts in different languages, they are said to be ‘parallel’⁵⁶. The term ‘translation corpus’ generally refers to a slightly different kind of bilingual corpora pair in which the translated texts are freely adapted to suit the readership of the Target Language (Tognini Bonelli 2000a: 101). The essential difference between these two types of translated corpora is that a translation corpus tends to display fewer features of translationese and a more relevant contextual and cultural grounding than would be found in parallel corpora, where the texts are unadapted. This matter is discussed further in 7.2.

⁵⁶ Baker (1992, 1995) calls this type of corpus a ‘translation corpus’, but ‘parallel’ is the more widespread term, used by the TELRI multilingual corpus projects and for most bilingual corpora where the texts which comprise the data set are ostensibly the same, but translated.

This bilingual research is different, however, as it is based on independently-constructed comparable corpora. In an ideal world, all general reference corpora would be designed along the same lines; but given that corpora are constructed for varying purposes and in adherence to particular beliefs regarding size and proportions of different types of text⁵⁷, there are several coexisting ‘standard’ models, each with their proponents and detractors. The Bank of English, for example, is often criticised for its heavy weighting in favour of journalism (though in practice one can deselect journalistic subcorpora if this is felt to be necessary). CORIS is loosely modelled on the written component⁵⁸ of the Longman Spoken and Written English corpus, whose composition is quite different to that of the Bank of English. Table 3.5 shows the proportions of the generic text types⁵⁹ comprising the corpora.

5. text type	6. Bank of English	7. CORIS
8. misc. journalism	9. 65.5%	10. 47.5%
11. general prose	12. 17%	13. 25%
14. academic prose	15. 1.5%	16. 12.5%
17. legal prose	18. --	19. 10%
20. ephemera	21. 1%	22. 5%
23. spoken	24. 15%	25. --

26.

27. Table 3.5: Proportions of text types in Bank of English and CORIS

The Bank of English can be searched by sub-corpora which are composed either of texts from one text source, for example a single newspaper title, or a general grouping such as ephemera,

⁵⁷ See Atkins *et al.* 1992 and Biber 1993 for detailed discussion of these matters.

⁵⁸ CORIS contains no spoken data, a choice made in the light of difficulties involved in collecting and transcribing spoken data, and because the corpus was intended to complement existing text resources rather than compete with them (Rossini Favretti, 2000: 43).

⁵⁹ See Atkins *et al.* (1992) for a detailed discussion of what constitutes a text, and a definition of text types.

academic writing, books, further divided by broad geographical area and resulting language variety (British, American, Australian, Canadian) A version of CORIS, which goes by the name of CODIS (CORpus Dinamico di Italiano Scritto), not only allows sub-corpora to be selected and de-selected, but also allows the size of data for each subcorpus requested to be stipulated. This means that it is theoretically possible to create an *ad hoc* corpus to suit the analyst's particular needs. CODIS subdivides books into novels, short stories and various, and by intended readership, but does not divide the data by geographical area, despite the pervasiveness of dialects and standard regional varieties of Italian.

Although the Bank of English and CORIS differ both in size⁶⁰ and composition, they can still be said to be *comparable*. Both claim to provide a balanced representation⁶¹ of their languages, and contain a wide variety of text types which, in common with the vast majority of corpora used in corpus linguistics research, are not shortened into text excerpts. The apparent dissimilarities in composition that are made evident in Table 3.5 are not necessarily proof of incomparability, as it should be borne in mind that different languages do not necessarily give the same priority to specific types of texts. In fact the decision to model CORIS on LSWE was taken because the text types and their proportions were deemed to be more appropriate for the Italian language than was the case for the BNC, LOB or the Bank of English⁶². This means that the comparability of the Bank of English and CORIS is not *absolute* but rather *relative* in terms of the languages represented and the amount of data available.

⁶⁰ The 450m-word Bank of English is five-and-a-half times larger than the 80m-word CORIS.

⁶¹ Precisely what 'representative' means is very much a moot point in corpus linguistics. It is a hypothetical construct which cannot reliably be defined *a priori* (see Biber 1993 for a full account), and "must be regarded largely as an act of faith" (Leech 1991: 27).

⁶² Rema Rossini Favretti, personal communication.

3.3.2 *Comparison of the Bank of English and CORIS: software tools and access*

Both the Bank of English and CORIS are accessed online and have integral interfaces⁶³ – UNIX-based for telnet connections, and web-based for Internet connections respectively. The Bank of English query software is extremely powerful and flexible, allowing the analyst to make very complex queries, to sort and re-sort the resulting concordance lines, to impose further restrictions on query results, to view expanded context and indeed, when necessary, to view the entire article from which the concordance line is taken. Data can be saved to file with up to 500 characters of context, allowing detailed analysis to be carried out off-line, on a local PC or on paper if necessary.

The CORIS interface, on the other hand, is far less flexible. In the first place, there is a 160-character restriction on the concordance line length, and the results can only be saved as they appear on-screen. The only way to access more context is to enter separate queries consisting of strings near the area to be expanded, which often has to be done several times to reach a sentence boundary or other point at which the context can be fully understood⁶⁴. There is a wild-card symbol but no lemmatiser, so each inflected verb form has to be retrieved in a separate query; and regular expression searches cannot be carried out to reduce and refine the data obtained within a query. These limitations have made the collection of the Italian data used in this study a time-consuming and laborious business. The solution adopted was to

⁶³ Unlike the BNC, which can be stored on a PC and accessed by a range of concordance programs.

⁶⁴ In example 72 in Chapter 6, 160 characters of context gave the following citation:

ultimo grido di guerra di Bossi . E la tragica mascherata continua : con le camicie verdi , il governo padano , il parlamento di Mantova , con tanto di patetic

In order to find enough context to make sense of the example queries had to be entered for 'ultimo grido' then 'batterci contro' (for preceding context) and 'parlamento+di+Mantova' then 'giocano alla politica' followed by 'corte suprema': Abbiamo deciso di batterci contro l'Italia" è l'ultimo grido di guerra di Bossi. E la tragica mascherata continua: con le **camicie verdi**, il governo padano, il parlamento di Mantova, con tanto di patetici ministri che giocano alla politica, e in più una corte suprema, che non si sa chi giudicherà.

collate query results and their contexts, save them to file, and then process them locally by running them through a PC concordance program.

3.4 Corpus analysis

Up to this point, only technical matters of data retrieval have been addressed. But corpus linguistics requires more than just retrieval of data, no matter how sophisticated that retrieval can be. This section deals with the other side of corpus linguistics – the analysis itself – and the main stances taken with regard to the treatment of corpus data⁶⁵.

3.4.1 Data-based corpus analysis

Data-based language analysis is the all-encompassing term given to linguistics which uses data as the basis for its theoretical statements. Within the field of corpus linguistics, however, Tognini Bonelli (2000b and ff.) uses the term “corpus based” to refer to:

work where the corpus is used mainly to expound on, or exemplify, *existing* theories, that is theories which were not necessarily derived with initial reference to a corpus.

(Tognini Bonelli, 2000b: 74)

The corpus-based approach allows *a priori* theories to be validated and refined through the analysis of authentic language samples. The downside is that new discoveries are more difficult to come by, as the data analysed is already pre-selected on the basis of the

⁶⁵ This will necessarily take the form of an overview. See Tognini Bonelli 2001 for a more detailed treatment of the issues.

characteristics that the linguist wished to investigate, creating a vicious circle of data exclusion. Language which does not fit nicely into a pre-determined category is thus overlooked, or suppressed, or deliberately done away with; any which way the result is to preserve an illusion of orderliness in a manifestly complex and chaotic system. The next subsections address the main types of data-based linguistics – that in which undesirable data is discarded (3.4.1.1), where it is ignored (3.4.1.2), and where it is supplemented or supplanted by the linguist’s native-speaker knowledge (3.4.1.3).

3.4.1.1 Subtracting data

[E]very corpus will contain sentences that the writer wanted to be ungrammatical (in the widest sense of the word) by deliberately violating the rules of the grammar, or knows to be ungrammatical, as when he breaks off sentences, repeats (parts of) constituents, uses elements from a substandard variety of the language, and so on.

(Aarts 1991: 25)

Aarts is not alone in using this kind of justification for the non-inclusion of corpus data which does not conform to a set of pre-determined rules. Here, as in the greater part of corpus linguistics literature, the focus is on grammar rather than lexis, and the rules of the grammar are ‘known’ before any data is analysed. A grammar is necessarily a condensation and generalisation of the mass of language it represents, so decisions must be taken as to what is included or omitted. It is of course true that, on occasion, people are intentionally ungrammatical (in the strict sense of the word); finishing a sentence in mid-flow, hesitation and repetition are less clearly-defined examples of ungrammaticality, but are included under the Chomskyan notions of performance which underlie the method adopted here. Aarts goes on to explain that by taking into account anomalies such as those quoted in the extract above, “the generalizability of these statements to the whole of the language” is compromised (ibid: 25). What he does not recognise is that by imposing a narrow definition of grammaticality on (presumably) acceptable and comprehensible language, the grammar itself becomes more and

more distanced – not just generalised but forcibly removed – from “the whole of the language” that it purports to classify.

3.4.1.2 Overlooking data

Unless appropriate additional information is somehow built into the corpus, the concordancer cannot tell the difference between I (personal pronoun) and I (Roman numeral); between minute (noun) and minute (adjective); or between lying (telling untruths) and lying (in a recumbent posture). How is this information to be provided? Can the analysis ... be induced from the corpus by discovery procedures, or does the researcher need to impose distinction on the text by means of human ‘intuition’ or analysis?

(Leech, 1991: 12)

Although the ‘semantic tagging’ alluded to by Leech is still a long way from becoming a standard corpus tool, POS-tagging (3.2.2.2) has already been with us for some time. This effectively transforms the electronic text into an informational database of classes and structures, which has considerable advantages in terms of processing speed and accuracy. It has a downside, however, in that tags can only retrieve word-forms which conform to an *a priori* category. Data that does not conform to the tag set is not discarded as such, but through being overlooked it effectively disappears⁶⁶. One of the risks that an uncritical reliance on automation brings is, therefore, that problematic, atypical or rare forms all too often end up being consigned to oblivion rather than investigated. This problem is avoided by ‘light and loose’ mark-up (Clear *et al.* 1996: 306) such as that used in the Bank of English (see 3.2.2.3), or by avoiding the use of tags in corpus queries, as has been the case in this study (3.5.2).

⁶⁶ This is connected to Sinclair’s assertion (2000: 35-36) that mark-up reduces the information held in a corpus.

3.4.1.3 Adding data

You have undoubtedly noticed that I resorted to made-up examples and imagined contexts. But that, of course, is because I'm pretty sure that what I am claiming about the fact of the matter is right, but the corpus didn't give any evidence one way or the other.

(Fillmore 1992: 56)

In Chapter 2, it was shown how the 'mental lexicon' gives prominence to salient features of language while playing down the humdrum and mundane uses (see especially 2.3.2). As Francis points out, "when people are describing their own language practices, there is often a difference between what they think they say and what they actually do say" (1993: 139). This difference manifests itself most evidently in the ignoring of uninteresting patterns, and giving more importance to the less frequent, salient uses than they effectively warrant. Fillmore (inadvertently, perhaps) highlights the corpus-based linguist's paradox in using a corpus: he desires to study real language through attested instances, and is thus prepared to challenge his intuitions; but when those intuitions are in fact challenged (by the absence of an expected phenomenon, or the presence of an unexpected one), he assumes that it is the data that is at fault and that it needs supplementing – from his intuitions.

The alternative course of action, advocated by Sinclair and his followers, will be discussed in the next section. This is the 'data-driven' approach in which the analyst is urged to "trust the text" rather than "throw away the evidence".

3.4.2 *Data-driven corpus analysis*

...the corpus tells us what the facts are. Some of these facts may seem intuitively obvious in retrospect (this is often the case with findings in the social sciences). But they cannot be predicted in advance and they certainly cannot be exhaustively

documented from intuition.

(Stubbs 1996: 40)

Although initially adopted as a language learning methodology – “data-driven learning” (Johns 1991) – in which corpus data is used by students “to explore the regularities of patterning in the ...language” (Johns and King 1991), the ‘data-driven’ approach has also found its way into monolingual language description, as exemplified by Hunston and Francis’ (2000) work on lexical patterning in grammatical description. Data-driven corpus analysis is sometimes criticised for taking an almost unnecessarily obsessive stance with regard to the ‘linguistic evidence’, but the reality is less extreme. It is simply a methodological approach to the analysis of samples of linguistic data.

The methodology set out in Sinclair 1991 (see especially pp.53-65) advocating exhaustive data analysis for language description, is called ‘corpus-driven’ by Tognini Bonelli (2000b and ff.). She outlines the corpus-driven approach thus:

The *corpus-driven* approach ... , in contrast to the corpus-based approach, constitutes a methodology that uses a corpus beyond the selection of examples to support linguistic argument or to validate a theoretical statement. The commitment of the scholar is to the integrity of the data as a whole, and descriptions aim to be comprehensive, rather than selective, with respect to the corpus evidence for a particular topic of research. ... The theoretical statements, as well as the comments or recommendations made, arise directly from, and reflect, the evidence provided by the corpus.

(Tognini Bonelli, 2000b: 75)

Proponents of this approach are reluctant to impose preconceived categories onto the data, and are concerned with describing the language sample comprehensively, rather than simply verifying or validating existing theories. Using the corpus to go beyond the verification or validation of a linguistic argument involves a more thorough mode of research than simply seeking out examples to prove a point. All linguistic research starts off with some sort of

hypothesis, which is to be tested out on a data set, and the data will (hopefully) confirm or refine the hypothesis. In data-driven corpus linguistics, the researcher is as concerned with those examples which do not fit the hypothesis, or which form sub-groups within the hypothesised trend, or which answer a theoretical question to which the answer was previously not known, as s/he is with verifying the initial research question. Thus no unattested data is added by the linguist, nor is existing data overlooked or suppressed. As Sinclair states, “no instances are overlooked in any sample, no matter how awkward or bizarre they might be” (1991: 94).

Although data-driven corpus analysis can often produce surprising, new information about language, just as often the findings simply state the obvious. Or rather, they state what perhaps *should* have been obvious, but yet had somehow been missed in traditional linguistic description. As Louw explains:

A common problem might be called ‘twenty-twenty hindsight’: the tendency to claim that one ‘felt’ the presence of a form which was inaccessible to one’s intuition until it was revealed through research.

(Louw 1993: 173)

The ‘facts’ of the language, as Sinclair likes to call them, are not always accessible to introspection, but are laid bare in a computer concordance. The linguist’s intuitions about the language, in which salient meanings are identified far more readily than non-salient meanings (see 2.3.2), contrast sharply with corpus evidence of language use. Data-driven analysis can therefore be said to complement and supplement native-speaker introspection by filling in the gaps brought about by the language user’s inflated attention to salient forms.

3.5 Colour word expressions: a definition of the data examined

The relationship between the corpus-driven approach and metaphor studies is a rather uneasy one, with corpora usually losing out in favour of invented or opportunistically-gathered examples (see especially 2.3) which arguably corroborate the hypotheses under examination. But the aim of this research is to understand when and how connotational meanings are activated in text, not simply to prove that they are (sometimes) activated; and for this reason it is also necessary to understand when and how such meanings are *not* activated. The most methodologically sound way to do this is to analyse data which can answer both parts of the question. This is where the corpus proves its worth, although there is a potential difficulty, in that it makes the natural variation that occurs in canonical phrases rather difficult to find. The ways in which this problem has been resolved in this study are set out in 3.5.2.

A further advantage of using naturally-occurring corpus data when studying non-literal language is that it always provides details of the context in which an utterance occurs, whereas it is rare for gathered examples to include such features. The role of context is of vital importance to the understanding of meaning: the balance of item and environment – node and context – is all too often overlooked in metaphor studies, which tend to focus exclusively on the internal composition of the phraseological unit. However, it will be seen in the following Chapters that the inclusion of context casts the problem of figurative meaning in a very different light, challenging the beliefs about non-literal language studies discussed in 2.3.

3.5.1 Characteristics of the data

The data consulted in this study comes from the two largest general reference corpora currently available for the languages studied – the Collins/University of Birmingham Bank of English⁶⁷ and the University of Bologna's CORpus di Italiano Scritto (CORIS).

The object of this study is to ascertain the extent to which the various connotative meanings of colours are realised in language use. As this requires that the data examined be composed of colour words, the logical choice was to define the data set in adherence with Berlin and Kay's (1969) eleven⁶⁸ basic colour terms (1.2.1.1), rather than involve all colour terms whether basic or otherwise. In addition, the colours were to occur in habitual collocations and idiomatic/ semi-idiomatic or otherwise fixed phrases: one-off, idiosyncratic uses of colour words do not necessarily yield the same type and degree of information about habitual use as those expressions which occupy part of the language community's active or passive repertoire, and they cannot be collected or analysed systematically. The collocations and other expressions to be studied were identified through consultation of the Oxford English Dictionary and other specific reference works⁶⁹. This yielded a huge number of collocations and phrases, not all of which were relevant to the investigation of secondary meanings, and so

⁶⁷ The changing composition of the Bank of English during the course of this study, involving a net increase of over 100 million words and the addition of new text sources and subcorpora, has also resulted in the removal of some texts from the earlier 329m version (this is a result of the implementation of the 'monitor corpus' [Clear 1987]). Given the low frequency of occurrence of the expressions under study, an inclusive approach was taken to the data, meaning that all examples found over the time period 1997-2003 have been considered. In effect, then, the English data comes from a combination of the old and new versions of the Bank of English, with the removal of duplicate examples arising from this overlap of corpora. For this reason, some of the citations used as examples in the Chapters to come may be found to be no longer present in the 450m Bank of English.

⁶⁸ The eleven basic colours are twelve in Italian, as we have to consider blu and azzurro as distinct entities (see 1.2.1.2).

⁶⁹ Works referred to for the English data were the following: Oxford English Dictionary, COBUILD (3rd edition), as well as specific idioms reference works (Moon 1995, Flavell and Flavell 1992, Wilkinson 1993, Kirkpatrick and Schwarz 1993). The works consulted for the Italian data were: Ragazzini 1995, Zingarelli 2001.

further selection was necessary. The criteria for refining the selection are set out in the subsections to follow.

3.5.1.1 Literal and prototypical colour-word expressions

It was seen in 2.2.1.1 that the principal determining factor for literalness is its unwavering adherence to truth conditions, which secondary meanings tend to violate to varying degrees. In practice, the purely literal meanings of colour words are used in an *ad hoc* manner according to the context of situation in which they are being used, and therefore cannot be considered to be instances of repeated language use as such. However, in their prototypical form, they can contribute to the formation of compounds which generally have a terminological or identifying function: ‘white blood cell’, ‘greenfinch’, ‘red currant’. In these cases, the colour is intended to be interpreted literally within compound as a whole.

By definition, literal meaning excludes connotative meaning, but we sometimes come across literal expressions which are nonetheless semantically loaded. An example of this is to be found in the use of colours, such as black, white, yellow and red, to describe skin colour and hence racial type. Here, the colour word acts as a vehicle for the emotive and attitudinal connotations relating to the race⁷⁰. On the other hand, political parties adopt colours on the basis of pre-existing connotative meanings, choosing the colour that most aptly expresses their political ideals, and not because of any denotative link between party members and the colours. Such a function is clearly of relevance to this study (see especially 6.3.4).

⁷⁰ As this study aims to investigate the meanings connoted by colours, and not the connotations inherent in a target for which a colour word is the verbal vehicle, colour terms used to describe race have not been included.

Simple collocations making no reference to the extended meanings of the colour words (including red meat, white wine, black eye) were eliminated from the study, because their function is essentially denotative. The other main occurrence of prototypical uses of colour words, in comparative expressions involving colour (such as ‘as red as a lobster’ and ‘whiter than white’) were retained, as they exploit secondary meanings to some degree (see 4.3). The other expressions in the preliminary data set fall into the category of non-literal language, and will be defined in the next subsection (3.5.1.2)

3.5.1.2 Figurative colour word expressions

The majority of the expressions remaining on the list after the exclusion of literal words and collocations fall under the umbrella term “fixed expressions and idioms” (Moon 1998). Those that do not are collocations with metonymically-driven figurative meanings, such as ‘libro giallo’ or ‘grey matter’. These expressions were all searched for in the corpora: those which were not found, or which occurred in minuscule numbers (less than five) were eliminated because no objective analysis would have been possible.

In the few expressions where figurative meanings have the same lexical realisation as a literal counterpart, for example ‘black and white’, the literal expressions were eliminated by hand from the total number available in the corpus. It must be acknowledged that hand-sorting can also be imperfect, especially when dealing with vast numbers of concordance lines, but the imprecision of regular expressions (see below, 3.5.2.1) meant that hand-searching was the preferred solution in these cases. Each example was evaluated singly, and those whose meaning was unclear were later re-examined with more of their co-text. Thus non-figurative meanings could be excluded from the data set, and figurative meanings retained.

3.5.1.3 Criteria for the inclusion of non-basic colours

As a final comment, it should be added that some non-basic colours were included in the data set at a later stage as part of the search for variations, as it was found from a preliminary examination of the data that additional colours can occur in place of the basic colours. These specific colours – ‘crimson’, ‘emerald green’, and so on – appeared in innovative variations of idiomatic phrases, usually taking on a central role in the creation of puns. They are discussed in Chapter 6.

3.5.1.4 Summary

There are two main advantages of using corpora to study the figurative uses of colour words. First of all, corpora make it possible to analyse the expressions in their habitual contexts of use, providing important information about the textual environment in which they tend to occur. A much more complete picture of these expressions can therefore be formed than would be possible from examining examples in isolation, or contextualised examples acquired serendipitously or opportunistically, in order to verify or substantiate a given hypothesis⁷¹.

Evidence of usage also applies to the existence of non-canonical forms of the expressions. The corpus provides a stable data set in which the patterning of non-canonical variants can also be identified, and compared against that of their canonical counterparts. Although such comparisons can theoretically be made from data which derives from different sources, no statements can be made regarding the behaviour of canonical and non-canonical forms

⁷¹ Reference can be made to Lakoff 1987. One of his data collection methods was to ask his undergraduate students to note any interesting examples they found in the week separating their tutorials (1987: 215). This obviously yields interesting results, but there is no benchmark to compare them against; more importantly, the data automatically excludes borderline cases, ambiguities and downright contradictions to the theory that they were intending to prove, thus casting doubt on the validity of the study.

existing in the same data set and thus in absolute terms with regard to a systematically collected sample.

A complete list of the canonical forms of the expressions comprising the final data set can be found in Appendix 3a; the methods adopted to find their variations will be outlined in section 3.5.2.

3.5.2 Procedures for retrieving non-canonical variations of fixed phrases in corpora

Before variants of canonical forms can be located in a corpus, it is first necessary to retrieve all occurrences of the canonical form, and to carry out a full analysis on these examples, starting at the collocational level, and moving through colligation and semantic preference. The semantic prosody may or may not be apparent at this stage, and it is perhaps more useful to assess this element together with the variants at the end of the analysis, because being concerned with the pragmatic function of the phrase, it can be expected to display a similar function both for its canonical and non-canonical manifestations.

This first stage in looking for variations to the canonical form is to understand the structural patterning of the canonical version. These are most obviously located in recurrent collocational patterns, but it may be the case that semantic groups, rather than individual words, have to be established as collocationally significant – the semantic preference. Recurrent grammatical features (colligation) also need to be noted. The patterning leads to the formation of ‘typical structures’, consisting of a series of slots, including the node: I call these structures ‘collocational frameworks’ (after Sinclair and Renouf, 1991).

The first stage is to identify the principal collocates of the canonical phrase, and their positions before or after the node. By doing this the analyst devises one or more typical structures in which the node is found. Once the habitual patterning is established, the string has to be entered in such a way as to allow individual slots to be left open, thus allowing alternant forms to appear in the results. It needs to be borne in mind that one slot does not necessarily correspond to one word, because the variants may consist of multi-word elements, or omit some component of the typical framework. For this reason, some leeway has to be built into the collocational frameworks to allow for these. This can be done in both the Bank of English and CORIS through the query pattern which allows the researcher to specify the minimum/ maximum number of words occurring between search items. Specific examples of collocational frameworks will be given in the case studies below.

The lines obtained as a result of the combined search procedures have to be checked one by one to eliminate the rogue forms that inevitably appear alongside the sought-for variants. This typically happens when the string crosses a sentence boundary or when other, unrelated collocations appear (see the example of 'red rag', 3.5.2.1). It is advisable to include all examples which are not obviously *unrelated*, because it is easier to eliminate these at a later stage than recover them once discarded.

It is worth noting that because the frameworks are initially based on the canonical form, the less a variant deviates from this, the more likely it will be to reappear during a series of related searches. A further eventuality to consider is that some variations might show similar features which are not fully reflected in the canonical form. Clearly, if this were to happen, the frameworks could undergo modification or extension with a view to carrying out further

retrieval of variants. It almost goes without saying that all duplicates must be eliminated from the resulting concordance lines before proceeding with the analysis.

3.5.2.1 Case study 1: ‘like a red rag to a bull’/ ‘like a red flag before a bull’

These British and American forms of the ‘same’ idiom are discussed in Philip (2000). As the focus of that paper was to examine variant forms as well as canonical forms, a procedure had to be devised for retrieving them from the corpus. The basic steps are those explained in 3.5.2: the details of these steps applied to this particular structure are set out in this section, to show both how the collocational frameworks can be applied in a concrete example, and how this study could be replicated⁷². The resulting concordance lines can be found in Appendix 3b.

Canonical phrase elements were identified as:

28.	BE	LIKE	A	RED RAG	TO	A	BULL
29.				RED FLAG	BEFORE		

These were reduced to the following basic schema:

30.	BE	COMP	DET	RED RAG	PREP	DET	NOUN
31.				RED FLAG			

The central node itself was not presumed to be invariable. The most obvious variation would be to find it in the plural form, but otherwise unchanged; however the hypothesis was that

⁷² The original study was carried out in 1999 using the 329m Bank of English. Replicating the study on the current 450m corpus would inevitably involve different examples, but the overall features of variation would probably not differ far from the original study.

there might be colours other than ‘red’, and fabrics other than ‘rags’, involved in potential variants. The first search was therefore to check the centrality of the collocation with the following queries:

1. red+1,5bull
2. rag+1,5bull
3. flag+1,5bull
4. to+a+bull

The results proved that no colours other than ‘red’ were used in combination with a fabric and ‘bull’; and no fabrics other than ‘rags’ were found where ‘red’ and ‘bull’ were both present. Of the occurrences of ‘red rag’ that did not relate to the idiom, two were literal (these are reproduced in the appendix to Philip 2000), and a further 30 were in capitalised form, being the name of a socialist-feminist paper, Red Rag⁷³, easily identified as a magazine by its collocation with issue numbers and dates. The other principal unwanted collocation which occurred was ‘red bull’ (Red Bull being a caffeinated sports drink, with no relevance to the idiom).

The next step was to search for variations to ‘bull’, and this was done by entering the basic collocations as search terms:

5. red+rag
6. red+flag

⁷³ This title appears to allude to the idiom, in that it is intended to provoke, but it does not relate to the idiom as it is used in language use.

Whereas ‘red rag’ provided only a couple of examples to add to those found in searches 1-4, ‘red flag’ proved much more problematic as it is more commonly found as the simple collocation rather than the full idiom. To resolve this problem, the search had to be refined to include a preposition slot after the collocation. The concordance lines for ‘red flag’ were alphabetically sorted to the right of the node, and those not followed by a preposition were deselected.

As a final check for very innovative variations, the following search string was entered to find alternatives to ‘bull’ (this applies to the British variant only).

7. like+a+1,5to+a

None of the relevant resulting concordance lines had not already been obtained in the previous steps. Duplicate examples were removed from the combined file containing the results of queries 1-7 before being analysed in the normal manner.

3.5.2.2 Case study 2: ‘notte in bianco’

‘Notte in bianco’ is discussed in 5.2.1.3. The following search procedures were used to find variations to the phrase, and more specifically, the search for members of the paradigm relating to the ways in which people spend their nights. The resulting concordance lines can be found in Appendix 3c.

First of all, the canonical forms were retrieved, and the collocational analysis carried out. It turned out that the main collocates in the context of the multi-word node were the verbs

‘passare’ and ‘trascorrere’, so these were selected as alternant elements in the collocational framework. ‘Nottatta’ and ‘nottataccia’⁷⁴ – two alternative forms of ‘notte’ were also taken into consideration, alongside their plural inflections.

Sequences such as the relatively simple ‘passa@⁷⁵ 4:4 notte’ (see ‘red+1,5bull’ above) generated several hundred concordance lines; too many to scan effectively, so more specific queries were adopted instead. The first sequence ran as follows:

1. passa@ 4:4 notte+in
2. passa@ 4:4 notti+in
3. trascor@ 4:4 notte+in
4. trascor@ 4:4 notti+in
5. nottata 4:4 bianc@
6. nottata+in
7. nottataccia
8. nottatacce

Using this sequence of searches, only two duplicate examples were found.

The second sequence made use of the MI collocations listing for ‘notte’ and ‘notti’ respectively, to find the remaining significant lexical collocations. Collocates for these terms grouped themselves into two main semantic sets, one of which referred to sleeping (or not), the other to descriptions of the night (starry, freezing, and so on). Those in the first group were selected as being relevant to the idiom: ‘insonne’, ‘agitata’, ‘lung(hissim)a’,

⁷⁴ Whereas ‘notte’ is the physical phenomenon which can be glossed as ‘the time of day when there is no sunlight’, ‘nottata’ refers to the activities which occur during that time (c.f. giorno; giornata). Nottataccia is the pejorative form (c.f. giornataccia).

⁷⁵ @ is the wild-card symbol which is more commonly indicated by *

‘interminabile’. These collocates were searched individually, in the context of ‘notte’ and ‘notti’:

9. notte 4:4 insonne@
10. notti 4:4 insonni@
11. notte|i + agitata|e
12. notte 4:4 lung@
13. notti 4:4 lung@
14. notte 4:4 interminabile
15. notti 4:4 interminabili

Results from these searches which showed no similarity in structure to the collocational framework were discarded (e.g. ‘lunga’ and ‘interminabile’, which turned out not to refer to time passing but to time periods). As in 3.5.2.1, all duplicates were discarded before analysis began.

3.6 Discussion

This Chapter has introduced the tools and methodologies associated with language corpora, and has discussed the data to be used in the remainder of this Thesis. Before going on to look at that data, it is necessary to outline the precise reasons for using corpora in this kind of research given that metaphor studies have, on the whole, been reluctant to consider authentic, naturally-occurring data.

The use of corpora in the study of non-literal language is unusual, though it is not unheard-of. Deignan, for example (1999a, 1999b, 2000) takes a data-based approach to cognitive metaphor, using collocation analysis to differentiate between literal and figurative uses of

word- forms, whereas Louw's (1997, 2000b) use of corpora in the study of metaphorical and figurative language is especially concerned with the contrast between habitual patterns of usage and innovative and idiosyncratic language.

This study is different in several ways to these main trends. In the first place, the figurative language under study is conventional, rather than the innovative or idiosyncratic metaphors found in literary works. The variations included in the data set are all derived from these conventional expressions and, importantly, originate from the same corpora as the canonical forms, allowing more direct comparisons to be made than is possible with more disparate sources.

It should also be stressed that the study of connotative meaning is quite different to that of conceptual metaphor. Connotation operates by associating an entity with an attributive sense, which results in the creation of an enriched meaning. Conceptual metaphor, on the other hand, owes its existence to the sum of conventional linguistic expressions which appear to prove that certain domains are conceptually related. This research aims to identify the triggering of connotative meaning in linguistic expressions, not to classify the expressions by conceptual domain.

The third main difference is of course that this study is bilingual. It therefore seeks not only to understand the mechanisms driving connotative meaning in colour-word expressions, but also to establish to what degree the trends identified in English are reflected in a second language (Italian). The ultimate aim is to arrive at a definition of the features that must be considered when translating connotative meaning.

4 COLOUR WORDS IN ENGLISH AND ITALIAN

See red: to see into the fire at the heart of all things

Yellow fever: the fear of colour

(Ackroyd, The Plato Papers)

4.1 Introduction

This Chapter sets out the fundamental points regarding colour in language. 4.2 recapitulates Berlin and Kay's study (see 1.2.1.1). The sequence of acquisition of the colour terms serves as a model against which their frequency of occurrence are compared. The proposed hypothesis is that there is a general correspondence between the identification of colours as basic and their centrality in a language and its culture. Where this is not the case, possible motives are investigated.

Proof that basic colours can be recognised is fundamental to a cross-linguistic comparison of colour meaning. 4.3 concentrates on prototypical features of the basic colours, which are mainly investigated with comparative expressions such as 'red as a beetroot' and 'white as milk'. By examining similes involving colour words, we gain an insight into the range of reference that colour words can have, both to things in the real world and to the actual shades of the colour intended. In so doing, their semantic flexibility and versatility is highlighted.

4.3 prepares the ground for the presentation of fixed expressions containing colour words in 4.4. This presentation aims to demonstrate how some of the connotative meanings associated with colours are manifested in language. In so doing, it paints a picture of the connotative

meanings of colour as they are represented in the mental lexicon, where they form part of the language user's explicit linguistic and cultural knowledge. This section is intended to serve as a reference point for later Chapters, and is based on citational forms⁷⁶ with some reference to corpus data.

4.2 Frequencies of the basic colour terms in English and Italian

4.2.1 Berlin and Kay's study

Since its publication in 1969, Berlin and Kay's groundbreaking study has served as a point of reference for virtually all academic research on colour. This study is no exception, even if the naming of colour terms is not central to it. One of the most important findings that Berlin and Kay made was that there is a highly consistent order with which cultures worldwide deem colours important enough to refer to them by name. As I mentioned in 1.2.1.2, the study has been widely criticised as being too Anglocentric⁷⁷, and not wide-ranging enough in the types of languages included in the research. Although these criticisms are justified, they do not invalidate the study's findings. These arguments are fairly peripheral in terms of my Thesis; as I am comparing the 1969 study to actual frequency of usage, the potential problems that would have been encountered with the Italian data are easily resolved.

⁷⁶ Subsequent chapters will make exclusive use of authentic, contextualised examples from the Bank of English and CORIS.

⁷⁷ All of the terms used are basic in English, but there is no evidence that English basic colour terms are to be considered the benchmark for other languages. Even within Europe we have languages which divide 'blue' into two distinct shades, much in the same way as we divide up 'red' and 'pink'; these two 'blues' are certainly basic in Italian ('azzurro' and 'blu') and Russian ('sinij' and 'goluboj'), and yet go unaccounted for in Berlin and Kay's schema. However, no follow-up study has been made which addresses these problems, either because the task itself is too daunting, or perhaps because their importance is seen as limited in an ever-more Anglocentric academic world.

To recapitulate on the discussion in 1.2.1.1, the order of colours proposed is shown in Table 4.1.

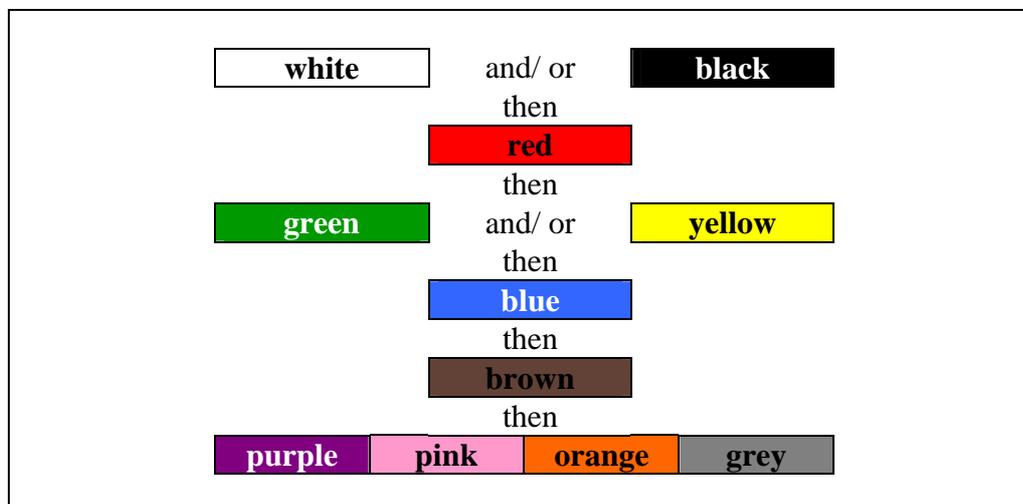


Table 4.1: Berlin and Kay's colour categories (after Berlin and Kay 1969: 4)

We will now look at the Bank of English and CORIS to see how this model compares to the actual measured frequency of occurrence of the eleven basic colour terms in English and Italian respectively.

4.2.2 Frequencies in the Bank of English

Let us first look at the data from the current 450 word Bank of English⁷⁸ (see Appendix 4 for tables based on the 329m and 400m word versions used since this research started):

⁷⁸ These figures are raw, in that surnames and other such 'interference' have not been removed. The reasons for this are pragmatic: although all surnames begin with a capital letter, it cannot be assumed that all colour words beginning with a capital letter are therefore surnames. The tens of thousands of words in the data could not have been trawled through by hand, and short-cut methods, such as the use of regular expressions to eliminate all capitalised colour words would also have removed all sentence initials, and many headlines too.

white 142084	black 132407
red 81925	
green 62421	
brown 61029	blue 54775
grey/gray 28317	
yellow 22872	
pink 16687	orange 15841
purple 6674	

Table 4.2: Frequencies of basic colour terms in the Bank of English

The most notable differences between this sequence and that proposed by Berlin and Kay appear after the fourth term, green. What we discover is that instead of yellow and green appearing together, yellow has dropped down to eighth position, occurring only one third as often as the 1969 study would have made us expect. We find instead that green and brown appear with very similar frequencies. Yellow, as I have mentioned, takes eighth position, followed by the conflated figures for the variant American and British spellings of grey. Pink and orange have been grouped together because their frequencies are similar, and purple lags behind, by far the least frequently-used of the basic colour terms.

Brown is more frequent than suggested by Berlin and Kay's sequence, probably because of its ubiquity as a surname (along with Green, Grey/ Gray, Black and White). Brown has in fact moved from sixth to fifth place on the frequency list of colour words in the Bank of English during the course of this research (see Appendix 4). This is almost certainly because during the period of expansion of the corpus, Labour came to power in Britain; the surname of the current Chancellor of the Exchequer is Brown. Confirmation of this hypothesis is found when

we discover that the highest proportional frequency of 'brown' is found in British journalism.

Yellow is remarkably less frequent than Berlin and Kay's order would have us believe. This may well be partly determined by the fact that Yellow is not a surname, whereas both Green and Brown are, but this is not enough to explain its surprisingly low frequency. A probable explanation can be found in our propensity for using the synonyms 'gold' and 'blond(e)' in certain contexts, both terms have positive connotations which 'yellow' appears to lack in English⁷⁹. The use of the term 'yellow' is therefore certain to be less frequent than the physical occurrence of yellow coloured things, and this has repercussions for its perceived symbolic value in the language.

4.2.3 *Frequencies in CORIS*

The frequencies of colour words in the CORIS corpus are shown in Table 4.3 below. As with the English data presented in Table 4.2, these are raw figures, thus proper names and other homophones have not been eliminated. Plural forms of colours which are invariable (i.e. which do not agree in gender and number with their subject) are indicated in the table, to allow proper comparison to be made both with the English data and with Berlin and Kay's hypothesis.

As before, the colours are listed in their actual order, rather than that of Berlin and Kay's study.

⁷⁹ Yellow's metaphorical life is characterised by its negativity: yellow belly, yellow streak, yellow press, all of which will be discussed in more detail below (3.2.2), are the only established metaphorical phrases to involve yellow. None of them are remotely positive, nor even neutral. Gold, on the other hand, generally carries a positive evaluation (n.b. gold and blond are not addressed by this study as they are not basic colour terms).

80m CORIS

nero/a 13,194	rosso/a 11,527	bianco/a 9888
	verde 8071	
	rosa§ 6455	
azzurro/a 4221		blu§ 4121
giallo/a 4310		grigio/a 3344
	viola§ 1771	
marrone 688		arancione 464

§ denotes colour with invariable singular/plural form

Table 4.3: Frequencies of basic colour terms in CORIS

We can see at a glance that rosso is more frequent than bianco rather than appearing in third position as it does both in the Bank of English and in Berlin and Kay. Blu and azzurro have not been conflated here, because they are both basic colours, but we can see that they do not have the same frequency; blu is invariable whereas azzurro is singular. Marrone is one of the least-used colour terms, and I will venture two hypotheses which can explain this in part. The first is that unlike in English, where Brown is a commonly-used surname, the occurrence of Marrone in this context is less common (although there is currently a Minister Marrone in Italy); and whereas brown is a common descriptor of hair and eye colour in English, terms such as castano and nero tend to prevail in Italian.

Giallo is relatively more frequent than its English counterpart, yellow, and its close association with green (see 1.2.3.3) is attested in several expressions that are presented below (4.4.2). If it is true that yellow has a negative connotation in English which makes speakers reluctant to use the word, we find evidence in CORIS that yellow and green both have negative connotations in Italian:

Considerato nelle più diverse civiltà un colore rassicurante, calmante, rinfrescante, tonificante, mediatore, esso assume tuttavia a volte un significato negativo: “ridere verde”, “essere al verde”, “diventar verdi” esprimono considerazioni di paura, di indigenza, di minaccia, persino di follia (sarebbe stato fin dal Medioevo il colore con cui si designavano i pazzi e quello degli occhi di Satana).

(PRACCVolum)

Both green and yellow are colours of bile and referred to as such in the data, whereas the notion of biliousness in English is fading into obsolescence. Giallo gains in frequency also because it is the colour of the middle traffic light (which is amber in English).

The most important observation of all, however, is that English appears more inclined to use basic colour terms than Italian is. CORIS is about one fifth of the size of the Bank of English, but the frequency of occurrence of basic colour words in the Italian data is substantially lower – nearly twenty times lower in the case of brown/ marrone, but more often the frequency of the Italian words is between 30% and 50% of that of their English counterparts. The reasons for this are not known, but corpus composition may have contributed to this matter. The Bank of English is oft-criticised for its heavy weighting towards journalism, and it has proportionately much more journalism than CORIS; what is often not stated, and is a matter of great importance in this particular study (see especially Chapter 7), is that the *type* of journalism included – whether broadsheet or tabloid – has a great effect on the type of language found. The lower frequency of tabloid journalism in Italy⁸⁰ greatly reduces the occurrence of idiomatic and clichéd language, where colour words are often encountered in English.

⁸⁰ When it appears, tabloid journalism tends to occur in the form of weekly newspapers rather than dailies, and these are not included in CORIS.

Finally, it should be mentioned in passing that the habit of forming compounds out of colour words is typical of Italian, especially when referring to football teams. Clearly, compounds such as ‘bianconero’ and ‘giallorosso’ cannot be accounted for in the table above as they are not themselves basic colour words. They have been included in the data set under study as they correspond to formulæ in English such as ‘red, white and blue’ in that they are encountered in innovative variations of set phrases (see below, especially 6.4.2).

4.2.4 Frequency and meaning: commentary

Of course, it is not to be considered as a given fact that frequency of use should correspond to order of appearance in the language, though it is interesting to note the similarities that present themselves. But frequency has another, more central function within language analysis, which will be borne out in this study. In short, the more frequent a word is, the more meanings it is likely to generate. As far as individual word- or collocate- meaning is concerned, this seems to happen because of what can be called ‘metaphor potential’, the potential figurative uses of a word outside its original context of genre and register.

We can observe an illustration of this with the term ‘grey matter’. Its less frequent companion ‘white matter’ is confined to the domain of medicine, and although a number of concordances for ‘grey matter’ share the same contextual features as those for ‘white matter’, we can see that the vast majority of instances are figurative expressions for intelligence, coming through the metonymic link that ‘grey matter’ has with the area of the brain where intelligence is based, as well as the metaphorical mapping of ‘brain’ and ‘intelligence’. ‘White matter’, on the other hand, has no such metaphorical life. The number of occurrences of ‘grey matter’ in its home domain of medicine amounts to only eleven percent of the occurrences (18 of the

164 concordance lines), a third of which actually collocate with ‘white matter’; in contrast, all 42 occurrences of ‘white matter’ are literal, and found in the domain of medicine.

We can hypothesise that, given these frequencies and proportions, a very small corpus might well only give examples for the figurative sense of ‘grey matter’, just as a substantially larger corpus might provide evidence of rare figurative extensions of ‘white matter’, but it is not just word meaning that is affected by frequency. Zipf (1935) discussed the phenomenon of word co-occurrence in phraseological constructions, hypothesising that the more words there are in a phrase, the fewer examples of that phrase there will be. So although more meanings are activated in frequent words, the fact that they often have to combine with other words controls their proliferation. For example, if we are to look for examples of the phrase ‘black market’ in the Bank of English, we can see that ‘black’ occurs 132,407 times, and ‘market’ 168,217 times. Thus we can expect the phrase to appear several times, and indeed we can find 1432 examples. If we then decide that we want the phrase ‘the black market’, we find it is around half as frequent, with 780 appearances; and if we want to extend the phrase further – ‘on the black market’ – its frequency of occurrence again halved to 387 occurrences.

In this way we can see how important large quantities of data are to the analysis of the different meanings of a word, both because of the restricted frequencies of word co-occurrence in phrase building, and because of the metaphor potential which is triggered when a word/term’s frequency becomes high enough. In the light of the frequencies of the basic colour terms illustrated in Tables 4.2 and 4.3, we can also expect the corpora to supply us with a larger number of figurative meanings derived from the most frequent colour terms than from the less frequent ones, giving a realistic representation of the actual use of these terms in the language. For precisely the same reason, we can also expect to find more inventive and

figurative uses of colour words in the English data than we will in the Italian data, given the mismatch in their relative frequencies of occurrence.

4.3 Colour words and meanings

4.3.1 Literal and prototypical meaning

The only literal meaning of colour terms is in their denotative function⁸¹; the sun is yellow, the sky is blue (or grey), blood is red. When used in this way, colour terms have no meaning other than the colour itself. A ‘basic’ (Berlin and Kay 1969), ‘focal’ (Neimeier 1998) or ‘prototypical’ (Cruse 1986) colour term in its denotative use carries the same function as non-basic colour terms such as ‘ochre’, ‘lilac’ and ‘crimson’; as part of a physical, objective description. The basic colour terms are prototypical, though, and just as we might prefer to use the word ‘tree’ instead of specifying ‘oak’, we are more inclined to say ‘red’ than ‘vermilion’ in everyday situations. This prototypicality helps to explain much of our use of colour words to describe things that, strictly speaking, do not share the same denotative colour as the word normally describes: black and white are very frequently used to describe race, even though the real colour of human skin ranges from pink through all shades of brown, and only very rarely arrives at either of the extremes; yellow and red used in the same context are even less accurate indicators, but understood nonetheless. Similarly, white wines and white meat are not white but simply pale, beetroot are purple, not red, and the ‘red’ in red wine is a

⁸¹ It should be noted that the denotative colour assigned to any object is subject to the influence of one’s linguistic and cultural background. The examples given here are true for British English, but they can and do vary even within quite closely related languages: in German, for example, the sun is red, not yellow (personal communication, Wolfgang Teubert).

much darker colour than is prototypical. In fact, 'red' wine is either 'rosso' or 'nero' in Italian, when in reality wine colour – burgundy – falls somewhere between the two.

The prototypicality of colours can be illustrated by corpus examples involving comparison of a colour to an object or entity. Typically in English, we find such expressions as 'white as a sheet', 'white as snow', 'red as a lobster'; but these are also fixed expressions which are also partly governed by idiomaticity. Non-idiomatic comparisons, on the other hand, many of which are habitual collocations, give a more complete picture of the range that prototypical assignation of colour terms can span.

4.3.1.1 White/ bianco

In the case of 'white+as' (230 relevant concordances), a very high proportion of the examples are based on the fixed expressions 'white as a sheet' (41) and '[as] white as snow' (27, including variants such as 'the driven snow'), but there are other collocations which focus not only on the prototypical colour white, but also on such factors as luminosity ('white as the moon', 'white as bone') and connotative qualities traditionally assigned to the colour such as purity ('white as milk') and pallor from fear or shock ('white as chalk'). Each of these collocations undergoes variation at the level of semantic field, producing variations such as 'white as candles' for 'white as wax', and in the case of 'white as chalk' we find all sorts of non-standard versions such as 'white as the purest marble' and 'white as the cliffs of Dover'. These non-standard versions are the ones that really give an insight into the notion of colour prototypicality. Conventional expressions require little interpretative effort (see 2.3.4), but innovative expressions, if they are to succeed in conveying their meaning, need to exploit shared cultural knowledge, in order to be understood without too great an effort. It is therefore

necessary for a colour comparison such as ‘as white as...’ to refer to something that is broadly white for it to be meaningful⁸².

The results of the search ‘(as)+white+as’ in the Bank of English are shown in Table 4.4. The Italian data (Table 4.5) demonstrates several similarities, with neve, latte and lenzuolo/ cencio being the most frequently-occurring of the prototypically white objects. The variants that arise again exploit the cultural perception of whiteness and those things that are prototypically white, including candles, death and corpses, and the ‘membro di un membro del Ku Klux Klan’.

white as snow (29)
white as the snow (2)
white as new-fallen snow
white as a snowflake
white as the driven snow (2)
white as driven snow
white as driving snow
white as ice (2)
white as an iceberg
white as Antarctica
white as the slopes
white as milk (6)
white as bone (3)
white as bleached bone
white as a dinosaur bone
white as chalk (3)
white as alabaster
white as porcelain
white as the purest marble
white as the cliffs of Dover
white as the fabled chalky subsoil of Grande Champagne
white as wax (2)
white as candle wax
white as candles
white as paper (3)
white as sheet of paper
white as a paper towel (2)

(continued overleaf)

⁸² The exception to this is when irony is intended, as we will see in Table 4.6. below.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> white as open envelopes white as a sheet (37) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> white as the proverbial sheet white as a clean sheet white as the collective sheet white as the sheets and hoods of the Ku Klux Klan [white as a shirt] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> white as the shirts worn by his players white as the shirt he was wearing white as his shirt white as a banker's shirt white as a doctor's coat white as a surplice white as his England singlet white as a tablecloth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> white as banqueting-cloth white as shrouds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> white as death white as a ghost (14) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> white as the mongrel's ghost white as paint <ul style="list-style-type: none"> white as the Wembley touchlines on Cup final day white as a sheep (2) white as a shell <ul style="list-style-type: none"> white as an alaya shell white as ivory white as sugar white as coconut flesh [white as a feather] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> white as a snow goose's breast white as the swan on the lake white as a heron white as the feathers of the albatross white as the moon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> white as a full moon white as the full moon in winter white as a splash of moonlight [miscellaneous inventive versions] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> white as his father's dog-collar white as a nun's thoughts white as a virgin's g- string

Table 4.4: As white as...

<p> bianco come un lenzuolo (11) bianco come le lenzuola del talamo fatale bianco come un cencio (5) bianco come un panno lavato bianco come uno straccio bianco come la neve (8) bianco come la neve fresca bianco come neve bianco come il latte (5) bianco come il latte ghiacciato bianco come latte appena munto bianco come un secchio di latte bianco come un cadavere (2) bianco come la luna bianco come la luna che appare tra le nuvole bianco come il gesso bianco come un segno di gesso su una lavagna bianco come il suo sorriso bianco come il suo candido sorriso bianco come una candela bianco come un giglio bianco come la colomba bianco come pietra bianco come spose bianco come la morte bianco come un santone bianco come piazza pulita bianco come le luci al neon bianco come don Benedetto bianco come la veste di Talkannon bianco come la pelle di un re greco dell’Iliade . bianco come il membro di un membro del Ku Klux Klan </p>
--

Table 4.5: Bianco come...

4.3.1.2 Whiter than white

Prototypical whiteness is even more marked in variation to the set phrase ‘whiter than white’, where we find a range of expressions which encompass the canonical form and all degrees of innovation, from dead ‘metaphors’ (2.2.2.3) through transparent and semi-opaque metaphors,

to highly innovative (and often humorous) opaque variants. The picture that results (see Table 4.6) presents some of the many different kinds of ‘white’ used in English, which have both linguistic and cultural significance. The expression refers to moral purity through the connotative value of white, and its success relies on the comparison of this whiteness with another whiteness, this time broadly literal rather than connotative.

whiter+than (182)
<p>canonical form whiter than white (158)</p>
<p>standard variants: dead metaphors (<i>compare to ‘white+as’, Table 4.4</i>) whiter than snow (7) whiter than the driven snow (2) whiter than milk whiter than ivory whiter than chalk</p>
<p>innovative variants: transparent metaphors whiter than fine bone china whiter than dried rice</p>
<p>innovative, non-standard variants: semi-opaque metaphors whiter than an alpine meadow in December whiter than driven cocaine</p>
<p>innovative, non-standard variants: opaque metaphors⁸³ whiter than Persil whiter than next week’s improved detergent whiter than a Newt Gingrich fundraiser whiter than Michael Jackson</p>

Table 4.6: Variations of ‘whiter than white’

This knowledge creates an expectation within this emphatic comparison, i.e. that the comparison must be made with something that is white: thus ‘an alpine meadow in

⁸³ These are entirely reliant upon cultural knowledge for their interpretation

December' is assumed to be covered in snow. When this expectation is unfulfilled, we encounter ironic and humorous effects, as can be seen in the innovative metaphors in Table 4.6.

In the variants found in Table 4.6, we can see that humour and irony combine to create some highly individualistic expressions. 'Whiter than driven cocaine' is of course a variation of 'whiter than the driven snow', 'snow' being a standard euphemism for cocaine. Here the meaning is turned on its head, though, as the purity that the canonical expression implies is blighted by illegal drug-taking – anything but pure, though still white. Another illustration of humorous irony is 'whiter than Michael Jackson': this violates truth conditions, as we know that Michael Jackson is an African American who has become white through extensive plastic surgery and whose moral conduct has been publicly questioned. The double meaning is doubly ironic, as Michael Jackson represents neither purity nor is he racially white, so both interpretations of the underlying canonical phrase are reversed.

4.3.1.3 Red/ rosso

Red, as was mentioned above, is traditionally the colour of beetroot and lobsters, but the Bank of English shows us that, as with white, variations are very common and invoke different connotative meanings. For example, 'red as a beetroot' only occurs to indicate deep embarrassment, and the corpus data suggests that this often happens in the presence of a member of the opposite sex. 'Red as a lobster', on the other hand, is used to describe sunburn.

A selection of the results of the search '(as)+red+as+a' in the Bank of English are presented in Table 4.7.

red as a beetroot (3)
red as a boiled beetroot
red as a radish
red as a tomato
red as a candy apple
red as a yu berry
red as a beacon
red as a fire
red as a lobster
red as a turkey cock
red as a cardinal's robe
red as a bleeding heart
red as a boil
red as a raw steak
red as a brick
red as a fire engine
red as a Campbell's tomato-soup can

Table 4.7 'As red as a...'

Here again there is a wide range of variation both within categories (for instance, foodstuffs) and outside them, accounting for an equally wide range of reds which fall into the prototypical category. An equivalent data set from Italian provides us with a comparable picture. 'Rosso come' typically collocates with 'peperone' and 'gambero' (the functional, if not quite literal, translations of 'beetroot' and 'lobster' respectively), but also yields variation that parallels that found in the English (Table 4.7)⁸⁴:

⁸⁴ The order of presentation is intended to correspond to the order of presentation of the English examples wherever possible; those examples which are not habitual collocates, or are non-canonical versions of habitual collocates, are indented.

rosso come un peperone (21)
rosso come un pomodoro (2)
rosso come un pomodoro maturo
rosso come una ciliegia
rosso come una mela
rosso come le mele che raccoglie
rosso come la buccia della mela
rosso come una barbabietola ⁸⁵
rosso come le bacche del pungitopo
rosso come fuoco (6)
rosso come una fiamma
rosso come brace
rosso come un filo di brace
rosso come un gambero (3)
rosso come un crostaceo
rosso come un'aragosta bollita
rosso come un tacchino
rosso come un biscione ⁸⁶
rosso come il sangue (11)
rosso come sangue
rosso come una rosa
rosso come i mattoni che lasciava cuocere al sole
rosso come un tramonto nei mari del sud
rosso come il cuore spezzato di Maria Pia

Table 4.8: 'Rosso come...'

Looking at the data in Tables 4.7 and 4.8, we can be confident that the prototypical attributes of red and rosso are, if not the same, then at least highly contingent. If we also recall the connotative meanings outlined in 1.2.3.2 and Appendix 1b, we also see that many of these are accounted for in these two Tables. This is because of the metonymical link that so many connotations have with colour words in particular (see Niemeier 1998). However, these similes relating to red/ rosso and its counterparts, which are necessarily red in colour to merit the comparison, indicate the range of shades which share the denomination red. These run the

⁸⁵ This occurs in a text translated from the English; it is not an expression that is generally found in Italian.

⁸⁶ This should be understood in the sense of the red snake (one of a pair) that forms part of the symbol for medicine, rather than as the augmentative form of biscia – grass snake.

gamut from orange or pinkish-red crustaceans through blood to purplish-red beetroot, and are all perceived as being prototypical. That English and Italian share not only the same general cultural associations but also the same real-world associations and general perception of colour meaning should allow a direct comparison to be made between the two languages, and that when we move into the realm of translating these colour words (Chapter 7) we should encounter far fewer difficulties than might be the case with two wholly unrelated languages.

As a final remark in this section on literal meaning, it should be noted that the comparisons that arise between colours and real-world entities just discussed form the basis for almost all figurative extensions of meaning, whether these be metonymical (the most common), metaphorical or symbolic. This is discussed fully in the next section.

4.4 Figurative meaning in colour-word expressions

In 4.3.1, we discussed the way in which comparisons of the type ‘as [colour] as [object]’ are used to connect a colour with an object which has that colour as one of its properties, such as red and blood, white and snow, and saw that exceptions to this general rule⁸⁷ tend to be deliberate violations for stylistic purposes (irony, humour, or poetry). This use of prototypical colour terms brings us to the farthest extreme of what can safely be defined as ‘literal’. Figurative meaning begins with metonymy and transparent metaphor and then works through a continuum of increasing opacity and metaphoricity. However, colour metaphors displaying no metonymical motivation whatsoever are very rare indeed. When they do occur, they are invariably innovative rather than conventional, and amount to a serious violation of truth

⁸⁷ Due to their rarity and innovative status, no such examples of innovative metaphor were encountered in the data analysed in this study.

conditions arising from impossible colour associations. An example of such language use is “the sky is blue like an orange”⁸⁸, which creates a surreal image because although the sky can be orange, oranges cannot be blue; in this way, the comparison is invalidated. The high degree of saliency of colour words means that they occupy a somewhat privileged position in figurative language, as their transparency compels the language to adhere to truth conditions: colours occur naturally and are consistent in their manifestation under given sets of conditions, so the sea is blue or green but not yellow, and most plant life is green and not orange.

Metonymy plays a substantial role in the creation of colour word expressions. However, metonymical motivation for figurative meaning does not preclude opacity of meaning. A great many colour-word expressions, coined deep in the past, have lost their immediacy and semantic transparency with the passage of time. Others have remained more-or-less transparent through the maintained currency of their underlying conceptual relations. When the figurative meaning of a colour-word expression is not immediate, we can investigate its etymology in order to understand its original intended meaning⁸⁹, bearing in mind that there is a significant difference in the meanings attributed to ‘full-intuitive citational meaning’ (Louw 2000b) and the pragmatic meaning of an expression in a discourse situation⁹⁰. Thus if some bad news comes to someone ‘out of the blue’, it is unlikely that the metaphorical expression would instantly and automatically trigger an image of, for example, lightning appearing out of the (blue) sky. However, when the phrase appears in a decontextualised setting, as is the case

⁸⁸ Group *mu* (1970/1981), cited in Day 1996 section 6.

⁸⁹ It should be stressed that although this is possible, it should not be assumed that most language users actually do so and therefore take it for granted that they will be conscious of the origins of the expressions they use. When analysing language in use, the linguist has to be aware that the vast majority of language has not been created by fellow linguists, and that it is academically dangerous to over-interpret intended meaning in the absence of explicit supporting evidence.

⁹⁰ These matters, outlined theoretically in 2.4.3, will be treated fully in the following chapters.

here, such an image can be expected to arise as a consequence of the re-analysis and subsequent re-lexicalisation of the phrase (Louw: *ibid*).

In the following subsections we will seek to identify the connotative meanings traditionally ascribed to the colour words in the English and Italian expressions listed in Appendix 4b⁹¹. For this purpose the expressions are analysed in their standalone, context-free, canonical forms, which are those held in the so-called ‘mental lexicon’ (see 2.2.1.3). The corpus citations and analysis of the same phrases in context forms the content of the rest of the thesis.

4.4.1 Black, white, and shades of grey

Although not colours in a strict sense, black, white and grey are being considered as such for the purposes of this study. We saw in 1.2.3.1 (see also Appendix 1b) that black and white are not attributed many different meanings. As polar opposites, they attract similarly contrasting attributes, most notably good and evil, and light and dark (which in turn are associated with good and evil). Grey can temper black, detract from white and serve as a mid-way point between extremes. We will see how these three shades interact in linguistic expressions which call upon their connotative meanings.

4.4.1.1 Good and evil

White is associated with goodness, and in turn with purity of thought and deed. The Italian expression ‘passare una notte in bianco’ has its origins in Mediæval times; its etymology lies in the practice for mediaeval gentlemen to stay awake in meditation for a whole night before

⁹¹ These expressions are the ones that help support popular beliefs regarding the meanings of colour words, as was mentioned in the introduction to Chapter 1.

being knighted. They did so dressed in white to symbolise their purity (Zingarelli 1994: 1118). Its current meaning is roughly synonymous with ‘to have a sleepless night’ (but see 5.2.1.3), and the connotative value of *bianco* has all but disappeared. Another expression related to purity is that of the ‘white lie’, which is a benign untruth. ‘Whiter than white’, presented above (4.3.1.2) again rests on the connection between white and purity or moral righteousness. A ‘white wedding’ is ostensibly a symbol of a virginal wedding, whereas a ‘*matrimonio in bianco*’ is a marriage that remains unconsummated; both expressions relate to sexual purity, but the meanings are palpably different (see 7.5.2.1).

‘White magic’ (*magia bianca*) is magic which does good, in stark contrast to ‘black magic’ (*magia nera*) which does harm and, like all things associated with black, is related to evil, misery and destitution. An ‘*anima nera*’ is a malicious, skulking character, and thus shares some essential characteristics with a ‘*bestia nera*’ (*bête noir*). English, interestingly, demonstrates a will to redeem the evil with expressions such as ‘not as black as s/he is painted’, in which an attempt is made to salvage somebody’s character, and ‘the pot calling the kettle black’, in which the accuser is told to consider his/her own actions before criticising those of other people. The least evil of the conventional expressions with black are those regarding humour: ‘black humour’ (*umorismo nero*) has sinister or malicious undertones but is ultimately intended to be laughed at.

Grey is often said to denote dullness, but it can also signify obfuscation and uncertainty. A ‘grey area’ (*zona grigia*) is something that is unclear and open to a variety of interpretations, and which can therefore be manipulated for particular ends. An ‘*éminence grise*’ (*eminenza grigia*) is a figure who exerts power from behind the scenes, and is unanswerable to others.

4.4.1.1.1 The depths of despair

In Italian, to an apparently greater extent than in English, nero is used in collocations to indicate depression and desperation. A ‘periodo nero’ is a particularly bad period, and linked to this expression are the Black Mondays and Fridays of the stock market (in both languages). A bad mood may be called a ‘black mood’ (umor nero), and induce one to have negative thoughts (‘pensieri neri’), to see the worst in everything (‘vedere tutto nero’) and to paint a black picture of the situation (‘fare un quadro nero della situazione’). This expression can be compared to the English equivalent, ‘not as black as s/he is painted’, which is almost invariably tempered by presentation in the negative form.

The blackness presented in the previous paragraph is essentially subjective, based on the individual’s perception of the outside world. More objective information is suggested by ‘miseria nera’ (dire poverty) and ‘fame nera’ (extreme hunger, starvation). Here, nero resumes its sinister connotations on top of a desperate situation.

In all of the above expressions, black/ nero can be tempered by substitution with grey/ grigio; but similarly, your ‘esistenza grigia’ (dull, insignificant life) can be worsened by the substitution of grigia with nera. The ways in which this kind of colour substitution changes meaning are discussed in Chapter 6.

4.4.1.2 Written evidence

In addition to the general qualities of good and evil discussed so far, we must remember the importance that the written word has in Western culture. Evidence and proof must be written down and not merely attributed to hearsay, and so the notion of black ink on white paper too

takes on importance in language. Thus important information must be ‘put down in black and white’ (nero su bianco), and one must be careful that nobody tries to make you ‘vedere bianco per nero’ (pull the wool over your eyes). If we are given ‘carte blanche’ (carta bianca), we ourselves write the rules, rather than adhering to another person’s instructions.

Finally, one must guard against unwelcome surprises which happen ‘di punto in bianco’ and which tend to turn everything on its head. This sudden disappearance of a mark on a white sheet of paper is unsettling, and serves as a reminder that writing is not perhaps as stable and permanent as we would like it to be.

4.4.2 *The true colours*⁹²

It was seen in 1.2.2 ff., that the true colours display a wealth of connotative value – certainly a more wide-ranging set of meanings than is the case for black, white and grey. In this subsection, the classification of Italian and English conventional linguistic expressions containing colour words is continued following the sequence proposed by Berlin and Kay, and subdivided by the various meanings that the colours are purported to have.

4.4.2.1 Red

4.4.2.1.1 Passion and fervour

Red, the colour of blood, is linked by metonym to the manifestation of emotion, as well as to more-or-less direct references to blood itself. Thus anger and love are both symbolised by red, as are war and revolution. Anger causes blood to surge to the head, making us red in the face

⁹² Intended in opposition to the tones, black and white.

(go red; diventare rosso [in viso]), and clouds our vision to make us ‘see red’ (vedere tutto rosso). The expressions ‘like a red rag to a bull/ red flag before a bull’ recall the folk belief that bulls are angered by the colour red, whereas ‘rosso di rabbia’ (red with anger) is self-explanatory. The origin of the phrase ‘catch somebody red-handed’ is clearly murderous, blood being still on the hands of the murderer whose passion and fervour were the driving force behind the crime.

A second type of passion is of course the amorous one, illustrated by red hearts and roses and by the less romantic ‘red light’ areas (a luci rosse). Again this connection with blood is due to the physical manifestation of blood in the face due to emotional arousal.

Red is also the colour of political fervour and revolution, possibly because of its links with emotion and spilled blood, but more pertinently because the Jacobins’ galley prisoners were made to wear red caps⁹³. Thus we can find the Communist ‘red flag’ (bandiera rossa), reds (i rossi) and ‘red-shirts’ (camicie rosse). This third example forms a pair with ‘black-shirts’ (camicie nere), indicating Fascistic sympathies. Developing this pattern, we find ‘camicia verde’ as a recent addition on the Italian political scene; not, as one might think, referring to the environmentalist green party but rather to the far-right wing, xenophobic Lega Nord, who have adopted the colour green as their party symbol.

4.4.2.1.2 Economic and bureaucratic difficulties

Red has historically been considered the colour of authority, importance and, by extension, bureaucracy. In fact, the expression ‘red tape’ is a common synonym for bureaucracy; the

⁹³ Personal communication, Wolfgang Teubert.

term has its origin in the pink-red ribbon which has traditionally been used to bind official documents in Britain.

In another sphere – that of finance – we find that whereas credits are traditionally notated in black ink, debits are noted in red, originally to differentiate and highlight the two sides of the account. The expressions ‘(go) into the red’ and ‘(come) out of the red/ move into the black’ (*avere il conto in rosso/ nero*) 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 life-blood – its finances. In doing so, it attributes to ‘red ink’ a connotation of blood that is not otherwise present.

4.4.2.2 Green and yellow

4.4.2.2.1 Envy and jealousy

In most of continental Europe, yellow is the colour of jealousy (*giallo d’invidia*), but English deviates from this norm, preferring green. Whether this is due to Shakespeare’s ‘green-eyed monster’ or to some pre-existing connotation attributed to green, is unknown; however English retains ‘green with envy’. The conflict between green and yellow is not particularly surprising, as both these colours correspond to the colour of bile, and this metonymical connection gives rise to another set of expressions, absent in English, where green is the colour of anger ‘*verde di bile*’, ‘*verde di rabbia*’, and ‘*verde di collera*’. (see 7.5.1.1 for a comparison of the colours of anger in English and Italian). Green can also be used to describe the colour of a person’s face when nauseous, the nausea being caused by a variety of factors including shock, illness, or envy. ‘To feel green’ corresponds to this meaning, and in English it is generally interpreted as an expression of envy.

4.4.2.2.2 *Youth*

‘To be green’ has two distinct meanings in English: ‘to be young and inexperienced’, and ‘to support environmental and ecological issues’ (see 4.4.2.2.3). The former meaning is the more opaque, and etymologically much older⁹⁴. It alludes to green wood – young wood that is greenish in colour and very supple and flexible – and the expression combines the characteristics of malleability with youth, with the additional factor of youth corresponding to inexperience. This connection is not necessarily apparent to the average language user, as it is based on a metonym that once upon a time could be taken for granted but is no longer part of the cultural baggage that an ever more urbanised society carries around. Italians too speak of a ‘verde età’, which is similarly infrequent in current language use.

4.4.2.2.3 *The natural world*

The meaning of ‘be green’ as ‘environmentally and ecologically aware’ is based on a more transparent relationship than that of ‘youth and inexperience’ outlined in the previous paragraph, because the colour of most plant life is taken to represent plant life in general in a direct act of metonymy. This meaning is both more salient and more frequent than that described in the previous subsection⁹⁵. The connection between green and plant life is also present in the expressions ‘to have green fingers’ (*avere il pollice verde*) and ‘to have the rub of the green’, used to describe people who have a special ability in cultivating plants.

⁹⁴ The OED gives citations for the ‘young and immature’ meaning dating back to 1548, whereas the ‘environmental’ sense only emerges in 1972.

⁹⁵ To illustrate the link between currency of meaning and frequency of use, it can be pointed out that in the Bank of English, the older, opaque meaning of ‘be green’ occurs only 20 times (six instances occur in a single text) and includes three citations and an additional elaboration of the lines from Shakespeare’s *Anthony and Cleopatra* ‘In my salad days/when I was green in judgement’. In contrast, the transparent metaphor of ‘green’ meaning ‘environmental’ occurs several hundred times.

4.4.2.2.4 *Mysteries and unsavoury characters*

Other than envy, yellow has little general connotative value, and that which it has is rather undesirable. In English it is associated with cowardice ‘to have a yellow streak/ belly’, again deriving from the colour of bile. These expressions are accounted for in Italian with ‘(non) avere il fegato’ (not to have the liver [stomach] to do something), reiterating the connection with bile production.

Exclusive to Italy is the association of the colour yellow to crime and police investigation. A ‘film giallo’ or ‘libro giallo’ are detective films and stories respectively, ‘un giallo’ a factual or fictitious mystery, usually involving murder. This association came about because of the Italian tradition of publishing detective fiction with yellow covers, to distinguish them from romantic fiction (in pink covers).

The obsolete ‘yellow press’ is roughly equivalent to the ‘red-top’ tabloids of the present. It, like them, owes its name to the colour of the newspaper title on the front page, and occupied itself with scandal and shock-horror tales. By extension, the term came to mean scandalous and scurrilous journalism, much akin to what is now termed ‘the gutter press’.

4.4.2.3 Blue

4.4.2.3.1 *The sky above*

Light blue has an obvious metonymical connection to the sky. Unexpected events can be said to come ‘like a bolt from the blue’ or ‘out of the blue’, and are thus compared to a lightning bolt appearing in a clear blue sky – not a dark, stormy one where it might be expected. Infrequent events are said to occur ‘once in a blue moon’ (ogni morte di papa). The blue

moon is not in fact a metaphor, but a real phenomenon whereby the moon takes on a blue tinge. As the expression suggests, this occurs very infrequently.

Just as the sky can be a place of departure, as when things fall from the sky, so too can it be a destination. When people wander off ‘into the wide/wild blue yonder’, they appear to be swallowed up by the sky, although in reality there is not upwards movement involved but rather movement towards the horizon.

4.4.2.3.2 The depths below

Blue is not only connected to the sky, but also has links to depression and also to fear, connections which may be due in part to the proximity of dark blue to black on the colour scale. This certainly appears to be supported by the occurrence in CORIS of ‘fifa nera’⁹⁶ as an emphatic form of ‘fifa blu’ (blue funk). These expressions for fear are complemented by ‘scream blue murder’, where again the colour blue is chosen (and not red, for example, which would suggest blood). The use of blue to suggest fear is probably linked to the image the face taking on a bluish tinge because of the combined action of blood draining away and the fright constricting breathing and hence the oxygen flow in the blood. Although the colours white and grey are used to denote fright, we should remember that we become ‘blue with cold’, and when we hold our breath or forget to breathe, our faces turn blue (‘to talk until you are blue in the face’).

Blue (blu) is also the colour of water and of the sea. The notion that water is a boundary marker forms the basis of the expression ‘clear blue water’ (6.3.4.1), used to emphasise the

⁹⁶ Two occurrences, as opposed to eight occurrences of ‘fifa blu’.

distancing of one political party from the policies and actions of another. However water is not always clear and calm, but often turbulent, unpredictable and full of unknown danger. Thus to be caught 'between the devil and the deep blue sea' is to be stuck in a no-win situation, where either course of action is as risky and undesirable as the other.

Finally, the metaphorical or metonymical origin of 'to have the blues', or 'to feel blue' is uncertain as far as the OED is concerned, but is likely to be related to the negative connotations of dark colours in general, and black in particular (1.2.3.1).

4.5 Summary

In 4.4, we saw how conventional linguistic expressions correspond to the various connotative meanings attributed to colours. These correspondences work in two ways. Firstly, they demonstrate how colours come to represent concepts that go beyond the literal. This can be seen to be heavily influenced by metonymy, as indeed Niemeier (1998) points out, as most of the connotative meanings that we assign to colours seem to be grounded, at least to some extent, in reality. Secondly, the connotative values of colour as demonstrated in conventional linguistic expressions consolidate and perpetuate folk beliefs about colour meaning. The language user can appeal to his or her linguistic knowledge to support the belief that, for example, red is the colour of anger, because he or she can quote linguistic expressions, such as 'see red' and 'red with anger', as proof.

The expressions held in the mental lexicon appear to exert a strong force on our cultural knowledge and awareness. And just as language provides evidence of the connotative meanings of colour words, it also acts as a semantic stabiliser, discouraging inventive, 'non-

standard' meanings from being associated with any given colour word. For example, Niemeier mentions that although ideas can be 'green' in English they cannot in German, almost certainly because of a famous citation from Goethe⁹⁷. A parallel in the English-speaking world would be to suggest that 'grey-eyed' could mean 'jealous': Shakespeare's coining of 'the green-eyed monster' put a stop to any such linguistic inventiveness, to the extent that even in the present 450 million word Bank of English there is no eye colour other than green used with this sense in mind, with or without the collocate 'monster'. Through these examples we can appreciate that although colours have many apparently arbitrary meanings, they are at the same time relatively stable.

In 2.2.1.3 we saw that, although the 'mental lexicon' can be tapped for explicit linguistic knowledge, corpus research suggests that such knowledge is selective, "highly specific, and not at all a good guide to what actually happens" in language (Sinclair 1991: 4). What then of the meanings that have been identified here and in Chapter 1? Do linguistic expressions really mean what we believe they mean: what else could they mean?

In the next Chapters, we study a number of the expressions introduced in 4.4.2, but, breaking away from the tradition of figurative and metaphorical language studies, these are not analysed in their citational, decontextualised forms. Instead, only those examples occurring in the corpora accessed are used; these examples include not only canonical forms but also variants whenever it has been possible to identify and retrieve them. All of the corpus examples appear in context, and so the contexts too are studied for relevant linguistic features. In this way, we can arrive at an appreciation of when and how connotative colour meanings

⁹⁷ In Faust: "Grau, mein lieber freund, ist alle Theorie, und grün des Lebens goldner Baum" (All theory is grey, my friend, and green is life's golden tree) (Niemeier *ibid*: 144, her translation).

are activated, and compare this information to the etymologically-orientated definitions offered in this Chapter.

5 DELEXICALISATION: COLOUR WORD EXPRESSIONS IN CONTEXT

...all conceptualist and associationist psychology must be laid aside together with the traditional figures of rhetoric (J.R. Firth 1968: 16⁹⁸)

5.1 Introduction

When are connotative meanings activated in language use, and when are they incidental to the overall communicative intention? The traditional approach to the study of colour words, exemplified in the previous Chapter, sheds little light on this question. Previous research into non-literal colour meaning (see especially Niemeier 1998) has tended to treat the linguistic expressions in isolation, divorced from any discourse context and rarely if ever deviating from their canonical forms. In these cases, explicit reference is made to symbolic and connotative meanings based on the etymologies of the idiomatic and figurative colour-word expressions, which show clearly the metaphorical motivation underlying their ‘full intuitive’ meanings. However, no attempt has yet been made to relate these theoretical meanings to the pragmatic realities of the same expressions when they are operating in naturally-occurring discourse.

The adoption of a corpus-driven approach in this study is motivated by a desire to understand what colour words actually mean when they occur in various linguistic and situational contexts. The corpus provides the evidence of the expressions in use, both in their canonical

⁹⁸ In ‘Linguistic analysis as a study of meaning’.

forms and in a variety of non-standard versions (see 3.5.2 for a full discussion of data retrieval procedures used in this study); the varying techniques of analysis adopted are intended to identify the collocational and semantic patterns that habitually form around colour-word expressions. These are compared to near-synonyms in 5.2, to illustrate the fundamental part played by the ‘extended unit of meaning’ in governing language choice, and the effects of delexicalisation on colour words. In 5.3, the variation of fixed phrases first comes under scrutiny. Here, grammatical and syntactical variation to canonical expressions are introduced, with lexical and semantic variation following in 5.4. The purpose of discussing variation is to demonstrate what general kinds of alteration to canonical forms occur, and what effect these have on the meaning of the phrases. Fundamentally, in this Chapter it is discovered just how complex phraseological patterning can be. The issues which arise in this Chapter are developed further in Chapter 6, where the relationship between internal phraseology (the fixed expressions) and external phraseology (the extended unit of meaning) is studied with particular reference to colour-word variation.

5.2 Language choice

5.2.1 Selecting phraseological chunks

It is one thing to account for meaning in terms of etymology and metaphorical extension, and quite another to do so in terms of pragmatic function, as will become evident in this section. Language reference works, from the authoritative Oxford English Dictionary to the relatively low-brow Brewer’s Phrase and Fable, provide information which is essentially based on etymology, i.e. observing meaning from a diachronic perspective. But although this can be interesting as an end in itself, the current, pragmatic meaning of the expression is not taken

into consideration. In other words, this type of definition does not enable us to understand what conditions lead the language user to select one particular expression over another, ostensibly synonymous one.

Using a corpus to analyse canonical phrases illustrates the extent to which intuitive beliefs about language meaning contrast with the reality of language in use. In fact, as soon as a canonical phrase is contextualised and viewed in a concordance program with other, contextualised, occurrences of the same phrase, it becomes apparent that there is nearly as much phrasal fixity outside the boundaries of the canonical form as there is within it. In the light of this realisation, it can be useful to observe near-synonyms in context too, to see what contribution the context makes in determining language choice and delimiting meaning. Three case studies of such ‘paradigmatic’ analysis are presented in this section, with the aim of demonstrating the role of context in determining the pragmatic meaning of colour-word expressions. A second aspect of language choice – that of using canonical or non-canonical forms – is examined in 5.3 and 5.4.

5.2.1.1 Red handed

Is the adoption of the phrase ‘to catch somebody red-handed’ governed by a desire to use metaphor, or is there some other reason for its use? Taking as a point of departure the Hallidayan notion that language should be based on a theory of meaning as choice (1992: 15), it can be postulated that the choice of the expression ‘to catch somebody red-handed’ is made in the context of a paradigm which includes such expressions as ‘to catch somebody in the act’ and ‘to catch somebody in flagrante delicto’. Whether this selection is conscious or otherwise cannot be answered by the corpus data (see Teubert 1999, section 1, on this

point); what can be addressed are the factors that make ‘to catch somebody red-handed’ more appropriate than ‘to catch somebody in flagrante delicto’ in a given context.

If we look for the canonical phrase ‘to catch somebody red-handed’ in the Oxford English Dictionary, we are presented with the following entry:

Red-handed, a. 1805. **1.** In the very act of crime, having the evidences of guilt still upon the person, esp in phr. *to take*, or *be taken*, red-handed 1819. **b.** Having the hands red with blood 1961. **c.** That sheds or has shed blood; bloody, sanguinary, violent 1879.

The idiomatic expression appears as a collocation, though the definition also states that it appears especially in phrases with the verb ‘take’ (in contrast with ‘catch’, which is the form given in Moon (ed.) 1995). The metonymical motivation for the central collocation ‘red-handed’ is made explicit in sub-senses b and c, and, taken together, the definitions suggest that the phrase is used when an individual is caught perpetrating some bloody, violent crime. We do not learn, however, what the relationship between the expression and the events it is used to describe is, nor the reason for its selection over another expression with similar meaning, such as ‘to catch somebody in the act’. This information can, however, be supplied by the corpus.

When we look closely at ‘to catch somebody red-handed’ (see Appendix 5a), the corpus tells us that those who are caught red-handed are criminals (e.g. ‘thief’ (6), ‘culprit’ (2), ‘bandit’, ‘poacher’, ‘drug syndicate member’) or individuals of high standing (e.g. ‘high-echelon public servant’). Their non-verbal behaviour involves being caught with illegal drugs or weapons, or carrying out acts of fraud or theft. These are all easily identifiable as

acts of criminal behaviour, although interestingly enough there are no examples which mention murder, despite the fact that this pre-eminent criminal act lies at the origins of the verbal expression. So it would seem that the specific elements of etymology which gave birth to the phrase are no longer evoked by that phrase.

Moving on to another member of the paradigm to which ‘to catch somebody red-handed’ belongs, a similar dislocation of etymological and pragmatic senses can be found. An etymological account cannot tell us, as the corpus does, that ‘in flagrante delicto’ (in the act of the crime) is an expression that is used to talk about illicit sex – not a crime as such but merely a particular kind of morally questionable behaviour – and also that it almost invariably involves people of high social standing (usually men) having illicit affairs with others of lower standing (usually women, including secretaries and ‘mill-maids’: see Appendix 5b). The fact that the data here comes mainly from journalism does not diminish this finding in any way, as it is perfectly in tune with our intuitions. The true significance of the fixity of semantic preference for the participants and their actions comes to light when we compare these two phrases and find that they are mutually exclusive: only 3 of the 191 occurrences of ‘to catch somebody red-handed’ imply sexual behaviour, and none of the 25 occurrences of ‘to catch somebody in flagrante delicto’ refer to anything other than sex. This again highlights the important role that context plays in defining the meaning of the phrase, and supports the notion that it is context rather than etymology that motivates the choice of one expression over another in discourse.

The third phrase mentioned earlier as belonging to the same paradigm as these two, ‘catch somebody in the act’ manages to resist the lexical and semantic fixity that has just been described. But again the apparent flexibility of this superordinate expression is brushed

aside when we look at its contextual meaning. The random selection of concordance lines in Appendix 5c shows clearly that the phrase as it stands is incomplete, the most frequent collocate at N+1 position being ‘of’ – ‘to be caught in the act of...’ (see Appendix 5d) – and it requires an action (Firth’s ‘non-verbal action of the participants’). So the ‘crime’, for example, ‘stealing’, ‘enjoying ourselves’, ‘adultery’, ‘digging’, is specified as an extended part of the lexical group rather than being semantically inherent in the shorter phrase, and each of the actions has a recognisably established set of participants, as was the case for the two more specific actions.

caught...	red-handed	in flagrante delicto	in the act
participants	thief culprit(s) gangs criminals killers robbers man workers members	businessman headmaster senior officer celebrities members of the upper [class wife ex-boyfriend	rocks galaxies lovers husband person students scientists criminals thieves vandals
action of participants	leaving running taking carrying laden trying to smuggle bombing	found caught discovered photographed	stealing enjoying ourselves adultery digging talking

Table 5.1: Comparison of near-synonymous expressions using corpus data to identify the participants and their actions in the ‘context of situation’ (after Firth 1968: 197)

In 'caught red-handed', it has been seen that the colour word 'red' in the context of the set phrase has no relationship whatsoever to the original meaning (which can be glossed as 'with blood on your hands'). Not once is the phrase used in the context of serious physical injury, murder or other bloody death. Such a context would be literal and as such is theoretically plausible and possible; yet it does not appear to be used. The indication here is that 'red' has been completely delexicalised in this phrase. This notion is thoroughly at odds with our intuition because in semantic terms, colours are extremely transparent. Yet there is no evidence whatsoever in the examples analysed that 'red' in the phrase 'to catch somebody red-handed' has any relation to the meanings traditionally ascribed to 'red' either as colour or symbol.

5.2.1.2 Blue moon

To illustrate this point further, we can turn to an expression that belongs to another fixed collocational framework: 'once in a blue moon'. This fits into the set 'once in a [timescale]' (see Table 5.2) in its function as qualifier (e.g. 'an event that comes along once in a lifetime') rather than as a noun modifier (e.g. 'a once in a lifetime opportunity'). As for 'red-handed', the etymology gives a sound explanation for the metaphor both in terms of the colour chosen and the fact that the core collocation refers to a time period, as blue moons are in fact a very rare but real phenomenon. In the context of the utterance, this underlying fact which is not invoked by the expression: the link between the utterer's meaning and the 'full intuitive' meaning is even less evident than was the case for 'to catch somebody red-handed'. In fact, an analysis of the phrase in isolation would leave many speakers with the conclusion that the utterance involves a violation of truth conditions, as a

blue moon is not generally believed to be a reality⁹⁹. It is again important to stress the point that the vast majority of language users are ignorant of the etymology of the words and phrases that they use, and for this reason linguists must be wary of an over-reliance on factual, though often trivial, etymological information when trying to shed light on pragmatic meaning. The pragmatic meaning of ‘once in a blue moon’ has of course nothing to do with moons or the colour blue, but draws on the rarity value of this event to describe other rare and unusual events.

Once in a	lifetime 500
	while 851
	long while (3)
	wee while (2)
	great while(8)
	blue moon 68
	generation 27
	decade 13
	millennium (8)
	thousand year(s)7
	few-thousand-years (1)
	century 12
	hundred years 6
	million years 2
	career
	house on fire

Table 5.2: The ‘once in a [timescale]’ paradigm

The collocation ‘blue moon’ is used relatively infrequently compared with the other members of the ‘once in a [timescale]’ paradigm. It differs too in that it has a consistently

⁹⁹ This is borne out in the examples in the corpus itself, where etymological information is presented in several different examples of the collocation ‘blue moon’. The typical discourse structure of the etymological explanation includes ‘in fact’s ‘actually’s and instances of the emphatic ‘do’, which all contribute to the glossed description ‘you might not believe this but it’s true’.

neutral-negative semantic prosody, in common with most of the less frequent collocates, and in contrast with ‘once in a lifetime’ and ‘once in a millennium’, which are both positive and relate to experiences that are too good to be missed. This negativity is manifested in two distinct ways; there are two sets of activities which collocate frequently with expressions on the paradigm such as ‘once in a while’, both of which are things that you shouldn’t do either because they are bad for your health (‘smoke’, ‘drink alcohol’, ‘take drugs’) or because they are seen as indulgences (‘buy shoes’, ‘pamper yourself’). At a glance, ‘once in a blue moon’ would seem to be less proscriptive in that it grants some concessions:

1. Sure, it happens, but it’s **only** once in a blue moon that an affair can make things better.
(today)
2. We all know that once in a blue moon, and in small amounts, **they do no damage**.
(brmags)

However, on closer inspection it seems that the greater the length of the time scale mentioned, the less acceptable the activity appears to be. The only exception to this in the paradigm is ‘once in a lifetime’, but this is likely to be due to its different grammatical function – it is unique in that it is generally used as a noun modifier, not a qualifying adverbial phrase. The negativity surrounding ‘blue moon’ is part of its pragmatic meaning, not its etymology, and it is not necessarily recognizable in the ‘full intuitive’, decontextualised meaning. And as was the case with ‘to catch somebody red-handed’, the colour word here is completely delexicalised, having no relationship whatsoever with the colour blue.

5.2.1.3 Notte in bianco

As we discovered in 4.4.1, the expression ‘notte in bianco’ is used to describe a sleepless night, and has its origin in a spiritual purification ritual practised in Mediæval times. The reasons that an individual might have for not sleeping are many and varied, and can also be expressed in Italian with ‘insonne’. In this section the differences in patterning and use of these apparently synonymous terms are identified and followed up with a brief comparison of ‘notte in bianco’ and ‘notti in’ other kinds of activities.

There are only 33 occurrences of ‘notte in bianco’ in CORIS, 50% of which are preceded by a form of ‘passare’ or ‘trascorrere’ (spend [time]). This immediately highlights the fact that the sleepless night is spent in some kind of activity rather than being a passive state which is merely endured. The activities that collocate with ‘notte in bianco’ are on the whole work-related, and it is seen below that this is an important factor in differentiating the expression from ‘notte insonne’. Activities mentioned in the corpus data include chatting (ex. 3) and going to nightclubs (ex. 4), but the most prevalent feature is that of work: meetings (ex. 10), police investigations (ex. 11), keeping accounts, programming (ex. 5), as well as non-professional, physical work, as shown in examples 7 and 9.

3. Gli ufficiali non ripresero più a giocare, e passavano la notte in bianco, chiacchierando nel cortile fino a molto tardi (NARRATTrRo)
4. Stefania, 25 anni, grafica di computer, ha smesso con la discoteca perché non ce la faceva a lavorare passando le notti in bianco. (STAMPAQuot)
5. Non è solo un problema dei programmatori e delle loro notti in bianco? (PRACCRivis)
6. Hideo disse di avere passato alcune notti in bianco per organizzare la gestione del negozi (NARRATTrRo)
7. Quante volte hai passato le notti in bianco per salvare le tende dalla neve o dalle

- raffiche di vento (NARRATVari)
8. REPORTAGE IL CONTO ALLA ROVESCIA La notte in bianco di Hong Kong Timori e paure, Borsa in fibrillazione (STAMPAQuot)
 9. Il 1° Maggio 1976 passai la notte in bianco, smontando quadri, tavolini, specchiere e cercando in ogni dove di casa mia, forse inconsciamente cercavo, mettendo sotto sopra tutta la mia casa, l'origine della maledizione che mi colpiva. (NARRATVari)
 10. La pennichella fa bene, rispondono da Milano, "purchè non duri due ore , altrimenti si passerà la notte in bianco". (STAMPASupp)
 11. Le tue indagini ti hanno molto stancata , anche se non sembra. Troppe notti in bianco, troppe emozioni ... (NARRATTrRo)

As can be seen from these examples, 'notte in bianco' tends to be used when the individual concerned has stayed up all night, rather than spent a night tossing and turning in bed. Exceptions to this general rule occur mainly in newspaper and magazine health supplements, where 'notte in bianco' appears to be the favoured term for sleepless nights of an involuntary nature (which are more commonly called 'notti insonni' in the data analysed). This journalistic use may be a kind of damage-limitation technique, whereby the negative causes of insomnia are described with a more positive term.

'Notti insonni' are a cause of anxiety and torment, and occur despite efforts to try and sleep. Unlike 'notte in bianco', emphasis tends not to be placed on the activities carried out during the sleepless night ('passare' or 'trascorrere' are only found in 20% of the 159 examples analysed), but focus instead on mental states such as worrying, thinking and wondering which prevent the individual from sleeping. The day's events and problems continue to occupy the mind, making it impossible to switch off and rest. Not surprisingly, then, 'notti insonni' forms combinations with agitation (5), anxiety, torment and tension (2), none of which appear in the 'notte in bianco' data; the cumulative effect is to emphasise the involuntary nature of the sleeplessness and the distress that it causes. It is also of interest to note that 'notti insonni' are

a recurring problem, indicated by the plural form occurring in 81 of the 159 examples. In contrast, ‘notte in bianco’, occurs 15 times – less than half the frequency of the singular form.

12. Era possibile che la notte insonne fosse stata provocata dalla conversazione con il governatore, e dalla minaccia della guerra. (NARRATTrRo)
13. E' stata, per i Kennedy, una notte insonne, di pianti e preghiere, di disperazione e qualche bicchiere di whisky. (STAMPAQuot)
14. Trascorsi una notte insonne nella quale attraversai una profonda crisi di creatore. (NARRATRoma)
15. Poi la festa, splendida e insperata , e una notte insonne per la tensione accumulata. (STAMPAQuot)
16. ...quando le cose vanno bene è più difficile battere il proprio obiettivo. In gergo tecnico il benchmark, quel numeretto che domina le notti insonni dei gestori coscienziosi. (STAMPASupp)
17. Il giudice passava le notti insonni a lambiccarsi il cervello per capire che cos'era che non funzionava. (NARRATRoma)
18. Vede, i miei eserciti sono schierati in Russia e passo notti insonni a chiedermi come andrà a finire". (NARRATTrVa)
19. Dire baco (o bug) a un programmatore significa invece fargli brutalmente ricordare ore di ansia e notti insonni passate a cercare un baco (o de bug). (PRACCRivis)

The examples above provide an overview of ‘notte insonne’ in context. Worry and anxiety (ex. 13, 14, 16, 18) are most characteristic of the use of this expression, alongside stress (ex. 14), racking one’s brains (ex. 17) and ruminating over conversations exchanged (ex. 12). There are some examples which specify work as the reason for sleeplessness (ex. 19), but these are work problems which can be solved through mental effort rather than hands-on action.

We have seen that the principal differences between ‘notte in bianco’ and ‘notte insonne’ concern the reasons for sleeplessness. The etymology of ‘notte in bianco’ is not reflected in the use of the idiom: we find ‘notte insonne’ being used when the mind is occupied in thought

rather than dreams, a condition that one might expect to be more common with ‘notte in bianco’, given its meditative origins. Furthermore, ‘bianco’, meaning ‘white’, contributes no semantic value to the phrase, and can be said to be delexicalised just like red and blue in the phrases discussed above (5.2.1.1, 5.2.1.2).

Both the expressions above relating to sleeplessness carry a marked negative semantic prosody, realised through their collocating causes. This negativity appears to be ingrained in the concept of spending the night doing anything other than sleeping, as the data for ‘passare/trascorrere una notte in...’ suggests (see Appendix 3c). People spend their nights in hospital (6), in prison (2), in a cell (4), in a police station, on the road (3), in hotels (11) or in tents (2). Some of these places are downright inhospitable, others simply lack the comfort of one’s own bed. The few exceptions to this negativity – on the town (3), in the nightclub (4) – may be conceived as enjoyable activities, but again imply significant sleep deprivation, and thus complement the general semantic prosody that emerges. This has very little to do with word meaning, and everything to do with pragmatic reality, and may help account for the negativity attached to ‘notte in bianco’, which runs against its worthy etymology.

5.2.2 The effects of delexicalisation on metaphorical meaning

In the above examples (5.2.1) we have noted a difference between the purported meaning of these canonical phrases (as presented in 4.4) and the meaning that they express when they occur in naturally-occurring language. The ‘full-intuitive’ meanings of ‘catch somebody red handed’, ‘once in a blue moon’ and ‘passare una notte in bianco’ are cast in a very different light when examined in context. Although they can be said to be decomposable idioms, the

reality of language use is that they function as non-decomposable units. The colour words, along with the other components, become delexicalised: ‘red’ does not refer to blood, ‘blue moons’ have no functional relationship to the colour blue nor to the moon, and ‘bianco’, if interpreted at all, is certainly not interpreted as a colour¹⁰⁰.

A comparison of these phrases with their near-synonyms provides further evidence that language choice is governed not by the compositional meaning of the internal elements of a phrase but instead by particular features in the surrounding context. In the case of ‘catch somebody red handed’, a context of situation regarding crime is the deciding factor in selecting the phrase from among the other members of the paradigm (see Table 5.1). ‘Once in a blue moon’ is located on a scale of frequency of occurrence, and acquires its semantic identity through comparison with other timescale indicators, as can be seen in Table 5.2. ‘Passare una notte in bianco’ has taken on a meaning that is quite distinct from its etymological meaning, but which can be differentiated from its apparent synonym ‘passare una notte insonne’ in terms of the different kinds of actions and events which can be found in the context of the two phrases.

These examples demonstrate that there is a fundamental mismatch between ‘full-intuitive, citational’ meaning and contextual meaning. The connotative values of the colour words discussed here appeal to compositional and etymological meaning, but these meanings appear not to be activated when the phrases are in use. The salience of colour words too is questioned when we observe that they do not form a special semantic class with immunity to delexicalisation.

¹⁰⁰ If anything, it is understood as ‘blank’, not ‘white’; a ‘notte in bianco’ is an unproductive night, whereas a night spent sleeping allows you to rest and prepare yourself for the coming day.

The following sections of this Chapter discuss some types of variation which occur in fixed phrases containing colour words. The effects of such variation on meaning – both compositional and delexical – are addressed.

5.3 Syntactical and grammatical variation

The three case studies presented in 5.2 have served to demonstrate that language choice is not as free as we might naïvely believe it to be. The elements contributing to the ‘extended unit of meaning’ of a term appear to be the elements that exert the most influence on its meaning, and certainly seem to be the factors that influence the choice of one member of a paradigm over another. But language choice is not restricted to the mere selection of pre-fabricated chunks: the canonical phrases themselves can undergo internal variation, and this is investigated in the coming sections.

The variant forms presented here have been retrieved from the corpus following the procedures set out in 3.5.2, and are presented in order of least to greatest influence on the semantic meaning of the original, canonical form. The variations are dealt with under fairly broad headings¹⁰¹, indicating general trends identified in the data set examined. This section deals with those changes, mainly alterations to grammatical features, which barely affect the meaning at all, but which admit a degree of syntactic flexibility which the canonical form

¹⁰¹ Moon (1996) identifies far more detailed types of variation in her lexicographic study, but such fine distinctions are not necessary to this study, which is essentially semantic in nature.

does not. Other types of variation do affect the semantics of the canonical form and these are discussed in 5.4.

The variation to be discussed in this section is structural, manifesting itself in the grammatical or lexico-grammatical presentation of the phrase in question. We see in the sections to follow that this sort of variation is quite distinct from lexical and/or lexico-semantic variations both in structure and meaning. It involves, for example, the use of the plural form of a noun rather than the singular and other part of speech variation, or of the use of perhaps an alternative preposition or determiner, and has the broad intention of maintaining the original meaning while altering its verbal presentation to fit the context. Let us look at variation of syntactic roles and alternative wordings in turn, illustrating each point with corpus data.

5.3.1 Variation of syntactic roles

An analysis of language chunks, or units of meaning (Sinclair 1996), using large corpora allows us to establish the norms associated with them as well as the anomalies. The particular case of idioms and other fixed expressions lends itself surprisingly well to corpus analysis because the common perception is that these phrases are pretty much invariable. But “‘fixed phrases’ are not in fact fixed’ (Sinclair 1996: 83), not only in that they can and do undergo all sorts of creative variation (see below), but also in that their structural positioning and grammatical class can, in theory, be altered too. Syntactic role variation is not nearly as common as the more inventive variations that we encounter in the sections below. Whereas every one of the phrases involving colour words that were studied displayed some evidence of variation, if variation of syntactic role appeared at all it amounted to a tiny proportion of the

whole – never more than half the number of other types of variation. Some of the variations encountered in the data are illustrated here; the nature and extent of the variation is discussed.

5.3.1.1 White elephant

‘White elephant’ occurs 208 times in the Bank of English, 193 of these in the figurative sense under study. The phrase is usually pre-modified by adjectives relating to size (biggest, huge, great, massive), expense (expensive, costly, £/\$ x million/billion), and attitude expressing negative opinions (embarrassing, controversial, over-ambitious, self-indulgent). The habitual and typical use of the phrase can be glossed as follows: [be] + [determiner] + [modifier] + [node]:

20. ... and Concorde became the greatest `white elephant" in aviation history. (indy)
21. ... the International Space Station is a costly white elephant, and merely an exercise in public relations. (indy)
22. The Dome, our newest and already strangely outdated white elephant. (times)

In 27 of the concordance lines studied, ‘white elephant’ appears in pre-modifier position, either as (21) ‘a white elephant something’ or (6) ‘a white elephant of a something’:

23. The Tyneside MetroCentre was initially derided as a white elephant project. (guard)
24. ...the fiasco of the new Scottish parliament white elephant building (sunnaw)
25. The building allocated to the project was a white elephant of a theatre (brmags)
26. Long before that he had headed a design team to build the giant Brabazon, an over-ambitious white elephant of an aircraft, five times bigger and heavier than anything preceding it. (guard)

The function of this syntactic role variation is emphatic: by shifting the expression from its habitual post-modifier position to the unusual pre-modifier position, the author's contempt is foregrounded. The MetroCentre project is not just any old project, it is first and foremost a white elephant; but it is the project, not the resulting centre itself that is being criticised. We see that the pre-modified nouns are in fact very generic – project, building, airport, stadium – and a connection is being made between the particular case specified in the context being a 'white elephant' and nouns of that class in general, which presumably are not usually 'white elephants'. Thus the specific event or structure is connected to events and structures in general, the POS shift highlighting its uselessness and expense – the 'white elephant' characteristics.

5.3.1.2 Red tape

Of all the expressions based on figurative extensions of colour words analysed in this study, 'red tape' is by far the most frequent, appearing 1646 times in the Bank of English (by contrast the second-most common phrase, 'green light', occurs 1360 times – including literal meanings – and 'see red' occurs 607 times). The expression is derived from the metonymical relationship between legal documents which are bound by pinkish-red ribbons. Thus 'red tape' became synonymous with the contents of the documents, especially those seen as being excessively bureaucratic, and has, over time, come to be used as a synonym for bureaucracy. 'Red tape' is distinctly characterised by its semantic preferences; the active verbs are most often verbs of cutting ('cut' and 'slash' together account for just over 6% of all occurrences of the node), and the passive verbs are mainly those of entrapment (bind [up], catch [up], enmesh, entangle, shackle, swathe, tangle, tie [up], wrap [up]), and of suffocation (bury, choke, drown, smother, stifle, strangle, struggle, throttle). These semantic groups together

constitute an extremely strong semantic prosody of difficulty, specifically in that people find themselves controlled and bound by what they perceive to be excessive amounts of ‘red tape’. It is this prosody that distinguishes ‘red tape’ from its near-synonym ‘bureaucracy’. ‘Bureaucracy’ does not conjure up the images of bonds and ties that are inherent in ‘red tape’, whose semantic prosody is one of the most negative imaginable. It is completely unlike ‘bureaucracy’, whose collocating verbs are restricted to the more neutral ‘cutting’ and ‘reducing’.

27. As a small business owner, she says she wants to help government cut through bureaucratic red tape and over-regulation. (usnews)
28. British business is being strangled by red tape and suffocated by taxation. (sunnow)
29. Accountants want taxpayers to immediately start preparing for next year's introduction of the GST or face a red-tape and paperwork nightmare in the final months before the July 1 changeover. (oznews)

As far as syntactic role variation is concerned, there is a growing number of occurrences of ‘red tape’ appearing in noun modifier position (ex. 29) – 20 occurrences were present in the 350m Bank of English; 242 in the current 450m database. In effect it is being used as a synonym for ‘bureaucratic’ but just as nominal ‘red tape’ throws up more imagery than ‘bureaucracy’ does, so the modifier combines with more vibrant terms such as ‘tug-of-love’, ‘bonfire’, ‘hell’ and ‘tsar’. The reasons for this anomaly is almost certainly linked to the semantic preferences and prosody of the expression. The noun modifier ‘red tape’ is simply intended to function as the adjectival form of the compound noun ‘red tape’, although it undergoes no morphological variation (unlike its near-synonym ‘bureaucracy’ which becomes ‘bureaucratic’).

5.3.1.3 Brown-nosing

'Brown-nosing' is given by Cobuild 3 as the canonical form of this expression; being found in the gerundial form gives it flexibility in use as noun, noun modifier and verb, so one would not necessarily expect it to be found in variant forms. However this is to overlook the difference between the action of brown-nosing (27) and the actor – the 'brown-noser' (13). The 'brown-noser' is more likely to 'brown-nose' somebody (17) than engage in the practice of 'brown-nosing' (8); and if one is on the receiving end, one is passively 'brown-nosed' (2). This syntactic role variation is simply a matter of standard language flexibility where the different nominal, verbal and adjectival forms convey different shades of meaning, and in a sense it allows the term, which is already insulting, to be even more direct: rather than accusing someone of 'brown-nosing' (which allows for the possibility of the action being a one-off), you can accuse them of being a 'brown-noser', and in so doing attack their character. Needless to say, we find that the people who are most likely to be subjected to such insults are active in politics, and also in the competitive worlds of business and the popular entertainment industries.

30. ...it would certainly be true if they were like the Tory Brown-Nosers, those furry, servile little creatures... (guard)
31. Ditto the Blessed Margaret, as some brown-nosing cabinet colleague once dubbed her. (today)
32. He'd pushed his way to his present moderate eminence by a mixture of hard work, brown-nosing, and ruthless opportunism. (brbooks)
33. " I understand. I'm a cop myself," I said. I didn't add that I wasn't about to brown-nose anybody, lawyer or layman. (brbooks)
34. While Saddam Hussein was allegedly being brown-nosed by a British MP this week, his people were out on the streets to mark the third anniversary of the start of the Gulf War. (today)

5.3.1.4 Commentary

The examples provided above give an overview of the kinds of functional (though not necessarily morphological) variation that occurs within canonical phrases. There are a few remarks that have to be made regarding such variation, however. The first is that is relatively uncommon, and when considered in comparison with other types of variation (in particular with that which results in the creation of puns) it is barely significant. Yet this does not mean that it is not worthy of study. It is arguably easier to analyse variation and the evolution of language chunks when there is a clearly defined ‘standard’ form to start off from: as we have seen in the above examples, the variants draw on the cotextual features of the canonical phrases and are in use because these features are not necessarily present in nearly synonymous terms. The form of the utterance is determined by the intended meaning and the ways that it can be realised in keeping with language norms.

The second point to be made is that the absence of syntactic role variation in many of the phrases studied does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that no such syntactic role variation *can* occur. The smaller Italian data-set yielded virtually no occurrences of such variation, though of course variation does exist in the Italian language. The more times an expression occurs in the corpus, the greater the chances of finding alternative wordings. However, the proportion of variant forms to the number of occurrences of the canonical phrase is different for each and every case examined. Of the examples presented above, we found that ‘red tape’ undergoes syntactic role variation in only about 0.01% of its total number of occurrences – a tenth of the percentage of syntactic role variation for ‘white elephant’, in spite of its occurring eight and a half times more often.

Finally, of the phrases studied, those which showed evidence of syntactic role variation were most usually noun phrases in the canonical form which shifted to pre-modifier position. The instances of noun phrases becoming verbs is much rarer, probably because is a much more forceful kind of manipulation: English need not alter the morphology of a pre-modifier, turning it into an adjective, because it permits the use of compound nouns and nouns in pre-modifier position. The creation of verbs from nouns involves certain changes to the word morphology as well as the position and grammatical function in the phrase, and in doing so risks upsetting the delicate phraseology which surrounds idiomatic and metaphorical utterances. Verbs are sometimes created from nouns in the data studied, but when this occurs it does so in combination with other syntactic role variation (see 5.3.1.3).

5.3.2 Comparing hypothetical and attested variation

The absence of any single type of variation does not necessarily preclude its existence, because the number of attested examples is always constrained by the content of the corpus. Each change to the Bank of English (see 3.5.1, Footnote 19) has introduced further non-canonical examples of fixed phrases, and removed previously existing ones. However, the basic schematic patterns have essentially remained the same, with remarkably little if any new information being gleaned from them. The study of many variant forms across the data set suggests that some parameters establishing the acceptability or otherwise of a phrasal variant do exist. In this subsection I intend to show why it is essential to study the actual attested variants, rather than hypothetical variants, in order to ascertain the parameters that appear to be in operation. The hypothetical ‘examples’ introduced here are signalled by an asterisk (*).

5.3.2.1 Like a red rag to a bull

‘Like a red rag to a bull’ undergoes all sorts of variation (Philip 2000), including the shift from adverbial phrase to noun phrase, as found in example 35, as well as its reduction to the simple collocate ‘red rag’ (which is nonetheless linked to the idiom by association¹⁰²).

35. Zulle reached the foot of the 20km climb to La Plagne 4 min and 50 sec ahead of Indurain making him Tour leader ‘on the road’. It was the red rag that the Spanish bull needed.
(indy)

If the noun phrase were to become a noun modifier, we might expect to find utterances such as ‘*It was a red-rag-to-a-bull sort of comment that would have outraged the establishment¹⁰³’, or ‘*It was a red-rag comment that would have outraged the establishment’, although no such variation appears in the data set. These constructed examples have in fact have been modelled on attested examples of the phrase ‘once in a blue moon’, which appears five times in noun modifier position, always in hyphenated form. Yet in spite of this pre-fabricated structure, it would seem that ‘red rag’ has no *raison d’être* as noun modifier, as it has yet to manifest itself in this position.

A hypothetical verbal form of the phrase is more difficult to imagine. To ‘red rag somebody’ could not work effectively because there is a conflict of the meanings of ‘rag’ (cloth, temper, low-grade reading matter, and so on), therefore such a formulation would not necessarily carry the intended meaning of ‘waving a rag in front of a bull’.

¹⁰² See 3.5.2.1, (p 128) for an example.

¹⁰³ The phrase is hyphenated to make it recognizable as a single selection, and the source and effect of the ‘annoyance’ has to be verbalized elsewhere. The rest of the context is in keeping with the contexts of the attested occurrences of ‘like a red rag to a bull’ and its variants. See Philip 2000 appendix i.

36. After South Africa confirmed their place in Sunday's final with a 75-45 win over Antigua and Barbuda, van Dyk **waved a red rag to a bull** with her announcement she was glad not to be facing New Zealand in the final. (oznews)

It is this semantic anomaly which makes 'to red rag somebody' unacceptable, and the attested form 'to wave a red rag to a bull' the chosen verbal formulation, because it specifies the mental image inherent in the idiom.

5.3.3 *Variation of structure words*

It is important to stress that corpus evidence of this type of variation suggests that its intention is extremely limited. In other words, it appears to be an effect of performance error rather than intentional variation in over half of the instances encountered; and this proportion rises greatly if this is the only non-canonical element in the phrase. An illustrative example of this sort of variation (from Philip 2000: 223) is this version of the canonical phrase 'like a red rag to a bull': 'The letter was as a red rag to a bull'¹⁰⁴. It may be worth noting that in the 53 examples found of this canonical phrase and its variations, the example above is the only example fitting this category which contains no other variation. It appears that when this type of variation is adopted, it is relatively unintentional. The interlinking of structure and meaning makes it nigh-impossible to change just one small element of a phrase and keep the original meaning unaltered. It is more usual that one tiny change will lead to a series of re-workings so that the phrase can keep to its original meaning while obeying fully the grammatical and lexical restrictions that bind it together. There is some evidence to suggest that this type of

¹⁰⁴ Source: Bank of English, British Books subcorpus

fairly low-grade variation hinges on a perception of the truth values underlying the phrase, and on the imagery that it triggers. This makes verbalisations involving the verbs ‘wave’ and ‘put’ quite permissible, and, as we can see in the following examples, the structure of the rest of the phrase must accommodate the variation to take account of the language norms which accompany it. Below is a selection of concordance lines displaying the kinds of variation that have just been discussed, presented in order of smallest to greatest amount of variation (my emphasis):

37. The sight of my Federal uniform was **as a red rag to a bull,**" Heiser recalled. (usbooks)
38. The thought of making it harder on criminals and easier for the police is, to the council, **like waving a red rag to a bull.** (oznews)
39. Good on you for **waving the red rag in front of the bull,**" writes Mr Doyle. (oznews)
40. To hit back is **to hold up a red rag in front of an already enraged bull.** (brbooks)
41. Our presence **may have the effect of a red flag held permanently before a bull.** (brbooks)

The situation described by the canonical phrase at the base of these examples is of course a cultural commonplace, and this makes it impossible to give conclusive evidence as to whether these are variations of ‘like a red rag to a bull’ or simply related realisations of the cultural meaning. However the fact that this meaning did not appear in any other structural form in any of the occurrences of ‘red rag’ in the Bank of English is evidence enough of the role of the idiom in putting forward the meaning.

5.3.4 *Summary*

POS variation and changes in the structure of multi-word expressions serve the general function of shifting emphasis onto an otherwise unmarked item of the expression itself or of its immediate context. Emphasis can be achieved by means of shifting syntactical patterns as we saw in (5.3.1.2), and by highlighting actors rather than their actions (5.3.1.3). Reformulation of a phrase results in a different kind of emphasis; this sort can permit the introduction, substitution or elimination of some elements, provided the resulting whole remains true to the canonical form's image schema. This reliance on the underlying image acts as a boundary to the amount of variation that will occur if the overall meaning of the phrase is to be successfully maintained, but allows for certain elements of the image to be brought into focus, as occurs when the verb 'to wave' is added to the canonical phrase 'red rag to a bull'.

The characteristic that both these types of variation share is their adherence to the canonical form both in terms of the meaning transmitted and insofar as the contexts of the multi-word expressions remain true to the general schema of their corresponding canonical forms. The intention is to be emphatic but not overtly creative, hence the fairly low occurrence of such types of variation and the ease with which those that do occur can be classified. In the following sections, we examine variation on a cline from the avoidance of cliché to its use as an intentional stylistic device.

5.4 Lexical and semantic variation in fixed phrases

Lexical and semantic variation is a wide and varied topic. The variation covered in this section is restricted to three principal types – substitution by semantic class (5.4.1), substitution by rhyme or assonance (5.4.2), and substitution by translation (5.4.3). The focus here is to identify and analyse general trends of semantic variation, mainly in the immediate verbal context surrounding the colour-word expressions, and to understand how such variation affects the meaning expressed by the canonical form. With the exception of 5.4.3, the variation studied in this section does not focus exclusively on colour word substitution, alteration or addition, as this is to be the topic of Chapter 6.

5.4.1 *Substitution by semantic class*

Substitution by semantic class is probably the most widespread form of productive substitution. As Moon points out (1998: 124-7), both verbal and nominal variation commonly involves near-synonyms, and ‘there is no real change in meaning of the F[ixed] E[xpression or] I[diom], although there may be register distinctions’ (ibid: 124). Substitution of this type should not only concern students of idiomatic language, as we can see it at work in a looser kind of framework described by Sinclair (1996) as ‘semantic preference’. For example, the relatively recent coining of the term ‘red eye’ meaning ‘late-night’ (from the metonymical relationship between tiredness and the eyes becoming bloodshot), with reference to business flights in particular, yields variations such as those in Table 5.3.

```

>we'll fly Continental, the Red-Eye Express. I'll look at the schedule<
> for the Virgin overnight `red-eye" flight home, even mother admitted<
> (not to mention the red-eye exhaustion) makes them wary <
>go out on the Sunday night red-eye, get into Boston at 9:30 a.m. East<
>And on those long-distance red-eye runs, he says, drugs were, and <
> his companions are on the red-eye shift on Ramadan Radio, London's <
>the only journalist on the red-eye shuttle to London as Gould set off<
> be tempted to book a `red-eye" special that transfers you <
>to 33 matches, including a red-eye trip to Tokyo. It is little wonder<

```

Table 5.3: Red eye as noun modifier

Although flight(s) still remains the most frequently-occurring of these (12 out of the total 46 occurrences of the collocation having this meaning), we can see how the semantic set is exploited, making use of near-synonyms that are used to create the ‘habitual environment’ of this expression (which although being a fixed collocation, does not have a fixed surrounding phraseology). We see also that a new item, ‘shift’, belonging to another semantic set, has been introduced, and we can speculate that as the term ‘red-eye’ gains ground, it will break out of its original fixed collocation ‘red-eye flight’ and into other areas where its meaning is also appropriate.

When we talk about variation by semantic class, the underlying implication is that there is a canonical form which is varied. Analysis of corpus data shows that the kinds of canonical phrases that can be found in dictionaries and other reference works are often reduced to the minimum, and that the entire ‘unit of meaning’ (Sinclair 1996) actually ranges much wider. For example, ‘nero su bianco’, collocates principally with ‘mettere’, but this does not form part of the canonical phrase. Variations to ‘mettere’ mainly express the concept of ‘putting something down on paper’ – ‘scrivere’, ‘fissare’ and ‘documentare’ can be found – but they also relate to the reading of the document and its authoritative role, and include ‘vedere’ and ‘risultare’. Similarly, ‘catch somebody red-handed’ can appear in variants, though these have

little impact on the meaning of the canonical phrase ('apprehend', ' nab', and 'find' all occur in the data, though they account for only five out of the total 191 occurrences of the expression).

5.4.1.1 Variation for emphatic purposes

Variety within semantic classes can make its presence more clearly felt than the examples in the previous subsection would suggest. For example, you can 'cuss' 'swear', and 'scream' 'a blue streak', as well as 'talk' one; all verbs which conform to the original but add an emphatic tinge. In the same vein, you can do all sorts of verbal activities until you are 'blue in the face', including 'answer', 'argue' (4), 'ask', 'call' (2), 'cite', 'criticise', 'deny' (2), 'discuss', 'extol the virtues of something', 'lecture' (3), 'offer advice', 'scream and sue', 'shout' (5), 'sing, booze and celebrate' 'speak' (2), 'talk' (13), 'tell yourself', 'tut-tut' and 'use the word reform'; but note that quiet, calm speaking is not present. 'Into the red', meaning 'into debt' behaves in a similar fashion. It does not combine with any verb in its canonical form, but the evidence suggests that you usually 'go' 'into the red' (as shown in Moon (ed.) 1995). If we then look at the variations to this verb, we find that they are not all simply verbs of movement, but that most also specify the institutionalised metaphor in which numerical reduction is expressed as downward movement: 'dip', 'dive', 'drop', 'fall', 'plunge', 'push', 'slide', 'slip', 'slump'. The effect of these variations is to provide a visual image of the movement downwards, a fairly standard metaphor used in statistical and financial reporting.

5.4.1.2 Bleed red ink

We can see a similar phenomenon to that of ‘into the red’ (5.4.1.1) with another financial expression, ‘bleed red ink’, which undergoes all sorts of innovative variation. Here not only do we find variation; we find that the allegedly canonical verb ‘bleed’ is nigh-absent, being favoured by other, even more immediate images including ‘bathe’, ‘dip’, ‘drip’, ‘drown’, ‘swim’; and the quantities of the red ink itself are specified as ‘flood’, ‘flow’, ‘rainstorm’, ‘sea’, ‘splash’, ‘tide’, ‘trickle’. But we find here that the meaning of the original has been warped, the imagery now centring on ‘red ink’ rather than ‘bleed’. There are few isolated examples (8 in the 450m Bank of English) which recall the connection between red ink and blood through the use of the verbs ‘stem’(6), ‘staunch’ and ‘cauterize’:

42. That is good news for consumers, who are likely to see the price of pcs tumble by at least a third in 1993, but dreadful for the legion of small, mostly American, PC makers struggling to **stem the flow of red ink**. (econ)
43. However, analysts said its half-yearly result was likely to indicate it had managed to **stem the flow of red ink** as it started to finally put a painful pay TV past behind it and, thanks to new businesses like local telephony, started to benefit from increasing contributions from its costly cable network. (oznews)
44. We may see that again: Hollis Harris's first job with his One Big Airline must be to make the cuts to people, planes and facilities that will end service duplication and **cauterize the flow of red ink**. (strathy)
45. The deteriorating US trade performance comes despite the Clinton administration's determination to **staunch the flow of red ink**. (guard)

5.4.1.3 Commentary

Substitution by semantic class is, as I mentioned at the beginning of this section, a very wide-ranging type of variation. It can be reduced to two types, however – the *incidental* and the *intentional*. Incidental substitution involves near-synonymy; it is not possible nor advisable to state whether this occurs by chance or by design, but the effect is one which does not weigh

heavily on the processing of the meaning of the phrase. Intentional substitution, on the other hand, picks up on elements of the canonical phrase to emphasise them in some way. Whereas incidental substitution tends to occur with words of the same rank, intentional substitution is often based upon the use of hyponyms, as has been illustrated above. Going back to the example for 'into the red', the incidental substitution occurs with using 'move', 'run' and 'head' in place of 'go', whereas the intentional substitution involves 'plunge', 'slip', 'slide', and so on. Intention leads on to the next type of variation, which causes the expression's mental image not only to be revived, but actually reviewed and reassessed.

5.4.2 Substitution by rhyme or assonance

The substitution of an element of a set phrase by a rhyming or assonant word is a relatively rare occurrence, and of all the subcorpora it is most common in the journalistic ones, where it is used as the basis of puns. This type of variation is actually very difficult to find in a corpus and lends itself far more easily to the opportunistic kind of data-gathering favoured by most cognitive linguists working on creative language. However, for the purposes of this study all of the data analysed has been taken from the same corpus, so that real comparisons can be made about frequency and contextual features both of the canonical forms and of their variants.

The successful discovery of rhyming or assonant substitution is at times based on chance, though Philip (2000: 221) sets out a method of retrieving them from the Bank of English by an educated form of trial and error (see also 3.5.2). Moon (1998: 49-51) also discusses ways of retrieving such variations, although she concludes that their successful discovery is 'ultimately a matter of serendipity' (ibid: 51). In the end, no claim of exhaustiveness can

realistically be made, but it is undeniably preferable to have an incomplete sample than none whatsoever.

Examples of variants found through the methodical searching of canonical structural and lexical parts of set phrases include ‘Post calling the Kestle black’ from the canonical phrase ‘the pot calling the kettle black’ with variants for the (then) Post Office and a member of its staff by name of Kestle; ‘White Lie-kea’ from ‘white lie’ and the name of the Swedish home store ‘IKEA’; and ‘greasy eminence’ from ‘eminence grise’, where an attitudinal marker takes the place of the colour word.

The Italian data is heavily influenced by football journalism, where colours are habitually used to identify teams. Thus we find that ‘Atalanta è la nostra bestia nerazzurra’, rather than simply our ‘bestia nera’; and ‘Tra i chiaroscuri del bianconero si intravede un Baggio di sole’, rather than ‘un raggio di sole’.

The purpose of such punning is to locate the idiomatic expression in its context; to incorporate the person, thing or organisation being referred to into the set phrase. In the clear majority of cases its purpose is to fulfil an *ad hoc* communicative need – to create a punchy headline which will entice the reader towards a somewhat less punchy article. The contribution that these variants make towards describing the general rules that govern substitution in set phrases is not particularly useful as they are so tightly bound to specific contexts, individuals and events. Punning is discussed further in Chapters 6 and 7.

5.4.3 *Variation causing a re-processing of the meaning*

When substitution occurs in idiomatic phrases, the effect is often to change the mental image generated by the words (Moon 1998: 127). But the effects can be far more dramatic when the substituted term is not normally considered to be a member of the semantic set of one of the elements of the original phrase. For example, Philip (2000: 226-7) discussed the effects of substitution on one of the meaning-bearing words in the phrase ‘like a red rag to a bull’ – the word ‘bull’. The idiom’s truth-value hinges on this word – the commonplace is that red angers bulls, therefore the phrase as a whole needs both the provoker (the red rag) and the provoked (the bull). So it can be observed with interest that instead of ‘bull’, variants such as ‘the purists’, ‘the true blues’, ‘the Americans’, ‘the Euro-sceptics’, and so on, can be found. What happens is that a prototypical bull is projected onto these other entities, providing them with such qualities as stolidity, stubbornness, resistance to change, as well as anger and strength. But this is not an isolated example: the traditional ‘black sheep’ is one ‘of the family’, though it can just as well belong to a non-standard ‘family’ group, such as ‘the lending sector’, ‘the sporting world’ or ‘Thai Buddhism’. In Italian too, ‘pecora nera’ can refer not only to the ‘famiglia’, but also ‘della zona’, ‘del quartiere’ and ‘dell’industria’ – very similar groupings to those found in English. The difference between these examples and those for ‘bull’ is that in the word ‘family’/ ‘famiglia’ does not generally evoke the same degree of standardised connotative meaning that ‘bull’ enjoys, so the overall effect of the semantic transfer occurring here is limited. However, it is important to stress that the canonical schema is preserved: there is no evidence of anyone being described as the ‘black sheep’ of anything other than a group of people or ‘community’ (or indeed ‘flock’ as illustrated in the example ‘l’Italia, fino a due mesi fa pecora nera del gregge europeo’), and no evidence of a ‘red rag’ provoking anything other

than bulls and (generally male) humans. In linguistic terms, this means that the semantic preferences ascertained in the study of canonical examples involving the key-words ‘red rag’ and ‘black sheep’ are being adhered to.

5.4.3.1 Foreign and translated words and phrases

There is another type of variation which causes the re-processing of meaning which is found infrequently because it involves the translation either into English from a foreign language, or from English into a foreign language. This occurs for example in the expression ‘eminence grise’ where 16 of the 103 occurrences are as ‘grey/gray eminence’. It may be worth noting that the French term is mis-spelled several times (using the masculine form ‘gris’ instead of the feminine ‘grise’), which leads us to suspect that the reasons for its being translated into English are connected with attempts to render the phrase more accessible to a non-Francophone public. Here the context of the phrase remains constant independently of the language used. The Italian data does not demonstrate translation from Italian into another language. The inverse variation, that of translating English or Italian into a foreign language, is a form of the variation that is discussed in the next Chapter as its purpose is quite different, generally being central to the creation of puns.

5.5 Commentary

The difference between treating phrases as isolated chunks, as in Chapter 4, and as integral parts of flowing discourse, as in this Chapter, is huge. The meanings we attribute to ‘full-intuitive citational’ forms appear to be quite at odds with the meanings that these same forms realise in the context of naturally-occurring language use. Apparently decomposable phrases are not separated into their component words but processed as meaningful chunks of language. In doing so, much of the semantic power of the compositional elements is neutralised – delexicalised – allowing the phrase to take on a meaning that does not strictly correspond to the meaning of its parts. This demonstration of the idiom principle at work is fascinating precisely because it goes against so much of the linguistic research that has been carried out on figurative language. Salient words are no more protected from delexicalisation than non-salient words; decomposable idioms do not undergo decomposition; metaphorical meanings of colour words are not activated despite our conscious knowledge of their connotative and symbolic values; fixed phrases are not particularly fixed.

In 5.2 it was seen that it can be useful to analyse language with reference to paradigmatic choice. This analysis of near-synonyms – what is said together with what could have been said – strongly suggests that language choices are made on the basis of contextual and cotextual circumstances. This hypothesis is developed further in Chapter 7, where it is applied to problems of translation equivalence.

Variation to fixed phrases is certainly the exception rather than the rule. It is no creative free-for-all, but rather appears to occur within fairly strict parameters set by the cotextual norms of the canonical form and its extended unit of meaning. Grammatical variation is not particularly common or semantically productive; lexical variation, on the other hand, is much more wide-

ranging in scope. It was seen in 5.4.1.2 how the canonical verb ‘bleed’ is substituted by other members of the same semantic class to create a vivid image which greatly exaggerates the quantity of the (metaphorical) red ink, and in 5.4.1.3 how ‘red tape’ takes on a metaphorical life of its own by binding and trapping its victims.

Of course, we would be hard-pressed to account for the variation encountered were we not in possession of a thorough awareness of the canonical phrase and its typical patternings. This is made possible by the use of corpus data, and has the added advantage that by studying examples of both canonical forms and their variants occurring in the same set of data, the same criteria can be used to compare features, lending a homogeneity to the data that would be difficult to achieve through reliance on random examples.

Although this Chapter has discussed lexical variation, this has not included variation or substitution of colour words. This type of variation is the most common of all those found in the data, and the one that provides the most information about the activation and suppression of connotative colour meaning. The following Chapter deals with the substitution, variation and addition of colour words in the data studied, with a view to accounting for the conflicting views surrounding colour meaning and the corpus evidence provided in this Chapter.

6 RE-LEXICALISATION: LANGUAGE CREATIVITY AND THE RE-ASSESSMENT OF MEANING

*Pinko commie comic Ben Elton will be left red faced after being seen in the pink in a red hot blue movie soon to be released.*¹⁰⁵

6.1 Introduction

The data presented in the previous Chapter cast doubt over the possibility that colour words are actually interpreted metaphorically in fixed phrases. We saw that colour words become delexicalised when they are part of conventional linguistic expressions, just as other words are. However, it is not true to say that the connotative meanings of colour words are never activated in language. Just as variation to other parts of the expressions brings about a re-assessment of the conventional meaning, variation to colour words also brings about particular semantic effects. This Chapter addresses the issue of colour meaning in non-standard occurrences of canonical phrases, and demonstrates some of the mechanisms that trigger secondary interpretations.

The variation presented in 6.2 deals with the substitution of colour words for emphatic, pejorative and ameliorative purposes. This type of variation exploits knowledge of gradations of colour (as presented in the diagram in Appendix 1a) in addition to an awareness of the connotative values that the chosen substitute colour can represent. In 6.3 a number of case studies demonstrate how the intentional change of a colour word can evoke secondary meanings based on cultural knowledge, or trigger the appreciation of other relevant meanings

¹⁰⁵ Citation from OUP Reading Programme database (Angus Stevenson, personal communication)

in the given context. This is followed by a discussion on the institutionalisation of variant forms. The section ends with an exposition of colour word expressions occurring in contexts which feature other colour words, and the semantic effects that such cotextual proximity can bring about. The focus of 6.4 is polysemy in colour-word expressions, with particular emphasis on the simultaneous interpretation of conventional, delexicalised meanings and connotative meanings.

6.2 Colour word substitution

We saw in Chapter 5 that lexical and semantic variation counteracts the effects of delexicalisation, triggering a re-formulation of the conventional expression on the part of the listener/reader. In the case of ‘red tape’, for example, the variation focused on the imagery of ‘tape’, illustrating the popular conception of bureaucracy as restrictive and binding. For ‘bleed red ink’, we find that the figurative legwork is being done by ‘ink’ and its quantity, expressed in terms more commonly associated with water. The effect of variation in both these phrases, as well as the others discussed, is to add semantic value and emphasis to a conventional expression, this coming about through a process of decomposition of the conventional phrase into its meaningful component parts, and its subsequent recomposition and relexicalisation.

It will have been noticed that most of the variation discussed in Chapter 5 affected elements of the extended phrase – especially verbal – rather than its central collocations. In fact, it is relatively uncommon to find alteration of key elements such as the colour words in these expressions. When such variation is encountered, we find that the effect is more marked than that which has been discussed up until now: near-synonymy is difficult to achieve when

dealing with colour terms, thus the change of a colour word tends to involve a distinct shift in meaning rather than just a small step along a semantic gradient. The exception to this general rule is when the colour is changed for emphatic purposes, in which case colour gradations are employed. This is discussed in 6.2.1.

6.2.1 *Change of colour for emphatic reasons*

The change of colour for emphatic reasons tends to be restricted to the more transparent, metonymically motivated metaphors, such as ‘go red’/ ‘diventare rosso’, ‘fifa blu’, ‘green thumb’, and ‘black and white’. Variation to these phrases involves the substitution of one colour for another which lies close to it in the colour spectrum. When the intention is to be emphatic or pejorative, a stronger colour is selected, as demonstrated in 6.2.1.1 and 6.2.1.2. In cases when the intention is ameliorative, a lighter colour is chosen, for example in the transformation of ‘periodo nero’ into ‘periodo grigio’, or when a ‘black week’ (on the stock exchange) is transformed into a ‘grey week’, or when one ‘goes pink’ (with embarrassment) rather than ‘red’. Examples of the substitution for emphatic purposes, by far the more common of the two types, are presented in the case studies to follow.

6.2.1.1 Go red

Among the examples of ‘(go/grow red) in the face’ we find that purple is sometimes used to describe anger more emphatically than red, as in examples 1 – 4.

1. As, **purple in the face**, I wrapped myself around the gaff and its flogging sail, an inflatable dinghy shot out of the harbour mouth. (brmags)
2. “Shoot him!” screamed the activist, **purple in the face** at the betrayal. (brbooks)
3. The drill instructor, **purple in the face** with powerless rage, bellowed the command to

form turtles. (usbooks)

4. Just as all the barristers **go purple in the face** and start screaming if anybody says they are not perfect, so it was exactly with the solicitors. (times)

However, 'red' remains the 'standard' choice in this linguistic context ('blue' in the face is usually found within the context of 'speak/shout etc. until you are blue in the face'). It is worth mentioning that although people 'are' or 'go' 'purple in the face', it is rare for them simply to 'be' or 'go' 'purple', whereas 'go red' is commonplace. 'Go red in the face' can in turn be considered an emphatic form of 'go pink in the face'. Consider these two expressions of embarrassment:

5. To her surprise, he **went pink** in the face. "Ah, yes," he said, looking guilty. (brbooks)
6. I'd always get embarrassed, **go bright red** in the face. (oznews)

It is necessary to picture the scenes where the face is physically changing colour. Fear causes us to 'go pale' or 'go white'. Embarrassment starts with pink and ends at red; anger starts at red and moves through shades of purple. We know that these variations are metonymically motivated because it is easy to imagine real-life situations where they might occur, and, in other languages, these other colours are used in normal contexts to discuss the colour of someone's face. In Italian, for example, fear makes people 'diventare pallido' (become pale), embarrassment is described on a scale running from red to purple; anger from red to black; and in English we appear not to use the expression 'black with rage' (no attested examples in 450m words), whereas purple (22), red (17) and white (9) are all used.

6.2.1.2 Verde di rabbia

If the variations to 'go red' can be said to reflect the gradations of colour actually found in the

faces of those who get angry or embarrassed, the reasons for saying ‘verde di rabbia’ might not seem so obvious. Despite this, it is as common as ‘rosso’ in CORIS; joint second in frequency of the colour words that are used to describe anger and rage in Italian (the most frequent is ‘nero’; see Table 7.19 for numerical frequencies). But why ‘verde’, when it occupies a zone of the colour spectrum quite distinct from that of red? Indeed, of all colours, green is the one that is least related to red, and contrasts starkly with the other colours used to describe ‘rabbia’, which range from red to black via purple, plus white:

7. Il peso di uno schiaffo potente sulla guancia le fece chiudere gli occhi, si accorse del **rossore di rabbia** e vergogna che le saliva in volto, ma non pianse. (NARRATRoma)
8. ...oppure parevano cioccolatini venefici a forma di fiore, e foglie, foglie erette come teste di imperatori romani verdi di bile, gialli di itterizia, **rossi di rabbia**, blu come Marco Aurelio. (NARRATRacc)
9. "Si può sapere da che parte stai?" Trainer era **rosso di rabbia**. "Chi non desidera lavorare nella mia squadra dovrebbe cercarsi cercarsi un altro impiego" strillò. (NARRATTrRo)
10. Macché felice, volevo l' oro Fiona: che rabbia, retrocedo come i gamberi ATENE VOLENDO sulla battuta, par alleggerire un pó la tensione, potremmo dire che Fiona May è nera. Non di pelle ovviamente, quello lo sanno tutti. **Nera di rabbia**. (STAMPAQuot)
11. Chi sta vicino allo sciatore di Castel dè Britti, dice che è **nero di rabbia** , che sogna la rivincita. (STAMPAQuot)
12. Quelle pesti erano sempre **nere di rabbia** (oltreché di sporco) e ne facevano davvero di tutti i colori.(NARRATTrRo)
13. Quando mia nonna le ha risposto: "Speriamo di no, altrimenti verrà fuori una puttana come te!", ho visto mia madre diventare **verde di rabbia**, e da allora la sera si infilava nel letto mio facendo il rumore della mosca, diceva che era tornata da me, che si trovava meglio. (NARRATRacc)
14. Avrebbe potuto dire che veniva a Danemouth per far delle compere e, entro pochi giorni, le avrebbe comunicato i risultati, che, se favorevoli, avrebbero indotto il gran capo, il signor Harmsteiter, a parlare con i genitori di lei. La faccenda si presentava veramente meravigliosa! Io ero **verde di rabbia**! (NARRATTrRo)
15. Eppure, era come se ci fossimo improvvisamente calati nel cuore della Bibliotheque nationale. - Ha pensato ai libri? **Verde di rabbia**. Gli occhi fuori dalla testa. Labbra viola e grossi pugni bianchissimi. (NARRATTrRo)
16. Fabio lancia violentemente il camion contro il muro e comincia a urlare. È **viola di rabbia**, una furia scatenata. (STAMPAPeri)

17. Hai fatto di peggio! - Cosa stai dicendo? Adesso È talmente **bianca di rabbia**, e io sono così bianco di furore, che le lenzuola sembrano avere un bel colorito.
(NARRATTrRo)

Different degrees of anger seem to be expressed with different colours: ‘Nero di rabbia’ (ex. 10, 11 and 12) appears to have a connection with the physical side of anger, with the ‘non-verbal actions of the participants¹⁰⁶, being based around physical activity – a missed gold medal in ex. 10, a ski competition in ex. 11, and general hooliganism in ex. 12. ‘Viola di rabbia’ (ex. 16) is juxtaposed with mad anger, throwing things and shouting, whereas ‘bianco di rabbia’ represents cold, controlled anger. ‘Rosso di rabbia’ is the canonical form, the ‘default option’, as can be seen in ex. 8, where it is compared with other canonical colour associations. Examples 7 and 9 both refer to the prototypical expression of anger as blood rising to the face. The remaining examples (13, 14 and 15) demonstrate that ‘verde di rabbia’ is emphatic: the insult in ex. 13 makes the woman livid with rage, the narrator in ex. 14 recalls frustrating, infuriating events, the librarian’s eyes are bulging with anger in ex. 15.

Green, as was seen in 1.2.2, is the colour of bile, and bile is closely related to violent emotion such as rage: thus the expression is justified by metonymy. So it transpires that Italian allows emphasis to be expressed not only through the use of darker, more intense shades or reds and purples, but also through an apparently unrelated colour. This sort of variation of colour words serves to make the expression more picturesque, but it does not fundamentally change the meaning of the canonical version in any way, simply adding shades of meaning that the canonical form does not incorporate. It does not force the reader/ listener to re-assess the meaning of the original, as the changes are slight and related to the physical manifestation of

¹⁰⁶ Firth, 1968: 197; see also 2.4.1.1.

colour, not the connotative values attributable to them. These other functions are discussed in the sections to follow.

6.3 Different colours to evoke cultural knowledge and/or contextually relevant connotative meanings

It is not uncommon for more drastic changes of colour word to be made. A second level of colour word change can be identified in those alternant forms which are motivated by cultural realities, and which thus require a small element of re-processing on the part of the reader/listener. Typical and most widespread of these variations is the use of the colours which are associated with political factions (Fascists favouring black; British Conservatives, blue; Labour and ‘comunisti’, red; Liberal Democrats, yellow; Greens and Italian Lega Nord, green) and football team strip colours (especially in Italian, where teams are habitually known by their colours rather than by name). Such substitution can involve the choice of a specific colour term in place of the prototypical one, as well as the more commonly-occurring substitution of one prototypical colour for another.

6.3.1 Innovative variation of colour words

Although some variations to colour words in fixed and idiomatic expressions are one-offs, they still conform to two main types. The first concerns those variations which exploit the connotative meanings of other basic colours, for example, ‘fifa blu’, which occurs 9 times, and also appears as ‘fifa nera’ (twice) and ‘fifa verde’. Both these variants are emphatic and draw on the connotative values of the colours: ‘nero’ can be glossed as ‘horrific’, ‘verde’ as ‘sickening’. The second broad type of variation involves the substitution of a basic colour

with a more specific shade of the canonical form, for example ‘emerald with envy’ (see examples 39 and 40 in 6.3.1.3 below). The effect of both these types of variation is ultimately the same – to give added value to a tired, conventional expression by imbuing it with contextually relevant meaning. This section deals with both these types of variation as they are manifested in some Italian and English expressions.

6.3.1.1 **Pensieri neri**

As can be seen in examples 18-20 below, ‘pensieri neri’ – gloomy thoughts and doubts – are to be avoided at all costs, but such avoidance requires some real effort such as engaging in distracting activities such as tidying (ex. 18) or exerting considerable willpower (ex. 19 and 20). Clearly, the presence of ‘nero’ recalls the connotations discussed in 1.2.3.1 – negativity, depression, desperation – and unsurprisingly, the cotexts of the examples make clear the notion that ‘pensieri neri’ are to be steered clear of and fought off.

18. Lei seguì a riordinare per non farsi vincere dai **pensieri neri**. Pulizia e simmetri.
Tenere a bada i dubbi. (NARRATRacc)
19. In camera, mi ero lasciato cadere sul letto. Esausto. La testa piena di **pensieri neri**.
Non pensare. Dormire. (NARRATTrRo)
20. Dovevo rigorosamente evitare ogni emozione, ogni **pensiero nero**. Serenità, placidità
erano le parole d'ordine. (NARRATRoma)

When ‘nero’ is substituted with another basic colour term, the connotations specific to black are no longer evoked. Instead, the new colours bring their own set of connotations which are activated in accordance with contextual cues – grey with boredom and disinterest, green with the environment, and so on. The examples of variation found in CORIS are presented below:

21. ... facce nascoste dalle tendine, pallide, facce spaurite dalla notte, come bigi animali

- in agguato sulla soglia di tane elettriche, facce dai grigi occhi incolori, lingue grige, **pensieri grigi** che si affacciavano alla carne torpida del volto. (NARRATTrRo)
22. Accanto a Marion era impossibile abbandonarsi a **pensieri grigi**. Per lei, sarebbe stato impensabile non dividere immediatamente con l'altra persona ciò che la commuoveva - gioia, dolore o rabbia. (NARRATTrRo)
23. Tutto è azzurro, il mare, il cielo, i pensieri stessi di coloro che possono godere queste ore di sogno. I **pensieri azzurri** dei due protagonisti mezzi nudi in pattino erano espressi audacemente e prudentemente al tempo stesso. (STAMPASupp)
24. E di Luzi, più che l'inabissarsi del suo quasi orante **pensiero azzurro**, restano, come condizione di quel pensiero, le colline, i gesti delle mani delle sue donne, i profili dei paesaggi e dei volti. (PRACCVolum)
25. Naturalmente questo approccio può portare, come sovente accade nel **pensiero verde**, a sognare il ritorno a un mitico passato di piccole comunità autosufficienti (PRACCRivis)
26. TORMENTAMI **PENSIERO ROSA**. INSISTO PER TUO RITORNO PALERMO. LASCIA INDAGARE PROFESSIONISTI. HO UN PENE NUOVO. TI RACCONTERO'. TANTI BACI UGOLINO. (NARRATRoma)

'Pensieri grigi' are dull rather than depressing, in ex. 21 clearly associated with other grey characteristics, in these other cases it is the colour itself that is being referred to, not its connotations. However, the overall effect is to paint computer nerds as dull and boring as well as pasty-faced. Compare this with ex. 22, where 'pensieri grigi' are contrasted with and defeated by Marion's colourful company. The following two examples, illustrating 'pensieri azzurri' evoke the sensual connotations of the colour¹⁰⁷. This comes out in the context of both examples 23 (nudity) and 24 (curved shapes). Note that such thoughts are expressed 'audacemente', and one might 'inabissarsi' in them – rather critical comments which support the idea that 'pensieri azzurri' are not approved of nor to be encouraged.

Each of the remaining colours occur once only, and it should be noticed that their appearance in the singular form marks them out from the other examples provided, which are plural.

¹⁰⁷ C.f. expressions such as 'blue movie' in English, though the almost pornographic connotations that 'blue' can have in English are tempered in both the examples provided here.

‘Pensiero verde’ is environmental thinking; the trend in general rather than an individual’s environmentally-conscious thoughts. The sexual connotations of the ‘pensiero rosa’ that torments the writer of ex. 26 is confirmed by his revelation that he has a new penis, and that all will be revealed later.

6.3.1.2 Anima nera

Staying with ‘nero’, let us move on to another expression which displays evidence of substitution of colour words: *anima nera*. This expression, predominantly found in political contexts, refers to a sort of latent evil or malice, and has overtones of sinister dealings and policies (ex. 27, 28, 29). In non-political contexts, the expression takes on a more transparent meaning, being used as in ex. 30 to describe a sinner, or ‘evil soul’.

27. I democristiani sono dei mostri. Sono l'**anima nera** dell'ipocrisia e della vigliaccheria italiana. (NARRATRoma)
28. Nel gruppo c'era ogni sfumatura, dall'esaltato nazionalista all'**anima nera**, bramosa del male. (NARRATRoma)
29. Ricordo male, ma Amato non era il braccio destro, l'**anima nera** di Craxi? Provvedimenti impopolari... dicono di essere stati penalizzati da provvedimenti adottati per il risanamento del Paese (EPHEMLette)
30. Respiro. Sono vivo, sto andando verso il Signore. Sono un'**anima nera**, ma Dio la monderà. Egli è buono con me. (NARRATTrRo)

In common with many expressions containing black, the inverse meaning can be achieved by substituting ‘nero’ with ‘bianco’, thus turning the malicious being into a ‘heart of gold’ (ex. 31 and 32). ‘Anima grigia’ is not used to describe ambiguities along the good-evil scale, but rather refers to the same dullness and depression that we witnessed in ex. 21 and 22 above.

31. DAL NOSTRO INVIATO FUKUOKA - Un danese dalla pelle nera e un nero dall'**anima bianca**. Entrambi keniani, ma di un Kenya diverso. (STAMPAQuot)

32. Aveva temuto quel momento da quando la Maria del Casone le aveva avvicinato al letto una cosa nera e pigolante avvolta nelle fasce. Una rondine nera, con un'**anima bianca**. (NARRATRoma)
33. Se vivi vicino a una di queste **anime grigie** non hai una sorte molto lieta. (NARRATVari)
34. ...c'è anche una storia d'amore incarnata nell'ispettrice Grazia, alter ego dell'ormai noto commissario De Luca: una spia della sua **anima rosa**? Potrebbe anche essere così. (STAMPASupp)
35. Nel bagliore del meriggio Eraclito, con gli occhi chiusi verso il sole e l'**anima rossa** di ardore, gridava: "Il dio è giorno, notte, inverno, estate (NARRATRoma)
36. Persino l'Unità rovina un patrimonio guadagnato con milioni di torturati in tutto il mondo vendendo la sua **anima rossa** alle verdi chiome di Ivrea. (NARRATVari)
37. Gabriele Volpi. Mestiere professore precario, **anima verde** doc alla scoperta della nuova frontiera dell' inquinamento. (STAMPAQuot)
38. Per battere un fenomeno sempre più inquietante scende così ora in campo la Lega di Bossi lanciando le ronde padane. O, come sono state ribattezzate dal commissario della Lega di Como, Stefano Galli, "con le sue **anime verdi**". (STAMPAQuot)

An 'anima rosa' (ex. 34) has romantic inclinations, and an 'anima rossa' is a passionate individual – here with regard to religion (ex. 35) and the selling of one's communist soul (ex. 36). 'Anima verde', on the other hand, is divided here into two very distinct meanings, which have particular relevance to the Italian political scene. The first is the conventional 'environmentalist' tag (ex. 37), easily recognised by the presence of 'inquinamento' in the nearby context. The other is the more recent adoption of the colour green by the 'leghisti', a separatist-nationalist political party based in 'Padania' – the north of Italy.

6.3.1.3 Green with envy

We have seen in 6.3.1.1 and 6.3.1.2 how changes of colour can operate systematically to change the intended meaning of a fixed expression, while simultaneously allowing the canonical form to permeate at an implicit level. In this and the following section this trend is investigated further, with reference not only to basic colour terms but also to specific shades

of the colour used in the canonical expression. The following examples illustrate the variants found for the expression ‘green with envy’:

39. When it comes to serious money, the art market is led from New York these days and just listing the works coming up for sale is enough to make an art lover's mouth water and turn his eyes **emerald with envy**. (times)
40. Mars is strongly placed, imbuing you with the kind of energy, courage and sheer sex appeal that make lesser mortals **emerald with envy**. (brmags)
41. Although I am now beginning to wish I had kept all my Seventies fashion mistakes like those grey suede hot pants, that lilac lurex boob tube and the pink feather boa. Not to mention my red, yellow and green-checked acrylic poncho. I saved my cash from my Saturday job in Chelsea Girl to buy that particular horror. If I still had them all today, I could have worn them all at the same time and looked like a real fashion victim. Those Taras and Clarissas would have been **pea-green with envy**. (sunnaw)
42. Some St Valentine rhymes were handed down from mother to daughter. And there was always the agony of not getting a single card and having to go into school saying that the postman hadn't been yet. One girl used to receive about half a dozen of those gigantic overblown cards which could comfortably house a family of four. We'd all be **pea green with envy** and it was only years later that I discovered she actually sent them to herself. (sunnaw)
43. Stunning Miss Ireland Emir Holohan-Doyle wraps our national flag around her – hoping to make her Miss World rivals **green, white and orange with envy!** (sunnaw)
44. The Spey Valley boasts a year-round range of activities to turn rival tourist areas **tartan with envy**. (today)

In these examples we see the use of ‘emerald’ twice in place of green. The first (ex. 39) creates an alliteration and comes across as something of a cliché – rather fitting for the tabloid horoscope in which it occurs. The second occurrence (ex. 40) evokes both ‘emerald green’ as a specific colour and ‘emerald’ as a precious stone, thus activating the additional connotations of wealth that might be relevant to an art-lover who has ‘serious money’. Examples 41 and 42 both specify the shade of green as ‘pea-green’. Although the immediate context gives no firm indication of the reasons, it should be remembered that ‘pea green’ is a shade that corresponds to the colour’s prototypical realisation, and that its use here can therefore be interpreted as being emphatic rather than connotative. Examples 43 and 44 locate the idiom in a national

context, exploiting the colours of the Irish flag and Scottish tartan (which very often uses green as its base colour) respectively.

6.3.1.4 Purple prose

To give a further example of this type of variation, let us look at 'purple prose'. Reproduced below are the twelve¹⁰⁸ non-standard occurrences where 'prose' is pre-modified (there are a further four non-canonical examples where 'prose' is post-modified by 'purplest'(2), 'deepest purple', and 'purplish').

45. If however, your reading revolves around the straight and narrow, **the purple (verging on blue) prose** misogyny will not amuse you. (brmags)
46. The owners are driven to **the purplest of Beverley Nichols prose** as they rhapsodise over their patches... (brmags)
47. One understands the passion of the early commentators as they described in **the purplest of prose** what the moving-picture theater meant to the city's working people. (usbooks)
48. ...almost everyone who has interested Paris during the last thirty-five years has been preserved in her **amber prose**. (usbooks)
49. Mr Dobson's, which arrived a day earlier, was a plain photostat of four sides of **grey prose**. (times)
50. ...because all the great journalism of the late-20th century lacks any objectivity and dull, **grey John Major prose** ... (brmags)
51. Who else would describe Labour's 1997 election victory as 'a cornucopia of luscious psephological fruit?' But for Lord Jenkins, the report is more than an exercise in **clarety prose**. (econ)
52. Question: what do these two scenic descriptions have in common, apart from the **violet prose**? (brmags)
53. The occasion was a piece I had written dedicated to **scarlet prose**, called 'Novel Reactions', which Peter read and I attempted to play out: (brbooks)
54. With vivid imagery and **colourful prose**, Margulis explores the origins of life, the essence of humanity and the functioning of the Earth. (newsci)
55. Often penned in **colourful prose** by Lord St John himself, these letters don't mince

¹⁰⁸ A total of 68 concordance lines were found relating to the idiom (canonical and non-canonical forms).

words. (indy)

Again here we can see that the canonical ‘purple’ can be made emphatic by use of the superlative form (ex. 46, ex. 47), undergo sideways shifts (ex. 45, 51, 52 and 53) or jump right to the opposite end of the colour spectrum (ex. 48), and be generalised to the superordinate ‘colourful’ (ex. 54, ex. 55); the prose can furthermore be deprived of colour (ex. 49, ex. 50). But the change in colour here, as in the previous example, is not merely dictated by the hue, but by the connotative power assigned to it in the culture. ‘Purple’ prose is already idiomatic; the text is not actually purple in colour, but in style it is rich and sumptuous – virtues associated historically in Western cultures with the ‘regal’ colour purple (see Appendix 1b). ‘Scarlet’ and ‘claret’ both have similar connotations of wealth to ‘purple’, but in the context of this idiom they can give us more information: both are shades of red, and if we look at the context of example 51 we find in the former an explicit reference to the Labour party (traditionally represented by the colour red) as well as to the House of Lords, whose members wear red robes. ‘Violet’ is a more delicate shade than ‘purple’, so we can assume that its selection in example 52 is intended to describe an equally watered-down prosaic richness. ‘Blue’ is chosen because of its connotations with sex; the comparison is successful because the ‘purple prose’ can ‘verge on blue’ both in terms of content (‘purple prose’ is, according to the corpus evidence, typical of romantic fiction) and colour (blue stands next to purple on the colour spectrum, see Appendix 1a). ‘Amber’ rather than ‘purple’ is decipherable only by studying the extended context; as with emerald in the previous set of examples, it refers both to a colour and to a gem. The context suggests that it is precisely the gem, and not the colour, that is being referred to (the metaphor would run along the lines of people and events being ‘trapped’ inside the author’s lucid descriptions, like prehistoric flies in the resinous stone). It is convenient, however, that the stone is also a colour and so can be set

beside 'prose' where another colour would normally sit. Such juxtaposition of meanings makes an expression difficult to decipher, not only for the analyst but also potentially for the reader, unless the context prepares it sufficiently well. 'Grey' in the context of this idiom is the opposite of purple, in that it can be glossed as 'dull, boring'. This is again confirmed by the immediate context; in example 49 the 'grey prose' is found in a 'plain photostat', and in example 50 we are cast in no doubt whatsoever: the grey prose is defined as 'dull', and John Major, the 'grey man' par excellence, is also put in for good measure. This leaves the superordinate 'colourful prose', which is arguably a fixed expression in its own right. With this expression, the meaning shifts away from the mannered and flowery 'purple', the sexual 'blue', the politically motivated 'red', and the dull 'grey', to the generic 'colourful' with its equally non-specific meaning of interesting, vivid.

6.3.1.5 Summary

The above case studies have demonstrated what happens when a colour word is changed. It was seen in 5.2 that canonical forms of expressions containing colour words are delexicalised, and for this reason the connotations present in the 'full-intuitive, citational form' are not activated. When the colour word is changed, however, the phrase undergoes a degree of semantic reprocessing, allowing the new colour to bring with it the connotative meanings that it normally represents. In doing so, we can say that the phrase is being *relexicalised*. A further, related type of colour substitution is presented in 6.3.2.

6.3.2 *Translation for stylistic purposes*

A different take on this generic sort of variation can be found in the use of translation: not in the form of calques, where a foreign expression is translated into English, but rather by the translation of just one word – here the colour word – into another language. It is not a particularly common device in the data set under investigation, but merits a mention because it demonstrates an alternative method of contextualising the canonical form. The phrase ‘the pot calling the kettle black’ yields the following variations of this sort:

56. Last year, a top London food critic awarded null punkte for every German restaurant visited. <p> Surely a case of the pot calling the kettle **schwarz**. <p> (today)
57. It is downright hypocritical for the French to ban British beef produced under some of the world's most stringent safety regulations." Mr Gill, president of the National Farmers' Union, added: `It is time the pot stopped calling the kettle **noir** # (sunnaw)

We can see that the language used for the translation of ‘black’ corresponds to the language spoken in the country being referred to in the preceding context, though while in example 56 the actor – the ‘pot’ in the expression – is the English-speaker (‘a top London food critic’) with the foreign ‘kettle’ being identified by the translated word, in the example 57 we find that the English speaker is criticising a French ‘pot’ who would be using French to describe its adversary, the ‘kettle’ (English farmers). The only statement we can make from so few examples is that the purpose of the translation is to emphasise the cultural connotations already present in the text through the use of foreign language rather than by changing the key-word’s semantics while remaining within the framework of the English language.

Translation can work in the reverse direction too. In common with many European languages, English has a tendency to not only adopt foreign expressions but to retain them in their original language, rather than translating them. Examples within this data set include ‘eminence grise’ and ‘carte blanche’, both of which are included by virtue of their being

parallel to the Italian expressions ‘*eminenza grigia*’ and ‘*carta bianca*’ respectively. But while there is no evidence that ‘*carte blanche*’ is ever translated into English (perhaps because the near-synonym ‘free hand’ suffices in most contexts; perhaps because ‘white sheet’ or ‘white paper’ already exist and embody other, entirely unrelated meanings), ‘*eminence grise*’ occurs 16 times as ‘grey eminence’ (5.4.3.1). The cotextual features of this phrase remain unaltered in spite of the translation, leading us to suppose that the reasons underlying the translation are concerned with the accessibility of the phrase in a world that is increasingly dominated by the English language. Alongside ‘*eminence grise*’ we find ‘*eminence rouge*’ – historically Cardinal Richelieu, the showier, more public figure who wore a red habit, in comparison to his grey-clad secretary Père Joseph. Again, ‘*rouge*’ is translated into English – there is one example of the French, and one of the English translation – and in addition there are three occurrences (from the same US books text) of the term ‘scarlet eminence’. Neither the originals (‘*eminence grise*’ and ‘*eminence rouge*’) nor their translations are ever used to refer to the historical figures who inspired them; the only historical figure mentioned is in fact Rasputin, described as the ‘*eminence noire*’, presumably both because of his dress and the sinister nature of his dealings.

6.3.3 *Commentary*

What we observe in these extended examples is that the idioms are in effect being presented canonically with the exception of one of the keywords, which is modified. In the canonical version, the colour word is not processed with its ‘full intuitive’ meaning because it is one part of a non-decomposable, delexicalised whole. By altering the colour word, however, the reader is forced to incorporate a new element into the meaning of the underlying form, resulting in two simultaneous processes. The first of these is that the idiom is reassessed

literally; it is broken up into its component parts, each of which have an individual value which differs from that which they have as a chunk. This allows the new colour to be accepted in the 'string' as it is a member of the same semantic class as that which it has replaced and thus can be accepted much in the same way as other semantic class variation is accepted (see 5.4.1). The second process is that of making or finding the connection between the new colour word and the context in which the variant form is being used, to arrive at an appropriate interpretation of the colour word's intended meaning. This usually involves either the selection of one of the colour's connotative meanings, or an element of cultural information; see for example 'green, white and orange with envy', ex. 43 above, where the canonical colour word is joined by another two colours which, taken all together, have a distinct meaning (the colours of the Irish flag) which is confirmed by other elements in the context ('Miss Ireland'). The substitution or addition of a colour word therefore activates a process of relexicalisation, making the expression both more vivid and more contextually appropriate.

6.3.4 Institutionalisation of variant forms

Sections 6.3.1 and 6.3.2 discussed what the effect of innovative changes to colour words was on the meaning of linguistic expressions. In the majority of cases, such variations are one-offs. They appeal to the reader because of their creativity, but also because they adhere sufficiently tightly to the rules governing the canonical phrase so as not to create difficulty in their interpretation¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰⁹ When the meaning is not altogether clear, as in example 48 in 6.3.1.4 above, a literal interpretation gains priority over the idiomatic one; this finds substantiation in the psycholinguistic literature (see for example Gernsbacher and Robertson 1999).

In some cases, the changes that started out as one-off, innovative changes gain currency in the language and become institutionalised; that is, they are picked up and repeated by other language users, and as a result of this process they become part of the normal repertory of variation rather than an exception to the norm. This is especially true in politics, where colours have well-established meanings, as can be seen in the case studies below (6.3.4.1 and 6.3.4.2).

6.3.4.1 Clear blue water

The expression 'clear blue water' was coined by the British Conservative government of the 1990s. A typical example of this phrase is:

...it would also put clear blue water between Government and Opposition. (indy)

The most common verb is 'put' (8 occurrences, as opposed to 'open' (6), 'establish' (2), 'create' (2)), and in more than 50% of the occurrences the phrase is followed by 'between' and two opposing political parties. The text sources are invariably British. The variations that we find follow the basic schema set out by the extended unit of meaning, [to put]+[clear blue water]+[between]+[party X and party Y]:

58. One of the few remaining expanses of **clear pink water** between the two parties is New Labour's old commitment to introduce a minimum wage. (indy)
59. I have recently noticed the use of the phrase '**clear red water**' in relation to the Labour Party. (guard)
60. One aim is to put '**clear red water**' between Labour and the Conservatives in the public's mind. (indy)
61. Leading Article: **Clear yellow water** - Mr Ashdown's pitch is distinctive, but not exclusive (guard)

62. (i and ii) We are tickled by the Liberal Democrats' latest foray into the world of comedy. "Paddy Ashdown," reported the Times yesterday, "sought to put 'clear yellow water' between himself and the government at the start of the European election campaign # **Clear yellow water** - geddit? Marvellous. (guard)

With the exception of the two lines which comment on the use of the phrase itself (62i and 62ii), we can observe that there is recognition that the authors recognise that the phrase is to be followed by 'between' and the names of political parties. The greatest amount of variation occurs in the choices preceding the phrase, where we usually found a verb of positioning in the canonical form, but this variation, discussed in the previous section, is very basic and quite likely serves simply to avoid the use of overly formulaic phraseology. The various colour words found are predictable, with red and yellow referring to the Labour and the Liberal parties respectively; 'pink' with reference to New Labour is used throughout journalistic writing in the Bank of English to refer to the 'washed-out' nature of the socialism that the party represents. Example 58 thus stands in relation to examples 59 and 60 in much the same way as 'go purple in the face' does to 'go red in the face' (see 6.2.1.1).

6.3.4.2 Camicia nera

The recent political history of Italy is marked by the wearing of shirts – red or black depending on one's political allegiance. 'Camicia nera' (131 including plurals) occurs nearly four times as frequently as 'camicia rossa' (35 including plurals), however, suggesting that the former, with its relation to the Fascist past, has left more of a mark on the national psyche.

When the expressions 'camicia nera' and 'camicia rossa' are used, they can refer to the shirts itself, but it is more common for them to be used as metonyms for the shirt wearers and hence

we find that the plural forms of both expressions are common (accounting for just over one third of the total occurrences).

63. ...Giovanni Gentile, pur in un voluto e signorile riserbo lasciava liberissimi anche noi cattolici e antifascisti (mi doveva lasciar espellere per un gesto anti **camicia nera** ma mi riammetteva dopo pochi giorni). (STAMPAQuot)
64. Le nostre **camicie nere** sono i Tribunali che agiscono contro i reati di opinione (STAMPAQuot)
65. ...fu messo in atto un piano per far finire carcere altri due anarchici innocenti, accusati per l'assassinio di due **camicie nere**. (STAMPAQuot)
66. Zio Matteo era tornato a parlare dei Mille, delle **Camicie Rosse**, ma il piccolo non capiva. (NARRATRoma)
67. Ovunque attorno ai tavoli **camicie rosse** e urla e grida di evviva e di a morte. (NARRATVari)
68. L'avvenimento decisivo della lotta tra i due eserciti avviene nella battaglia finale in cui combattono le **camicie rosse** (compagnia del giardino di Botanica) che vogliono avere dalla squadra opposta il campo di via Paal. (NARRATVari)
69. Quando Enrico Berlinguer faceva sognare tutt'Italia, anche le mamme timorate di Dio, e i comunisti minacciavano il primato democristiano il Nostro si preparava a diventare uno degli astri che avrebbero illuminato la marcia trionfale delle **camicie rosse** lungo la terza via, in fondo alla quale nessuno ha mai scoperto che cosa ci fosse. (STAMPAPeri)

Shirt wearers are certainly not a thing of the past, however. Despite the fact that 'camicia nera' and 'camicia rossa' mainly occur in texts discussing history, a new development has emerged in the past few years:

70. Giura che non è lì che finirà tutta la Storia della Padania, delle **camicie verdi**, del Roma ladrona, il Nord non perdona. (STAMPAQuot)
71. Bossi sale sul Monviso e sogna la Scozia Solo trecento **camicie verdi** con il senatur che insiste: sulle riforme occorre trattare. (STAMPAQuot)
72. "Abbiamo deciso di batterci contro l'Italia" è l'ultimo grido di guerra di Bossi. E la tragica mascherata continua: con le **camicie verdi**, il governo padano, il parlamento di Mantova, con tanto di patetici ministri che giocano alla politica, e in più una corte suprema, che non si sa chi giudicherà. (NARRATVari)

CORIS in fact contains 84 occurrences of ‘camicia verde’ (singular and plural) – more than twice the number of occurrences of the well-established ‘camicia rossa’. Green in this political context has nothing to do with the environment; rather it appears in a context of political violence and hatred which has nothing whatsoever to do with the ‘Verdi’, and everything to do with the ‘Lega Nord’, who have adopted green as the colour of their ‘homeland’, Padania. The parallels between this extreme right-wing, xenophobic party and the Fascist black-shirts are hard to ignore, and it is therefore fitting that the green-shirt-wearing members of this party should be referred to in similar terms to their forebears. It is also probably for this reason that there is no confusion with the Green party, because the denomination ‘camicia —’ seems to be applicable only to extremist politics.

There are also a handful of occurrences of ‘camicia azzurra’ referring to the (blue-donning) extremist wing of Forza Italia, known as the ‘italoforzuti’:

73. Forza Italia copia i leghisti ACQUI TERME. Dopo le **camicie verdi**, le **camicie azzurre**; dopo la milizia padana, quella italoforzuta. (STAMPAQuot)
74. Spero che il ministro Napolitano tratti le **camicie azzurre** come ha trattato quelle **verdi**. (STAMPAQuot)

The relatively recent coinings shown in examples 70 – 74, are becoming more and more common: on frequency alone, we can see that the ‘camicie verdi’ are more than twice as pervasive than the ‘camicie rosse’, and the ‘camicie azzurre’ may well follow suit. The most important point to note regarding these new forms is that they follow the use of the original ‘camicia nera’ in terms of referring to extremist political groups who are especially famed for their violent and intolerant behaviour. The fact that the coloured shirts are also worn may

have given rise to the first use of the expressions, but for them to have gained such currency suggests an appropriateness of terminology that goes beyond the merely descriptive.

6.3.4.3 See red

A further example of colour-word variation invoking cultural knowledge is found in the expression ‘see red’, one of the most frequent colour word expressions present in the corpus (607 occurrences). Apart from the canonical form, which is discussed in the next section, this expression yields several alternant colour words in place of ‘red’:

75. REPUBLICANS **saw red, white and blue** at the Spring Hill Fair yesterday (oznews)
76. Jeans ads dropped after protesters **see blue** (guard)
77. UNITED FANS **SAW BLUE** # (brbooks)
78. Electors **see blue** over MP's ambulance dash (times)
79. FIRST WITH THE NEWS 6 13 7 WRIGHT J 9 **SEEING GREEN** 11 PIC OF BOB BROWN BEING MANHANDLED BY LOGGERS(oznews)
80. Hunched figures slurp yaki soba, using the disposable wooden chopsticks that make environmentalists **see green**. (econ)
81. ... Which gave Jensen licence, if that is the word, to commit another displeasing foul, again without **seeing yellow**. (brmags)
82. ...things have a way of balancing out, even if Arsenal **saw yellow** four times and Millwall two. (guard)
83. Martin Johnson also **saw yellow** after an assault on Gloucester's flanker Ian Smith (guard)
84. ...just outside the area and was lucky to **see yellow** rather than red. (times)
85. Fowler **saw** red, Cusani, Baldwin and Erskine **yellow**, the crowd bleakness on a golden afternoon. (guard)

As in other examples of variation observed up to this point, the colours that appear here in place of ‘red’ are easily accounted for with a glance at their context. As the canonical form ‘see red’ only has a figurative meaning (because ‘red’ is a qualitative term, not an entity), the

reader of these variations should be drawn to a figurative interpretation as a first resort. Yet this is not the case. The cotextual references to cultural phenomenon are impossible to miss, and thus the individual occurrences presented here manage to combine the innovative element with the established meaning of the canonical form. ‘Red, white and blue’ is the standard sequence in which we state the colours of flags containing these colours (as opposed to, e.g. ‘red and white and blue’ which has no such fixed referential meaning), and a Republican holds the flag and what it represents close to heart; we can surmise that in example 75 the anger aroused is caused by a constitutional issue.

The next three examples (76-8) substitute ‘red’ with ‘blue’ – the colour of denim, a substantial number of football teams’ strips, and the Conservative party and emergency service sirens respectively. In examples 76 and 77, the colour literally seen is indeed blue, and it is this colour, and what it represents in the given situational context, which causes the protesters’ and fans’ anger. Example 78 is a pun that operates on a more abstract level, as it is not necessary for a Conservative to wear blue to be associated with this colour; the ambulance siren, on the other hand, is indeed blue, thus fulfilling the necessary visual element for the pun to function effectively.

Examples 79 and 80 show us that angry environmentalists might well ‘see green’. There are a handful of other examples present in the corpus in which ‘see green’ refers to having a green (environmental) vision of the world, but none in which the intended meaning is envy. The examples quoted above are the only two to refer to anger, and do so for environmental reasons – the use of “disposable wooden chopsticks”, presumably as an alternative to eco-friendly reusable ones (example 80), and the context of situation of example 79 which involves loggers, who are forest workers and therefore have a metonymical connection with the colour green.

The remaining examples (81-85) demonstrate an interesting variant based on the dual meaning of 'see red' in football contexts (see 6.4.3.1). The 'yellow' of this variation is of course the yellow card, issued for minor on-pitch misdemeanours. The use of the expression refers not just to the card but also to a slightly milder form of anger than that described (and punished) by its counterpart 'see red'.

These variants once again demonstrate how the context of situation is brought into play in the creation of intentional puns. The reader is invited to make the connection and therefore appreciate the writer's workmanship in creating the compact, semantically loaded chunk. It is worth mentioning that there are no attested occurrences in the corpus of puns of this kind which do not make explicit reference to their context of situation. From this we can deduce that on the one hand, the possible range of meanings triggered by a colour word is too great for the intended meaning to be guaranteed, and on the other, there is no merit in creating a pun which has no grounding in its immediate context, again because its interpretation would almost certainly require too much interpretative effort on the part of the reading public.

6.4 Relexicalisation effects

The types of variation of colour words discussed until now are based on culturally-accepted connotative meanings rather than context-specific ones. In the above examples, it can be seen that the cotext aids in the disambiguation of the existing connotative meanings of polysemous colour words, ensuring that the most appropriate of these will be selected. But the cotext is not instrumental in creating that polysemy in the first place.

On occasion, the cotext does play a more important role, signalling meanings that are not normally present as well as disambiguating between existing polysemous senses. When this happens, the effect is to create what can properly be called puns. This section addresses some of the features that contribute to the creation of puns based on colour words. In 6.4.1, the focus is on the semantic interplay that occurs when additional colour words are found in the cotext of a colour-word expression. In such cases, a connection is activated between the connotative meanings of the various colour words, shifting the focus of the underlying canonical expression onto some contextually-relevant feature. 6.4.2 addresses puns which explicitly signal additional meanings through repetition, juxtaposition of fixed expressions or commentary, and which thus ensure that the intended meaning is interpreted correctly. Finally, 6.4.3 deals with matters regarding implicit knowledge and its role in the successful interpretation of puns.

6.4.1 Effects of cotextual proximity of two colour words

In 6.3.4.3, we encountered the example ‘make environmentalists see green’, the colour ‘green’ being used to refer back explicitly to the connection between the colour green and a concern for the environment. However, it is rather more common to see this same notion expressed by placing two colour words in close proximity. When colour words are present in the cotext of a colour-word expression, the effect is to favour a relexicalised interpretation of the canonical phrase in the light of the juxtaposition of the different colour words. The result is the creation of a contextually-motivated pun, for example ‘green sees red’ (example 86 below):

86. **Green sees red** over card GLADSTONE'S Green candidate Cedric Williams said

yesterday he was cheated out of votes by a `questionable" how-to-vote card infuriated Gladstone's National Party. (oznews)

This kind of contextual proximity for creative effect is to be differentiated from juxtapositions such as that in example 87, which do no more than contrast conventional expressions relating to the same semantic field:

87. Possono ancora essere convertiti in persone che **vedono rosa** al posto del **nero**, il bicchiere mezzo pieno anziché mezzo vuoto.(STAMPASupp)

The creation of a pun necessitates that the colours do not normally occur as alternants (such as 'vedere rosa' and 'vedere nero' in ex. 87), because this would only create contrast rather than new meaning. Compare example 87 with examples 88-90:

88. Colleagues **see red** when medics turns out to be **Black** (brmags)

89. IBM no longer **sees red** when called `**Big Blue**.'" (usnews)

90. Un danese dalla pelle nera e un **nero** dall'**anima bianca** (STAMPAQuot)

The combination of literal and figurative meanings of the colours in these examples triggers the reprocessing of the canonical form to include further connotative meanings. It is not a particularly sophisticated linguistic technique, but it does have the advantage of being transparent and eye-catching – two desirable characteristics of journalistic writing, the text type from which virtually all the examples of this kind of variation were found. More complicated linguistic devices are adopted in the types of examples discussed in 6.4.2 and 6.4.3.

6.4.2 *Explicitly-signalled meanings*

If we consider the use of colour-word metaphors and idioms, the evidence is that the colour word has to be seen to be contextually appropriate if it is to be selected by the writer at all. If it is not contextually appropriate there are two strategies that the speaker/writer resorts to. The first of these is to use a near-synonym that conveys more-or-less the same meaning. In doing so, the contextually inappropriate colour word is avoided, though the general sense of the expression can still be transmitted. This tends to happen in texts where puns and double-meanings are not being sought intentionally, or indeed where they are being deliberately avoided, as might be the case in, for example, academic or official writing. The second option is most prevalent in journalism, where quite the opposite stylistic effect is desired: the colour word expression can be adopted with the intention of generating double meanings. Puns are an excellent, effective way of catching the attention of a newspaper readership, and they are easily created by an apt choice of idiom whose canonical form includes words that are pertinent to the context.

In the examples that have just been discussed it has been seen that when key and other meaning-bearing parts of multi-word units are altered, the phrase, which in its canonical state is delexicalised, is forced to undergo a re-assessment of its meaning: a re-lexicalisation. This involves a complete re-processing of the language chunk which under normal circumstances would be interpreted as a single unit of meaning. But it is not actually necessary to change the canonical form in order to achieve this effect.

5.4 demonstrated the ways in which the context of situation, as expressed through the words in the context of the multi-word expression, supplies the reader with the necessary information

needed to process the intended meaning of the writer's pun. In this section we observe the ways in which the situational context alone makes us reinterpret the delexicalised phrase. In these cases, the context leads the reader to select one of the connotative meanings of the colour word (or other key-word of the phrase in question), whereas the canonical phrase would normally call upon another. These meanings can be literal or figurative, transparent or opaque, and can (and do) even include the juxtaposition of two idiomatic phrases. What results is a superimposition of meanings, each of which carries equal weight in contributing to the intended meaning of the pun. To illustrate this point, let us examine some of the examples that occur in the corpus.

91. <h> **Light fingered green fingers** </h> <p> Report by Tony Henderson <p> Light fingered - as well as green fingered - visitors are making off with valuable cuttings and plants from gardens which open to the public. (brmags)
92. **Caught painting town red-handed** By PETER HANSEN HIDDEN cameras planted on Brisbane suburban train stations have been silently capturing on videotape some of Brisbane's worst vandals, as well as a variety of thieves, graffiti artists and other criminals. (oznews)

'Light fingered green fingers' (ex. 91) is a headline that combines two idioms which have 'finger' in common. The extended context goes on to discuss both theft ('light fingered') and gardening ability ('green fingers'), so the combination of the two idioms is apt and easily decodable. Example 92 mixes 'painting the town red' with 'catch (someone) red handed'; again the article clarifies the mixed idiom, specifying the usual collocates of 'catch (someone) red handed' ('vandals...thieves, graffiti artists and other criminals' – see 5.2), and accounting for inclusion of 'paint the town red' – here intended in the literal sense of urban graffiti rather than the more common figurative sense 'having fun'.

This kind of juxtaposition of puns is rather unusual in that the meanings are explicitly

signalled by the repetition of the key words later in the immediate context. That both examples 91 and 92 are newspaper headlines comes as no surprise: headlines are a considerably rich source of idiomatic language and of puns (see especially Partington 1996: 122ff). They can present dense semantic chunks safe in the knowledge that the following article will clarify any ambiguities and fill in any gaps in the reader's knowledge which would otherwise prevent him or her from reaching a full understanding of the pun. However in the vast majority of the examples of dual meanings encountered in the data set, it is up to the reader to make the connection between the contextually appropriate meaning and the canonical expression, as is the case in the next two examples:

93. A fanatical Star Trek, Alien and Star Wars fan, Tim has a collection of space age memorabilia which would make most extra-terrestrials **green with envy** - if they weren't that colour already. (oznews)
94. Now is the time for Celtic to put matters right and stop **the air turning**, dare I say it, **blue** at Parkhead! It's time the Bhoys made the other side of Glasgow **green with envy!** (sunnaw)

In example 93 we are bombarded with contextual information that regards space – the films Star Trek, Alien and Star Wars, the expression 'space age', and then we are told that this collection of memorabilia 'would make most extra-terrestrials green with envy'. Our cultural assumption that Martians and other aliens are green lies at the core of the pun, and just in case there were any doubts, the author tells us 'if they weren't that colour already' in an aside. Why any extra-terrestrial might want Earthling sci-fi memorabilia at all, let alone go 'green with envy' at the thought, is not addressed by the pun whose intention is simply to juxtapose a green object which is related to the context with the idiomatic expression of envy.

Example 94 relies on the reader's ability to grasp the connection between 'the Bhoys' and the

colour green. It is not just the context of situation being written about that does this, but also the context of reading. That ‘the Bhoys’ is the popular name given to Glasgow Celtic FC is common knowledge within the article’s intended readership. The other ‘given’ knowledge is that Celtic plays in green, their city rivals Rangers play in blue (hence ‘stop the air turning... blue’) literally on ‘the other side of Glasgow’. All these elements combine together to support the pun: if Celtic were to win, Rangers would be envious and thus take on the physical colour of their greatest rivals, as well as swearing a great deal (‘turn the air blue’), causing great satisfaction on the part of Celtic’s fans. This contextual knowledge makes it a pun provided the context is understood along the lines explained here. If the reader fails to pick up on the double meanings, he or she misses out on the intended semantic density; when this happens, ‘green with envy’ is understood to mean envious and nothing else. We will come back to this point with regard to the translation of puns in Chapter 7.

6.4.3 Implicitly-signalled meaning

Moving a step further into the territory of double meaning, we find that the reader can be provided with no explicit signalling to aid interpretation, being expected to make the connection between habitual and intended meaning unaided. As a consequence the range of connotative meanings that can be called upon is necessarily reduced, because although the writer might like to show off his or her skills as a wordsmith, the ultimate aim of writing is to transmit information. If the information is too convoluted or can only be arrived at by means of a laborious series of abstract connections, there will be a serious risk that its transmission will fail. Some examples of implicitly-signalled meanings are presented in 6.4.3.1-3.

6.4.3.1 See red

‘See red’ occurs disproportionately in economics and business reporting, contexts in which it can simultaneously encompass two meanings of the idiom – the non-decomposable idiomatic sense of ‘anger’ and the decomposable, literal one of observing the red ink in which debits are notated in banking ledgers:

95. A CUSTOMER saw red when her bank said she was overdrawn - by £40 million.
(today)

96. INTEREST rate blues had the stock market seeing red yesterday as traders pondered Monday's surprise move. (today)

The expression also appears frequently in contexts relating to football, where a player has fouled and received a red card as a result. In true football style, rather than bowing out gracefully, we find that the perpetrators continue to vent their anger on other players (ex. 97) or on the referee (ex. 98), thus converting an earlier yellow card into a red one:

97. Tosh was booked for arguing the decision, then saw red when he continued his protests in the tunnel at the break. (sunnaw)

98. Booked earlier for dissent, he then delivered a volley of abuse at the referee after being awarded a foul and saw red. (indy)

This choice contrasts with ‘to be red carded’ (664) which involves no such double meaning. Whereas ‘see red’, meaning both ‘red card’ and ‘anger’, appears exclusively in football commentaries, ‘to be red carded’ is also used in the context of sports other than football.

99. Watford look doomed and their cause isn't being helped by new signings like Neil Cox who was red carded for swearing at a linesman. (sunnaw)

100. The first player to be red-carded under English rugby's new disciplinary system has escaped suspension and will be free to turn out in the Pilkington Cup (guard)

A further double-meaning that is constructed upon the idiom ‘see red’ is one that relates to the red of Communism. By metonymy this also refers to Communist (and even ex-Communist) countries, and their nationals:

101. <p> seeing red SIX years after Hungary embraced democracy, communist symbols and leaders have returned as kitsch, from decor for restaurants to tourist souvenirs. (oznews)
102. LONDON Monarchs were seeing red yesterday when they signed ex-USSR rugby international Oleg Sapega, the 24-year-old defensive lineman who played in the World League last year for the Raleigh-Durham Skyhawks. (today)

This particular contextualisation of ‘see red’ (illustrated in examples 101 and 102) is not only less frequent than the other types already discussed, but also declining (comparison of 329m word corpus used at the start of this research and the current 450m word corpus), probably because of the declining socio-political interest in Communism and, with the passing of time, the declining association of ex-Communist states to their past political affiliations. What all three of these genre-specific pun situations have in common however is their exploitation of the idiom in a context that activates a secondary meaning that would not normally be relevant. Not only is the context of situation spelled out explicitly, but each of the three types discussed also displays evidence of different cotextual features; these also differ from the general use of ‘see red’, especially in their lack of causative verbs such as ‘make’ (ex. 103), and concessives such as ‘just’ (ex. 104):

103. To hear some juniors moan later that Viv didn't do this or that for them, made me see red. (brbooks)
104. `I think John just saw red because the clamping has been going on for some time. (today)

In other words, the extended unit of meaning has undergone variation despite the fact that the central phrase remains in its canonical form. This is important to note, as it has been seen in previous sections that when the canonical form of the phrase is changed, the extended unit remains unaltered, as if it were acting to counterbalance the variation. Here the same process can be witnessed in reverse; whereas before the non-canonical form's meaning was sustained by the 'canonical' cotext, we now have the canonical phrase acting as a focal point which stabilises the 'non-canonical' cotext.

6.4.3.2 In the pink

The same basic procedure can be identified in all the variation of this kind found in the data. The canonical phrase is located in a non-canonical cotext in which the intended meaning is indicated either explicitly, as was the case in the examples in 5.2.1.1 above, or implicitly as is the case for 'see red'. These examples for 'in the pink' further illustrate how the conventional use of the phrase, meaning 'happy and healthy' (ex. 105 and 106) differs from the inventive examples shown (ex. 107, 108 and 109) in terms of their cotextual features:

105. Ferguson announced afterwards that most of his preferred cast for Turin were in the pink of health, and that Peter Schmeichel and Andy Cole should be fit on Wednesday. (guard)
106. This time, he is very much in the pink and operating at the peak of his powers. (indy)
107. Peter Tachell is the author of Europe in the Pink -- lesbian and gay equality in the new Europe (brmags)
108. ACTOR John Inman is in the pink as he and co-star Fleur Bennett begin work on a new series of Grace and Favour. (brmags)
109. A POSSE of fox-hunting ladies have got the lads jodh-purring with joy. By posing in the pink. The gallant gals, aged from 19 to 51, stripped off to whip up some cash for their country pursuit. (sunnaw)

The references to homosexuality (ex. 107 and 108) and nudity (ex. 109), both of which are

commonly associated with the colour pink, are signalled explicitly, but cultural knowledge is required to appreciate that example 108 is intended to be a pun, as it is otherwise typical in terms of form and context. In contrast, the typical pattern for ‘in the pink’ to describe people is violated by example 107, as it fails to state the factors that have contributed to being ‘in the pink’. ‘Posing’ in example 109 differs wildly from the semantic groups of the habitual verbs ‘put’ and ‘be’, and ‘in the pink’ is not the state being experienced (as is usual for the phrase) but rather the cause of the lads’ happiness.

The examples above demonstrate once more that the pragmatic use of the phrase’s canonical form is non-standard because the extended unit of meaning, despite the integrity of the core phrase, is non-canonical. This affects the meaning in that the unusual context makes us reassess the overall effect of the phraseological sequence the violation of the semantic prosody (Louw 1993) leads us to relexicalise the phrase, reading more into it than we would do if it were canonical.

6.4.3.3 Italian football team colours

A final mention should be made of the puns that Italian football journalism generates. In comparison to English, Italian offers a relatively small number of fixed phrases containing colour words¹¹⁰. Despite this, there is evidence to show that the same kinds of language creativity occur in Italian and, in common with the English data, journalism is the richest source of such inventiveness. Italian favours the use of colours to name its sports teams to a greater extent than English does, in turn providing an opportunity for creative language use

¹¹⁰ There are many collocates and compounds, but the kind of phraseological sequences involving colour words found in English are much rarer in Italian. This is a matter pertaining to this particular semantic set, and is not an absolute comment about Italian in comparison with English.

such as ex. 110:

110. Una vita in **technicolor**, una carriera tutta in **bianconero**. "Ho cominciato alla Juve a 16 anni, me ne sono andato a 32". (STAMPAQuot)

More common than this sort of juxtaposition is the use of a compound in place of a single basic colour, when that single colour is one of those contained in the compound (see ex. 111 - 114). This allows the canonical meaning of the original to refer specifically to the team in question without further explanation; such economy of language is especially useful for headlines and soundbites. Example 115 exploits a more sophisticated pun. It is the name of a TV show in the Lazio region which plays on the name of an existing TV serial, 'La Signora in Giallo'¹¹¹, converting 'giallo', with its connotations of crime investigation, into 'giallorosso' – Roma F.C. An awareness of the existence of the original TV show is essential if the pun is to be appreciated.

111. La soluzione della **crisi rossonera** è a portata di mano. (STAMPAQuot)
112. **CRISI ROSSONERA**/ Risposta polemica a Sacchi e Galliani. (STAMPAQuot)
113. L' Atalanta è la nostra **bestia nerazzurra** (EPHEMLette)
114. Gli è stato chiesto delle difficoltà incontrate nel calcio italiano in questo **periodo nerazzurro**, e Hodgson non ha mancato di offrire una risposta spiritosa. (STAMPAQuot)
115. Il meglio del calcio in tv? "Stimo molto alcuni programmi su reti minori del Lazio: "Gol di notte", "La signora in **giallorosso**". (STAMPAPeri)

The presence of compound colours in Italian opens up a possibility for language creativity that English cannot exploit to nearly the same degree. Although colours can also be used in English to refer to teams, their use is not nearly as widespread as it is in Italian. The team

¹¹¹ The same serial is known in the English-speaking world as 'Murder She Wrote'.

colours, characterised by single-word compounds such as ‘giallorosso’ or ‘bianconero’, cannot normally be used to describe colour combinations in other contexts¹¹². Thus when such a compound is used in place of a basic colour word, as in ex. 111 – 115 above, the expression automatically incorporates the denotative meaning of the team in addition to the figurative meaning of the phrase. This intentional semantic input contributes to the same kind of re-lexicalisation process that occurs in the other variants described in this section.

6.4.3.4 Commentary

It is in the kinds of puns analysed in this section that we finally start to see a connection between the use of colour words in language and the exploitation of their cultural connotations. Up to this point we have observed that the idiomaticity of fixed expressions contributes to a delexicalisation of the individual words that combine to give the phrase its meaning. Variation of the component words invites the reader to re-evaluate their ‘full-intuitive’ value, thus revitalising their imagery. When variation involves the substitution of a different colour word for the original, not only is it necessary for the reader to search his or her knowledge bank for meanings associated with the new colour word in order to find the one that the author appears to be alluding to, but the original (delexicalised) colour word is also positioned in a semantic set with other colours, thus undoing the effects that delexicalisation has had on the term. In this way new life is breathed into the faded and washed-out metaphor.

On the other hand, it has been observed that a pun can be created simply by locating an apt

¹¹² Compare ‘bianconero’, which collocates principally with ‘squadra’, ‘tifosi’, ‘maglia’, ‘società’, and ‘bianco e nero’, which collocates most frequently with ‘foto’, ‘immagine’, ‘film’.

idiomatic phrase in a context where the colour word (or other key word, for that matter) has polysemous value. The resulting change in the phrase's habitual cotextual setting triggers a response on the reader's part to find the semantic connection between the original phrase and the new meaning projected upon it by the author. Both of these types of punning are highly sophisticated linguistic devices, yet they are not ephemeral: their underlying mechanisms are identifiable through a detailed analysis of corpus data.

6.4.4 The effects of variation

This Chapter has dealt with the effects of variation on fixed expressions, not just in the sense of listing the types of variation that occur but, more importantly, explaining what the effects of these types of variations have on the transmission of meaning in authentic text. The importance of placing so much emphasis on the analysis of anomalous, variant forms of idiomatic expressions should be clarified. If we wish to understand what kind of relationship there is between a word's literal meaning and its connotative ones, we have to look at how the word is used. We assume that the connotative meanings will not be activated when the word is being used in its denotative, literal sense, and as a consequence we seek recourse in other areas of language. In the case of this research, the analysis of established idiomatic (intended in the widest sense) phrases containing a colour word was expected to yield insights into the manifestation of connotative meanings in language use; but in actual fact, the revelation has been quite the opposite. The results from the data sets provided by the Bank of English and CORIS show that these phrases do not stimulate additional semantic activity; rather they are delexicalised to such an extent that both the figurative meanings and the denotative meanings of the colour words remain inactive within the chunk as a whole. It has been thanks to the

analysis of variant forms that it has been possible to account for the use of connotative meanings in real text. It has been shown that connotative meanings can in fact be activated, and that their occurrence follows general schematic patterns which can be compared and contrasted with the patterns forming around their corresponding canonical forms.

The linguistic evidence seems to suggest that the relationship between the phraseological core and the ‘external’ phraseology – the ‘functionally complete unit of meaning’ (Tognini-Bonelli 2000) – involves a very delicate equilibrium which risks tipping over into a nearby semantic territory if too heavily weighted in one or other direction. In other words, if too much of the overall extended chunk deviates from the canonical form, the meaningful ‘chunk’ is likely to merge with another one which has a similar lexico-grammatical form, resulting in ambiguity and shifts in meaning. To illustrate this, let us observe an example from the corpus which sits somewhere in between the variant forms of ‘a red flag before a bull’, the American variant of ‘like a red rag to a bull’ and ‘be a red flag’ (warning sign):

116. What would be, if you'll excuse the expression, a red flag for you on this issue - if Mr. Khasbulatov assumes more power, if Mr. Ruskoi assumes more power? Is there something that you're waiting for? (npr)

If something ‘is a red flag’, it is usually a warning sign; if it ‘is a red flag for/to somebody’, it is usually a provocation. We also have an explicit reference to the Communist red flag, signalled by the overall context of the discourse and especially by the speaker’s apologetic use of the term ‘red flag’. In this example, which is the only one of this kind found in the data set which refuses classification into one meaning or another, the ‘red flag before a bull’ meaning is suggested by the words of the phrase itself, but the ‘be a red flag’ meaning is the one supported by the cotext. The extended context does nothing to clarify matters, and we are

left with a language chunk in limbo. This is a very rare occurrence in the corpus, suggesting that Chomskian notions of ‘performance error’ are responsible for this isolated example.

In normal circumstances, the relative fixity of a phrase is matched by the relative fixity of its cotext – the collocations, colligations, semantic preferences and prosodies. The more the phrase is varied, the more the cotext has to adhere to its most typical schema; and the more fixed the phrase, the more leeway there is for variation to the cotextual features: while the former is a fairly common occurrence in normal native speaker creativity, the latter is an intentional tactic used almost exclusively in journalistic writing to achieve special effects, and is relatively rare in the normal run of everyday language use.

6.5 Conclusions

It has been seen in both this and the preceding Chapter that language form and meaning are inextricably linked. Units of meaning appear to be selected not just for their internal wording but also because they each have their own distinct contextual and cotextual meanings which differentiate them from their near-synonyms (5.2). The units themselves, despite being known as ‘fixed expressions’ can and regularly do undergo variation to their form. These variations fall into a number of categories and range from those which alter the presentation of the lexico-grammatical structure of the phrase without compromising the meaning that it conveys, through a cline of semantic variability which ultimately peaks with a conscious effort on the writer’s part to combine different meanings into one single language chunk. In rare cases, the central phrase retains its canonical form but is located in an atypical cotext. This cotext is recognisably different from the normal cotext because it highlights a component part of the core phrase, thus generating double-takes, and in so doing reversing the delexicalisation

process to create superimposed meanings and puns. If in this final case the central phrase appears in any form other than its canonical one, there is great likelihood of it not being interpreted correctly or, conversely, of it being perceived as overly contrived. In either case, the author's intended meaning would properly not be understood and the communicative act would have failed.

As the focus of this study has been restricted to fixed phrases containing colour words, does a chance not remain that the research findings too are restricted to this particular area of language? The data would suggest not. It has been seen that the variation these multi-word units undergo is not limited to any particular element of that unit, for example the colour word. As a general rule, if variation occurs at all, it manifests itself across the board, often incorporating more than one of the general types outlined in the previous sections. For example, it is extremely unusual to come across a single example of any phrase which differs grammatically from the canonical version but otherwise demonstrates no change. Variations tend not to occur in isolation, but rather involve a combination of grammatico-syntactical and semantic changes (Philip 2000: 223). Some phrases contain elements which lend themselves better than others to creative exploitation, but ultimately the reasons governing invention are not internal to the phrase itself but part of the context of situation of the events being discussed, and the kinds of texts in which they appear – tabloid and sports journalism being an overwhelmingly rich source of creative invention and punning. What can be said is that because of the polysemous nature of colour words, they lend themselves very easily to the sort of *ad hoc* contextualisation that effective punning requires; and it is in inventive, unconventional language use such as punning that their connotative meanings are brought to the fore. Innovation reverses the delexicalisation of the canonical phrase by forcing the phraseological chunk to go through a process of decomposition and recomposition. This

relexicalisation allows the connotative meanings of the colour words to be activated, when in a delexicalised string they would remain latent¹¹³.

It has been seen that the Italian and English data demonstrate the same features both in their canonical forms and in the types of innovation and variation that have been found in the corpora. The next Chapter addresses issues regarding the translation of colour words in fixed expressions in Italian and English, focusing on the translation of conventional language as well as the more complex issues concerning the translation of innovative and variant forms of canonical expressions.

¹¹³ This semantic ‘latency’ is what Gernsbacher *et al.* interpret as the suppression of meaning (see 2.3.3). I argue that, rather than being *suppressed*, meanings are *latent*, only being activated in when the cotextual environment is favourable.

7 TRANSLATION EQUIVALENCE OF COLOURS IN CONTEXT

I am now lost in a welter of insuperable difficulties if I turn to translation without linguistics, to find out what becomes of all these meanings. I should probably manage something without bothering about theory perhaps, just going ahead and getting the main ideas, and with a lot of intuition and hunch, inspiration and even flashes of genius, creating in the target language something deriving from the source language. The bridge between the two could consist of ideas, ill-defined – perhaps just naked – without any form expressed or rather with the two forms expressed, one in the source language and the other in the target language, the translator being the creator of the bridge, without any working drawings whatever.
(Firth 1968: 85)

7.1 Introduction

The problem of translation as art or translation as theory has always puzzled linguists. The dichotomy rests on the distinction between the product, that is the translation as a work in its own right, and the processes which allow it to be created. If translation is classed as an art, then as Firth ironically puts it, it will be governed not by theory but by “intuition and hunch, inspiration and even flashes of genius”. These things are without doubt an essential part of the translation process, but they should not be allowed to drive it – not because they are intrinsically bad, but because they lack any notion of procedure. As such, the process is neither documentable nor replicable, and the practice takes on the guise of a talent rather than something that can be learned. Intuition is not a method; it is not systematic in the slightest. The potentially haphazard reliance on intuitions worries not only Firth, who asks what happens to “primary meaning, basic meaning, generic meaning, secondary meaning, transferred meaning and many others of the same sort” (1968: 85), but all linguists who base

their theories on data. The more we analyse data, the clearer it becomes that intuitions are systematically over-selective to the point of being blinkered. The only reasonable way forward, in the light of this knowledge, is by following a systematic procedure, and learning to doubt the validity of our intuitions.

In the previous four Chapters, we have seen the ways in which units of meaning are built up around metaphorical expressions in English and Italian. What is noticeable is that although the same kinds of connotative meanings are suggested by colour words in the two languages, the expressions that we encounter in one language are frequently without an equivalent – with or without a colour-word – in the other language. How should the translator proceed, then, in carrying the meaning of ‘cronaca rosa’ into English, or ‘like a red rag to a bull’ into Italian? This Chapter will look at different approaches to the translation process, with a view to arriving at real equivalence in the translation of colour words and the expressions they generate.

7.2 Translations and the translation process

7.2.1 Translation and the dictionary

In the search for a translation, the bilingual dictionary is usually the first port of call. However bilingual dictionaries are often less helpful than one might suppose. For any given headword, there are meaning subdivisions to guide the user towards the required word(s), but within any given sense division it is not uncommon for more than one possible equivalent to be provided, with no guidance as to when one will be more appropriate than another. The reason for this lies in a misconceived view of what a dictionary is for: translation is usually a decoding

procedure in which the source language (SL) of the text is the foreign language, and the target language (TL) is the native language. The native speaker knows in which context each of the suggested translations can be used, and is thus able to choose the most appropriate term from the selection offered¹¹⁴. When the translation is for encoding purposes, the user has no guidance because the presumed *a priori* linguistic knowledge in the foreign language is not held by the language user in this case, and more often than not the resulting translation is awkward and not native-like. Much the same principle of decoding governs native speaker monolingual dictionaries: headwords are explained by means of near synonyms which allow the reader to understand the meaning of the unfamiliar word that s/he has come across in print or in conversation, or some other context of use. Bilingual dictionaries offer little or no information on how the word is used, except for indications of register or domain in the case of words which are restricted in meaning and context¹¹⁵.

7.2.1.1 Figurative meaning in bilingual dictionaries

It is one thing to find translation equivalents for individual words, and quite another to translate phraseological chunks, because the longer the chunk the greater the likelihood is for there not to be a single, standard translation in use. A further problem lies in identifying what is literal and what is not, because figurative meanings also activate connotation and imagery which may be necessary to their context, and which therefore need to be taken into account. In the case of text translation, this can be done with no real difficulty, because there is a degree of flexibility allowed which means that it is not always necessary to adhere strictly to the original. When the translation is for a bilingual dictionary, however, problems do arise. If

¹¹⁴ See also Teubert 1999 on this point.

¹¹⁵ The new generation of monolingual English language learners' dictionaries are an exception to this rule, being based on corpus evidence and thus in a position to offer advice on usage, as well as examples. There are at present no monolingual Italian dictionaries which satisfactorily address this matter.

there is an equivalent expression it is given, and this happens quite frequently in English-Italian context because a lot of the linguistic and cultural norms from one language are paralleled in the other. For example, ‘to see red’ is ‘vedere (tutto) rosso’; ‘to have green fingers’ is ‘avere il pollice verde’, ‘blue blood’ is ‘sangue blu’. However there are far more cases where there is a mis-match of literal-figurative meanings, or with register or genre or domain, in which case the standard tactic is to provide a literal translation plus gloss, and to translate the figurative meaning if this makes sense in the TL:

1. **white elephant**, elefante bianco; (*fig.*) oggetto inutile e dispendioso, capriccio costoso¹¹⁶
2. **a red rag**, un cencio rosso; (*fig.*) una cosa irritante, una provocazione

If no equivalent figurative meaning exists in the TL, the SL expression is simply paraphrased:

3. **a purple passage (o a purple patch) in a book**, un passo elaborato (o ornato) in un libro

Or it is explained by means of a series of near-synonyms, monolingual dictionary-style:

4. **giallo**, (*romanzo, dramma o film poliziesco*) detective [novel, play, film]; mystery, whodunit (*fam.*)

By explaining the meaning, the translator can then choose an expression which transmits the same meaning in a way allowed by the TL. Yet this apparent transparency is misleading. As most dictionaries favour one language as decoder and the other as encoder, the two sides of the dictionary can be unbalanced. Ragazzini (1995), aimed at native speakers of Italian, uses

¹¹⁶ The translation examples in this subsection are all taken from Ragazzini (1995).

Italian as decoding language. This choice means that although a single word translates the Italian headword ‘giallo’ into English (ex. 4), an English speaker wishing to encode ‘a red rag’ in Italian would find the corresponding entry (ex. 2) of little or no use at all, as no translation equivalent is suggested. At the same time, the usefulness of the literal translation is doubtful, given that the literal meaning would certainly be searched for under the headword ‘rag’, not ‘red’.

From this overview, it can be seen that dictionaries tend to opt for literal equivalence and, where this is not possible, glossed explanations of meaning, rather than pragmatic equivalence. The rest of this Chapter will address alternative approaches to translation which prioritise the matching of expressions rather than the explanation of their meanings. Section 7.2.2 introduces the notion of the ‘unit of translation’ which forms the basis for the arguments presented in 7.3, where the use of corpora in translation theory and practice is examined. 7.4 takes the form of an extended case study in translation equivalence, demonstrating the application of the corpus-driven approach. Finally, figurative language, both conventional and unconventional, is addressed in 7.5, in a demonstration of how data-driven procedures can assist the translator in arriving at an appropriate translation of non-literal and even innovative language use.

7.2.2 Units of meaning and units of translation

Translation is concerned with meaning, rather than words¹¹⁷. As words combine to form ‘units

¹¹⁷ Although some theorists only accept this when faced with figurative language which cannot be translated literally – see Newmark 1981 on translation in general, and Viaggio’s 1992 critique of this; see also Newmark

of meaning' (Sinclair 1996; see also 2.4.2.2) it follows that the individual word cannot in itself be considered a unit of translation. For this reason therefore, excessive adherence to word forms when translating is a self-defeating exercise. Apart from running the risk of transcoding rather than translating (Viaggio 1992: 49), the translator seriously risks misrepresenting the original by translating word forms rather than sense.

The object of translation is to recreate the meaning of the SL in the TL, to engage in what Halliday terms "meaning-making activity" (1992: 15). Once the straitjacket created by the orthographical word has been removed, the meaning-making process involves the identification of units of meaning, and their contextually and co-textually appropriate re-lexicalisation in the TL. That the translator aims for appropriateness is of course essential if the resulting work is to achieve its communicative goal, but differences between context and cotext also need to be emphasised because they relate to two different aspects of meaning. Context is a huge variable which encompasses subject, genre, and culture, whereas cotext is variable within a more restricted area. The context has a general role, governing what is appropriate in real-life terms, the 'context of situation' (Firth 1957:177; see 2.4.1.1). Cotextual features, on the other hand, are responsible for most of the functional meaning conveyed in any given context, as has been observed in the preceding Chapters. The cotext rounds off and fills out the more easily-identifiable collocational meaning. But it is more volatile than context, and any deviation away from its self-imposed norm has potentially huge implications for its received sense (Louw 1996, 2000). If the TL wording is to mirror the intended sense of the SL original (even if the TL wording itself is light years away from the wording in the SL), the entirety of the unit of meaning – preference, prosody and all – must be

1980/1981 on translating metaphor (the only paper in his 1981 publication *not* to be criticised by Viaggio) in which he is forced to translate sense rather than words.

adequately accounted for.

The unit of meaning is not necessarily the same thing as the unit of translation. Although the unit of translation takes all aspects of the unit of meaning into account, it is defined by its *appropriateness* to the given linguistic and situational context even if the two correspond as units of meaning. Tognini Bonelli (1996: 199) stresses that although the main object of translation is to reproduce SL formal patterning by TL formal patterning through a process of identification of functional equivalence, there is a difference between the unit of meaning and the unit which is chosen for translation:

[I]t is important to understand that I am assuming a difference between a *unit of meaning*, whether in the source or in the target language, and a *unit of translation*: it is argued here that while the first is defined *contextually*, the second is defined mainly *strategically*.

(Tognini Bonelli 1996: 189)

The strategy being referred to here is the filling of the textual space with appropriate content – appropriate in terms of meaning in the most fundamental sense, where the cultural and linguistic realities of the TL are taken into account, in order to create an effect that is equivalent to that produced by the original (Tognini Bonelli 1996b: 189). This is not new to the practice of translation, but it is turned into a conscious choice when we accept that the unit of meaning is not simply a case of word co-occurrence but that it is restricted in its application by its concentric rings of colligation, semantic prosody and semantic preference. These are the factors that make the unit complete, and “only when functionally complete, a unit of meaning will be available as a possible choice to the translator” (Tognini Bonelli 2000: 75). As units of meaning are really monolingual units (because of cultural mismatches) the importance of adopting such a strategy – consciously or otherwise – takes on great importance in terms of

fidelity to the original text and integrity of its content.

The journey from theoretical ideals to practice and practicality is often a bumpy one. Theory by its very nature is ideal, but in practice such ideals often get left by the wayside; and we need to remember that translating is not a theoretical issue – it is a practical one. Baker (1992: 57) reminds us that “[a] certain amount of loss, addition, or skewing of meaning is often unavoidable in translation”. This is because translation is not simply to do with transferring elements of a source language text into the target language. The translator must be aware of, and make up for, the “displaced situationality” that translation presupposes (Viaggio 1992:33) by adopting a suitable translation strategy, for example by incorporating into the text anything pertinent to its overall understanding that might be implied but not stated, or indeed to eliminate over-elaborate and redundant information which is typical of the SL style but not of the TL. Thus the translator becomes not only a linguistic figure but, perhaps more importantly, a mediator between different linguistic realities.

7.3 Corpora in translation theory and practice

When it comes to translation, *pragmatic* knowledge of the language is vital if appropriateness, or even adequacy¹¹⁸, is to be arrived at. This kind of practical language knowledge is often unavailable or inadequate in print (in dictionaries and other reference works), and so it has traditionally been withheld from the translator. The patterns which determine meaning used to be available to the translator only in a very ephemeral sense, being thought of in the past as intuitive knowledge, existing in the minds of native speakers, and unobservable in scientific

¹¹⁸ Viaggio (1992: 31) emphasises the role of adequacy in translation, in that “being of a higher degree, it must prevail over accuracy”.

terms. Electronic language corpora have filled this information void. They can be used to provide instant knowledge both for the foreign language and for the mother tongue, allowing the translator to check his or her intuitions about the languages against the evidence they contain. In this way, equivalence can be arrived at via a 'data-assisted' process (Louw, 1997). Dictionaries show us the possibilities from which the item was selected, and the possible range of equivalent items in the TL, but corpora show us the larger picture, allowing us to understand for what purpose the SL item was chosen (the pragmatic meaning). The fact that this can be observed directly on a computer screen means that information regarding appropriateness at the most subtle of levels is available not only to the native speaker, but also to the non-native speaker who wishes to check the full meaning of an expression before attempting to render it in his/her own language.

As was mentioned in 3.3.1, the use of parallel corpora is extensive in translation studies, both as a practical tool and as a teaching and learning aid. The most prevalent application of parallel corpora is to compare units that have already been translated (see especially the TELRI Plato project¹¹⁹). A second method, as advocated by Baker (1995) is to compare the linguistic features of one language as SL and as TL. Clearly in this case the texts are not parallel, but *comparable*, and the aim is to identify and isolate unnatural features in a language which only occur when it is the TL, regardless of the SL. A third application of corpora in translation is the one adopted in this study, whereby comparable bilingual corpora are used to compare structures in one language with apparently equivalent structures in a second language to see if they are functionally as well as formally equivalent. It allows the user to try out different possibilities (such as several translations provided by a bilingual

¹¹⁹ <http://www.telri.bham.ac.uk/telri2/communication.html>

dictionary), and to then be in a position to make an informed choice when translating the expression. Needless to say, this is as useful to the language student as it is to the translator in that it opens a window onto native speaker norms which would be otherwise inaccessible and left unexplained.

7.3.1 Corpora in translation theory

If we go along with Halliday's assertion that language is choice (1992:15), then we have to view each unit of meaning in the SL as a choice that has been made (intentionally or otherwise): this choice stands in contrast to the other choices that could have been made but were not. In order to translate, then, the translator's task is to identify the equivalent paradigm of choices in the TL, and to use the most appropriate of these in the context. It is only in this way that the translator can effectively transfer the sense of the SL utterance into the TL. Such an operation can be carried out without a corpus – it is the “intuition and hunch, inspiration and even flashes of genius” that so perplexed Firth (1968: 85) – but the functionally complete unit of meaning was not documented before the advent of corpora and was indeed believed to be undocumentable. Now that these units can be identified without difficulty through the use of corpora, the translation process can become more transparent and systematic.

The case study illustrated here follows the principles of data-driven translation as expounded by Tognini Bonelli (1996, 2000, 2001). The aim of this kind of procedure is to determine what the features of a given ‘functionally complete unit of meaning’ are in the SL, and to identify a ‘comparable unit of meaning’ (1996: 184) in the TL. The basic principle is set out in Table 7.1.

COMPARABLE CORPUS (L1)	TRANSLATION CORPUS /TRANSLATOR'S EXPERIENCE SL/TL	COMPARABLE CORPUS (L2)
Step 1 From Formal Patterning/L1 to Function(s)/L1	Step 2 identify a <i>prima facie</i> translation equivalent for each Function ? Funtion/L2	Step 3 from Function/L2 (as realised by a translation equivalent) to Formal Patterning/L2

Table 7.1: The translation of units of meaning (Tognini Bonelli 2001: 135)

The aim of this kind of procedure is to determine what the features of a given ‘functionally complete unit of meaning’ are in the SL, and to identify a ‘comparable unit of meaning’ (1996: 184) in the TL. This is similar to the approach advocated by Viaggio (1992: 31), although corpora make the task if not easier, then certainly much more accurate. He describes the process thus:

[The] method is rather simple (not to be confused with easy): identification of the translator’s purpose, understanding of the SL text; inferring of sense (including any relevant formal features); re-expression of sense as a TL text (with as adequate a recreation of the relevant formal features as possible); collation of original and translation for semantic and stylistic adequacy

(Viaggio 1992: 31)

Tognini Bonelli’s corpus-driven procedure concentrates more explicitly on the formal realisation of meaning (in both languages) than Viaggio’s does. Furthermore, it recognises the inseparability of form and meaning, which is all too often neglected especially in pre-corpus translation theory. In the procedure outlined in Table 7.1, the formal patterning of the unit is correlated to a function via the identification of the semantic preference and the semantic prosody. It is this function, not its SL wording, that becomes the item to be translated. The

translator aims to bring out as many of the features of the SL unit in the TL as possible by selecting an appropriate wording in the TL which embodies the same set of concepts present in the SL. It is desirable, though not always possible, to arrive at absolute equivalence, and for this reason it is more correct to use the phrase ‘comparable unit of meaning’: the items are comparable in function, though not necessarily in form, and operate within a comparable context of situation. Translation relies on the concept of comparability (rather than equivalence as such) because it is a practical possibility, whereas equivalence is a theoretical ideal which only sometimes can be fulfilled.

This functional approach is long overdue in translation and bilingual lexicography in particular: Tognini-Bonelli’s call for the compilation of databases of translation webs (2001: 150-154) will greatly facilitate all sorts of bilingual work; but these are not yet in place, and will take time to build up. In the meantime, there is great need for ‘quick-fix solutions’ which do not require such in-depth analysis. This process is what I prefer to call *data-assisted translation*¹²⁰.

7.3.2 Corpora in translation practice

Expertise in the first language is a prerequisite in translating that is taken for granted. But even the most highly-competent native speaker is usually unable to consciously explain their choice of one expression over another. Exposure to corpus data highlights patterns that have been simply assimilated, and the phenomenon of what Louw calls “twenty-twenty hindsight”

¹²⁰ Although this approach is data-driven, I prefer to call it data-assisted. It is data-driven in terms of the linguistic analysis which is performed, but it is data-assisted in that it is an *aid* to the translator’s decision-making rather than a ready-made translation provider.

(1993: 173) is experienced by most. What happens, then, when the translator studies the SL text with a corpus, finds the functionally complete unit of meaning, understands it, and then puts it into TL wording? How can any of us be sure that the meaning is preserved?

Clearly this is where Tognini Bonelli's approach comes in, but I would argue that for all its benefits, it is restrictive in that it tends to work with paired *items*, not paired *paradigms*. Halliday mentions the fact that all language is choice (1992:15); choices which are restricted to the possible within any given situation. There is therefore a paradigm of possibles, from which one is chosen as being the most apt. The fact that our conscious intuitions are faulty suggests that we choose unconsciously, going about it by 'feels right' or 'sounds right' rather than any more objective approach. If we therefore wish to translate a functionally complete unit, preserving its (unconsciously) intended meaning, we have to assess that meaning in terms of the other members of its paradigm. Only then are we in a position to decide upon the most suitable way of translating the meaning, choosing from a comparable paradigm in the TL. In this way we can also make sense of Tognini Bonelli's assertion that "the absence of a pattern is considered potentially meaningful" (2000: 75).

Very often two expressions seem to be identical and interchangeable; the corpus data lets us look into the detailed mechanisms driving the different senses, to identify where the differences lie. A data-assisted approach (Louw 1997) puts emphasis on the corpus as *authority* rather than *dictator*, in that the translator's knowledge of the language is fine-tuned by the evidence rather than being wholly based upon it. The data supplements and in fact overrides the 'feels /sounds right' aspect of text creation, ensuring that the translation is

faithful to the original. It furthermore allows the translator to recreate any changes away from standard patternings that might have been created by the author of the original¹²¹.

The case study presented in the following subsection is a practical illustration of data-assisted translation. It will show how pragmatic function contributes to forming the extended unit of meaning, and will illustrate the advantage of working with translation paradigms rather than paired, isolated items.

7.4 Case study

The case study of ‘go red’/ ‘diventare rosso’ will illustrate Halliday’s (1992: 15) assertion that any theory of language must be based on a theory of *meaning as choice* if it is to be relevant to translation. His definition of choice as “(i) what is possible, and (ii) within what is possible, what is more and less likely” (ibid) is brought to the fore in this case study, where it can be shown that the author chooses a meaning from a range of possibilities, and therefore the translator must attempt to choose the equivalent meaning from an equivalent range of possibilities¹²². This final section shows how translations of units of meaning can be identified by simple search procedures in a corpus, making it possible for translators to build up translation databases with relative ease. It also resolves some of the disputes regarding translation that have been put forward in the past with regard to the translation of metaphorical and figurative language. By calling up instances of how the same pragmatic

¹²¹ If these ‘oddities’ can be detected and analysed in the SL, as Louw (1993, 1997, 2000) has demonstrated, it follows that they can be consciously replicated in the TL.

¹²² This, in practice, is a strategically-defined unit of translation (Tognini Bonelli 1996: 189): it is strategic because it is the conscious process of replicating the meaning choices made (consciously or otherwise) by the ST author.

meaning is habitually expressed in the two languages under study, it is shown how metaphorical expressions in the SL can be translated by following exactly the same procedures as those adopted for non-metaphorical language, thus rendering superfluous any claim that more elaborate and idealistic theories are required for this ‘special’ kind of language.

The phases ‘diventare rosso’ and ‘arrossire’ are used differently, but bilingual dictionaries tend to give the same set of translations for both. The expressions are two choices on a paradigm and recall the fact that when we are embarrassed or ashamed, or perhaps angry, we go red in the face. When a bilingual dictionary is consulted, the list of translations provided for any term are members of a paradigm; this is comparable to the paradigm from which the term belongs in the SL, and which can easily be retrieved by back-translating or by referring to a thesaurus. In the case of ‘diventare rosso’, paradigms retrieved for Italian and English are displayed in Table 7.2.

to become red
to blush
to flush
to go red
to redden
to turn red
↕ ↕ ↕ ↕
arrossare/si
arrossire/si
diventare rosso
farsi rosso (in viso/faccia)
far salire il sangue

Table 7.2: Go red/ diventare rosso paradigm

This paradigm constitutes the possible verbs from which ‘go red’ and ‘diventare rosso’ are chosen¹²³. If any one of these terms is to be translated accurately, the features that distinguish it from the other members of the paradigm it belongs to need to be identified and subsequently paired with the most closely-corresponding of the expressions in the comparable paradigm in the other language. This will be examined in detail in this extended case study.

7.4.1 Analysis of terms on the English paradigm

7.4.1.1 Become red

‘Become red’ (50¹²⁴) is the least frequent of the terms on the English paradigm. It collocates with body parts – ‘skin’ (12), ‘eye(s)’(9) and ‘face’ (3) especially – in 37 of its 50 occurrences. The remaining examples come from a mixture of categories, involving leaves changing colour (2), objects which become red through heating (2), expression of emotionally-induced redness (‘anger’, 1; ‘shame’, 1) and a handful of other, unrelated instances. The main use of this expression, therefore, is to describe body parts which become red; but this is not their only characteristic. They become red *and* ‘sore’ (6), ‘inflamed’ (5), ‘swollen’ (4), ‘blotchy’ (2), ‘hot’ (2), ‘angry’, ‘flaky’, ‘irritated’, ‘itchy’, ‘oversensitive’, or ‘raw’. It becomes clear from this information that we are dealing with the description of medical symptoms, and this gains further corroboration by the colligational feature of conditionality (13 instances), for example:

5. If your skin does not respond to better treatment and becomes red, sore or very scaly, consult your doctor as this may be an indication of eczema, psoriasis or ichthyosis.

¹²³ This is not an exhaustive list of every possible comparable expression, and avoids paraphrase; it corresponds to the full paradigm of translations found in Ragazzini 1995.

¹²⁴ The data examined here was gathered in July-August 2001 from the then c.400m-word BofE.

6. If something gets into your child's eye, it will become red, sore or itchy and will also be very painful.

The written description of symptoms are a common feature of texts giving medical advice, for example in magazines and newspaper supplements. In contrast with their spoken description (for example, a patient speaking to his/her doctor), where the symptoms are being experienced, their written expression favours a hypothetical view. Where no conditionality is present, we are dealing with the factual description of symptoms (16), and the expression of emotion through the face or eyes going red (8).

7. Soon the skin on her arm became red and angry.
8. My eyes would become red and inflamed, and used to hurt terribly.
9. In 1993, when his team told him he had to start rethinking his approach to the budget, he became red with anger.
10. "Now, look here, Joe Blaggett," Dad's face suddenly became red. Alec had never seen him look like that before.

The numbers of examples found for the different meanings identified for the verb 'go red' are really too few to posit semantic prosodies with any confidence. There is, however, an extra-linguistic function¹²⁵ identifiable in the description of medical symptoms. This features the distancing technique of hypothesis, suggesting that the underlying purpose is to give advice while pretending that it is for theoretical purposes only; that is, receiver of the advice is not the person who is affected and therefore does not need to take any action. This would need to be corroborated by further examples.

¹²⁵ This extra-linguistic function largely corresponds to Firth's (1950: 182) "effect of the verbal action". Whereas the semantic prosody is concerned with the utterance and its pragmatic meaning, the extra-linguistic function is concerned with the utterance as a communicative act and the effect that it has in terms of actions, services, and so on.

The other meanings do not display enough consistency in patterning at the collocational and colligational levels to confirm their status as units of meaning, though the characteristic that they all have in common is their almost clinical objectivity, and this in itself will be found to be meaningful when compared to the other terms to be described in this subsection.

expression	<i>become red (50)</i>
collocates	skin (12), eye(s) (9), face (3), scalp (2), ears, feet, fingers, knee red <i>and</i> sore (6), inflamed (5), swollen (4), blotchy (2), hot (2), angry, flaky, irritated, itchy, oversensitive, raw anger, shame
colligates	conditionals (13)
semantic preference	body parts, medical descriptions
semantic prosody	objective-neutral
extra-linguistic function	? advice for medical symptoms presented as hypotheses; distancing technique

Table 3.3: Become red: expressions, patterns and preferences

7.4.1.2 Blush

'Blush' (297) is a verb which creates a few surprises. It forms several fixed phrases, including 'to have the grace to blush' (9, seven of which in BR/US books subcorpora), 'blush to admit/recount/tell' (7), 'blush to recall/remember' (4), and 'blush at the thought/idea' (4):

11. To do him justice, Recht had the grace to blush as he spoke. (Brbooks)
12. `Well, you should be. If it wasn't for you I'd be married by now." Sylvia had the grace to blush. (Usbooks)
13. As I made solid earth, Kevin high-fived me. And, I blush to admit it, I may even have used the word `awesome". (Times)
14. I blush to admit it, but I quite liked driving the Freelander. You sort of feel vaguely enthroned behind the wheel. (Times)
15. Can't you remember any daft things you've done which you would blush to own up to? (Sun)

16. I remember wondering whether the pupils would stand up and fall silent when I entered. Now, I blush to recall my naivety. (Indy)
17. Thank goodness I have lost the article I wrote about <f> The Female Eunuch </f> I would blush to recall, I suspect, the tone of my shocked and <f> probably prissy dismissal of Greer's work (Brbooks)
18. ...but the day is approaching when leading footballers whose earnings can run into millions of pounds may possibly blush at the idea of seeking yet further rewards from supporters. (Times)
19. If our rulers had any modesty, they would blush at the idea of calling in foreign aid (Brbooks)

It is very clear from these examples alone that 'blush' is used in embarrassing or compromising situations, and not in anger. This is perfectly in line with the received meaning of the verb, but is still worth making explicit. This characteristic distinguishes 'blush' from the other verbs in the paradigm, which can all be used to describe any emotional state which causes the face to take on a red hue. Examples 11-19 illustrating the fixed phrases generated by 'blush' also display the colligational features typical to the use of the verb in other contexts. In fact although 'blush' has very few habitual collocations which do not contribute to the fixed phrases already mentioned, it has a very marked set of colligational patternings which set it apart from its near-synonyms. One pattern can be found in the high frequency – one in every six occurrences – of the first person pronoun 'I' (51), which occurs infrequently, if at all, in the contexts of the other terms in the paradigm. 'You' is also much more frequent here than it is elsewhere, counting 16 occurrences, most of which are impersonal rather than second person pronouns. The second colligational characteristic is with modal verbs (59), especially 'would' in second conditional constructions (34) as shown in examples 19 and 20-22 (below), although all the modals can be found in the data set. Apart from 'would', the use of should (8) and ought to (1) contribute to a picture that suggests that people are expected to blush, which will be discussed in due course. Finally, we can note a very strong colligation with causatives, namely 'make' (75) and 'cause' (5), usually functioning in conjunction with

modals in variants of the structure ‘something would make [even] somebody blush’, where ‘somebody’ is normally considered to be the archetypically worst offender of ‘something’:

20. But once inside you are whisked into a palace of kitsch that would make Austin Powers blush. (Times)
21. ...a flamboyant cast of characters paraded on and off the three-tiered stage in outfits which would have made Village People blush. (Indy)
22. ...like splashing out half-a-million quid on a do so garish that even Eastenders pub landlady Barbara Windsor would blush with embarrassment? (Sun)

Austin Powers, a spoof version of James Bond, is the ‘king of kitsch’, and if he would blush at the interior of the palace, it really must be kitsch in the extreme. The pop group Village People were active in the 1970’s, era of bad taste and clothing which was even worse. If the outfits worn by the cast would make them blush, again this is an indication of superlative flamboyancy. Similarly, the actress Barbara Windsor is not unfamiliar with garish outfits, especially in her role as a soap opera publican, and her hypothetical blushing once more serves to illustrate that the outfit in question is superlatively garish.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this verb is the counter intuitive fact that it is used not when people blush, but when people *do not* blush, and is often accompanied by a tangible sense of disapprobation. In fact, 26 of the concordance lines contain explicit negation of blushing, drawing parallels with expressions such as ‘somebody did not flinch’, in which one is expected to react in a certain way, but does not:

23. I will say nothing of the military class and the leaders in war, who do not blush to assert that their time has beheld the culmination and perfection of military art, (Usacad)
24. Velàzquez is of the new breed. They do not blush. He is the man of the future, the pioneer of the rancorous glorification of self. (Brbooks)

25. Later, she did not blush when she gushed: `Jan, you must be so clever." (Guard)

The author implies that a given situation or statement *should* make someone blush, out of modesty (ex. 26) or embarrassment (27), but fails to do so:

26. As a result, she owns a set of reviews that should make her blush, **but** does no such thing (did David Mamet approve of her Oleanna? Adored it, I think") (Times)

27. They are brazenly ethnocentric and racist. Such prejudice should make Romantic anthropologists and liberals blush. **But** so often they admire in primitive people what they abhor in their neighbors. (Usbooks)

Or it is suggested that others who are more ‘guilty’ than the accused *would* blush if they were to find themselves in the same situation, as we saw in examples 20-22. In both types of situation, however, we find that no blushing actually occurs, and the effect is one which carries with it the implication of a degree of impudence on the part of the guilty person.

expression	<i>blush</i> (297)
collocational patternings	‘have the grace to blush’ (9) ‘blush to admit/recount/tell’ (7); ‘blush to recall/remember’ (4) ‘blush at the thought/idea’ (4) ‘something would make [even] somebody blush’
colligates	first person pronouns (51) modal verbs (59) causatives (81) negation (26)
semantic preference	embarrassing or compromising situations
extra-linguistic function	admission of embarrassment/shame indignation at those who do not blush (i.e. show no shame)
semantic prosody	expected but not forthcoming; difficulty

Table 7.4: *Blush: expressions, patterns and preferences*

The only time that ‘blush’ is used when blushing actually occurs is when people use the first

person pronoun to admit that they blushed (ex. 13, 14, 16, 17 above), and when they do so they often make their embarrassment explicit with other verbal cues in the cotext, for example the damage limiting ‘even’ (ex 13) and ‘quite liked’ (14), which seek to downplay the reason for embarrassment. To sum up, although blushing is used when the emotion being expressed is embarrassment, never anger, it describes a state which is conspicuous by its absence – a state which is expected but rarely encountered.

7.4.1.3 Flush

Intransitive ‘flush’ (337) (as opposed to the transitive form which involves water being used to cleanse systems and cisterns) is much more commonly found as a past participle adjective than as a verb as such. Unlike its near-homophone ‘blush’, it does not appear to form fixed phrases or formulæ. As may be expected in the light of the patterns that we have seen so far, ‘flush’ collocates predominantly with body parts, especially ‘face’(49) and ‘cheeks’ (27); it also collocates with colour words (see also ‘turn red’, 7.4.1.6), and these serve to specify the shade that a person flushes – pink, red or purple. In most cases, the colour is described in some detail, so rather than finding that people ‘flush’ a simple ‘red’ (8), we find that they ‘flush bright red’, ‘crimson’, ‘puce’, ‘mottled maroon’, and even ‘blotchy albino pink’, to name but some of the remaining 37 examples. When the colour is not specified, the manner is, so it can be seen once more that ‘flush’ tends to require qualification rather than being capable of functioning as a standalone term. People flush ‘slightly’ (8), ‘angrily’ (5), ‘heavily’ (2), ‘hotly’ (2) ‘brightly’, ‘deeply’, ‘excitedly’, ‘noticeably’, ‘visibly’, and so on. The cause of the flushing is often specified as ‘embarrassment’ (7), ‘anger’ (6), ‘pleasure’ (5), ‘rage’ (3), ‘excitement’ (2), ‘apprehension’, ‘delight’, ‘envy’, ‘fury’, ‘mortification’ – which we will find are much the same as the remaining members of the paradigm (see 7.4.1.4-6). It is not uncommon for people to ‘feel themselves flush’ (15), suggesting that the action is

involuntary. Most pronouns are third person singular (around 120; compare with 14 occurrences of 'I').

The most interesting colligational feature associated with this verb is its co-occurrence with direct speech – in over 50% of the occurrences. The verbal action invariably causes flushing, usually from embarrassment or anger:

28. What's that got to do with me? Or the Blairs?" she added, flushing as she took in the implications of the Superintendent's words. (Brbooks)
29. `Get on well with your dad, do you?" <p> Taken off guard, Charlie flushed a dark red. `All right," he said gruffly. (Brbooks)
30. "...Dr. Brandon was giving vent to some strong feelings." Brandon flushed and looked embarrassed. (Usbooks)
31. Alex apologized, then, realizing what he'd said, flushed and apologized again. (Brbooks)

expression	<i>flush</i> (337)
collocates	face (49), cheeks (27) red (18); bright red (3), deep red, dark red, angry red, scarlet, crimson; pink (2), deep pink, complementing pink, painful pink, blotchy albino pink, gravadlax pink; purple (2), violet, puce, mottled maroon he/she (120); I (14) slightly (8), heavily (2), hotly (2) deeply, brightly, noticeably, visibly, again (6), once more, instantly, quickly, suddenly angrily (5), excitedly, embarrassment (7), anger (6), pleasure (5), rage (3), excitement (2), fury (2), apprehension, delight, envy, mortification, pride, rage
colligates	direct speech adverbs of degree; adverbs of frequency feel yourself flush (15)
semantic preference	face colours emotions
extra-linguistic function	actual occurrence of blushing (esp. in literature)
semantic prosody	involuntariness, uncontrollability

Table 7.5: *Flush: expressions, patterns and preferences*

In contrast, we do not find situationally-induced embarrassment or anger in the context of this verb.

People do not ‘blush’, but they certainly do ‘flush’, at least in literary contexts – only 48 of the 337 occurrences are not from either the British or the American books subcorpora. The adjectival form ‘flushed’ is more evenly distributed over text types.

7.4.1.4 Go red

‘Go red’ (108), in common with the other verbs being discussed here, collocates most frequently with ‘face’ (34), with it forms a fixed phrase – go red in the face (19) (see also 6.2.1.1):

32. <M02> <ZF1> And <ZF0> and then MX erm would lose his cool <M01> Mm. <M02> thump the table and go red in the face <M01> Mm. (Brspok)
33. If you see a young Taurean going red in the face, or indeed around the neck, prepare for trouble. (Brbooks)

In addition to ‘face’, ‘go red’ also collocates with ‘skin’ (4) and facial features (‘ears’ (3), ‘neck’ (2), ‘nose’, ‘eyes’). When these describe symptoms, it is usual for there to be further specification, along much the same lines as ‘become red’ (7.4.1.1):

34. I'm afraid the hot weather doesn't work for me. My skin goes red and blotchy and makes me feel self-conscious. (Brmags)

This pattern is proportionally much less frequent for ‘go red’, however (only 6 occurrences – 1 in 18 as opposed to 1 in 2 for ‘become red’). The same can be said for the pattern ‘red with

anger/rage/etc.’, which again is proportionally infrequent (only 2 occurrences). There are no passive verbal constructions, and causes of redness are rarely mentioned.

One further meaning which can be identified, and which appears to be unique to this verb, is to dye one’s hair red (4) (see ‘farsi rosso’, 7.4.2.4):

35. He was thinking of going red, but decided to rely on the salon's advice. (Times)
 36. I've got brown hair and I'd like to go red or auburn. I've never coloured my hair before - what do you recommend? (Brmags)

expression	<i>go red (108)</i>
collocates	“go red in the face” (19) “feel* her face/-self go red” (6) face (15), skin (4), ears (3), neck (2), nose, eyes salon, blonde, brown, auburn, hair
colligates	--
semantic preference	facial features
extra-linguistic function	Describing blushing from various causes, including anger (‘go red in the face’), in a fairly objective manner
semantic prosody	neutral

Table 6: Go red: expressions, patterns and preferences

‘Go red’ would appear to be used to describe redness, whether caused by emotion (the most frequent use) medical symptoms, or deliberate change of hair colour, but displays little if any evidence of attitudinal markers. It is the least semantically loaded of the six verbs on the paradigm under examination, and therefore the most ‘neutral’ choice for the author.

7.4.1.5 Redden

'Redden' (239), in common with 'flush', is far more frequently found in its adjectival function than its verbal one. When it does occur as a verb, we find that it has much in common with 'become red' in that it collocates principally with nouns which name body parts – 'face' (67), 'eyes' (43), 'skin' (37), 'cheeks' (18), 'hands' (9), 'nose' (7), and with the cause for the redness. These causes are prefaced with the passive 'by' (ex. 37-38) when this is an external force ('cold' (6), 'the sun' (2), 'lack of sleep', 'drink', and so on); when the cause is emotional ('anger' (2), 'embarrassment' (2), 'annoyance', 'rage', 'humiliation', 'effort', 'strain') this is introduced by 'with' (ex. 39-41):

37. ...his sandy hair was thinning, his formidable nose had been reddened by unaccustomed exposure to the California sun, (usbooks)
38. Come in, come in, cried the hacks, their eyes reddened by alcohol and malevolent glee. (indy)
39. Our father's face had reddened with rage and he began to sputter, a furious small man spattering us with his words, (usbooks)
40. Then her face reddened with anger. (usbooks)
41. There were tears on her eyelashes and the realization made her redden with humiliation. (brbooks)

'Redden' is overwhelmingly found in literature (174 – 108 Brbooks, 68 Usbooks), and this literary context contributes to its meaning, as we find that its collocating adverbs give information about its pragmatic meaning. People do not merely 'redden', they 'redden' in particular ways: 'slightly' (5), 'again' (3), 'angrily' (2), 'noticeably' (2), 'horribly'; and whereas 'become red' is usually further qualified by other symptoms, 'redden' restricts its collocations in this area to 'swelling'/'swollen' (10). Subjects of the verb are usually singular pronouns, including reflexives in the form 'feel oneself redden' (6); there is no significant difference between the frequency of masculine and feminine pronouns and proper names.

‘Redden’ is used to describe people who become red in the face through embarrassment, anger or effort, and the cause is usually specified to aid the reader in interpreting the intended emotion being described. When ‘redden’ refers to redness caused by external forces, these are always made explicit.

expression	<i>red</i> den (239)
collocates	‘feel --self redder’ (6) face (67), eyes (43), skin (37), cheeks (18), hands (9), nose (7), swelling/swollen (10) cold (6), the sun (2), lack of sleep, drink anger (2), embarrassment (2), annoyance, rage, humiliation, effort, strain slightly (5), further(4), again (3), angrily (2), noticeably (2), visibly (2), horribly, instantly, startlingly
colligates	passives + agent adverbs of degree
semantic preference	facial features
semantic prosody	objective-neutral
extra-linguistic function	embarrassment, anger or effort, and their causes symptoms and their causes

Table 7.7: Redden: expressions, patterns and preferences

7.4.1.6 Turn red

It would appear to be the case that embarrassment and anger are important to the content of literary plots, because ‘turn red’ (60 of the 225), like ‘flush’ (7.4.1.3), is highly concentrated in the British and American Books subcorpora. But here the similarity between the two terms ends, as we find in the normal run of things ‘turn red’ tends not to be used to talk about people. The exception to this is when the verb is followed by an explanatory prepositional phrase, prefaced by ‘from’(3) or ‘with’ (21):

42. As my skin turned red from the heat, I closed my eyes and wished for his death. I imagined it. Sometimes I would kill him. (Usbooks)
43. He acted the part with consummate skill, his child's face turning red with rage. (Usbooks)
44. `Even some of the team who have been in the job for years turned red with embarrassment." (Sun)

In these cases, the cause of redness is emotional – rage (7), embarrassment (3), shame (3), annoyance, fury, and so on; in example 33, the ‘heat’ mentioned in example 41 is not external (fire or sun, for example), but rather heat caused by rage.

The second important collocational feature of ‘turn red’, after ‘face’ (22) and emotion words, is ‘light’ (14), usually ‘traffic lights’ (6 and 7 respectively). This collocation is not only important in a situational context. It is also illustrative of the function of the verb ‘turn red’, because just as traffic lights change from red to amber to green – a *net* change of colour, not just a change in *gradation* of colour – so too do the vast majority of the verb’s subjects. ‘Leaves’ (3) change colour in the autumn, fruits and berries (including ‘rowan’, ‘mulberry’, ‘cherry’, ‘tomatoes’, ‘peppercorns’ and ‘peppers’) change colour when they ripen, crustaceans (‘lobster’ (2), ‘prawn’, ‘crayfish’) ‘turn red’ when cooked, and the metaphorical ‘red ink’ (2) in financial contexts contrasts with the more felicitous ‘black ink’:

45. Fresh chillies include the bright green serrano, which turns red as it ripens. (Times)
46. He remembers the excitement of receiving the air-freighted crates of live black lobsters (they turn red only on cooking). (Indy)
47. Last year, for the first time in three decades, we turned red ink into black," the President said at the budget's unveiling. (Guard)

Such examples account for 140 of the 225 occurrences of ‘turn red’. Colours which contrast with red are also present in the cotext (as illustrated in ex. 45-47): ‘green’ (17), ‘blue’ (14),

‘black’ (13), ‘orange’ (5), ‘pink’ (4), ‘purple’ (4)), again reinforcing the notion that this verb is used for distinct changes from one colour to another.

‘Turn red’ has a marked colligational preference for clause-final position and in nearly half of its occurrences it is followed either by a full stop (55) or comma (36), as well as favouring ‘and’ (39), ‘then’ (9) and ‘when’ (9) at N+1. This can occur because it is not usually necessary to specify further symptoms (unlike ‘become red’). The less frequent function of the verb in describing facial redness always indicates the cause (though this is not always made explicit in the immediate context). In the light of the more common function of ‘turn red’, we can posit the hypothesis that its use in describing emotional red-facedness is more emphatic than other expressions (because of the patterning of colour contrasts). This is corroborated by the lack of modification of ‘red’, which can be contrasted with ‘flush’ (above), which features modification as an important aspect of its patterning.

expression	<i>turn red</i> (225)
collocates	face (22) light (14), traffic lights (7). green (17), blue (14), black (13), orange (5), pink (4), purple (4) rage (7), embarrassment (3), shame (3), anger (2) annoyance, fury leaves (3), rowan, mulberry, cherry, tomatoes, peppercorns, chilli, peppers lobster (2), prawn, crayfish ink
colligates	prepositional phrase: ‘from’(3) ‘with’ (21) + emotion clause-final position; punctuation
semantic preference	basic colour terms flora
semantic prosody	objective-neutral
extra-linguistic function	distinct changes from one colour to another; contrast

Table 7.8: *Turn red: expressions, patterns and preferences*

7.4.1.7 Commentary

From the above analysis, it becomes quite clear that the near-synonyms are very well differentiated in their patternings, although some overlapping does occur. Native speaker confusion about the precise meanings of these terms almost certainly arises because different kinds of emotion produce the same outward sign – the face becoming red in colour – due to the rush of blood to the head, and this in turn leads to the use of all the above verbs to describe red faces. Only ‘blush’ favours one of the emotions to the total exclusion of the others (though we have seen that it more precisely refers to *not* blushing); in the other cases the place of redness is generally specified alongside its cause, thus eliminating the potential ambiguity existing in the decontextualised term. A difference is made, though, between redness caused by an emotional state, which is transient, and for which the cause is known, and that caused by external factors, especially in the description of medical symptoms. It would appear to be the case that topical redness (accompanied by swelling, soreness, and so on) is considered differently from ‘internal’ redness which is uncontrollable and involuntary but has a known cause. These two kinds of redness – internal and external – are more important to differentiate lexicographically than are the different causes for red faces.

7.4.2 Analysis of terms on the Italian paradigm

7.4.2.1 Arrossare/si

The verb ‘arrossare’ (80) occurs far less frequently than its past participle adjective, ‘arrossato’, which appears 653 times. Its reflexive form accounts for around half of the occurrences, and the remaining examples are transitive. The most important collocates are ‘pelle’ (18), ‘occhi/o’ (14), ‘viso’ (7), ‘guance’ (7), ‘mani’ (6), ‘faccia’ (3); parts of the body

that are habitually exposed rather than covered by clothing.

48. Hemingway inoltre era affetto da un eczema seborroico che gli arrossava le sopracciglia. (NARRATTrVa)

49. ...e osserva cosa accade: se entro 15 minuti la pelle si arrossa, si tratta di un'allergia (STAMPAPeri)

The degree of reddening described is usually slight ('leggermente' (2), 'lievemente', 'un pochino'), but occurs easily ('facilmente' (4), 'con facilità'), and is often accompanied by other symptoms such as swelling and itching ('gonfiore'(6), 'irritare' (2), 'prude' (2), prurito, bruciore (3)).

50. Se, invece, la vostra pelle è sensibile e si arrossa facilmente, dopo la doccia tamponatela con una salvietta su spugna morbida... (STAMPAPeri)

51. In certi periodi gli occhi si arrossano, prudono e talvolta le palpebre si gonfiano. (STAMPASupp)

52. La cute s'arrossa, compaiono papule più o meno rilevate, prurito intenso e senso di bruciore. (STAMPASupp)

expression	<i>arrossare/si (80)</i>
collocates	pelle (18), occhi/o (14), viso (7), guance (7), mani (6), faccia (3), collo (3), cute (2), cuoio cappelluto, naso, bocca, labbra gonfia/ore (6), irritare (2), prude (2), prurito, brucia/ore (3) sole (9), vento (2), freddo, aria aperta; lacrime (2), pianto, piangere; alcool, whisky, vino; sforzo; pudore; febbre leggermente (2), lievemente, un pochino facilmente (4), con facilità allergia (4)
colligates	reflexive pronouns (38) concrete nouns of the body (especially face – skin)
semantic preference	body parts, medical descriptions
semantic prosody	objective-neutral
extra-linguistic function	weather or allergies or effort make the body part red (and often inflamed or swollen); description of medical or clinical redness of face and hands

Table 7.9: *Arrossare/si: expressions, patterns and preferences*

The symptoms are caused by external factors such as ‘sole’ (9), ‘vento’ (2), ‘lacrime’ (2), ‘freddo’, etc. and are either caused directly by these things or by an allergy to them. At a first glance, then, ‘arrossare’ would seem to correspond to ‘become red’ on the English paradigm, and this will be confirmed below (7.4.3.1).

7.4.2.2 Arrossire/si

To the language learner, ‘arrossire’ and ‘arrossare’ appear to be very similar indeed, and even monolingual dictionary definitions do little to separate out the meanings. However the corpus evidence makes it clear that these two verbs operate quite independently of one another.

‘Arrossire’ is the only one of the Italian verbs which generates a series of fixed phrases (‘diventare rosso’ is associated with only one, and the others appear not to form any at all), including ‘arrossire fino alle radici dei capelli’ (5) (ex. 53-54), ‘arrossire all’idea/pensiero di...’ (8) (ex. 55-56):

53. Arrossì fino alla radice dei capelli, rivelando la bugia. (NARRATTRoma)

54. Non ho ancora finito di dirle tutto questo che è arrossita fino alle radici dei capelli.
(NARRATTrRo)

55. Lei non poteva dire nulla direttamente e lui arrossiva all’idea di rivolgere la parola a lei o a qualunque altra donna. (NARRATTrRo)

56. ...e il capitano Reeves sarebbe arrossito all’idea di lasciarsi guidare da un empirismo tanto primitivo. (NARRATTrRo)

We also find evidence of the formula ‘qualcosa farebbe arrossire qualcuno’ (5) which corresponds to ‘something would make [even] somebody blush’ (see 7.4.1.2):

57. ...per dichiarare la propria umiliazione di fronte a una "Bohème" che farebbe arrossire una cittadina abbandonata da Dio e dagli uomini". (STAMPAPeri)
58. ...ha detto una di quelle parole che dicono alla televisione, che farebbero arrossire un marinaio (ARRATRacc)

As with the English data, we find that something is considered to be so extreme that as to make the prototypically worst offender embarrassed – a version of Bohème which is so amoral that ‘a god-forsaken, abandoned town would blush’ (ex. 57), and ‘swearing that would make a sailor blush’ (ex. 58), which might be rendered more appropriately in English with ‘trooper’ rather than sailor. Apart from these fixed expressions, the infinitive form ‘arrossire’ collocates strongly with ‘senza’; one in ten occurrences follow the following pattern displayed in ex. 59-60:

59. alzi la mano chi può affermare il contrario senza arrossire. (STAMPAPeri)
60. ...denuncia senza arrossire le sue preoccupazioni in vista del match di stasera e avvisa i naviganti. (STAMPAQuot)

In addition to this, there are fourteen further examples of negativity, which again occur when redness is unexpectedly absent:

61. Essa si fermò. Pensavo che si sarebbe confusa, invece non arrossì né abbassò gli occhi. (NARRATTRoma)
62. L'altro, James O'Keefe, non era arrossito. "Ci hanno guardato il pisello", disse. (NARRATTrRo)

This lack of ‘arrossamento’ often triggers a sense of indignation because it is expected but not forthcoming, reminding us of ‘blush’ (7.4.1.2). This is expressed with equivalents of ‘even’ (‘persino’ (3), ‘neanche’, and so on), and a telling ‘ebbe la decenza di arrossire’. There is a difference with the English *prima facie* translation ‘blush’, though, in that around half of the

occurrences of ‘non arrossire’ appear in the company of ‘trying not’, or ‘managing not’ to:

63. Francesca cercò disperatamente quanto vanamente di non arrossire. (NARRATRoma)

64. Lui riuscì a non arrossire. (NARRATRoma)

65. Whitney spalancò gli occhi cercando di non arrossire. (NARRATro)

As with the other verbs discussed here, there are several (27) explicit indications of the cause of redness, usually ‘vergogna’(9), but also ‘imbarazzo’ (3), ‘piacere’ (2), ‘rabbia’ (2), and their near-synonyms:

66. Non mi piace guardare le foto di quand' ero ragazza. Al solo pensarci, arrossisco di vergogna. (NARRATRoma)

67. Vagamente ricordò che bastava un complimento per farla arrossire di piacere. (NARRATRoma)

68. Spino capisce l' equivoco che ha alimentato, lì per lì arrossisce d' imbarazzo, poi sente salirgli dentro una rabbia sorda... (NARRATRoma)

The causative structure ‘far arrossire qualcuno’ occurs 45 times in 150 occurrences of the infinitive, where people are most commonly the causative agent, and ‘sentirsi arrossire’, implying that the action is involuntary and undesired, occurs fifteen times (compare with ‘flush’, 7.4.1.3).

69. Sorrise. Ma non arrossì. Non c'è modo di far arrossire Carmen. (NARRATTrRo)

70. ...finse di crederci e questa sua improvvisa ed ostile condiscendenza mi fece arrossire. (NARRATRoma)

The remaining feature to be noted is the verb’s colligation with adverbs, especially those of degree (‘violentemente’ (19), ‘visibilmente’ (3), ‘intensamente’ (2), ‘lievemente’ (2)) and

frequency ('di colpo' (3), 'di nuovo' (2), 'ulteriormente' (2)), as well as four occurrences of the adverb 'facilmente'.

expression	<i>arrossire/si (653)</i>
collocates	violentemente (19), visibilmente (3), intensamente (2), lievemente (2), leggermente (2), profondamente, tantissimo, vistosamente, vivamente di colpo (3), di nuovo (2), ulteriormente (2), ancora di più, improvvisamente, nuovamente, subito, un'altra volta facilmente (4) vergogna (9), imbarazzo (3), piacere (2), rabbia (2), collera, istinto, sdegno, emozione, timidezza
collocational patternings	'arrossire fino alle radici dei capelli' (5), 'arrossire all'idea/pensiero di...' (8): 'qualcosa farebbe arrossire qualcuno' (5)
colligates	causatives (45) sentirsi arrossire (15) senza arrossire (15); negatives (14) adverbs of degree; adverbs of frequency
semantic preference	people emotions
semantic prosody	emotional difficulty; involuntary revealing of emotion
extra-linguistic function	sudden, not gradual, blushing; evidence of emotional reaction to a person or an event

Table 7.10: Arrossire: expressions, patterns and preferences

The indication is that the emotion is very strong when 'arrossire' is chosen to describe it, and that it is a sudden, not gradual, reddening that takes place, caused by a reaction to an external stimulus, usually a person or an event. There is no need to specify where the reddening occurs – face is tacitly understood.

7.4.2.3 Diventare rosso

'Diventare rosso' collocates most frequently with the prepositional phrase 'come un peperone' (8), and further information on the shade of red ('rosso fuoco', 'rosso vivo', 'rosso come papaveri', 'come un tacchino', 'come barbabietole'):

71. Aleksej si rende conto che l' uomo e il ragazzo lo stanno fissando e diventa rosso come un peperone. (NARRATTrRo)
72. Cominciai a sentirmi male. Terribile. Stavo diventando rossa come un peperone. (NARRATRoma)

People 'diventano rossi' in the face ('viso' (5), 'faccia' (2), 'volto' (2)); and sometimes their ears, eyes or hands go red ('orecchie' (3), 'occhi' (2), 'mani' (1)), though the location of redness does not necessarily have to be specified:

73. Forse le è venuto il batticuore o perlomeno sarà diventata rossa in viso dalla vergogna. (NARRATVari)
74. Lui sta rantolando. E, quando la morte si appollaia sulla sua testa, diventa rosso in volto, paonazzo. Successivamente diventa viola, cianotico. (NARRATRacc)
75. Renzo Calcaterra urla sempre di più e diventa rosso in faccia. (NARRATRoma)
76. ...mentre la punta delle orecchie gli diventava rossa nell' udire la propria voce sentita da tutti (NARRATTrRa)

The cause of redness, again not always stated, ranges from 'vergogna' (2) and 'imbarazzo', past 'orgoglio', to 'rabbia' and 'pianto':

77. ...viene portata in prima elementare e urla, scalcia, si divincola, diventa rossa di pianto. (NARRATRoma)
78. "...tu sei l' unico ad averlo notato. Gli altri sono ciechi. " Il ragazzo è diventato rosso per la vergogna, ma anche per la rabbia. (NARRATTrRa)

A second identifiable use of 'diventare rosso' occurs with lights – 'semaforo' (5) in particular, but also 'spia' and 'lampadina'. In all of these occurrences, the colour change is very marked and involves the shift from one hue to another, recalling a similar pattern in the cotext of 'turn red' (7.4.1.6).

79. Era un coniglietto, aveva dentro una lampadina e diventava rosso quando lo

accendevi. (NARRATTrRo)

80. Se però si consuma oltre 1 millimetro, la spia da gialla diventa rossa e la velocità sui rettilinei si riduce... (EPHEMIstru)

expression	<i>diventare rosso (126)</i>
collocates	“rosso come un peperone” (8) come barbabietole, papaveri, un tacchino, viso (5), faccia (2), volto (2); orecchie (3), occhi(2), mani (1) vergogna (2) imbarazzo, orgoglio, rabbia, pianto semaforo (5), spia, lampadina
colligates	prepositional phrases
semantic preference	specification of redness face and facial features lights and light-based signals
semantic prosody	emphatic but polarity-neutral
extra-linguistic function	emphasis of colour (bright) red

Table 7.11: Diventare rosso: expressions, patterns and preferences

In contrast with ‘arrossire’, there are virtually no adverbs of frequency or degree in the context of ‘diventare rosso’ – ‘di nuovo’ occurs only once, and it is the only adverb present. We can thus begin to make a general distinction between the terms discussed so far: whereas ‘arrossire’ specifies the manner and ‘arrossare’ the location of redness, ‘diventare rosso’ specifies the colour, whether of the face or of (traffic) lights.

7.4.2.4 Farsi rosso

This expression seems to be very rare in Italian¹²⁶. Because of the small number of examples, it is difficult to draw any conclusions about the behaviour of the verb. However, two of the four occurrences refer to dyeing one’s hair (as in go red, above), both of which, interestingly

¹²⁶ There are only 4 occurrences in the CORIS data.

enough, use the feminine inflection ‘rossa’.

81. Maria, in uno stato di totale confusione, si era fatta rossa e avrebbe voluto sprofondare per sottrarsi agli sguardi del pubblico (NARRATTrRoma)

82. Io facevo parte di loro. M'ero pure fatta rossa di capelli. (NARRATRacc)

The other two refer to red faces, from emotional causes, though it is difficult to ascertain whether the emotion being described is anger or embarrassment.

The cumulative patternings associated with repeated language use cannot be identified with so few examples, leaving us with very little information about the pragmatic function of ‘farsi rosso’.

expression	<i>farsi rosso (4)</i>
collocates	volto, viso capelli
colligates	---
semantic preference	---
semantic prosody	---
extra-linguistic function	---

Table 7.12: *Farsi rosso: expressions, patterns and preferences*

7.4.2.5 Far salire il sangue

There are only two occurrences of ‘far salire il sangue’ in CORIS, one of which specifies blood to the face ‘far salire il sangue in viso’, the other the height that the blood rises to:

83. ...l'uso del verbo piantare mi fece salire il sangue agli occhi. (NARRATTrRo)

This expression probably corresponds to ‘see red’ in English, though with no further examples it is impossible to be certain. Certainly we are dealing with provocation (“the use of the word dump” in ex. 83) which causes anger, but there are no repeated events to give us any clue as to the typicality of this meaning in context.

expression	<i>far salire il sangue (2)</i>
collocates	occhi, faccia
colligates	prepositional phrases
semantic preference	---
extra-linguistic function	---
semantic prosody	---

Table 7.13: Far salire il sangue: expressions, patterns and preferences

As with ‘farsi rosso’ above, there are far too few examples of this verb for it to be possible to make any useful statements about its behaviour and functional meaning.

7.4.3 Identification of translation

Now that the members of the paradigm have been profiled, it is possible to suggest best-fit correspondences between the two languages. This is brought about by means of a comparison of each of the components of the units of meaning – collocation, colligation, semantic preference, and pragmatic function/semantic prosody. It is unlikely that exact matches will be identifiable, simply because there is never any guarantee that exact matches do in fact exist, but a schematic description of the members of the paradigm, as shown in the summary tables on the previous pages, gives us the opportunity to match expressions as accurately as possible.

From a superficial perspective, all of the terms discussed in this section ‘mean the same thing’, and we have seen that their behavioural patterns overlap to some degree. But we have also been able to identify the salient features of each of the terms, the features that differentiate them from one another and which justify their co-existence. As Partington reminds us:

As nature abhors a vacuum, languages – or rather language users – continually differentiate between items which are potentially synonymous. In terms of communicative efficiency it is a waste to have more than one item meaning exactly the same thing.

(Partington 1998: 31)

The kind of analysis carried out in order to ‘profile’ the near-synonyms here has been done ‘manually’, but newer and more sophisticated retrieval software is now able to do much of this work automatically¹²⁷. This is clearly a boon to the translator and monolingual analyst alike, as the principal patterns are flagged up through statistical probabilities, showing the forms that could benefit from further detailed analysis.

In translation, the aim is to find the best-fit option, as absolute equivalence is a rare thing. In the terms treated above, we found a major division between emotional redness and external redness, the correspondence of fixed or semi-fixed phrases, and the and the presence or absence of distinct semantic prosody.

¹²⁷ CUE (Mason 1997) which has a ‘compute typicality’ feature; and the WASPS lexical profiling program (Kilgarriff and Tugwell 2000a, 2000b).

7.4.3.1 Become red, redden and arrossare/si

'Become red' and 'redden' are almost exclusively used to describe symptoms, as is 'arrossare/si'. None of these verbs combines to form fixed or semi-fixed phrases. All three terms count 'skin', 'face', 'eyes' and 'hands' amongst their most frequent collocates, and both combine redness with 'swelling', 'itching', and so on. The cause of the irritation is mainly exposure to the elements, but also involves drink. Only rarely are emotional factors cited (approximately 4% in both English terms, and even more rarely in Italian). At the pragmatic level, the verbs seem to correspond, and all three have a fairly neutral semantic prosody. The choice between 'become red' and 'arrossare' in translating 'arrossare/si' is determined by reflexivity: the reflexive 'arrossarsi' does not necessitate the specification of 'face' (which occurs only 3/50 times with 'become red', compared to 67/239 times with 'redden') or other body part, whereas 'arrossare' on the whole does.

7.4.3.2 Blush, flush and arrossire/si

The next pair of items which seem to have many characteristics in common is 'blush' and 'arrossire/si'. In fact, both of these verbs generate several fixed phrases which are remarkably similar both in wording and effect (see 7.4.1.2 and 7.4.2.2). Further to this collocational similarity, there is a marked colligational tendency for both terms to attract causative forms, conditionality and negation. However the tendency of 'arrossire/si' to colligate with adverbs of degree and frequency is not paralleled in the colligational features of 'blush'; rather it is a characteristic of 'flush', as indeed is the feature 'sentirsi arrossire', which also corresponds in terms of its relative frequency in the two languages. This separation of meanings occurs because of the pragmatic meaning of 'not blushing' which, although present in the profile of 'arrossire', is not nearly as all-pervasive.

7.4.3.3 Diventare rosso and its English equivalents

The third Italian term which yielded enough examples to be thoroughly analysed is ‘diventare rosso’, which has as its most important collocates ‘come un peperone’ – corresponding to ‘(be as) red as a beetroot’ (4.3.1.3) – and other colour expressions. This would make ‘flush’ the more appropriate translation, because it too favours specification of the shade of red. When the collocate is ‘semaforo’, or another kind of light, the English equivalent is ‘turn red’, as none of the other terms collocate with ‘traffic light’.

ENGLISH – ITALIAN	
become red	<i>arrossarsi</i>
redden	<i>arrossare</i>
blush	<i>arrossirsi</i>
have the grace to blush	<i>degnare di arrossire</i>
blush to admit/recount/tel	? <i>vergognarsi</i>
blush to recall/remember	? <i>vergognarsi</i>
blush at the thought/idea	<i>arrossire all’idea/pensiero di</i>
sth would make [even] sb blush	<i>qc farebbe arrossire [persino] qn</i>
flush + adverb	<i>arrossire + avverbio</i>
flush + colour	<i>diventare rosso + colore</i>
feel oneself flush + colour	<i>sentirsi arrossire + colore</i>
go red (+ hair)	<i>farsi rosso (+ capelli)</i>
go red in the face	<i>diventare rosso in viso; ?farsi rosso in viso/volto</i>
feel yourself/your face go red	<i>sentirsi arrossire</i>
turn red + [traffic] light	<i>diventare rosso + semaforo/luce/spia</i>

Table 7.14: Translation equivalences for the go red/arrossare paradigms

Many of the other collocations associated with colour change under ‘turn red’ will not be translated at all by red in Italian – especially plants (probably ‘maturare’): this semantic area

of ‘turn red’ would therefore need looking at in another translation paradigm. ‘Diventare rosso’ and ‘turn red’ also share the colligational feature of prepositional phrases which introduce the various causes of blushing in the different contexts. ‘Diventare rosso’ followed by ‘viso’, ‘faccia’, etc. fall under ‘go red’ (‘red in the face’), a translation also tentatively offered for ‘farsi rosso in viso’. Table 7.14 summarises the translations established through this analysis.

7.4.4 Commentary

Traditional methods of translation have generally appreciated the fact that networks of equivalence, rather than simple one-to-one equivalences, tend to be the norm. They differ considerably from the approach outlined in the case study above, however, in that they take for granted the notion of the ‘translation web’ (Tognini Bonelli 2001: 150-154), which implies a network which becomes more complex with every process of translation and back-translation. An example of a translation web can be seen in Table 7.15.

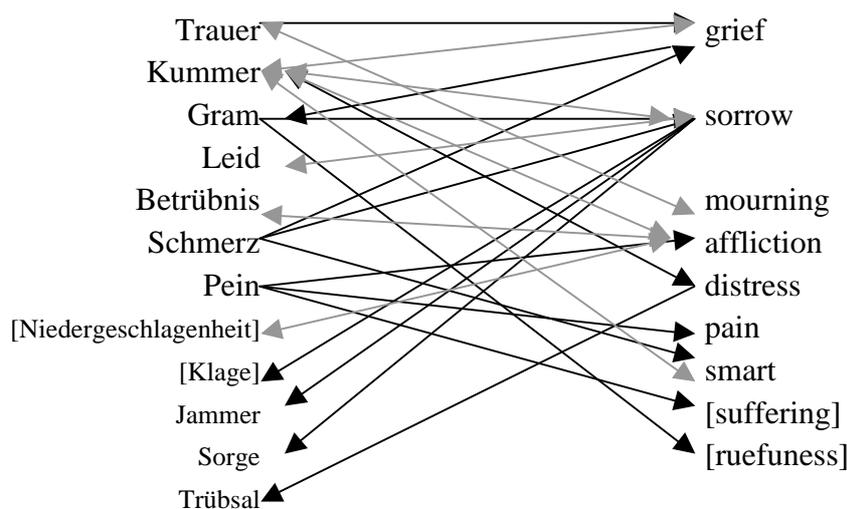


Table 7.15: Translation web (Váradi and Kiss 2001: 169 [after Teubert 1999])

This 'web' can be schematised in the following way:

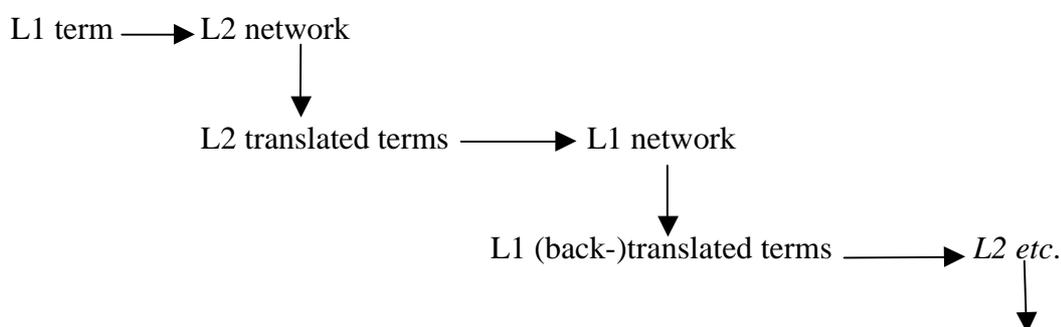


Table 7.16: Schema of translation web

The L1 term is considered to be a unit of translation, and its patternings are analysed, but not until the back translation stage are its near-synonyms – its fellow members in the paradigm – considered. In contrast, it is almost taken for granted that the L2 translation will depend on the particular sense to be translated, and consequently that the L2 translation will consist of more than one term.

If translation is considered from a paradigmatic viewpoint, this apparently infinite and ever-more complicated web is considerably less tangled. The translation – back-translation cycle, which becomes progressively more complicated, is prevented, avoiding the apparent non-equivalence which arises through back-translation which then necessitates the search for a 'better' translation.

The paradigmatic approach discussed in the previous section can be schematised as in Table 7.17.

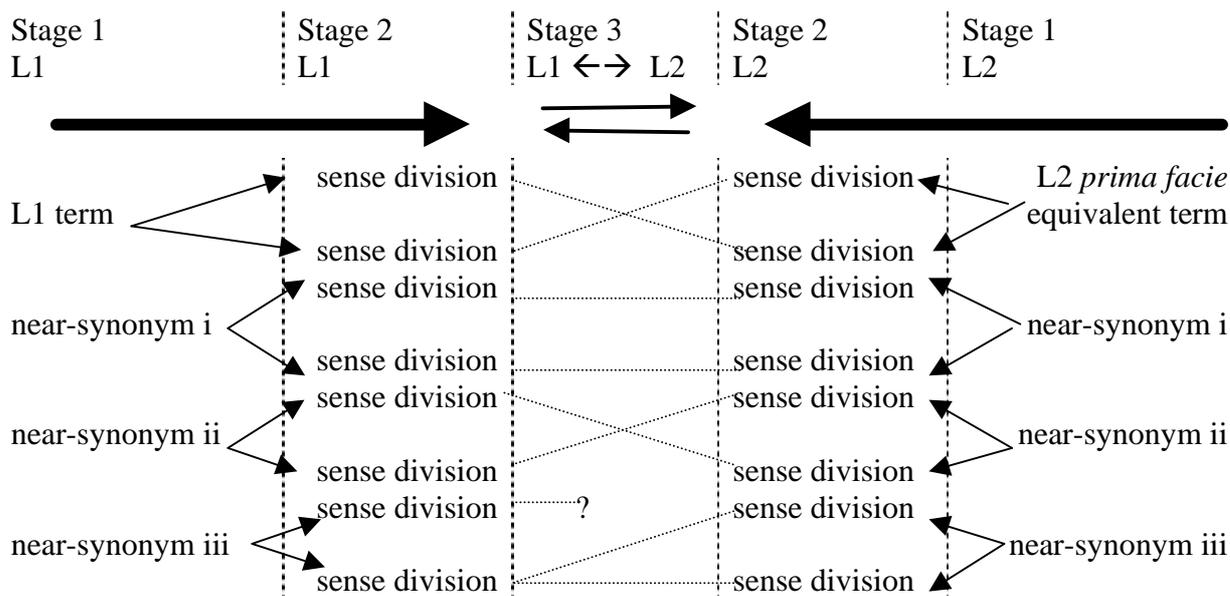


Table 7.17: Schema of paradigmatic approach to translation equivalence

In the diagram presented in Table 7.17, it can be seen that the two languages under consideration (here notated as L1 and L2) are not treated as SL and TL respectively, but as if both were SL. Giving equal priority to the two languages ensures that the analyses of the monolingual paradigm is always carried out in the detail that one would expect for the SL, rather than treating one language as being somehow more important than the other and therefore more worthy of detailed description.

The first stage is to identify a *prima facie* equivalent of the L1 term. The members of the paradigm to which the L1 term belongs are identified, as are those of the corresponding L2 term. Once identified, each term is broken down into its sense divisions and units of meaning. These are analysed in detail in order to identify their principal patternings – collocations and colligational features, phraseological constructions, semantic preference, contextual and situational features, and semantic prosody. Only after this detailed monolingual examination

has been carried out is it possible to match up terms, both in general (see the case of ‘arrossare’/ ‘arrossarsi’, 7.4.3.1, where the presence of reflexivity is the significant feature in determining the generic translations ‘redden’ and ‘become red’ respectively), and in particular, for example where phraseological or terminological constructions match (see ‘have the grace to blush’/ ‘degnare di arrossire’).

This type of translation essentially consists in the matching of prominent patternings in the two languages. There will inevitably be some patterns that appear to have no equivalent, either because another, related semantic paradigm is involved (see the case of ‘turn red’ with its hypothetical translation ‘maturare’ 7.4.3.3) or because no equivalent does in fact exist, perhaps for cultural reasons. In the case of the former possibility, the new, related paradigm is identified and treated in the same way as the first; in the case of the latter, the translator is likely to resort traditional remedies such as paraphrase, untranslated borrowing (perhaps with notes), or literal translation with gloss.

The paradigmatic model appears an unnecessarily time-consuming one at first glance, with its requirement for detailed analysis of members of a semantic set rather than of a single term. However, if the intention is not simply to find one translation but to compile some sort of translation database, it is clear that this approach is more comprehensive and, ultimately, quicker and potentially more accurate than other models¹²⁸. This occurs because of the detail paid to the semantic space of the L1 term right from the outset, and not at the later stage of back-translation. By opening up that semantic space to incorporate expressions with similar meaning (both in L1 and L2), the finer distinctions that traditionally only come to light after

¹²⁸ This is also true because it has great potential for partial or near-total automation, as existing lexical profiling tools already demonstrate.

the first translation – back-translation cycle has been completed are dealt with from the start. In this way, the messy, tangled web of translations can be avoided, and replaced by a more robust network of one-to-one correspondences that are not dependent on the notions of ‘encoding’ and ‘decoding’, or ‘source’ and ‘target’ languages.

In addition to the advantages already stated, the adoption of a paradigm in translation adds a further degree of consciousness to the translation process. The translator is able to enter into an awareness of the language choices made by the author, and thus not only find the most accurate translation, but also note the differences between this term and the others which could have been used, but were not. This notion takes on particular importance when the language being translated differs from the norm – either in extreme cases such as the translation of poetry, or in the day-to-day inventiveness that characterises normal language use (see especially Chapter 5). Peculiarities and deviations from the SL norm can be assessed in relation to that norm and replicated in the TL, in full consciousness rather than by mere instinct. This means that the translation can match the effect of the original, because the mechanisms governing the effect can be identified and reproduced. The next section the utility of paradigmatic awareness in translation is demonstrated with reference to figurative and innovative language.

7.5 Translating non-literal language

In theory, there should be no difference in approach to the translation of literal and figurative language; after all, text is usually composed of a mixture of the two, and it would be absurd to apply separate theories in different parts of the same text. For this reason, we should expect

that any theory of translation be valid for all types of language, and that it should not favour one kind of language over another. It has been argued, however, that particular translation problems are posed by living and revitalised metaphor (in contrast to dead metaphor, in which the images are disregarded) (Newmark 1980: 86). The crux of the issue here is that a word-for-word translation is not only inadequate when dealing with metaphor, but that it is also usually impossible, because secondary meanings of a SL word cannot be expected to correspond in the TL¹²⁹. If the words carrying the image of a metaphor cannot be translated in a way which preserves the image, the translator is posed with a problem (ibid: 93).

Newmark's theories have been influential but are not without their critics. Yet even Viaggio (1992), who is most outspoken against most of Newmark's approach to translation, has no negative comment to make about his special approach to the translation of metaphor. This is because it is the only part of Newmark's theory of translation in which servility towards words is abandoned in favour of a meaning-based approach to the text. However, we will see that its focus is too narrowly set on poetic metaphor to deal effectively with much everyday metaphor, such as that found in the corpus data examined, and that in practice this "special" theory for a "special" type of language is only necessary because his theory for "normal" language is adequate for its subject.

7.5.1 Translating conventional metaphor

We saw above (2.1) that Viaggio and Tognini Bonelli adopt very similar approaches to

¹²⁹ This may well seem somewhat obvious in the light of corpus research in which the identification of extended, functionally-complete units of meaning (as opposed to isolated words) leads us to establish corresponding units for translation, but outwith the field of corpus linguistics the concept of the unit of meaning cannot necessarily be taken for granted.

translation, and that as far as metaphor is concerned, neither feel the need to provide any addition to their standard approach. Newmark, on the other hand, provides us with seven procedures for translating what he calls “stock” (conventional) metaphor, from most to least desirable (see Table 7.18).

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) Reproducing the same image in the TL provided the image has comparable frequency and currency in the appropriate register.(2) Replacing the image in the SL with a standard TL image which does not clash with the TL culture(3) Translating the metaphor by simile, retaining the image(4) Translating the metaphor (or simile) by simile plus sense (or occasionally a metaphor plus sense)(5) Converting the metaphor into sense(6) Deleting the metaphor.(7) Reproducing the same metaphor, combined with sense |
|---|

Table 7.18: Newmark’s translation procedures (Newmark 1980: 88-91)

The first thing that strikes us in these considerations is a preoccupation with the image, but actual image that the SL metaphor might conjure up in the mind does not seem to be the kind of ‘image’ that Newmark is referring to. In practice, steps 1 and 2 involve the identification of a TL metaphor which has the same meaning, irrespective of the words used and the picture that they suggest in the mind’s eye¹³⁰. Steps 3 and 4 reduce the metaphor to comparison, under the pretext of interpreting it for the TL audience, irrespective of whether the SL audience are in a position to interpret it fully¹³¹. Step 5 resorts to demetaphorisation, and step

¹³⁰ Thus the metaphorical meaning of “two peas in a pod” translates as “due gocce d’acqua”.

¹³¹ As an example for both steps he takes a line from the libretto of Mozart’s *Marriage of Figaro*, whose text is of limited accessibility due to its style and cultural knowledge of its original intended audience: “La fenice è Dorabella”, translating it as “Dorabella is like the Pheonix of Arabia” (step 3) and “Dorabella is a model of faith, like the Phoenix of Arabia”. (Newmark 1981: 90). The association of phoenix and ‘model of faith’ is a matter of literary-cultural rather than national-cultural knowledge, and thus is as opaque in current Italian as it is in current English.

6 to elimination of the offending object, provided “the metaphor’s function is being fulfilled elsewhere in the text” (ibid: 91). Step 7 is a variation of step 4 but avoids the use of simile, and as such is more faithful to the original intention of the SL author. It is puzzling that Newmark should consider this step to be less desirable than deletion or demetaphorisation, but he does not justify the preferential order of steps which he advocates.

7.5.1.1 Verde di rabbia

If we want to test out Newmark’s procedures, it makes sense to apply them to real translation problems. The vast majority of the Italian data analysed in this study were examples of conventional metaphor, many of which have no existing pre-fabricated translation equivalents in English. ‘Verde di rabbia’ is a case in point. Although ‘green with rage’ rare in English, it belongs to the standard paradigm in Italian:

Italian	English
nero di rabbia (8)	<i>black</i> (not present)
rosso di rabbia (5)	red with anger (18)/ rage (28)
verde di rabbia (5)	green with anger (1)/ rage (2)
viola ¹³² di rabbia (not present)	purple with anger (1)/ rage (21)
bianco di rabbia (2)	white with anger (7)/ rage (9)
blu dalla rabbia (1)	<i>blue</i> (not present)
<i>rosa</i> (not present)	pink with anger (3)/ rage (2)
<i>paonazzo</i> (not present)	puce with anger (1)/ rage (2)

Table 7.19: Paradigm for [colore] di rabbia – [colour] with anger/rage

In addition to this, it should be remembered that it also belongs to the ‘verde di...’ paradigm:

¹³² Example provided by native speaker informants, though not attested in the corpus.

Italian	English
rabbia (5)	anger (1)
bile (1)	<i>bile</i> (not present)
<i>invidia</i> (2) ¹³³	envy (136), jealousy (4)
collera	<i>rage</i> (2) ¹³⁴ ,
paura (2)	<i>fear</i> (not present)
dolore	<i>pain</i> (not present)
<i>mal di mare</i> (not present)	seasickness (1)

Table 7.20: Paradigm for verde di [emozione]/ green with [emotion]

These considerations are important if we are to ascertain that the translation will have “comparable frequency and currency in the appropriate register”: the paradigm can tell us is what variation exists, what the prevailing norms are, and what the effect of this member of the paradigm is in relation to the others. As far as the ‘[colore] di rabbia’ paradigm is concerned, we can see that ‘verde’ has the same frequency as ‘rosso’, and that ‘nero’ is the most frequent choice: this suggests that these three colours are standard and unemphatic, unlike ‘bianco’ and ‘blu’ which only occur twice and once respectively. The second paradigm tells us that ‘verde’ is the most frequent collocates of ‘rabbia’, and the additional collocates ‘bile’ and ‘collera’ not only explain the relationship between the colour and the emotion, but also suggest what kind of anger – bitter and intense, rather than furious or wild.

We are now in a position to be able to work through Newmark’s procedures. We know that the image of the metaphor can be reproduced exactly because the colour is used in English, though it does not have comparable frequency and currency. The fact that ‘green’

¹³³ ‘Invidia’ occurs twice in the Italian data; both occurrences are in texts translated from the English, and for this reason have not been included in this paradigm.

¹³⁴ Both occurrences are enclosed in quotes, and refer to an album title.

overwhelmingly collocates with ‘envy’ in English is further evidence that it would be inappropriate to use ‘green’ to translate a normal use of ‘verde’, and so if currency is to be taken into account, we should choose a comparatively frequent term is does directly equivalent – perhaps purple, even though the colour being described is different, or we might choose not to use a colour at all and resort to the term ‘livid’, for example. The fact of the matter is that without context of use, without knowing more about how the expressions are used in both languages, we are not in a position to decide. This knowledge only comes through observation of the *function* of the expressions, and hence through a procedure along the lines described in 7.3.1.

7.5.1.2 Cronaca rosa

‘Cronaca rosa’ is another example of a problematic translation item. It has a paradigmatic counterpart in ‘cronaca nera’, but no such use of colours to define types of news story exists in English. At the level of image compatibility, too, there is a mismatch, because whereas ‘pink’ connotes romance and femininity, ‘rosa’ has a bit more of an edge in Italian, tending towards illicit love affairs. The image is thus incompatible at two levels – ‘pink’ is not used in the context of newspapers, and is softer than ‘rosa’. It cannot be reproduced nor replaced by an equivalent image, because none exists in English. There is no simile to create, especially as this is a kind of terminology, so we arrive at step 5 – conversion of metaphor to sense. There are two main equivalents supplied in Ragazzini (1995): ‘gossip column’ and ‘society news’. Again, without knowing about the context of use of these terms, as well as for ‘cronaca rosa’ itself, the translator is not in a position to choose either of the translations provided, nor to decide on another one altogether. The full meaning value of this phrase is to be found in a unit of translation which is larger than the lexical unit we are trying to translate, and it is for this reason that Newmark’s schema does not lead to successful translation.

The final point to be made at this stage is that the images that Newmark was so keen to preserve may not in fact exist: the systematic delexicalisation of conventional phrases – and we have seen that colour-word metaphors are no exception – asserts the dominance of pragmatic function over the perceived saliency of decontextualised utterances. We turn to consider the implications of this fact in 7.5.2.

7.5.2 Translating delexicalised language

We saw in the previous subsection that conventional, active metaphor is generally considered to have the function of enlivening text through the suggestion of imagery. However, corpus analysis is showing that although these images may exist, their importance is far inferior to that of the *function* to which the language expressing them is being put, and that the institutionalised meaning that the metaphor has acquired governs the selection of one particular metaphor over another. An example of this is found in ‘catch red-handed’ (5.2.1.1), where the colour red originally referred to blood. As a meaningful unit in current English, this expression is not used to talk about violent crime (murder in particular), which would cause the red hands, but rather about theft and illegal dealing in drugs and arms, which are not generally bloody activities. More importantly, perhaps, it is used when the crime is being committed, or about to be committed, but not as a *fait accompli*; so even if the crimes were bloody, the blood would not have appeared on the scene yet. If we take these facts of the term’s usage into account, we are forced to acknowledge that the metaphor’s imagery is incompatible with the events it is used to describe. By going one step further, acknowledging the theory of delexicalisation, we can dare to say that this incompatibility is not actually important. ‘Catch red-handed’ is not selected for its image but for its meaning – its pragmatic

function. Even though the metaphor is active and produces an image in a ‘full-intuitive’ context, when it is used in a communicative linguistic context, the function and pragmatic meaning override the imagery.

We thus arrive at a translation paradox, because the images that metaphors suggest are not visualised, the words we thought were based on connotative meanings do not in fact activate these meanings, and the denotative meanings themselves are reduced to a vestigial, delexicalised form. So what happens to the translation? Newmark’s considerations are shown not just to be insufficient in guiding us towards an appropriate translation, not only in that he disregards contextual appropriateness, but also in that he focuses on the wrong aspect of metaphor – the image rather than the function. The analysis of the function cannot be derived from the isolated form alone, and so it becomes necessary to study the context.

As the process of delexicalisation is observable in both Italian and English, it would make sense to translate a delexicalised word by another delexicalised word which in its “full-intuitive” sense would be equivalent. But we have to be sure that the ‘full-intuitive’ sense is indeed equivalent. This becomes especially true if we wish to avoid falling into the traps laid by false friends, which are plentiful given the common linguistic and cultural roots that English and Italian share. So although ‘to paint a black picture of something’ is ‘fare un quadro nero di qualcosa’ both in terms of the full meaning of the parts, and as a delexical unit, other apparently equivalent expressions are anything but. Equivalence both in wording and meaning is rare, even in closely related languages. We find that where the wording is the same the meaning is almost always different, and languages often make use of vastly different wordings to transmit the same meaning. What is metaphorical in one language may be literal in another, and even when metaphors are used in both languages, the chances are that

different vehicles will be used to carry the same topic, and this is the case even when languages share connotative meanings which would permit the same vehicle to be used.

7.5.2.1 Equivalence in wording and meaning

An example of a false friend can be found in the pair ‘white wedding’ /‘matrimonio bianco’. These expressions share the same symbolic use of the colour ‘white’ – as a symbol of purity and virginity, and use that colour in the same social context. Zingarelli, the first Italian corpus-based dictionary (Zingarelli, 2002: 3), defines ‘matrimonio’ thus:

matrimonio s.m. *I* Accordo tra un uomo e una donna stipulato alla presenza di un ufficiale dello stato civile o di un ministro di culto, con cui i soggetti contraenti si impegnano a instaurare e mantenere fra essi una comunanza di vita e d’interessi. [...] **2** Cerimonia nuziale

‘Matrimonio’ is the contractual and ceremonial part of the proceedings – ‘matrimonio civile’, ‘matrimonio religioso’ – whereas the other term which can be used to translate ‘wedding’, ‘nozze’, refers principally to the festivities surrounding it – ‘pranzo di nozze’, ‘viaggio di nozze’, ‘nozze d’oro’. Given this information, ‘matrimonio bianco’ would, at first glance, seem to correspond to ‘white wedding’, and divorced from any context of utterance, the full meaning of the phrases cannot be ascertained. It is only through use that the expressions take on meaning, and a glance at the concordance lines for ‘matrimonio bianco’ (6) and ‘white wedding’ (86, of which a random selection is reproduced in Table 7.21) makes it immediately clear that there are irreconcilable differences between the two terms:

Il suo è un	matrimonio bianco	: se tenta di avere rapporti, sente dolore.
Elena è sposata da un anno, ma il suo è un	matrimonio bianco	perché non ha mai avuto un rapporto completo.
E sono convinto che un	matrimonio bianco	Sia sempre un'esperienza drammatica.
Nell'unica espressione carnale del	matrimonio bianco	
e lui gridò: "Ma è un	matrimonio bianco	e si deve sciogliere, si scioglierà facilmente
finché il desiderio di un figlio non mette in crisi il	matrimonio bianco	.
Catherine, 30, has told friends she always dreamed of a	white wedding	in 100-seater Clyne Chapel
A pal said, 'Emma wants a big	white wedding	, a dream day.
Babs revealed she is now planning a 'big	white wedding	" in her birthplace
She was going to have a big	white wedding	With all the trimmings.
Almost every aspect of the traditional	white wedding	stems from the most ancient of customs
Deedee had a	white wedding	and two-point-five kids.

Table 7.21: Comparison of 'matrimonio bianco' and 'white wedding'

From the two sets of concordance lines, we can see a huge difference in the meaning: whereas the Italian specifies the state of marriage, the English refers to the wedding ceremony, which is more accurately rendered in Italian by 'sposarsi in bianco'. The English is characterised by the adjectives 'big' (14) and 'traditional' (11), and has as other significant collocates 'dress' (27), 'church' (11), and forms of the verb 'want' (11). The Italian, on the other hand, concentrates solely on the aspect of consummation of marriage – or more precisely, its non-consummation, specified by the collocate 'rapporto' [sessuale] (2), and by the strong negative prosody presented through the combined effect of the collocates 'dolore', 'esperienza drammatica', and 'crisi'. At the pragmatic level, a 'white wedding' is something that many people want, though a 'matrimonio in bianco' is quite the opposite; this semantic prosody takes us down from the symbolic level (the colour 'white' representing virginity) to the everyday reality of the term in describing real-life situations.

The non-equivalence of this pair provides irrefutable evidence in favour of Viaggio's caveat that "[t]he translator must never choose a ready equivalent because it is the 'same' word. It is not. EVER." (Viaggio 1992: 49, his emphasis). The translation mis-match is impossible to ignore, as it is immediately clear just how different the terms are. What may be more difficult is finding an equivalent when the most obvious one is shown to be widely off the mark, as is the case here. This is where the thesaurus, or more sophisticated sources of semantic equivalents such as Wordnet (Fellbaum [ed.] 1998) come in, providing possible synonyms which fill out the paradigms for each language, after which the matching process can be undertaken as in 7.4 above.

When the wording of a meaning changes dramatically between two languages, the translator's task is actually easier than when there is an intrusive SL candidate as illustrated above. This is

especially the case when the meaning is expressed idiomatically. Delexicalisation and idiomaticity are two sides of the same coin, but they are perceived differently – we accept easily that the meaning conveyed by an idiom does not amount to the sum of its parts, but find it more difficult to accept that ‘normal’ language operates more-or-less in the same way. If the translator were faced with ‘once in a blue moon’ (see Table 5.2), s/he would jump straight to the intended meaning without getting tripped up by the words used to verbalise it, because its formal patterning does not match its meaning. Its Italian translation, ‘ogni morte di papa’, is as idiomatic and figurative as the English, but more importantly, is used in the same contexts and transmits the same message. When the phrase is ‘settimana bianca’ or ‘fifa blu’, on the other hand, the words get in the way, making it difficult to separate the formal patterning from the function, although to a lesser degree than when a true false friend exists¹³⁵.

The fact of the matter is that delexicalisation is counter intuitive – it goes against what our intuition tells us – whereas idiomaticity is accepted without question. And yet

[T]he idea is not simply to reproduce the formal structures of the source text but also to give some thought, and sometimes priority, to how similar meanings and functions are typically expressed in the target language. (Baker 1993: 236).

How is ‘settimana bianca’ typically expressed in English? ‘Skiing week’, ‘skiing holiday’ or ‘ski break’ are all likely contenders, and it is for the corpus to inform us further on which would be most appropriate in the given context. Similarly ‘fifa blu’ is far more likely to be translated accurately with ‘fright of my/your life’, ‘scared out of my/your wits’ or ‘scared witless’ (and variations on this theme) than ‘blue funk’, which is offered as a possible

¹³⁵ This often results in ‘translationese’, where in the absence of a suitable term, or where it does not come immediately to mind, the translator calques a new one from the SL.

translation in Ragazzini 1995. The colour words here do not perform a special function which requires them to be translated at all costs – on the contrary, their meaning is better realised in other words in the TL.

Faithfulness to the SL text does not imply that transliterating is ever desirable. Newmark entirely misses the point when he asks “How glaring is a ‘glaring error’? *Offenbar, auffallend, grob* or *grell*?” (1981: 86). The question he should have asked is “how *erroneous* is a ‘glaring error’?”, in which case the ‘full intuitive’ meaning of the collocation (which he places under the heading of dead, but revitalised metaphors) would have been sidelined in favour of the delexicalised functional meaning. As Halliday tells us, “We become interested in the formal patterns only once we can assume that the semantic relations are in place”. (1992: 16). Formal appearances only become important in punning and other verbal humour, and this area of language deserves individual attention.

7.6 Translating relexicalised colours

We saw in Chapter 5 that most figurative language containing colour words is delexicalised. Because of the process of delexicalisation that fixed phrases undergo, a colour word does not have particular meaning-bearing importance to the overall canonical phrase. But when the colour word is changed or foregrounded, as is the case in puns, its behaviour changes too. The colour assumes its ‘full intuitive’ meaning, which includes all the connotative meanings that it might have. At the same time, the unexpected emphasis on the foregrounded colour word also forces the reader to take a closer look at the other components of the phrasal chunk, forcing a re-evaluation of the individual word meanings. The delexicalised whole thus undergoes a process of *relexicalisation* in which each word is given back at least some of the full-intuitive

meaning which was lost as a consequence of its combination with the other elements. When the phrase in question is figurative or metaphorical, a process of re-metaphorisation also occurs, along with the reactivation of imagery that this implies. What punning actually does, then, is to create an innovative metaphor out of a conventional one.

This return to imagery allows us a chance to reconsider Newmark's procedures (7.5.1), as he bases his translation steps on the assumption that metaphors are image-creating tools. His main concern as a translator is to reproduce the same image in the TL, with the proviso that it is of "comparable frequency and currency in the appropriate register" (Newmark 1980/1981: 88). Puns, however, only partially rely on imagery. Their effect lies principally in their wording, and here the function-function approach has to be modified to take into account the lexical realisation of the metaphor: if it is ignored, a substantial part of the overall meaning will be lost.

In the kinds of punning found in the data, the new colour has been specifically chosen by the author because of the connotative meanings that it conveys. When such an example has to be translated, the translator must identify several elements. The first of these is the canonical phrase on which the pun is based. In its canonical, delexical form, it will certainly have a (similarly delexicalised) translation equivalent, and this should be taken as the base for the translation. After this, the meanings being alluded to by the new element need to be ascertained, with regard to the cotext and situational context being described. Then the word(s) central to the creation of the pun have to be isolated and examined in turn, to see if they can be translated directly while still keeping both intended meanings, or if they need to be substituted or added to in order to produce the desired effect of the SL. Table 7.22 sets out the modified procedure for tackling the translation of puns and similar verbal creativity:

STEP 1 (a): supporting phrase	
formal patterning/1a ?	function/1a
function/1a ?	<i>prima facie</i>
function/2a	
function/2a ?	formal patterning/2a
STEP 1 (b) novel element(s)	
formal patterning/1b ?	function/1b
function/1b ?	<i>prima facie</i>
function/2b	
STEP 2	
formal patterning/2a + function/2b ?	<i>prima facie</i> patternings/2b
formal patterning/2a + <i>prima facie</i> patternings /2b ?	formal patterning/2

Table 7.22: Modified procedure for translating puns and word-play

This procedure involves an additional step to Tognini Bonelli's proposal (2001: 135), because the SL item first has to be split into its conventional and novel parts. These two parts are translated as if they were delexicalised, passing from SL form to function, then to a possible equivalent in the form of a *prima facie* translation, and from that to the formal patterning of the equivalent. The procedure for the supporting phrase is that for any normal unit of meaning; the procedural difference lies in the introduction of the word-play. The novel element will have more than one *prima facie* translation: being subservient to the formal patterning of the supporting phrase, it undergoes whatever modification is necessary for the supporting phrase to be able to fulfil the function of the SL original. The splitting of the phrase reflects the initial creation of the word-play from a fixed expression with subsequent modification to make the expression fit the context.

7.6.1 Three Italian puns and their translations

We have seen that in theory, word play can be translated well, though the dual importance of form and function complicates the process. It may be possible to translate the sense of the canonical expression and also that of the pun item, but not both at the same time; sometimes the images created from similar wordings in the SL and TL do not correspond, thus creating a problem before the pun element has even been taken into consideration. A further possibility is that the conventional metaphor at the base of the pun may have no equivalent in the TL. Newmark explains the problem thus:

[T]he best [original metaphors] often have not only complex but double meanings... the translator has the problem of polysemy or word-play and either chooses one of the senses or reproduces both and loses the word-play.

(1980: 93)

Is it really necessary to make a choice between meanings and word-play? It may sometimes be the case, but by focusing on the intended effect of the word-play, as well as form and meaning, a compromise can often be reached. We will discuss some real examples of punning to show how some of the problems in translating metaphorical language can be addressed.

7.6.1.1 Il giallo con tutte le soluzioni

The above phrase has been the publicity slogan for the Yellow Pages in Italy for the past few years. It is based on the conventional metaphor that a 'giallo' is a mystery, and that this particular mystery has all the answers. The Yellow Pages is a yellow book, but different from the prototypical 'libro giallo' which is a detective story, traditionally published with a yellow cover. The pun in this example is based on an untranslatable cultural norm, because the connection of yellow and crime is conventional in Italian but non-existent in English. The

result of this is that the metaphor cannot be translated by an English metaphor, and there is little point in creating a simile here because whereas in Italian, two conventional yellow books are being compared, the English would involve the comparison of a conventional to novel – the inverse procedure of most similes. There is no point paraphrasing the pun (step 5), because its purpose is as a slogan, and any alternative which involved explanation would be inappropriate in terms of its pragmatic function; nor can it be deleted, because it cannot be compensated for elsewhere.

If we were to ignore the pun, the translation would simply be ‘the mystery with all the answers’. But there is no connection between this slogan and the object that it is marketing. If the phrase were to be translated for informative purposes, the translation already suggested would be adequate, perhaps with a note to explain the meaning that has been lost, but if the translation is supposed to carry out the same pragmatic function, it would be inadequate. The pun is culture-specific to Italy and thus would not be used elsewhere – a completely different image and wording would be thought up by the marketing team to suit the audience, hence “good old Yellow Pages”, which is nearly as culturally incompatible in Italian as ‘il giallo...’ is in English.

7.6.1.2 Potrebbe dipendere dall’ iniezione di anticorpi bianconeri nel sangue viola

This sentence from the CORIS data is a sentence from a sports article in a quality newspaper. It is not a highly creative pun, but makes use of innovative metaphor to liven up the football report. It needs some explaining before the translation can be discussed. The ‘bianconeri’ are Juventus FC, and ‘viola’ is the Fiorentina FC; the colours refer to the teams’ shirts but are also the habitual names used when talking about the teams in sports journalism. In English, it is far less common to refer to a premier division team by its colours than it is in Italian, so we

have a translation problem from the outset, as the colours form the basis for the pun. The ‘injection of antibodies into someone’s blood’ is less problematic though, being a recognisable, conventional metaphor imported from the domain of medicine. This conventional metaphor provides the structure upon which the pun rests, and the colours make it more vivid. In this kind of creative language, the first stage of translation involves establishing an equivalent structure¹³⁶; once this is in place, the novel elements can be worked in.

The structure is translatable without too much effort, but working the creativity into the structure requires more effort. If we try to follow Newmark’s steps, we find that the use of colour words (and the images they create) to refer to the teams makes equivalent imagery difficult (and if possible, certainly less effective than the original), thus stages 1 and 2 are unsuitable. Translation by simile is unnecessary, because the image is accessible, so steps 3, 4 and 7 (see 7.5.2) should not be followed. Steps 5 and 6 effectively involve the elimination, but not the resolution, of the translation ‘problem’. So we find that the combination of conventional metaphor and imagery defeat the procedures laid down to tackle them. The pragmatic meaning of the structure leads us to maintain the medical terminology, but not the colours, as these do not have comparable meanings in English – even if colours were used to the same extent as they are in Italian, they would naturally refer to native teams (Newcastle United as black and white, for example), and not Italian ones. So in Firthian terms, the object of the translation is to identify the participants – the teams – and make sure that they can be recognised, as well as to state what their actions are: “It could depend on an injection of Juventus antibodies into Fiorentina’s blood.” This translation retains the meaning and

¹³⁶ As the structure here is a delexicalised metaphor, the procedure for translating it should be that described in 3.2

metaphoricity of the original while translating the colours into something that the English speaker can understand more readily.

7.6.1.3 Rosso di sera, nero in bilancia si spera

This example comes from the CORIS data, and is a one-off example based on the proverb ‘red sky at night, shepherd’s delight’¹³⁷. As with example 7.6.1.2 above, there is no problem of imagery in transporting the pun from Italian to English, because both the underlying proverb and the double meaning of red are current. The translator’s problem lies in the wording and meaning of the proverb in Italian which does not match that of the English, because the element of ‘hope’ (‘bel tempo si spera’) is not implied in ‘shepherd’s delight’¹³⁸, and because English specifies ‘red *sky*’, whereas the Italian does not. Newmark’s step 1 cannot be achieved because of the mismatches just described, and steps 2 to 7 are all inappropriate, just as they were in 3.3.1.2. So again we return to the functional approach, though bearing in mind that there is also a linguistic form that needs to be taken into account:

If an author achieves an æsthetic effect through his idiosyncratic use of language, the translator must definitely try and do the same. Now ‘the same’ is not merely aping the form, but achieving with it as close an effect as possible. (Viaggio 1992: 40)

The pun is based on the first half of a proverb, and we have seen that the English does not fit as far as the intended meaning is concerned. The Italian pun describes a bad financial situation which will hopefully get better. The equivalent meaning cannot be supplied by the English ‘red sky at night’, but a modification by rhyme can make it a possible contender, for

¹³⁷ The canonical phrase is ‘rosso di sera, bel tempo si spera; rosso di mattina, mal tempo s’avvicina’.

¹³⁸ The Italian expresses *hopes* for good weather the next day; the English ‘shepherds’ *know* there *will be* good weather. The difference is a matter of uncertainty vs. certainty.

example, the substitution of ‘delight’ with ‘plight’¹³⁹. A second solution would be to use the second half of the proverb – ‘red sky in the morning, shepherd’s warning’, where the warning suggests the uncertainty that was not present in ‘delight’. Two changes would have to be made for either expression to fit the context, both of which are extra elements in terms of the Italian: first of all, ‘shepherd’ should be changed to ‘banker’ or some other suitable occupation in the financial sector; secondly, ‘sky’ has to be either eliminated or substituted. The ideal solution would be to find an expression which rhymes with ‘sky’ to further locate the pun in the financial context, where such a term can be found. Failing this, a collocate involving red could be used for the same purpose. The point is that the formal patterning of the SL original has to be reflected in the TL because it is not merely a decoration but also the source of the main pieces of information to be transmitted. The TL choice has to offer the same kind of information (though not identical) in the same kind of wording in order to produce the same kind of effect. ‘Red ink at night, economist’s plight’ or ‘red ink in the morning, banker’s warning’ both make use of the SL proverb, where the pragmatic meaning is incorporated into the modified metaphor.

7.6.2 Commentary

Puns may well make up a tiny percentage of the language that is translated every day, but their peculiarity makes them a valid test-bed for any theory which purports to be relevant to translation in general. In contrast to other kinds of innovative metaphor, which are invented to make the reader ‘see’ a concept in a novel way, puns make use of existing expressions which suit the given context of situation, modifying them in part to create the novel element. Their

¹³⁹ Rhyming dictionaries can be used for this purpose, e.g. Fergusson 1985.

heavy reliance on verbal forms makes them very difficult to translate, because their function is largely determined by their lexical realisation, and not by semantics alone. Sometimes puns cannot be translated – this is the case with proper names which have been used because they rhyme with a part of the canonical phrase upon which the pun is based, for example ‘Tra i chiaroscuri del bianconero si intravede un *Baggio* di sole’ or ‘the critics who said he was crazy to buy the pub must be *Green-wich* with envy’, or ‘White lie-kea’. This kind of pun is usually found in newspaper headlines, and is related to the article that follows it; the translation should thus aim to fulfil the attention-grabbing function of the SL original, its precise lexicalisation being entirely subservient to this function. This is not a way to ‘get round’ the translation ‘problem’, but rather going about the creation of the TL text in a similar way as the SL was created, because headlines are coined after the article has been written, not the other way round. The aim, after all, is not to ‘transpose’ one text into another, but to generate a completely new one (Viaggio 1992: 40). When the pun is not linguistically and culturally limited, the best solution is to approach it as if it were delexicalised. This means that the function of the supporting phrase should be translated as if it were still in its delexicalised form, and the ‘relexicalised’ elements woven into the TL equivalent, in an effort to create as similar an effect as possible in the TL as the original would have had in the SL (see Table 7.21). So if the pun is a horrendously over-used cliché, for example, this element should be preserved wherever possible in the TL, and not eliminated, paraphrased or otherwise improved¹⁴⁰. In short, although puns pose particular problems in translation, there is no reason why they should be given special treatment: the additional step in the translation procedure outlined above lengthens the process but does not allow the atypical to drive the

¹⁴⁰ Newmark is not in agreement on this point, stating that the translator is entitled to eliminate cliché in order to show ‘his elegance, resourcefulness, ability to be brief, simple and clear, etc.’ (1980: 87) and that s/he should fix mixed metaphors (ibid: 94). It can be argued that this is the job of a copy editor, not a translator, although all too frequently these roles are one and the same.

general theory. When the pun cannot be expressed in a similar way to the original, for example, by using the same supporting phrase, its meaning can be conveyed in a different way without it being necessary to resort to paraphrase or elimination, both of which betray the author's intention and the text's message.

7.7 Conclusion: translating colour words in naturally-occurring language

The examples provided in this Chapter have illustrated the importance of contextual meaning and pragmatic function in translation. Colour words may well make up one of the most salient semantic categories in language, but they have been proven to be no more 'special' than the words they combine with in terms of the meaning they bestow on a phrase, despite their shared denotative and connotative meanings. This surprising discovery challenges our language intuitions at the deepest level. The examples that have served to illustrate the theory of delexicalisation since its initial proposal by Louw (1993) (see also Sinclair 1996) have involved neutral¹⁴¹ words, and this has left space for 'exceptions to the rule' to be posited with respect to specific semantic categories. The evidence of usage insofar as colour words are concerned is that highly salient terms undergo exactly the same kind of process as more neutral ones.

In terms of translation theory, this discovery is important and exemplary, because it weakens the argument in favour of exceptions to the rule. If salient words undergo delexicalisation when contextualised in naturally-occurring language (as opposed to their decontextualised citational forms), then this strengthens the case in favour of a functional approach, where the

¹⁴¹ 'Neutral' is intended to contrast with 'salient' – categories such as emotional words or colours (c.f. Dawkins and Farnham 1989: 386-7).

extended unit of meaning, and not the word, is taken to be the unit of translation. As Viaggio reminds us:

[T]he translator has to think in terms of functions. If it so happens that a ready equivalent performs the same function in that specific context (and situation), then that is the right choice; if it does not, then it is the wrong choice; it is that simple.

(Viaggio 1992: 49)

Simple it may be, but easy it is not, and instinctive even less. Salient terms interfere with the underlying meaning being expressed, and it is this interference which results in the battle between “full-intuitive” and functional meaning. But word strings, be they metaphorical, literal or delexical, semantically neutral or salient, serve only to fulfil an expressive function in a given context of situation. As Halliday explains, “If meaning is function in context... then equivalence of meaning is equivalence of function in context (1992: 16)”. Thus equivalence of form rarely corresponds to equivalence of meaning; and colour words are rarely translated by other colour words, even more rarely by the same colour word.

An approach to language which presupposes delexicalisation lends itself very well to the formulation of a general theory of translation. It forces the translator to focus his or her attention onto the intended meaning without getting sidetracked by the individual words used to express that meaning. It also suppresses the urge to separate language into literal and metaphorical by assuming that these categories are secondary to the expressions’ pragmatic function. In doing so, any need to develop special approaches which would allow metaphor and other figures of speech to be accommodated “on the side” is rendered superfluous: it is enough that they are approached just like any other expression, by an assessment of their function and the re-expression of this function in the TL.

Although translation still occupies the uncertain ground between art and science, it is paradoxically the scientific approach which allows the translator the most creative freedom. This freedom, traditionally ascribed to translation-as-art, is the result of a systematic, corpus-driven methodology: formal patterning has been forced to loosen its grip, allowing the translator to seek equivalence of meaning irrespective of the orthographic form it takes.

8 CONCLUSION

8.1 Summary and conclusions

As the preceding Chapters have provided regular commentaries and summaries, the purpose of this final Chapter is to summarise the main points and expand upon the findings and their implications. The main threads running through the Thesis are drawn together in this section, with further research and developments being discussed in 8.2 and applications in 8.3.

In Chapter 1, the meanings attributed to colour through the ages and the origins of those meanings were thoroughly examined. This served as preparation for the matching of linguistic expressions to particular connotative meanings – the same matchings that form the bread-and-butter of dictionary definitions for the expressions themselves. It was seen that connotations are overwhelmingly metonymical in motivation, and rarely symbolic or arbitrary, and so these meanings are mainly transparent. It was also shown that the passage of time has done little to alter the semantic associations attributed to colour words, and that the watered-down popular psychology found in magazine articles and web pages perpetuates even those meanings which are no longer culturally significant. It was demonstrated that the connotative colour meanings are not universal: different cultures attribute different semantic values to colours, just as they vary in the number of basic colour terms that they recognise, and disparities can be found even in related cultures such as English and Italian. Finally, synaesthesia research has given great support to the notion that cultural colour associations are learned, not innate, and that even non-connotative (synaesthetic) colour associations vary from one individual to another.

The second part of the literature review, in Chapter 2, concerned itself with literal and non-literal language. Here, the problems which arise when language is pigeon-holed into neat 'literal' and 'figurative' divisions were demonstrated, concluding with the observation that there is in fact a cline ranging from purely denotative word-meaning at one extreme to idiosyncratic, novel, metaphorical meaning at the other. This cline can be subdivided into fuzzy sets, but resists division into clearly-defined classes. The second part of this Chapter addressed matters of comprehension, illustrated by experiments carried out in psycholinguistics research. Such studies attempt to assess the ways in which the received meaning of figurative language is interpreted and processed, and are especially concerned with compositional and non-compositional, as well as literal or non-literal, interpretations of phraseological chunks. The main theoretical stances were compared and contrasted, leading to the conclusion that conventional expressions tend to be interpreted non-compositionally, whereas novel utterances tend to undergo compositional processing. The chapter concluded with a neo-Firthian overview of phraseological analysis, in which the fundamental importance of observing and analysing language in context was introduced.

The various theories of non-literal language processing discussed in this Chapter all stem from the use of invented language examples in experimental conditions. This kind of data stands in marked contrast to that which forms the object of study in neo-Firthian linguistics, in which naturally-occurring texts are analysed. The contrasting theories of language which emerge from psycholinguists and theoretical linguists on one side, and text-based linguists on the other, arise as a direct result of the contrasting language data that is consulted: research which focuses on the striking and unusual is likely to obtain results that are only pertinent to that particular type of language; research which focuses on the mass of repeated events is likely to be able to make revealing statements about habitual language use. The analysis of

naturally-occurring language data has given rise to the theory of delexicalisation of phraseological chunks: a theory which stands in opposition to the purported importance of salience and compositional analysis.

The contrast between arguments in favour of salience and those in favour of delexicalisation presented in this Chapter underpins this study. Delexicalisation supports the notion that the meanings of conventional figurative expressions are non-compositional and learned, just as individual word meanings are learned. However when a figurative expression is not conventional – for example, when it is inventive or innovative or obsolete – its meaning has to be processed compositionally, with attention to its ‘full-intuitive citational meaning’; in other words, salient meanings gain the upper hand. Thus the traditional divisions of language into literal and non-literal (or figurative) are almost certainly misguided, the real division lying on the conventional/ innovative cline. Truly innovative figurative expressions are opaque and compositional, and thus reliant on salient meanings in order to be interpreted. An innovative expression can, through repetition, gain currency in a language, eventually to the point where it becomes a conventional utterance. And it has been shown¹⁴² that, once learned, figurative expressions do not appear to behave any differently from conventional literal expressions.

While theoretical linguists lament the lack of ‘typical’ examples to be found in corpus data; corpus linguistics has challenged the reliability of native speakers in accounting for their use of language. Theoretical linguistics focuses on salient features of the language, and relies on decontextualised and invented examples; corpus linguistics, on the other hand, focuses on repeated language events in naturally-occurring data. Given this gulf, it is hardly surprising

¹⁴² See Titone and Connine 1999.

that such different objects of study – the one-off, ‘typical’, decontextualised salient example, and the repeated, conventional, contextualised non-salient example – have resulted in the formulation of such different statements about the ‘facts of language’. If the two types of data are combined, an attempt can be made at reconciling the apparently conflicting beliefs regarding figurative meaning.

Simply using general language corpora is not in itself a methodological statement: there are several issues regarding the treatment of the data that have to be taken into consideration. Chapter 3 introduced the data and methodology adopted in this study, concentrating on the ways of accessing and processing the data, as well as its analysis at the hands of data-based and data-driven corpus linguists. The stance adopted in this research was data-driven – an unusual choice for figurative language studies – and it is thanks to this unconventional approach that such unexpected findings were discovered. The information regarding connotative meanings presented in Chapter 4 bears witness to this statement: deprived of context and confined to canonical form, the connotative meanings of colours in colour-word expressions can only be understood in terms of their etymological origins.

Chapter 4 showed that there seems to be a relationship between the frequency of occurrence of colour words and their ‘primacy’, as determined by Berlin and Kay’s (1969) study, and emphasised the role played by prototypicality in the linguistic use of colour words. The theoretical treatment of the linguistic expressions containing colour words in this Chapter was seen to give priority to salient, ‘full-intuitive’ meanings. While this made it possible to state the relationship between colour words in linguistic expressions and their metaphorical and connotative meanings, it was unable to provide any insight whatsoever regarding meaning *in rebus* – what semantic value those same linguistic expressions carry when used as part of a

communicative act in some context of situation. This lacuna was filled by the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 5 introduced the hitherto-neglected role of context in the study of the colour-word phrases and formulæ. It was seen here how contextual features support and define the meaning of a central phraseological core by building up extended units of meaning, in precisely the same way as such units form around single words and simple collocations. By contrasting colour-word expressions with near-synonyms sharing features of lexical realisation, it transpired that the apparently compositional figurative expressions were in fact delexicalised. It was demonstrated that the choice of one expression over a nearly-synonymous one is largely determined by the situational context in which it is to be used, as can be ascertained by the regularity of patterning in the cotext surrounding the phraseological cores of the expressions examined: in short, when the requirements of the extended unit of meaning are fulfilled, the 'choice' of the phraseological core is not at all free but predicted and constrained by the context and cotextual environment. The colour words, previously thought to be highly salient, turned out to be delexicalised and neither carriers of literal-denotative nor metaphorical-connotative meanings. Such a discovery succeeded in challenging the whole notion that connotative meanings are in fact realised and realisable in the very linguistic expressions that allegedly supply proof of their existence.

Chapter 6 continued with the analysis of variant forms first introduced in Chapter 5, limiting the area of study to the effects of change to colour words within the phraseological core itself as well as in its immediate verbal cotext and context of situation. Such variation to both the core and its cotext within a single example was seen to be extremely rare, because it risks destroying the equilibrium of item and environment which allows a unit of meaning to be

differentiated from other, similar units: the result of too much variation is inevitably a failure or breakdown in communication.

Colour words can be changed by degree, to specify the precise shade of the colour, or by a net change of colour. It was seen that the effect of these changes is to break down the non-compositional phrase into its component parts, forcing a reprocessing of the sequence in order to make sense of the variation and incorporate it into the rest of the meaningful chunk. This transforms the non-compositional and delexicalised expression into a compositional, fully lexical expression in which the salient, full-intuitive meanings of the new element become activated.

When the expression is found in its canonical form, but in a non-standard cotext or context of situation, a similar phenomenon takes place. In the data examined, the analysis of cotextual variation was restricted to the presence or insertion of a colour word in the cotext. The effect of the juxtaposition of the cotextual colour word and that in the phraseological chunk is one of emphasis: the colour word in the phraseological core, which under normal circumstances is delexicalised, is re-lexicalised because of its proximity to another colour word. This re-lexicalisation activates the salient, full-intuitive meanings which are normally absent or suppressed. In this way, the connotative meanings pertinent to the contextual circumstances come to the fore, and supplement the non-compositional, delexical meaning of the canonical phrase by causing it to be processed simultaneously as both compositional and non-compositional.

The exploration of the paradigmatic axis to test the factors governing language choice was resumed in Chapter 7. In this chapter, comparable semantic sets were analysed in English and

Italian with a view to arriving at translation equivalence. Tognini Bonelli's (1996a) theory of translation was modified in order to take full account of lexical choice – the choice made to form the SL text, and the equivalent choice that should be used as the TL translation. In the developed and expanded theory presented, the L1 patterning was first contrasted with its near-synonyms on the paradigmatic axis, in order to understand the reasons for its initial selection, to ascertain what other choices were available to the creator of the SL text but rejected¹⁴³ nevertheless. The *prima facie* translation of the L1 term then underwent analogous treatment, with the stipulation that the analysis of the L2 paradigm was treated with exactly the same level of care and attention as that granted to the L1 analysis. In this way, the concepts of 'encoding' and 'decoding' language were effectively eliminated. This means that no language is given more prominence than the other, and stands in contrast to current practice, where equivalence is sought through translation and back-translation rather than being arrived at independently of the direction of the translation (L1 – L2, or L2 – L1).

It must be acknowledged that absolute equivalence is a rare phenomenon, but the data-assisted approach allows the translator to find a translation that operates in a comparable way to the SL term, taking into account the parameters determining its initial choice (by comparison with elements on the paradigmatic axis) and relating this to the *prima facie* equivalent and its semantic set in the TL. In addition, any variation to the canonical forms that have to be translated can be assessed in relation to the more habitual patternings in order to understand the nature and effect of the differences. This means that the translator can replicate the effect of the variation in the TL by examining the novel SL utterance in relation to the

¹⁴³ It is important to stress, as Halliday (1992) does, that these possible choices on the paradigmatic axis need not have been consciously accepted or rejected: corpus linguistics is not concerned with debating notions of conscious and subconscious language use, but with the evidence of whatever is actually produced.

conventional structure on which it is based, rather than being forced to rely on the “intuition and hunch, inspiration and even flashes of genius” (Firth 1968: 85) that continue to dog so much of translation practice. The theory proposed also has great potential for full or partial automation, if the current state of the art in lexical profiling is anything to go by. A further advantage of the analysis of paradigms in translation practice is that it helps free the translator from the shackles of the word-form by locating the translation item in the semantic set to which it belongs. This emphasises the fact that the word is merely a “lexical substitution-counter” (Firth 1935: 20), and that it is the meaning, not the word, that comprises the unit of translation. Thus translation equivalence can go beyond the current word-in-context-1 → word-in-context-2 approach, reaching a degree of semantic and pragmatic equivalence that cannot normally be achieved without several series of translation and back-translation.

8.2 Further research

The aim of this study seemed uncomplicated at the outset. By detailed and extensive study of one semantic set – colours – it was hoped that some light could be shed on the activation and function of connotative meaning in linguistic expressions. This fairly modest intention has led to the discovery of a wider-ranging trend. It has been established that conventional phraseological chunks are delexicalised in normal language use – this applies not only to colour-word expressions but also to all the nearly-synonymous expressions analysed. From this evidence it can be hypothesised that figurative phraseological expressions generally operate as delexical chunks, and that variation is the key factor in activating connotative meanings.

Clearly there are a myriad areas in which the findings of this research could be tested and validated, as connotative meanings abound in all cultures and languages. Significant semantic groups which spring to mind include expressions relating to food and drink, such as ‘you can’t have your cake and eat it’/ ‘non si può avere la botte piena e la moglie ubriaca’ – especially as a comparative study of cultural connotation – and the attribution of animal characteristics to humans, such as ‘to be a chicken’/ ‘essere un coniglio’. Both of these fields, like others, are riddled with cultural connotations which will inevitably find their way into inventive and variant forms.

8.3 Applications

8.3.1 Monolingual language description

The results of this research have implications for both mono- and bilingual language description. In the first place, it has become patently obvious that asking language users what they think they do with language is an unsatisfactory and inaccurate means of developing and refining theories of language. Testing language examples in unreal contexts cannot be the best way of understanding how those same language examples operate in real communicative situations. And analysing decontextualised examples with no reference to situational context and linguistic context can provide only a partial and highly selective analysis of the language under study. The findings of theoretical and psycholinguistics have been partially validated by this study, but only insofar as they relate to non-standard and innovative language. The integration of corpus data into these studies would enable them to flesh out their theories to take account of the less salient (and undoubtedly less exciting) realities of daily language activity, which can only be of benefit to linguistics as a whole.

On a related note, this study has proved that it is possible to use corpus data to study non-standard as well as canonical forms of linguistic expressions. Although the repeated patterns form the mainstay of corpus linguistics analysis, it is also true that language users have an irrepressible urge to be different, and to personalise aspects of the language they use. For this reason the further development of search routines for variant forms – possibly automated – would be a great benefit for those who lack the patience to seek out unusual examples by hand. An integrated analysis of the non-standard can round off descriptions of the repeated patterns so typical of corpus linguistics analysis.

Language is a mixture of the innovative and the mundane. The mundane is far more frequent and should rightly be given the attention it does in corpus linguistics studies, especially given the neglect it has endured since linguistics as a discipline began. But it is mistaken to suggest that the innovative cannot provide insights into language use. The fact of the matter is that both sides must be accounted for, not as watertight and autonomous language ‘types’, but as two ends of a continuum and thus with reference to one another. This can only be considered a right and proper requirement for any approach to language analysis and description which claims to be holistic.

8.3.2 Bilingual language description

As far as bilingual applications are concerned, the translation theory proposed in Chapter 7 is a further development of existing practice among some dedicated corpus-driven translators, but one which is still to take effect in the mainstream and, most importantly, in the compilation of bilingual dictionaries. There is immense scope for improvement in bilingual

dictionary publishing. Here, word-for-word, POS-for-POS, literal-for-literal and figurative-for-figurative continue to be the order of the day, despite the huge contribution that corpus linguistics has made over the past couple of decades. Some of the inadequacies of bilingual dictionaries are already being addressed by the availability of general reference corpora in some languages, but there is still an over-reliance on intuition in the translation process. The revised translation theory presented in this Thesis takes the goal of robust translation equivalence a step forward. The insistence that analysis must be carried out in both languages, ensures that the equivalence is more reliable than one founded on the analysis of the TL alone; and if such analysis can be at least partially automated then the advantages speak for themselves.

8.3.3 Machine-assisted translation

Machine translation, or at least *machine-assisted* translation, has been considered the Holy Grail of computational language analysis since its inception, and its realisation has always been imminent though still, sadly, lacking. However it is now within our grasp. The principles set out in Chapter 7 are based on existing monolingual word profiling applications such as those offered by Kilgarriff and Tugwell (2001a, 2001b) and Mason (1997), but with two substantial differences. The first is that, rather than single words, a series of semantically-related words are to be profiles so that comparisons and distinctions can be made between them. The second difference is, of course, that the profiling has to be carried out in both the L1 and the L2 so that matching patterns can be identified.

The principal requirement for the successful development of this kind of machine-assisted translation is that there be adequate amounts of comparable data in the languages to be

translated, preferably in the form of large, general reference corpora, composed of untranslated texts: if the intention is to identify equivalence by means of pattern matching, independently of translations identified by human analysts, comparable texts produced by native-speakers are essential. Such corpora already exist for many European languages; with time more will be constructed, and more languages catered for.

8.4 Concluding remarks

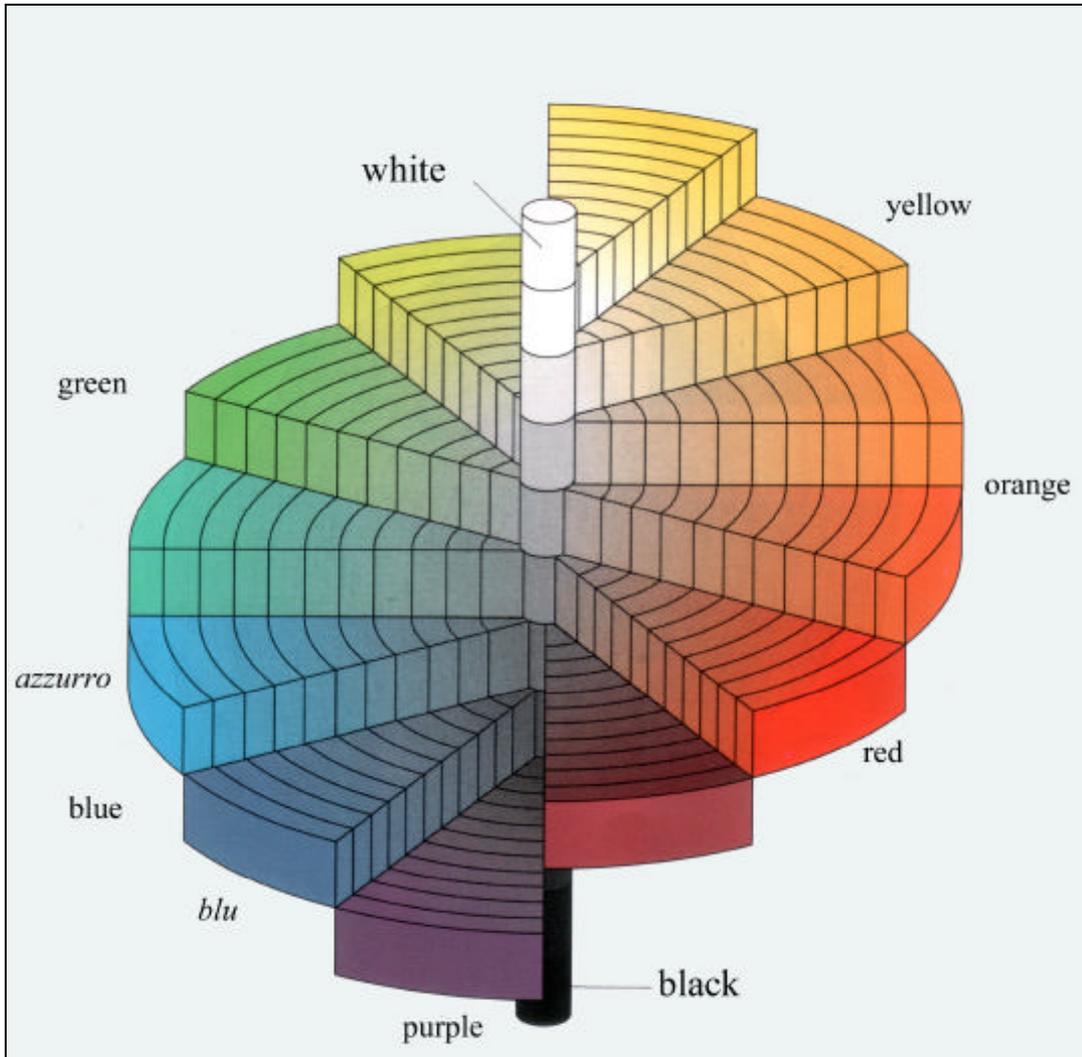
This study set out to examine and account for the presence of connotative meaning in the linguistic use of colour words. The initial expectation was that some fixed expressions and collocations would trigger these meanings and others would not; and for this reason a very wide range of phrases and formulae were examined. The results that have emerged are surprising, and quite at odds with this expectation. From the data analysed, it can be stated that normal, conventional language use is typically delexicalised, its meaning being heavily dependent on its pragmatic function. This has been the case across the board, in both languages studied, and in colour word expressions and their near-synonyms alike. It has been shown that the activation of connotative meaning is entirely dependent on deviations from the habitual usage of the expressions and their context, and the resulting reprocessing of delexicalised chunks; this information could not have been gleaned from the etymological or introspective approaches to linguistic meaning that have traditionally dominated research into figurative meaning.

When this research began, phraseological studies based on corpus data were few and far between, with collocation analysis being the main object of study. The advent of the “extended unit of meaning” (Sinclair 1996) has however brought about a change in the unit of

currency in the discipline, building on and partially overshadowing the humbler concept of collocation. This Thesis has seen the “unit of meaning” extended even further, to take account on the paradigmatic (semantic) as well as syntagmatic (lexicogrammatical) relations. In this way, two complementary aspects of neo-Firthian linguistic theory – collocational analysis (on the syntagmatic axis) and systemic analysis (on the paradigmatic axis) have been brought together. The results obtained by means of this approach have highlighted the interdependence of the two techniques, and go some way towards validating polysystemic data-driven analysis in both monolingual and multilingual corpus research.

9 APPENDIX 1A

'Colour tree' showing gradations of colours and tones



(Maffei and Fiorentini 1995: 123).

Positions of Italian *azzurro* and *blu* relative to English *blue* have been shown.

APPENDIX 1B

Summary of colour meaning from antiquity to the present day

colour	meaning	symbol or metonym	reasons for meaning
black	evil melancholy	symbol symbol	colour of darkness; darkness=evil from black bile, or lymph: lymph is white, but black was assigned to the humour
	disease, death sin mourning	symbol symbol metonym	black=evil, destruction and death from opposition to purity (white) by extension of black=melancholy and black=death
	Fascist and Nazi politics	metonym	from members' wearing black shirts
white	goodness phlegmatic	symbol metonym	colour of light; light=the divine colour of phlegm (which causes sluggishness)
	(moral) purity	metonym	by comparison to immaculate white; also from white=the divine
red	light fire, heat blood sanguine	metonym metonym metonym metonym	colour of light through dark cloud/dust red is colour of fire and of hot metals colour of blood blood causes the sanguine humour
	wealth, royalty, power violence, war, revolution good health	metonym metonym metonym	because of the high cost of the dye colour of blood; blood has connection with strong emotion colour of blood (seen in the cheeks)
	physical love, passion Communism and Socialism	metonym	colour of blood; blood has connection with strong emotion red as colour of war and revolution, and members' wearing red shirts
green	vegetation fertility, regeneration, renewal	metonym metonym	colour of plant life by extension of green=plant life
	environmentalism hope	metonym metonym	by extension of green=plant life by extension of green=regeneration, renewal
	jealousy, envy	metonym	colour of bile; bile=bitterness

continues overleaf...

colour	meaning	symbol or metonym	reasons for meaning
yellow	bilious gold jealousy cowardice illness light intelligence	metonym metonym metonym metonym metonym metonym metonym	colour of bile (bile causes irritability) similar colours colour of bile; bile=bitterness jaundice caused by liver weakness by reference to pallid skin colour colour of sunlight by extension of yellow=light (illumination)
light blue	sky heaven, the divine faith, spirituality loyalty	metonym metonym metonym metonym	colour of sky sky=heaven colour of sky/heaven; source of the divine constancy of sky; sky=blue
dark blue	water fear grief, loss conservatism aristocracy	metonym symbol symbol metonym	colour of sea, rivers and lakes dark blue equated with black; black=evil, destruction and death dark blue equated with black; black=evil, destruction and death 'blue blood' – veins showing through pale skin
brown	earth	metonym	the colour of earth
grey	depressing mediocrity	symbol symbol	milder version of black=disaster and grief at mid-point between black=evil and white=good
purple	passion wealth	symbol metonym	through association with Easter because of the high cost of the dye
pink	romance	symbol	derived from red=passion
orange	warmth	metonym	the colour of fire

APPENDIX 2

Contexts used in psycholinguistic experimentation

Example of verbal context

She finally kicked the bucket after being ill for months (idiom context following)
After being ill for months, she finally kicked the bucket (idiom context preceding)
She finally kicked the bucket, forgetting to move it from the path (literal context following)
Forgetting to move it from the path, she finally kicked the bucket (literal context preceding)

(Titone and Connine 1999: 1668)

Example of situational context

Tamara and I met Yossi at the concert and he hardly paid any attention to us. Tamara said:

(a) To this iceberg* I almost got married.”

(b) I almost got married to this iceberg.”*

(Probes displayed at *: salient-freezing; contextually compatible-guy; unrelated-sequence)

(Peleg, Giora and Fein 2001: 192)

Example of literally- and metaphorically- biasing contexts

a. The Saturday night party went on for hours. Drinks were poured, and we danced all night. We were probably less than inconsiderate when, the next evening, we called on our friends who had been partying with us. When they opened the door we realized: *Only now did they wake up.*

(Literally biasing context)

b. A bloody war has been going on in central Europe for a few years. Thousands of innocent women, men and children got massacred, and no one budged or lifted a finger. At last, a decision was made to intervene in the fights. *Only now did they wake up.*

(Metaphorically biasing context)

(Giora and Fein 1999: 1605)

APPENDIX 3A

List of fixed collocations and expressions analysed in this study

BLACK

(bête noir)	anima nera
(not) as black as you are painted	bestia nera
black and blue	camicia nera
black box	crisi nera
black look	cronaca nera
black mark	fame nera
black sheep of the family	fare un quadro nero della situazione
in black and white	lavoro nero
in the black	mercato nero
pot calling the kettle black	miseria nera
	nero su bianco
	pecora nera della famiglia
	pensiero nero
	periodo nero
	punto nero
	umor nero
	vedere tutto nero

WHITE

bleed someone white	bianco come
carte blanche	dare carta bianca a qn
white as	di punto in bianco
white elephant	far vedere bianco per nero
white lie	matrimonio bianco
white wedding	passare una notte in bianco
whiter than white	settimana bianca

RED

bleed red ink	bandiera rossa
catch somebody red-handed	camicia rossa
in the red/ out of the red	diventare rosso in viso
paint the town red	linea rossa
red as a	luce rossa
red cent	rosso come
red flag	rosso di rabbia
red herring	rosso di sera bel tempo si spera
red in tooth and claw	
red letter day	
red rag	
red rag to a bull	
red tape	
roll out the red carpet	
see red	

GREEN

be green	avere il pollice verde
green fingers	essere al verde
green light	partito verde
green-eyed monster	verde di bile
green with envy	verde età

YELLOW

yellow bellied	film/ libro/romanzo giallo
yellow press	
yellow streak	

BLUE

between the devil and the deep blue sea	fifa blu
black and blue	principe azzurro
blue in the face	
clear blue water	
feel blue	
into the wide blue yonder	
light the blue touch-paper	
like a bolt from the blue/ out of the blue	
once in a blue moon	
scream blue/bloody murder	
talk a blue streak	

GRIGIO

grey area	eminenza grigia
grey eminence/ éminence grise	esistenza grigia
grey matter	materia grigia
	zona grigia

ROSA

go pink (in the face)	cronaca rosa
in the pink	letteratura rosa
tickled pink	romanzo rosa
	scandalo rosa
	vedere tutto rosa

BROWN

brown-nose	
------------	--

PURPLE

purple passage	
purple patch	
purple prose	

APPENDIX 3B

Concordance for 'red rag' and related expressions

red rag (minus Red Rag newspaper)

indy Tour leader "on the road". It was the red rag that the Spanish bull needed. The temperature was
indy pride, a badge of manhood waved like a red rag to the bull of his leery lad's club of a band. <p> An
indy Seve, the sight of an American is like a red rag to a bull. He can't stand them. Plagued this year by
indy p> Mention of the Forest of Bowland is a red rag to the rambblers' bull. More than a quarter of a cent
indy paying school was always going to be a red rag to an earthy border side like Melrose who duly rose
indy duly handed the bib. It was more like a red rag. "Eric tried not to show anything but you could tell
indy . "Oxford will see that and it will be a red rag to a bull. It's a different game, a one-off, and this
indy 're born. But for some reason this is a red rag for some people. They say that you shouldn't try to
oznews holiday.<p> Good on you for waving the red rag in front of the bull," writes Mr Doyle. <p> We felt
oznews is, to the council, like waving a red rag to a bull. <p> It was strident in its criticism of
oznews them out entirely. <p> This is like a red rag to the Euro-sceptics who want the Minister to reject
oznews Antigua and Barbuda, van Dyk waved a red rag to a bull with her announcement she was glad not to b
oznews materials. <p> It was like waving a red rag at the bull; <p> he grabbed that pencil and took to
oznews correct it would be like putting a "red rag to a bull". <p> PARNELL S Unions vow mine
oznews possibly do that' it's like waving a red rag to a bull - it means I have to have a go." <p> Her j
brmags his pet hate-topic like a bull to a red rag # We're influenced by music in general. Personally, I
brspok . So the police actually it's like a red rag to a bull and a lot of those people as I've already
bbc general strike for May Day, it's like a red rag to a bull. South Korea officially celebrates Labour
bbc justification by the Japanese is like a red rag to a bull # even among the younger generation, who h
guard at this kind of deal could represent a "red rag to a slightly parochial regulatory board" if BT had
guard nuclear testing is the latest </h> red rag from a bullish Beijing. And Japan, for one, has had
guard enders in Feltham they would be like a "red rag to a bull", Mr Shaw said. <p> Frances Crook, director
guard ith two goals in as many minutes. <p> A red rag to a bull is deemed a dangerous ploy; here, this
brbooks at that moment of revelation. Like a red rag to a bull, it was. Jeremy nearly burst a blood vessel
brbooks . Of course the EOKA playboy was a red rag to Turkey. <p> More officers had come. The earlier
brbooks wave of success, Acheson became a red rag to the red-baiters. <o> When asked about his
brbooks hit back. To hit back is to hold up a red rag in front of an already enraged bull. Rarely does it
brbooks -on-troubled-waters lady. <p> It's a red rag to a bull when my son won't admit that he's wrong,
brbooks hick. "Incorrigible." That word was a red rag to Diane's bull. Although Tobes was not a juvenile w
brbooks the damage had been done and it was a red rag to the Unionist bull. The Catholic Church was also a
brbooks could be done. The letter was as a red rag to a bull. Cecil wrote to Sydney, pulling as hard as
brbooks and rage-blinded creators. Just as a red rag enrages a bull, quiet colours soothe. <p> The blue

usbooks setting must have affected her like a red rag to a bull. She grabbed the nearest end of the table
usbooks sight of my Federal uniform was as a red rag to a bull," Heiser recalled. Jenkins growled at the
econ stay aloof from EMU, it is a federalist red rag. <p> That does not seem to matter to those planning
econ p> The idea of cross-company unions is a red rag to businessmen. They say it would open the door to
econ Meanwhile, Michael Heseltine, red rag to the true blues, is the biggest winner. <p> But, ot
times `nigger" in the playground was like a red rag to a bull to me and then my dad was laughing at it on
times hain Pier in 1827, it would have been a red rag to Turner, who not only thought Constable inept at
times always be an irritant to Nato and is a red rag to the Americans. <p> Although the threat of nuclear
times them a favour." Such comments are a red rag to BT. Vallance says that under the proposed powers,
times lush quicker than a bull would spy a red rag. The vanity numberplate on his sports car read: DRU
times replay, a boast which proved to be a red rag to those Bulls. <p> Hill rode the wave of euphoria
times at Vishakhapatnam, that may be like a red rag to a bull for Steve Tikolo and Maurice Odumbe, the
times powerful that motivation will become. A red rag to the red rose, you might say. <p> Yet as the press
times " and are drawn to them like bulls to a red rag. Green doors are, well, `green". <p> But brown, blac
today <p> This sort of information is like a red rag to a bull for the tobacco companies but it really n
today tapping along to the music - another red rag to the purists - he would switch effortlessly from
today about car stickers. <p> IT IS like a red rag to a bull and, being a Taurean, I react accordingly
sunnow hionable on Radio Two, then I'm like a red rag to a bull on Radio One!" Daniel, from Kincasslagh,
sunnow just didn't fancy her. That was like a red rag to a bull. She went berserk. Julie demanded, Who do
sunnow 're dealing with now!" It was like a red rag to a bull. And the next thing I knew I was doing m
sunnow you speak to your children it's like a red rag to a bull." Mike is now stuck in Bournemouth, Dors
npr yellow burning under the dark. Under the red rag, her hair came down on her neck in the frailest of
today his bulging belly. That scraggy bit of red rag knotted around his plump, whiskery-grey neck. <p>

Red flag to/before a bull

brspok >put # <ZF0> putting a <ZF1> red <ZF0> red flag towards a bull <ZF1> or <ZF0> or <ZGY> into the Unit
brspok the # churches. We don't want to put a red flag in front of # somebody. <ZGY>praying use your prayer
newsci cell is to the immune system what a red flag is to a bull. The more cells are activated, the soon
newsci the same effect on scientists as a red flag does with bulls. So begins a new book by French aut
npr the Ataturk reforms. Mucaram's scarf is a red flag to many Kemalists, a setback on the road West and
brbooks our presence may have the effect of a red flag held permanently before a bull. But equally, in the
usbooks to pin a hem at 6 # 30 was to wave a red flag before a bull, but I slipped on the jumper and timid
usbooks on Capitol Hill was akin to waving a red flag in front of a sizable bloc of conservative congressm
usbooks remain silent, realizing that I was a red flag before certain of these bulls. The vote, once taken,
usbooks drocesses. It was this phrase, like a red flag waved at a bull, that finally caught the attention o
usbooks ather staid colleagues `like waving a red flag in the face of a bull # 51 Hueper's main problem,
econ 1980s shed so little light on it. <h> Red flag to a dragon: Sending the right signal to a pushier C

like+a+1,5to+a

indy could only work if it clung to the text of Hamlet like a baby to a mother's breast. It is one
usbooks utterly mine. And though I clung to my father like a barnacle to a piling, for many years I
brbooks the vice-presidential nomination to him rather like a bone to a dog, except that Truman was
brmags uestion and charging towards his pet hate-topic like a bull to a red rag # We're influenced
brbooks lly can't imagine handing myself over to a man like a cup to a teapot so that he can pour
brmags wing suit. It set Safire's pattern of returning like a dog to a bone, column after column, to
guard the attack. <p> Russell has taken to captaincy like a dollop of burnt sienna to a stretch of
brbooks she lay there, her damp body clinging to his, like a drowning sailor to a piece of
today a chap who, to hesitant TV interrogators, is like a glass of water to a man in the Sahara.
guard among us are black men," the 61-year-old says, like a grandfather to a good, but simple
brmags the exponents of the latter take to the Ozrics like a joyrider to a BMW convertible,
guard nywhere but the beach and eyes drop to your feet like a magnet to a Coke can. The ankle bone,
brspok 01> I've had to <tc text=pause> stand up to him like a man to a man <F02> Mm. <M01> at times
usbooks president's dissolution of parliament would be like a match to a gunpowder keg. The
brbooks urope, a civilized place to which Ashkhabad is like a minnow to a # a wash basin. You must
npr a craven lot. They cling to their opinion polls like a miser to a buck. So suddenly
brmags right lights of the city, to which he's tempted like a moth to a flame, seeking redemption in
guard team. Quinn is racing again this year, drawn like a moth to a candle flame. <p> All the
brbooks . She seemed to be drawn to her reflection now like a moth to a flame. But in so doing, she
brbooks the light around her that draws people to her like a moth to a flame.' Anna blushed. `Well
today the bright lights of west London drew Kharin like a moth to a flame he is no social
today found he couldn't. <p> He was drawn back to her like a moth to a lightbulb. <p> It is very
today rginia Ironside <p> HE WAS, she said, drawn like a moth to a light bulb. That's how a
today alliday said she kept returning to Rose and Fred like a `moth to a flame". <p> On her first
today replied: `I was low and vulnerable. <p> I was like a moth to a flame. The moth gets singed
sunnow wrote it. Ms Sereny was attracted to Mary Bell like a moth to a candle, just as Lord
usbooks in her imagery, but so are things that draw. `Like a needle to a magnet" she will be drawn
usbooks wboy suit with woolly chaps and showed him off like a performing monkey to a crowd of oil
guard tough little cookie who seems attracted to goal like a pin to a magnet. <p> Cole is expecting
brbooks ate. I must cling to my career, such as it is, like a rat to a sinking ship.' So you're
brmags Down tumbles into the violence-in-movies debate like a raw carcass to a pack of starved
indy fired up. For Seve, the sight of an American is like a red rag to a bull. He can't stand
brspok by public opinions. So the police actually it's like a red rag to a bull and a lot of those
bbc by calling the general strike for May Day, it's like a red rag to a bull. South Korea
bbc attempt at self-justification by the Japanese is like a red rag to a bull # even among the

guard pers by other offenders in Feltham they would be like a `red rag to a bull", Mr Shaw said. <p>
brbooks as sealed it was at that moment of revelation. like a red rag to a bull, it was. Jeremy
usbooks gnificent table setting must have affected her like a red rag to a bull. She grabbed the
times ird. Being called `nigger" in the playground was like a red rag to a bull to me and then my
times the small ground at Vishakhapatnam, that may be like a red rag to a bull for Steve Tikolo and
today search Campaign. <p> This sort of information is like a red rag to a bull for the tobacco
today who has a gripe about car stickers. <p> IT IS like a red rag to a bull and, being a
sunnow if I'm not fashionable on Radio Two, then I'm like a red rag to a bull on Radio One!"
sunnow person, but he just didn't fancy her. That was like a red rag to a bull. She went berserk.
sunnow it's not Elvis you're dealing with now!" It was like a red rag to a bull. And the next thing
sunnow house won't let you speak to your children it's like a red rag to a bull." Mike is now stuck
brmags tter's field, but neither does it seem remotely like a shrine to a fallen genius. <p> Green-
times ility". Sentiment, alas, is something or nothing like a signal to a computer, black or white,
usbooks want out of CLIQUES # Cliques can be very much like a silent but deadly virus to a
oznews into the vast space, breathtakingly beautiful, like a silver lining to a diaphanous cloud.
times I indicated the room, `paying a tenner would be like a silver cross to a vampire." <p> I was
newsci such systems melt from an ordered arrangement like a solid to a disordered fluid state like
brmags of Andalusia. Ronda, the most famous, clings like a suicide threat to a shelf of rock
brbooks llis said to Arnold, clutching to him suddenly like a survivor to a waterlogged plank. <p>
brbooks all. To draw nearer to this source is to come like a thirsty man to a pool of cool, clean
today erly, I pushed up my speed. It stuck to the road like a Tory minister to a Cabinet job.

APPENDIX 3C

Concordance for 'notte in bianco' and related expressions

passa@ 4:4 notte+in

passa@ 4:4 notti+in

trascor@ 4:4 notte+in

trascor@ 4:4 notti+in

nottata 4:4 bianc@

nottata+in

nottataccia

nottatacce

(combined queries, alphabetically sorted to the right of the node)

rantolante la sua partenza per Roma dopo una nottataccia . * [BEGINDOC] 16/04/1997 Grasso Aldo - TELEVISIO
vano a sentirsi nelle ossa e nell ' anima la nottataccia . - Non credo che oseranno entrare - disse
scaldare la schiena e le braccia di poetiche nottatacce . Ma il pensiero più tenero va , comunque al
ui telefona : " Mi scusi , ma ho passato una nottataccia , non posso uscire . Ci sono mattine che mi sento
Scusami , ma dopo il battesimo ho avuto una nottataccia , poi ti racconto . » « Quando dici ' poi ti
n cucina . « Si alzava sempre con un viso da nottataccia » ricordava senza amore Victoria Guzman . Sua
delle mie abitudini serali e la conseguente nottata bianca , come ai bei tempi . Prima avevo vagato per
l ristorante non prevedendo , poveretta , la nottataccia che l ' attendeva . Ieri mattina , però , Isi
el sesto capitolo l ' incipit dice " era una nottataccia d ' inverno " o " d ' inferno " . Flaiano raccolse
letta per scoprire se l ' ex sbirro dopo una nottataccia di lavoro alla discoteca fosse tornato a casa a
r il bambino dei MacAlliney ; ha passato una nottataccia e i genitori stanno dando in smanie . Si comportan
cantarsi in giro per la Darsena di aver passato la notte in acqua per qualcosa di serio . Poco prima delle
con Laura per ottenere di non passare neanche una notte in albergo , a Tunisi . Le avevo imbottito la tes
no il dormitorio come un ostello in cui passare la notte in attesa di trovare una sistemazione migliore , è
per strada . Molti hanno preferito trascorrere la notte in auto o in tende di fortuna . Purtroppo questa
eca perché non ce la faceva a lavorare passando le notti in bianco . " Il posto fisso d ' inverno . ricorda
solo la fatica del viaggio , ma anche più di una nottata in bianco . Anche se a vederci non sembra , da
poca in cui ogni pretesto era buono per passare le notti in bianco . Ero invecchiato una mattina , tornando
, compresi bambini e anziani , avevano passato la notte in bianco . Leopoldo Ercolani Piazza Navigatori ,
da quella casa come un ladro nel buio . Passai una notte in bianco . Mia moglie dormiva accanto a me , ign
su e preparatevi spiritualmente a trascorrere una notte in bianco . Noi ci guardavamo l ' un l ' altro , u
rdando la frase (r) preparatevi a trascorrere la notte in bianco » , avevo organizzato la spedizione pren
tad " , lo stesso letto matrimoniale . Passammo la notte in bianco , a parlare di poesia e della " condizio

evano il luogo pericoloso e malsano . Trascorse la notte in bianco , torturato dal caldo e dalle raffiche
n ci faccio caso . 54 Il 1 ° Maggio 1976 passai la notte in bianco , smontando quadri , tavolini , specch
ciali non ripresero più a giocare , e passavano la notte in bianco , chiacchierando nel cortile fino a molt
dritta . Si muoveva più svelta . Avevo passato la notte in bianco , ero rimasto sveglio il più possibile ,
to una persona per cui valesse la pena passare una notte in bianco : il suo prorompente seno mi sorrise dal
e si tratti di un disturbo da poco . Ma passano la notte in bianco : per riuscire a dormire , infatti , la
i [BEGINDOC] 4297_sall A chi rivolgersi Passate le notti in bianco ? Chiedete , prima di tutto , consiglio
un bambino cantandogli ninnenanne e di passare la notte in bianco curando un malato , non confidava nella
sera , o al fatto che ho passato gran parte della notte in bianco pensando ad Hilary , essendomi addormen
Quello della scorsa notte è stato il più grave . Nottata in bianco per gli abitanti del centro altirpino .
ato in ufficio di pessimo umore . Aveva passato la notte in bianco per la rabbia procuratagli dalla figurac
eoccupazione . Hideo disse di avere passato alcune notti in bianco per organizzare la gestione del negozio
iacciaio del Bernina . Quante volte hai passato le notti in bianco per salvare le tende dalla neve o dalle
Anton , che faceva l ' autostop e aveva passato la notte in bianco sui veicoli più strani e con le persone
ssemblea , il forzista Raffaele Calabrò , dopo una notte in bianco trascorsa tra funzionari della Digos ed
bombardamenti ! La settimana scorsa ho passato due notti in cantina ! » Mi vergognavo per lui , e sperai di
e ; non voleva rivelarle che non aveva passato la notte in camera sua , ma di sopra , a cercare di capire
ffcilmente succede che qualcuno vada a passare la notte in campagna o in montagna per immergersi nella pac
al nord - est , e Lander poté così trascorrere le notti in casa . Il secondo doveva portarlo sulla Costa
venuta a prendermi invitò anche loro a passare la notte in casa dei suoi genitori . Era una casa grande ,
cchio degli ultimi arrivati : « n re ha passato la notte in casa di Marfisa » . Ma quando qualcuno arrivò
Sta arrivando una tempesta . Potrei trascorrere la notte in casa vostra ? L ' uomo esamina Piotr . - Va ben
l ' imprenditore hanno così trascorso parte della notte in caserma . Pian piano è venuta a galla la stori
ieri sono stati rilasciati dopo aver trascorso due notti in cella ; restano comunque indagati per i reati
di manette , se aveva mai trascorso di persona una notte in cella , se aveva mai ucciso qualcuno , se pensa
vata e resistenza all ' arresto : ha trascorso una notte in cella ed è stato rilasciato soltanto dopo il pa
fritto dei bomboloni ripieni . Ale ha trascorso la notte in centro . Alla cantinetta . La puttarella ! Inve
8 milioni di visitatori hanno trascorso almeno una notte in città . In un quinquennio , sono stati creati
l ' anno , di cui soltanto tre milioni passano una notte in città , è evidente che esiste una richiesta di
eva da anni e si era fatto convincere a passare la notte in città e andare al cinema . Pensando al fatto ch
e sulla sua salute , ma il cantante , trascorsa la notte in clinica , ritornò a casa . Ora è arrivato l ' a
ormai " morta " : si potrà trascorrere l ' intera notte in compagnia della Maratona " Pace , amore e U2 "
Paolo . Per il sovraffollamento hanno trascorso la notte in corridoio perché le stanze erano tutte occupate
e il ritorno alla vita . Cominciò così una lunga nottata in cui , appiccicato a Nakash , imparai come si
ormentata vicenda , preceduta da un ' ultima nottata in cui accade un pó di tutto . Pisanu interviene
abbro leporino , era evidentemente reduce da una nottata in cui gli anabolizzanti avevano fatto a pugni
ignora mostra già tutto l ' affanno di una lunga nottata in cui i coniugi Romano non hanno probabilmente
n po ' meglio . La scorsa settimana ha passato due notti in cui la tosse e la difficoltà di respiro facev
ori translucidi indispensabili per trascorrere una notte in discoteca . Apposta , quindi , Home ricrea al
rito Rincasavano all ' alba dopo aver trascorso la notte in discoteca CREMONA - Due giovani morti sul colpo

do , tutti studenti universitari , reduci da una nottata in discoteca nella Bergamasca , uno è morto , men
ia stato arrestato . Il transessuale ha passato la notte in galera e poi è uscito pagando una cauzione di
ti . Mezzi morti di fame , gli Xosa trascorsero la notte in gioia selvaggia . Poi finalmente sorse come
unico , vero piacere era quello di trascorrere una notte in giro per la città , da solo , senza alcuno che
, con l ' auto in panne , è necessario passare una notte in hotel : il rimborso deve comprendere il costo
ntanto , mentre Bonanomi si appresta a passare una notte in mano ai suoi rapitori , i suoi compagni di viag
mistica Shirley MacLaine , la quale trascorse una notte in meditazione all ' interno della Grande Pirami
ha portato con sé a Karnak . Vi trascorreranno la notte in meditazione prima di mettersi alla testa della
i gli altri , troppi , si preparavano a passare la notte in mezzo alla strada , facendo le solite fesserie
. Andai a casa la mattina , dopo aver passato una notte in ospedale . Dormii , mi ero fatta dare un sedati
ritorno della mamma . E mentre papà passava le sue notti in ospedale , almeno fino a mezzanotte , quando ve
eista a Londra di un " giallo " : ha trascorso una notte in ospedale , dopo essersi sentita male durante un
ry funzionò a meraviglia . Durante la mia ultima nottata in ospedale , godetti un sonno ristoratore quale
cantante Biagio Antonacci . Gianni ha trascorso la notte in ospedale e , dopo il lieto evento , è apparso
organismo) sono costretti a passare ogni mese due notti in ospedale per ricevere - mediante una fleboclisi
n cui voleva mantenersi in contatto . Passavamo la notte in piccoli alberghi , ancora chiamati locande ; la
come scolaretti , spingendosi , passando tutta la notte in piccoli gruppi di due o tre , sempre in direzi
pesante ... Solo che ogni tanto bisogna fare una nottata in piedi . Elio stringe le labbra , accenna un mov
in attesa dei risultati definitivi e ho passato la notte in piedi in attesa di notizie certe . Questa è la
omani partiamo . Così hanno proposto di passare la notte in piedi per la nostra " despedida " . Abbiamo fa
stampata leopardo . Si alza dopo aver trascorso la notte in pigiama di cachemire cammello . E perché no ?
piere un ultimo tentativo , e fu proprio in quella notte in più passata al telescopio che egli scoprì effet
il tempo per finire di radermi . Ho trascorso una notte in preda alle passioni . Ho desiderato tutto in qu
vevano portato via Spratling facendogli passare la notte in prigione . Poi Spratling aveva preso un treno
' alba elegante al mercato , dopo aver passato la notte in prigione , vuol fare intendere che è stato con
cche faresti qualsiasi cosa per non trascorrere la notte in questa retrovia del fronte . Torni indietro ,
zzavano . Ero un cronista volonteroso e passai una notte in questura , con quelli della Mobile . Avevano f
e solo o in piccoli gruppi familiari , passando la notte in rozzi giacigli che si fabbrica alla biforcizio
servizio , a parte le persone che passano anche la notte in stazione , deve alzarsi all ' alba , chiedere
, invitando per radio la popolazione a passare la notte in strada . Su questa scelta si era allineato anch
a vergogna che vi sia gente costretta a passare le notti in strada , senza un tetto o un ricovero sicuro .
inque persone hanno dovuto trascorrere parte della notte in strada e tra loro anche alcuni bambini . Spente
osi un pó , spiega uno dei tanti che ha passato la notte in tenda . (Ansa) [BEGINDOC] 05/10/1997 Ora tocc
e 1300 le persone che a Foligno hanno trascorso la notte in tende e roulottes : un numero più che doppio ri
le proprie abitazioni per paura e ha trascorso la notte in treno ; nella sola Foligno 10 mila abitanti son
o di persone ha lasciato le case e ha trascorso la notte in treno ; nella sola Foligno 10 mila persone sono
La mamma disse che non se la sentiva di passare la notte in un albergo e che più tardi avrebbe preso il tre
egistrare alla polizia ogni volta che passavano la notte in un albergo e compilare innumerevoli moduli per
il mediatore russo ha tranquillamente trascorso la notte in un albergo romano , lo stesso in cui dovrebbe
llari per il traghettatore . Dopo aver passato due notti in un bosco a Klibia , senza dormire perché aveva

er vivere notti romantiche 1 . speranza Passare la notte in un castello irlandese è un sogno realizzabile . stretto a scendere dall ' aereo . Aveva passato la notte in un cimicioso albergo N ' Djili . Non aveva mai e in conserva di Chicago , con i quali passammo la notte in un elegante albergo del lungolago . Ci portaro he mi ha impressionato . Abbiamo dovuto passare la notte in un freddo edificio di pietra . Tutti erano stan no alla morte . Godolozzi fu costretto a passare la notte in un garage , davanti ai cadaveri di Galela e Has lo scimpanzé o il gorilla , avrebbe trascorso ogni notte in un luogo diverso , limitando tuttavia le sue sc oautori del testo . Capitati per caso a passare la notte in un motel i due , seminudi su un letto rosso con arte sono ragazzi come noi che vogliono passare la notte in un posto un pó diverso . Non ci sono identifica zaino . Erano giornate senza nubi . Trascorsi ogni notte in un rifugio alpino diverso e per cena mangiai s a visitai , a metà degli anni Settanta , passai la notte in un villaggio di cui non ricordo il nome , a nor i rimanevano ancora un po ' di soldi . Passammo la notte in un viottolo sull ' altra sponda del lago . Il m la voce . Dissero che era ubriaco e che passava le notti in un ' orgia di mulatte portate per via aerea dal e per i notturni . Uno dei volontari trascorse una notte in una baracca di due metri per due , su invito de ventiquattrenne , e l ' hunza Mahdi passarono una notte in una buca di neve a ottomila metri , perché gli a comunicato che la loro figlia aveva trascorso la notte in una cella , ma la mattina presto era stata rila atté il colonnello . « Abbiamo perciò trascorso la notte in una cooperativa agricola che non disponeva di t grafa Ana Martinez Seral , 36 , hanno trascorso la notte in una delle grotte che si affacciano sulla baia . seguenti non parlavano d ' altro , " la tragica nottata in una discoteca del nord Italia , dove decine di in faccia . Già , ma chi di loro aveva passato una notte in una frazione fantasma , come lui ? Nessuno . Ch mente . Alla sera staccano i cavalli e passano la notte in una locanda . Al mattino presto si rimettono in lward era affascinata . A Pechino , trascorsero la notte in una locanda cinese e , la mattina seguente , ri e cambiato i mobili delle camere . Trascorrere una notte in una stanza con la finestra sulla valle che si a concesso gratuitamente a chi trascorre almeno due notti in una trentina di hotel due / quattro stelle . Co e radici del mio cuore come un virus . Passammo la notte in una vecchia pensione dopo Kawazu . Un posto di amo andati in gita sullo Yatsugatake e passammo la notte in uno chalet , " dissi . Lei senza scomporsi diss no . Mi ricordo di sei coppie che passarono quella notte in varie combinazioni sessuali , come una fila di

notte 4:4 insonne@

diventare mezzogiorno , pomeriggio , sera . E poi notte . Insonne per tutti i tratti di un profilo , per ha domandato se io ricamavo ancora il corredo . Di notte , insonne per la solitudine e per tanti ricordi , per volta - ossessivamente . Le ripensò durante la notte , stordita e insonne , durante la passeggiata . Bit e i ragazzi del Pattume avevano passato una notte agitata , quasi insonne . Vaj , invece , dopo aver rofezie . " Può essere stato chiunque . " Dopo una notte agitata e insonne , Francesco prese il primo posto che aveva prenotato per telefono , e ora , dopo una notte agitata e insonne , si sentiva sfinito e affranto stacolo di fuochi artificiali in piazza Duomo . La notte che segue è insonne per migliaia di catanesi che uno stress notevole nei familiari . Il paziente di notte è insonne e vaga per la casa o per l ' ospedale ; ensione vicino alla stazione dove ha trascorso una notte insonne . " Non fa niente , è una tassa che aggiu » III . Al ritorno da quella serata ho passato la notte insonne . « E andata benissimo » , non faceva altre mie parole si persero nella solitudine di quella notte insonne . Al mattino ci alzammo presto . Nella eo , istupidito per ciò che avevo appreso e per la notte insonne . Dopo qualche minuto , mi resi conto che a , ma aveva l ' aria di avere trascorso una lunga notte insonne . NEL CORSO DEL PROCESSO di Klaus Helmut ciatore del Gabon , Denis Dangué Rewaka , dopo una notte insonne . Per i suoi colleghi la corvee non è ata . Vedi tu . Anche l ' abate aveva trascorso la notte insonne . Pertanto , fu subito disponibile ad veva avuto per lui inizio nelle ore piccole di una notte insonne . Quando mi saluta nel suo studio al primo paglia con la chiarezza innaturale che segue a una notte insonne . Seduti con la schiena addossata a una neanche del mutuo ventennale mi sono liberato . 41 Notte insonne . Soffia un vento caldo . Sto rincogliamermare questa ipotesi . Le scrivo nel cuore di una notte insonne . Sono tutta indolenzita perché ieri , e . Invece una decina di anni fa - fosse stata una notte insonne , fosse stato un colpo d ' aria - una lie avrebbe potuto donare il sangue . Trascorsi la notte insonne , a rivoltarmi nel letto . La decisione di o dell ' Unione Proletaria , e di aver passato una notte insonne , anche a causa del continuo andirivieni ruppo . Oppure era possibile che Maria , nella sua notte insonne , avesse raggiunto una convinzione ben più ome O ' Dell . Francesca l ' aveva composta in una notte insonne , carezzando la chitarra . Da allora sti qui a bordo della San Marco , in questa rapida notte insonne , danno l ' idea di un esercito italiano aviazione civile . E ' stata , per i Kennedy , una notte insonne , di pianti e preghiere , di disperazione centro : a sera tardi , con la prospettiva di una notte insonne , e nulla di meglio per tenere la mente Scendendo le scale , alle sei di mattina , dopo la notte insonne , ella ebbe cura di tenere gli occhi fissi rone ne comprese tutta la mostruosità . » Passò la notte insonne , gli pareva che la madre lo chiamasse dal i di farla franca , piccolina , ma questa sarà una notte insonne , niente da fare . Basta . Inutile stare a esempio . Era instancabile . Dopo aver passato la notte insonne , la mattina faceva un ' ora di ginnastica i il senso delle mie parole . Ramses trascorse una notte insonne , lo sguardo fisso su un filone di pietra ente salato di quelle lagrime , il tormento di una notte insonne , oppure il lenimento della rassegnazione o agli esiti reali negli altri due centri . E sarà notte insonne , per molti , in attesa dello spoglio di i mise a sedere sul letto ; aveva davanti a sé una notte insonne , piena di sogni a occhi aperti su quanto retendere di competere con il ragioniere ? Qualche notte insonne , qualche stretta al cuore , anche un ghetti " ed una " coppa mista " . SEGRETI Dopo una notte insonne , scendendo le scale di casa per andare al ni del rilassamento . Sguardo sexy Colpevole è una notte insonne , un periodo di stress , il computer

one con la madre , Maria non sentiva il peso della notte insonne : avrebbe voluto cantare , ballare , abbracciare ancora a 7 , senza la Russia) , ma è costata una notte insonne - notte di luna piena , con lampi di tempo iero era ancora in carcere . E nel corso di quella notte insonne - troppe , per la mia breve vita ! - salii come avevo paventato prima del viaggio , durante la notte insonne a Berlino . È la malinconia di questa ala operatoria , bensì per quella accumulata nella notte insonne a casa di Lazar . Era tale la dedizione di scricchiolii a Wall Street hanno provocato qualche notte insonne a parecchie persone . E poi c ' è il una lettera dall ' Etiopia Picos , Piaui , Brasile Notte insonne al Charm Hotel . In questa regione , in Vai avanti , Angelika . La mattina dopo , con una notte insonne alle spalle , si era guardata allo specchio di un blu violaceo , segno non solo di una solita notte insonne collegata con i circuiti di tutto il mondo l ' indomani mattina in aeroporto . Rosa passò la notte insonne con i pugni stretti e le unghie conficcate assato , che l ' altra settimana s ' è beccato una notte insonne da fibrillazione cardiaca per il troppo Così dice Giuseppe Somma , un uomo sfinito da una notte insonne e dalla tensione accumulata . La frana gli diavolo non fosse apparso . Una mattina , dopo una notte insonne e travagliata , tenni dietro alla camminata ndietro , e se per dimenticare gli era servita una notte insonne e un ' ubriacatura , per il cammino ma quella mattina si era svegliata tardi dopo una notte insonne ed era uscita di corsa . Odiava arrivare il giorno a guardare con orrore . Dopo un ' altra notte insonne finalmente se ne chiamò fuori , rimettendone te , ma temeva la risposta . Era possibile che la notte insonne fosse stata provocata dalla conversazione ietro uno di questi Il Lupo aveva passato tutta la notte insonne guardando di fronte verso l ' ala del piano nsistere nel tentativo di dormire * trascorrere la notte insonne guardando la televisione * cercare di tesse . Devo essere a Roma domani . Parto dopo una notte insonne in cui sviscero ogni aspetto del mio ati in quell ' anno , scoprì l ' attrazione di una notte insonne in un caffè , a parlare dei cambiamenti di e gentile . Mi domando cosa posso fare . Dopo una notte insonne la piccina ha fame , il suo volto ha mi . Mio marito andò a casa felice . Io passai una notte insonne ma altrettanto felice . Sapevo che questa zione malsana che avrebbe scaricato durante la sua notte insonne nella casa sul lago , pirateggiando attraverso nsiderare quello che era accaduto . Trascorsi una notte insonne nella quale attraversai una profonda crisi . Un giudice con un passato da Miss , allora . Una notte insonne non ti è bastata per cambiare idea ? " o gli si gettarono addosso coprendolo di baci . La notte insonne passata con Roberta aveva tolto loro la i aspetta e torna a descrivermi i disagi della sua notte insonne per il caldo , per i rumori di certi tram uai . Poi la festa , splendida e insperata , e una notte insonne per la tensione accumulata . Resterà per . Se , una volta all ' anno , mi capita più di una notte insonne per questo o quel motivo , mi è sufficiento , ma ancor irrequieta , condannata a un ' altra notte insonne popolata da incubi a occhi aperti . Anche a mostra di Van Dyck) , hanno stipato nella lunga notte insonne punte di 750 persone , un record anche dire elucubrare , figuratevi il resto ...) ed una notte insonne sono giunto alla verità : MAI ! Mi mpre vincere , ha raccontato il tecnico . Dopo una notte insonne trascorsa a rivedere le immagini della poeti che sanno penetrare l ' insonne volume della notte o attraversare i mari di ghiaccio in una rotta e in una lunga giornata senza senso , in una lunga notte insonne pericolosa e insonne , per un tempo infinito . L ' n Gabriele Albertini diverso quello che , dopo una notte insonne , commenta negli uffici del suo nchè ce n ' era il tempo , con il risultato di una notte insonne nella stanza degli ospiti di un e era stato raggiunto proprio in quella drammatica notte insonne , in via XX Settembre , dai capi

notti 4:4 insonni@

tto contrasto con l ' insonnia patita nelle ultime notti , non feci in tempo a rannicchiarmi che gli ulti
impresa facile . Soffrendo d ' insonnia , passo le notti a rielaborare la memoria come un copywriter di
o e fantasia a mille spartiti , canzoni , piogge , notti d ' insonnia , e che non potrò mai odiarlo ma solo
iziata la sua prostrazione . Vagava smagrito dalle notti di insonnia e dalle giornate di avvilitamenti .
onoscere Irene quanto se stesso . In quelle lunghe notti di insonnia si raccontarono le loro vite . Non
uando Cassio mi aveva consegnato il pugnale le mie notti erano state insonni . Mi chiedevo se l ' assassini
eale - non più la stanchezza vuota e nervosa delle notti insonni . Adesso è una stanchezza dolce , di
bo sulle nostre case , un frastuono che ci procura notti insonni . Auspicavamo , quindi , come membri del
ficio un pó tardi , alle 11 . Sì , passiamo spesso notti insonni . Dicono che soffrite di jetlag , come i
, non aveva più fiducia nella ragazza , passava le notti insonne . Finché , un giorno , quel misterioso
storie felici che Yukiko mi aveva raccontato nelle notti insonni . Insieme a quelle , emerse il suo profilo
amuffate in un sogno pauroso che mi aveva regalato notti insonni . La mia angoscia era dunque lontana ,
ianto . Sentii Anna piangere in silenzio per molte notti insonni . Non riuscivo a starle accanto . Furono i
o quei momenti , tornano a farmi visita durante le notti insonni . Quelle urla hanno vagato nella mia anima
ire al caldo , ma anche là continuai a trascorrere notti insonni . Riuscii a togliermi di dosso quella
ma mi sono alleggerito tantissimo . Sono finite le notti insonni . Sono passati gli incubi . Persino mia
pronunciate e sorrisi forzati , una fisionomia da notti insonni . Un quotidiano parigino , Liberation , ha
e gli attacchi di tosse , i dolori muscolari e le notti insonni . Zia Luna aveva conosciuto questi rimedi
r dire che l ' uomo era passato attraverso diverse notti insonni . - Oh , Zaira ... finalmente ... - Dio
esta volta nel Medio Evo Destinato a farvi passare notti insonni , Age of Empires II - The Age of Kings è
disturbare gli abitanti di nove Comuni MALPENSA - Notti insonni , addio . Dal primo giugno jumbo e cargo
gni dettaglio , chiede una tregua , dopo le lunghe notti insonni , con Joo al fianco , a progettare l ' ope
tutti i colori che lei stessa aveva lavorato nelle notti insonni , con le abili dita che avevano occhi .
portata lontano dal suo focolare domestico , dalle notti insonni , dai lavori fastidiosi , dal marito
mi ripaga di tante lacrime , dei sacrifici , delle notti insonni , dei dispiaceri , di tutto " . E poi come
abbiamo perduto . Non abbiamo perduto . Dopo tante notti insonni , il capitano Claudio avrebbe finalmente
o ... le flebo , le urla della stanza accanto , le notti insonni , la paura ... 31 dicembre , Jean - Pierre
ppetito con i pantaloni ormai larghi in cinta , le notti insonni , le gambe pesanti come il piombo quando
ramente grave e lui l ' avrebbe perduta . Quindici notti insonni , passate a immaginare la sua futura vita
o affrontare il dubbio e la colpa , e ho trascorso notti insonni , perseguitato dai fantasmi degli errori
ello studente - lavoratore che , con gran fatica e notti insonni , raggiunge la laurea e magari il Premio
se l ' è scritto persino sulle magliette : " Basta notti insonni , ridateci la serenità " , o ,
i , a riprodurre le diecimila lire . La banda , in notti insonni , riuscirà a stampare i soldi che però per
are per giornate intere , prendere oppio , passare notti insonni , scrivere decine e decine di abbozzi di l
io , rinunciaste al nostro amore . (r) Trascorsi notti insonni , sempre con il pensiero fisso a quello
già in fase di preparazione Fiesta 16 V , passavo notti insonni , sfogliavo continuamente Elaborare (che
ome quello sui rimpianti , sulle nostalgie , sulle notti insonni , sul desiderio di sicurezza e di protez
a su con gli occhi spalancati : - Mia regina delle notti insonni ! Queste deformi fattezze non mi impedisc

harlotte a quel tempo - le giornate solitarie e le notti insonni - può immaginare a quale tensione nervosa deve aver avuto tutti i problemi che ho io , molte notti insonni » . Che follia : viviamo per un tempo questa storia mi ha provocato soltanto dispiaceri e notti insonni " . Già , come a Gaetano Giaracca , 48 , i miei eserciti sono schierati in Russia e passo notti insonni a chiedermi come andrà a finire » . Io ne mentale , l ' anziano si perda . O che passi le notti insonne a girare per casa . Ecco alcuni piccoli ttacolo della sua carriera . Il giudice passava le notti insonni a lambiccarsi il cervello per capire che anze fredde , niente più ristrettezze , niente più notti insonni a preoccuparti di come farai a tirare lla tesi non era stata lunga , la sua stesura sì : notti insonni a scrivere cartelle e cartelle sulla macch . È l ' odiata colonna sonora che provoca da mesi notti insonni a una quarantina di pazienti dell ' ex no la sala prove autorizzata dal Comune . In più , notti insonni anche per i ricoverati del Sirio , Palme e Il Lupo stava per svegliarsi . L ' abitudine alle notti insonni aveva già avuto ragione del potente l film tv Fabrizio Costa abbia trascorso parecchie notti insonni chiedendosi se era il caso di dare alla fa per voi [http : / / www . wotmud . org](http://www.wotmud.org) Anteprema Notti insonni con Neverwinter Nights Bioware Corp [http :](http://www.bioware.com) quella nuova partorita in gran fretta dopo lunghe notti insonni di Rory Byrne e degli altri 27 maghi che siderazione ? A questo interrogativo che popola le notti insonni di molti maturandi la risposta è sì . " ntri di redazione , qualche litigata , sei mesi di notti insonni davanti al computer , ore e ore al ciclos ' animo . Pertanto , benché fossi sfinito da tante notti insonni decisi di risparmiare loro la mia angoscia ecnico il benchmark , quel numeretto che domina le notti insonni dei gestori coscienziosi . Ai primi tre " Johann Sebastian Bach : composte per alleviare le notti insonni del conte Keyserling , a quasi tre secoli a Germania : come menava , quello Stielicke ... Le notti insonni di Tardelli . L ' eleganza e l ' esempio i minuti . Gli farà bene dormire . Ha sempre avuto notti insonni dietro i suoi monitor . Sempre senza pace ede mi rappresentava innanzi agli occhi . Giorni e notti insonni dovrebbero aver permesso a Galileo di morale . Le marce , i pessimi accantonamenti , le notti insonni affaticano allo spasimo i corpi che non ybernauti ? Individui un pò bizzarri che consumano notti insonni davanti allo schermo per il solo gusto di no sotto forma di cefalee con nausea e di dolorose notti insonni e agitate . Essa non insiste su questo mal di denti , il mal di denti una successione di notti insonni e angoscie ; la prolungata mancanza di abitano alla compagnia , a orari pazzeschi , alle notti insonni e alle baldorie negli hot club di tutto il lo a quella donna gracile e sofferente che passava notti insonni e lunghi periodi in sanatorio . E si disps e dintorni . Che è costretta a vivere ancora oggi notti insonni nel frastuono tribale che proviene dall ' ano le partite a scacchi con il dottor ackermann . notti insonni nella sala di guardia . donne che gemono e nni l ' eroismo della sconfitta . Durante le prime notti insonni nelle stanze lussuose e gelide che erano invece fargli brutalmente ricordare ore di ansia e notti insonni passate a cercare un baco (o de bug) . sposta era nella macchina dell ' amore , stanco di notti insonni passate da solo . Adesso finalmente si era to di anni di annosi (allitterazione) tormenti e notti insonni passate ad arrovellarsi il cervello cerca potesse assisterlo , in cui aveva trascorso le sue notti insonni per i tormenti degli inganni subiti , Senza quel bel colorito rosso - gambero e senza le notti insonni per il dolore ? È un ritratto impietoso /1997 Lazzaro Claudio - PUBBLICATO - LE PROTESTE . Notti insonni per il montaggio del palco . E in tanti e la camorra impone in questa terra insanguinata . Notti insonni per le forze dell ' ordine . Devono garant omanda : " e se fosse colpa mia ? " . (r) Quante notti insonni per mio figlio che rimaneva senza padre , a . Angle Street QUELLA notte e la seguente furono notti insonni per Sam Peebles . Sdraiato sul letto con

a , il risveglio al mattino sempre più presto dopo notti sempre più insonni con un inspiegabile senso di ... » Quanto poco sapeva quest ' uomo ! Ora le sue notti insonni sarebbero trascorse a chiedersi come come la lama di un coltello . E io che passavo le notti insonni sdraiata accanto a lui , tremando e in grazia di Dio ; e la voce diventata rauca nelle notti insonni si era levata sempre più forte : " Te Deum giardino . Questa notte non ho chiuso occhio . Le notti insonni sono ormai la regola della mia vita . Pen quasi le due . I pensieri che si fanno durante le notti insonni sono un po ' strani . Vagano nel buio e a di guarire . L ' amavo così tanto , che anche le notti insonni trascorse a pensare quanto mi mancava era na spossatezza più profonda : per tre giorni e tre notti pressoché insonni si era trovato di fronte , per che però mi appartiene e che rende insonni le mie notti quando dall ' alto della torre del serraglio cerco utissimo nei giorni dell ' adolescenza , le lunghe notti tormentate dall ' insonnia , le molte lacrime

notte/i + agitata/e

mo fatti così . » Provai a dormire , ma passai una notte agitata . Le luci del parcheggio filtravano dalla lei partì , per un paio di settimane Freeman passò notti agitate . Poi , spinto da un impulso , una sera azza giornata . La mattina , appena desti dopo una notte agitata , affacciandoci alla finestra troviamo il , la madre morta di 3 Jane , familiare dopo tante notti agitate , anche se Angie sa che è Brigitte che quasi tre ore per arrivare a casa . Trascorse una notte agitata , cercando di immaginare che cosa poteva net . A quella sera irreale fece seguito una lunga notte agitata , popolata di incubi . Come avrei fatto a osa fosse non avrebbe saputo dirlo . Adesso le sue notti agitate cominciarono a popolarsi di sogni orribili a bocca in giù nel proprio rigurgito . Durante una notte agitata da sogni ferali , attribuiva le sue iante conflitto , tornava in forma spettrale nelle notti agitate del nostro Ardito . Tuttavia Paolo anelava conosciuto giovani che per anni hanno condiviso le notti agitate delle nonne , senza lamentarsi piú di spesso soffrono di cefalea , russano , trascorrono notti agitate e sono facili al risveglio improvviso con

APPENDIX 4A

Frequencies of basic colour terms in 3 versions of the Bank of English (1997-2003)

329m (1997)		400m (2001)		450m (2003)	
1 white 108638	2 black 103684	1 white 136493	2 black 129727	1 white 142084	2 black 132407
3 red 54527		3 red 77736		3 red 81925	
4 green 45541		4 green 58845		4 green 62421	
5 blue 38566	6 brown 37730	5 brown 55541	6 blue 50645	5 brown 61029	6 blue 54775
7 grey/gray 20194		7 grey/gray 26141		7 grey/gray 28317	
8 yellow 15527		8 yellow 21068		8 yellow 22872	
9 orange 11155	10 pink 11665	9 orange 14728	10 pink 15758	9 orange 15841	10 pink 16687
11 purple 4784		11 purple 6190		11 purple 6674	

APPENDIX 4B

The meanings of colours in colour-word expressions

<i>colour</i>	<i>meaning</i>	<i>examples</i>
BLACK	colour	<i>in black and white, nero su bianco, camicia nera</i>
	dirt	<i>pot calling the kettle black</i>
	misfortune	<i>miseria nera, periodo nero, crisi nera, fare un quadro nero della situazione</i>
	malice	<i>black sheep of the family, pecora nera della famiglia, (not) as black as you are painted, anima nera, bestia nera, black humour umorismo nero, far vedere bianco per nero</i>
	depression	<i>pensiero nero, umor nero, vedere tutto nero</i>
	illegality	<i>black market, mercato nero, lavoro nero</i>

WHITE	colour	<i>white elephant</i>
	purity	<i>white lie, white wedding, whiter than white, passare una notte in bianco, matrimonio bianco</i>
	white = blank	<i>dare carta bianca a qn, carte blanche, di punto in bianco</i>

RED	colour	<i>red herring, go red, diventare rosso in viso, red sky at night shepherd's delight, rosso di sera bel tempo si spera</i>
	warning	<i>red flag</i>
	importance	<i>red letter day, roll out the red carpet, red tape</i>
	finance	<i>bleed red ink, in the red/ out of the red, red cent</i>
	passion	<i>paint the town red, red light, luce rossa,</i>
	blood	<i>catch sb red-handed, red in tooth and claw</i>
	anger	<i>see red, red rag to a bull, rosso di rabbia</i>
	fervour	<i>bandiera rossa, camicia rossa</i>
	fire	<i>linea rossa</i>

GREEN	colour	<i>get the green light</i>
	plant life	<i>green fingers/thumb, be green, avere il pollice verde</i>
	youth	<i>be green</i>
	envy	<i>green with envy, green-eyed monster, verde età</i>

YELLOW	colour	<i>yellow press</i>
	cowardice	<i>yellow bellied, yellow streak</i>
	envy	<i>giallo di invidia</i>
	crime	<i>libro/film/romanzo giallo</i>

BLUE	colour	<i>black and blue, blue moon</i>
	sky	<i>into the wide blue yonder, like a bolt from the blue/ out of the blue</i>
	water	<i>clear blue water, between the Devil and the deep blue sea,</i>
	colour of face	<i>blue in the face</i>
	depression	<i>feel blue/ have the blues</i>
	fear	<i>scream blue/bloody murder, fifa blu</i>

GREY	colour	<i>grey matter, materia grigia</i>
	vagueness	<i>grey area, zona grigia</i>
	mundanity	<i>esistenza grigia</i>
	age	<i>grey eminence/ éminence grise, eminenza grigia</i>

PINK	colour	<i>go pink (in the face)</i>
	positivity	<i>tickled pink, in the pink, vedere tutto rosa</i>
	romance	<i>cronaca rosa, letteratura rosa, romanzo rosa, scandalo rosa</i>

PURPLE	colour	--
	extravagance	<i>purple passage/ patch, purple prose</i>

APPENDIX 5A

25 random concordance lines: catch@ red-handed

reports that `25 motorists who were caught red-handed by traffic-men in the Corniche while practising
A prominent Chart Thai supporter was caught red-handed in a house stacked high with small-denomination
possible". <p> The gang was finally caught red-handed in an armed police ambush in September 1992 as t
tion. PC Stephen Margiotta, 41, was caught red-handed on a secret video camera installed at Romford, E
ve deterrent. `Before we had to catch them red-handed raiding the nest," he said. `Otherwise once they
n his allotment shed to catch the culprits red-handed. <p> But instead of finding vandals during his v
sh Province who time and again were caught red-handed as they were driven back by a more powerful and
is tricky - unless the thieves are caught red-handed. <p> Even if they are caught, they are lightly r
ces Minister Glen) came out and caught him red-handed with his brush and tin. <p> A special Inner meet
and I ended up catching the future king red-handed with his mistress. <p> The house was in darkness
operation aimed at catching whale-killers red-handed, Australians and New Zealanders have reason to t
aste of time and money, when you're caught red-handed with the chicken in your hands, so to speak. <p>
this morning after allegedly being caught `red handed" with 200g of marijuana. <p> Borallon general ma
H: Two 17-year-old youths have been caught red-handed trying to place 1000 illegal bets in a sting whic
achlan had to resign because he was caught red-handed trying to fit up a Minister for something that h
h. <p> VINE T A bandit was caught red-handed, ran away, was captured, and then threw himself t
ather than an embezzler and a thief caught red-handed. <p> Modern banking was legitimised. <p> Unlike
front. <p> He ran out and caught the boy `red-handed". <p> I didn't hit him hard," Mr Sorgel said. <p>
light and believed she'd caught a culprit red-handed. <p> As a head came out of the pipe, she grabbed
EVISE # <p> Page # 23 Caught painting town red-handed By PETER HANSEN HIDDEN cameras planted on Brisba
garden wall to steal apples and was caught red-handed by the owner, George Bernard Shaw. <p> The playw
g operation. <p> The Americans were caught red-handed and five were expelled. <p> As a result, the who
they had seized from PRI officials caught red-handed. <p> Or is sticky-fingered? The sweets had a gre
nd eventually catch drug syndicate members red-handed. <p> The man has produced documents which show p
ally taking six days. <p> You've caught us red-handed," a spokesman said. <p> Our typists put in a wor

APPENDIX 5B

25 random concordance lines: catch@ in flagrante delicto

raph PA <p> News 1 <h> The List </h> <p> IN FLAGRANTE DELICTO: Howard Hughes and Bette Davis were caught papers about the headmaster being caught in flagrante delicto with, how shall I put it, a woman of ill-r nothing better than catching celebrities in flagrante delicto just ask EastEnders star Gillian Taylforth the famous businessman found by his wife in flagrante delicto. <p> What can I do to make it up? <p> Woul the famous businessman found by his wife in flagrante delicto. `What can I do to make it up? <p> Would y the famous businessman found by his wife in flagrante delicto. <p> What can I do to make it up? <p> Woul leniency shown to a senior officer found in flagrante delicto in the car park at Roma Street headquarter ained fame this year when she was caught in flagrante delicto with British actor Hugh Grant during a cut it at the time. My woman has often said, in flagrante delicto, `Tell me what it's like. <p> What does it claim to have seen Caroline and Pergami in flagrante delicto on a sofa was too frightened to come to Lo e for maths is that Mrs Nobel was caught in flagrante delicto with a mathematician. It's an intriguing n to, but he wrongly thought he caught her in flagrante delicto with an old boyfriend, Leonardo, because s dog, a German shepherd. She caught them in flagrante delicto." <p> What, the record guy and the dog?" s ot leave Carl there and then, discovered in flagrante delicto as we were, and go off and live with him i econdly, the man had caught young Gordon in flagrante delicto with one of the mill-girls; there had been unds that his wife had been photographed in flagrante delicto. In other words, she thought, we were caug ith one Lambert Plaidy; being discovered in flagrante delicto by Sir Edwin, and in the Rice family four- ou've caught your father and brother <f> in flagrante delicto, <f> shall we say, it makes it awkward for in `Birds of America" showed three jays `in flagrante delicto", stolen egg in beak. Yet the handsome cre nerators, he has not yet caught a circle in flagrante delicto. <p> Such failure is hardly news among the ime motets who killed his wife and lover in flagrante delicto. <p> Mr Bletschacher was amazed by the spe experiences. Ruby's father is discovered in flagrante delicto in the backyard while family and neighbour <p> When Alicia finds Vanessa and Fergus in flagrante delicto on the college high table, she decides to ogical, if Ms March and Mr Leung are not in flagrante delicto then it's as near the knuckle as makes no members of the upper class being caught in flagrante delicto (on the job) with guardsmen in the public

APPENDIX 5C

25 random concordance lines: catch@ in the act

cover on a cookery course in Co Kildare to catch an adulteress in the act amid the rising
tons of the stuff before we could arrive and catch them in the act. What the early Spanish
</hl> <subh> Switched on - Molecular cages catch genes in the act </subh> <bl> By LILA
again so they <ZF1> could <ZF0> could actually catch them in the act you know I thought No way I'm
luck than by design because it is difficult to catch the criminals in the act, Dr Pyle said.
plan to extort money from Joy and, if he was, catch him in the act? On November 3, Chertoff
The rape crisis controversy, tic talk, and catching warts in the act. By James Le Fanu <p> Trial
recorded on camera, meaning the offenders were caught in the act. But they were never arrested.
came to rotate so fast. Now they have caught one in the act of being spun CAMBRIDGE,
location in Italy to film the pasta actually caught in the act of growing. Not to be outdone (or
movies in, say, The Pretty Stenographer; or, Caught in the Act: New York studio - 26 feet - An
into the woodwork." <p> Are you a member of Caught in the Act?" Marsha asked the newcomer. <p>
from committing the perfect crime, he'd been caught in the act, said Mr. Bevan, leaving behind
by 25 per cent. <h> Science: Airborne elves caught in the act </h> By BOB HOLMES <p>
My Soul - Modern Talking 10 Baby Come Back - Caught In The Act Australia 1 Never Ever - All
s cheeks when she relives the moment she was caught in the act on a sun-lounger in Cuba! Karen, a
or lewd and libidinous behaviour -- if she was caught in the act. A spokeswoman said: `It might
with police. <p> Some were armed looters caught in the act; others died in a crossfire of
how hard you listened for it could never be caught in the act. Once He looked at me through the
me that young man you were brought in with was caught in the act with the weapon still in his
Barrie Goulding, maker of the £10.99 video Caught in the Act, said yesterday he wanted to fuel
features included first-person experiences, caught-in-the-act" security video-grabs and coverage
s highly controversial CCTV video compilation Caught in the Act! went on sale yesterday. mps and
What could look cooler than our Neon Cat Lamp caught in the act of slinking across your bedroom,
Federal District police who claimed to have caught them in the act of rape and sexual assault of

APPENDIX 5D

25 random concordance lines: catch@ in the act of..

program.³⁴ States staged "midnight raids" to catch welfare mothers in the act of receiving "male have begun to perform experiments designed to catch the human brain in the act of "seeing", or in says that in the future it may be possible to catch the rocks in the act of moving. But this will will peer into the dust of distant nebulae to catch stars in the act of forming; it will examine sherries officer John Ellis said: "You need to catch them in the act of actually stealing. Anyone that have planets in the right plane, and catching the planets in the act of passing in front was the personification of Shearer's tirade, caught in the act of helping himself. It was an the first time a galaxy-sized thing has been caught in the act of forming," said James Gunn, a would not be guilty of a crime unless he were caught in the act of filming or photographing a dollars for the apprehension of any soldier caught in the act of incendiarism. Though Slocum into her purse and gazed across the room. Caught in the act of watching them, the blonde dictated that it would be a big mistake to be caught in the act of climbing up the wooden arms by to keep what he had seen to himself: he had caught her in the act of rolling down the little red over 14,000 copies. Security officers caught some students in the act of stealing, but no unlikely name of Milky Boy. Mojammed Jan was caught in the act of stealing, and one of his men Want some nice examples of famous scientists caught in the act of trying to have things both was accidental. <p> Perhaps the theropod was caught in the act of pillaging a <p> nest of eggs, of the educational process, that, if you are caught engaging in the act of, you will be punished. o Camera was slim, young, and had indeed been caught in the act of turning: a handsome profile, like betraying himself. However, having been caught in the act of stealing he had to rethink his sexual script makes it easy for a man to get caught up in the act of performing. At the same oticed nothing? She felt like a naughty child caught in the act of some terrible misdemeanour. The Wilson, said: "John was shot and killed while caught in the act of committing a hot-prowl ail's idea of paradise. A prominent Labour MP caught in the act of not practising what the party sober for life, a dedicated reform politician caught in the act of being human in a milieu where Federal District police who claimed to have caught them in the act of rape and sexual assault of

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