



# CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH, RUSSIAN, AND HEBREW IDIOMS WITH LEXEME “GREY»

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**Abstract.** According to the article's aim to study English, Russian, and Hebrew idioms with the lexeme grey-gray / серый / צהוב (GRIS), a number of equivalents, original and unique GRIS were explored, the presented meanings of GRIS were organized into associative chains, then in microsystems, and the similarities and differences of trilingual GRIS were singled out. In the investigation, an extensive review of scientific literature in English and Russian was made and methods of qualitative-quantitative, semantic, and cultural-linguistic analysis in the framework of cognitive linguistics, color linguistics, and modern phraseology were used. The study consists of two main sections: Equivalent Grey Idioms (A. Optical color of natural objects and artificial objects; B. Mental and ethical problems) and Original, Unique GRIS. The quantitative and qualitative GRIS analysis convincingly proves an extensive basis for communication of multisystem linguistic and cultural groups, the intensity of interethnic communication in the 21st century, as well as the contribution of unique GRIS to the world linguistic culture. Optically grey color is between black and white, and, accordingly, GRIS are intermediate between black and white idioms, but are closer to black idioms. The article deals with the lexical-semantic polysemy of GRIS, and the metaphor “grey zone” that describes something intermediate, new, controversial, vague, not yet classified and regulated, and is intensively used in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in technology, computer science, economics, trade, law, social work, medicine, morality, literature, and diplomacy. The work results will help in educational and translation practice, compiling dictionaries, and creating a base for automatic translation of phraseological units. The research also contributes to intercultural communication, psycholinguistics, cultural studies, cognitive and comparative linguistics.

**Keywords:** English, Russian, Hebrew, grey color idioms, linguistics of color terms, contrastive linguistics, L2, automatic translation

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# СОПОСТАВИТЕЛЬНЫЙ АНАЛИЗ АНГЛИЙСКИХ, РУССКИХ И ИВРИТСКИХ ИДИОМ С ЛЕКСЕМОЙ «СЕРЫЙ»

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**Аннотация.** В соответствии с поставленной в статье целью изучить идиоматические единицы с лексемой «серый» в английском, русском языке и иврите, был проведён количественный анализ эквивалентных, оригинальных и уникальных идиом с лексемой «серый» (далее GRIS); представленные значения GRIS были организованы в ассоциативные цепочки, затем в микро-системы, проанализированы сходства и различия трёхязычных GRIS. В исследовании приведён обширный обзор научной литературы на английском и русском языках и использованы методы качественного и количественного, семантического и культурно-лингвистического анализа в рамках когнитивной лингвистики, цветолингвистики и современной фразеологии. Исследование состоит из двух основных разделов: Эквивалентные идиомы (А. Оптический цвет природных и искусственных объектов; В. Психические и этические проблемы) и Оригинальные, уникальные GRIS. Количественный и качественный анализ GRIS убедительно доказывает обширную основу для общения разносистемных лингвокультурных групп, интенсивность межнационального общения в XXI веке, а также вклад уникальных GRIS в мировую лингвокультуру. Оптически серый цвет находится между чёрным и белым, и, соответственно, GRIS занимают промежуточное положение между «чёрными» и «белыми» фразеологизмами, но ближе находятся к «чёрным» фразеологизмам. В статье рассматривается лексико-семантическая полисемия GRIS, а также метафора «серая зона», описывающая нечто промежуточное, новое, спорное, расплывчатое, ещё не классифицированное и не регламентированное и интенсивно используемая в XXI веке в сфере техники, компьютерных наук, экономики, торговли, права, социальной работы, медицины, морали, литературы и дипломатии. Результаты работы могут быть использованы в учебной и переводческой практике, составлении словарей, создании базы для автоматического перевода фразеологизмов. Исследование также вносит вклад в межкультурную коммуникацию, психоллингвистику, культурологию, когнитивную и сравнительную лингвистику.

**Ключевые слова:** английский язык, русский язык, иврит, идиомы с лексемой «серый» (GRIS), лингвистика цвета, контрастивная лингвистика, усвоение второго языка, автоматический перевод

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The article aims to investigate idioms with the lexeme grey-gray (American English) / серый / אפור (hereby – GRIS) and to fill a gap in the contrastive trilingual study of grey idioms (GRIS) and especially in investigating Hebrew grey idioms.

Color in a language is subcategorized by a set of interrelated vocabulary items. Grayscale or achromatic scale is the collection or the range of monochromic (gray) shades, ranging from pure white on the lightest end to pure black on the opposite end [19].

According to the Berlin & Kay theory of basic color designations [12], the basic colors in language evolution appear in such sequence: achromatic dark-cool, and light-warm (a larger set of colors, in English “black” and “white”), then red, either green or yellow, both green and yellow, blue, brown, purple, pink, and on the seventh stage – orange or gray.

In the opinion of S. Moutsios, a genuine curiosity, and high esteem for the intellectual activity of other cultures gave lain at the heart of the comparative inquiry .[27]

The 21st century requires effective intensive intercultural communication, and knowledge of idioms as the important vocabulary layer in oral, writing, and communication with native speakers contributes that making an emotional, persuasive, colorful, and metaphorical speech. Nowadays, automatic translation, or software for translating a text in a short time with little human effort, doesn't supply the translation of the idioms because of word-for-word translation, syntactic complexity, and lack prior choice of style and translation scope [9]. A growing need for L2 studying and automatic translation from many languages make our study relevant and important.

Cognitive science is an interdisciplinary science that draws on such fields as psychology, artificial intelligence, linguistics, and philosophy in developing theories about human perception, thinking, and learning [14] and it is the framework for this study as part of the Linguistics of Color Terms [21] and also of Contrastive Linguistics which deals with identifying differences and similarities in the structure of at least two languages or dialects [15].

According to Wezhbitskaya [33], language reflects the conceptualization of color designations, through language it is possible to understand the linguistic picture of the world, a kind of picture of the world, historically formed in the ordinary consciousness of the linguistic community [11]. The linguistic picture of the world is a set of ideas about the world embodied in the meaning of different linguistic units such as lexical units, set phrases, certain syntactic constructions, etc., which form a single system of views or prescriptions [4]. Kövecses considers some conceptual metaphors in different languages to be almost universal or potentially universal [26].

Mulder and Hervey [28] considered a language as a “system of systems” because it is made up of interdependent small language units that are units that become complete only when they are combined. The main premise of this concept is that the diversity of the form of a language requires the study of each of its multifunctional subsystems or microsystems [18]. A microsystem is a self-contained subsystem located within a larger system that constitutes the smallest unit of analysis in systems theory.

Microsystem linguistic analysis is based on the postulate that a language can be divided into separate systems small enough, but also complete, to be able to work together that can be analyzed by man and machine because the interaction of different subsystems is a property of the language.

One of the basic concepts of lexicology is a *semantic field* that denotes a segment of reality, symbolized by a set of related words, characterized by the connection of words or their meanings, the systemic nature of these connections, the interdependence and interdefinability of lexical units, the relative autonomy of fields, the continuity of the semantic space, visibility and psychological reality for the average native speaker [8], [31]. In the lexical-semantic field, micro fields are distinguished – semantic associations, the members of which are connected by an integral feature, usually expressed by the dominant of the micro field (nuclear lexeme), and the structure of the field consists of the core and the near and far periphery. Due to the influence of the method of component analysis [13], semantic fields have been seen as a subsystem of a particular language characterized by relationships with other units of phonological, morphological, derivational, syntactic, lexical, and semantic systems [8].

A. Zhukov [3] considered also phraseology a system and analyzed its systemic connections both external (relationships of variance, synonymy, semantic convergence, hyponymy, thematic unity, phraseological variance, and optionality, synonymy with other phraseological units) and internal (paradigmatic and syntagmatic).

Thus, as a result of the interaction of linguistics and other sciences, the term “microsystem” is increasingly used to describe language processes. Some color linguists already use the term “microsystem” in Russian, Ukrainian, English, and Kirgiz phraseological analysis [1, p. 7], [6, p.405], [7, p. 289]. In this study, GRIS is considered as a system of three parts, the elements of which are chains of associations [16],

defined as an associative field (or group of associations) to designate a set of lexical units that exhibit a certain similarity of form or meaning.

As a result, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century there are many studies on English color metaphors [10], [20], contrastive works on English and Italian [29]; English, Russian and Japanese [5]; English, Deutsch, and Mari [34]; and Polish, Portuguese, Spanish [30]. Especially interesting for this work are the studies of Thinard on English GRIS [32] and Denisenko on Russian GRIS [2] while there is no data on Hebrew GRIS.

GRIS occupy an insignificant share in the total number of color phraseological units (6 times less than the number of black phraseological units, according to research data), and they have a similar frequency in English (3-4 %) and Russian (2%) [5, p. 308–309], [34, p. 34].

This work is part of the project “Contrastive Analysis of English, Russian and Hebrew Idioms” (Kigel, Green Idioms [22]; Red Idioms [23]; Blue Idioms [24]; Gold, and Silver Idioms [25]; in the press – Contrastive Analysis of English, Russian and Hebrew White, Black, Yellow and Secondary Color Terms Idioms.

## 2. Methodology

The work is aimed at studying the trilingual GRIS, so the key research issues that need to be addressed are the following: to identify modern English, Russian, and Hebrew GRIS, count the number of equivalents and unique GRIS in each language; organize associative chains of GRIS meanings, and integrate them into microsystems.

For the study tasks, the following methods were used in the work: linguistic description, the comparative method, as well as the method of component analysis of the phraseological units.

In our work, we followed the following procedure. At the initial stage, GRIS lists and their meanings were created from electronic explanatory and phraseological dictionaries and an Internet token search. After comparing trilingual GRIS, identifying equivalents and original idioms, GRIS were classified into associative chains, microsystems, and three key major conceptual groups. In the next stage, quantitative analysis and a discussion of the results were carried out. Finally, the study results were summed up.

The results of the work should be used in the educational process (teaching and learning L2), human and automatic translation, lexicographic and lexicological work, and intercultural communication.

They will contribute to further linguistic research in studying phraseological microsystems in unrelated and structurally distant languages, and help comparative linguistics, psycholinguistics, cognitive, cultural linguistics, and translation theory.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Equivalent trilingual GRIS

#### A. Natural object's color

**Physical objects:** grey body radiation / излучение серого тела / קרינת גוף אפור (physics, an imperfect black body, partially absorbs incident electromagnetic radiation; a black body absorbs all the electromagnetic radiation vs a white body reflects all incident radiation uniformly in all directions).

**Fauna:** grey as mouse / серый как мышь / אפור כמו עכבר; a grey cat ran / серая кошка пробежала (Russian – чёрная / black, an unexpected quarrel); all cats are grey at night / ночью все кошки серые / כל החתולים אפורים בלילה (an alternative is not clear because of lack sufficient knowledge).

**Weather:** grey day, grey weathered, the grey of the dawn (predawn haze), grey morning / серый день серое утро, серая погода, серые дали / יום, אפור שמים אפורים (overcast, cloudy, overcast, inclement).

**Human body:** grey cells, grey matter / серые клетки, серое вещество / אפור תאים אפורים חומר אפור (cerebral convolutions, intelligence); grey-faced, grey out / серое лицо от боли, весь серый / פנים אפורות (impairment of cerebral circulation, a transient dimming, haziness of vision resulting from temporary); the grey face with pain/лицо посерело от боли (the face dull, drawn, wan, worn from grief, fatigue.); greyish or blue skin / сероватая кожа, серовато-синяя кожа / עור אפור בהיר (pallor, a lack of oxygenated blood to the discolored area).



### Artificial object's color

**Comparison:** grey as ash, smoke, asphalt / серый как пепел, дым, асфальт / עשן, אפר כמו אפר, אספלט.

**Textiles:** grey yarn / серая пряжа (coarse, unworked). **Clothing:** dressed in a grey, grey suit / одетый в серый, серый костюм, серый (grey, official, inexpressive; Russian-police officer, crime control department).

**Metallurgy:** grey iron / серый литейный чугун / ברזל אפור (cast iron, the grey color of the fracture because of graphite).

**Public utilities:** grey-water / серая вода / מים אפורים (reused, from washing machines, dishwashers, sinks, showers, bathtubs, for garden irrigation, mopping).

### B. Human Activity

**Medicine:** grey area (science, medicine, English, the struggle with uncertainty, a continuous adaptation of practice to new information); серая медицина (Russian, commercial medicine vs state medicine; aesthetic medicine, fake clinics, self-taught doctors without medical education and licenses; fitness equipment, supplies); רפואה אפורה (grey or black medicine, VIP attitude thanks to presents, donations, goods).

**Sex:** a grey person, grey-a, grey-asexuality / серый асексуал, серая асексуальность / מיניות אפורה (spectrum of asexuality and sexuality: no sexual attraction; rare sex desire); Fifty Shades of Grey / пятьдесят оттенков серого / אפור של גוונים חמישים (erotic romance novel, film about such sexual practices as Sado-Mazo).

**Psychoactive substances (drugs):** Grey death / серая смерть / מוות אפור (slang, a potent mixture of synthetic opioids).

**Economy:** grey market / серый рынок, серый бизнес / שוק אפור (not quite legal, not completely illegal; unofficial, not illegal; sale of legally goods – cameras, cars, watches, computer games, pharmaceuticals – by unauthorized dealers without brands permission; Hebrew, a financing system operates outside the institutionalized financial system); grey import / серый импорт / שוק יבוא אפור (parallel import through free official channels counterfeit imported goods); grey market goods / серые товары / סחורות השוק האפור (parallel import, commonly branded goods from one market, country, economic area subsequently imported into another market to sell without the owner's consent); grey market loans / кредиты на сером рынке / הלוואות שוק אפור (for borrowers which are refused by a bank to lend them money because of the risk; aggressive collection, physical threats); a grey market security / серый рынок ценных бумаг (over-the-counter transactions in securities before the official release into circulation); grey wave / серая волна (today's investment will only bear fruit when the investor's hair turns grey); grey scheme / серая схема (legal but frowned-upon scheme to work); grey goods, grey appliances / серая продукция, серая техника, серый товар / אפורה סחורה (e-commerce, electronic goods at below average market prices, without warranty, non-localized software vs white law goods with warranty, repair, replacement, loyalty to the buyer); grey knight / серый рыцарь / אביר אפור (a person or firm that makes a company a desirable takeover bid on better terms than an unacceptable and undesirable offer from a black knight).

**Employment:** grey salary / серая зарплата, работать в серую (income, only partially reported for tax, it issued the rest in an envelope); grey zona, grey area / серый район, серая зона / שטח אפור, תחום אפור (the social relations between actors and institutions, labor standards and status distinctions among working people, precarious working, nonstandard forms of work, unemployment, unclearly, debatably).

**Professionals:** grey collar / серый воротничок / צווארון אפור (combining the white-collar and blue-collar workforce; English, Russian – social infrastructure, service industries; Hebrew – indirectly engaging in the production quality auditors, warehousemen, working in a manual labor environment).

**Law:** grey law / серый закон / בחוק אפור (without law or precedent; the law has not been applied, doubtful whether and how it can be applied).

**Computers, devices:** grey list / серый список / רשימה אפורה (undesirable, unreliable, then the blacklisted); grey box, grey box model / серый ящик, серая коробка / קופסה אפורה (mathematics, statistics, computational; both insight into the system and experimental data with unknown parameters vs black box with unknown model form or purely theoretical white-box models); grey-box testing /

тестирование серого ящика / בדיקת קופסא אפורה (a technique for discovering software bugs with underlying software limited knowledge to fix, patch, prevent malicious attackers from utilizing these exploits; blended method of a white box, full-knowledge, and black box, no-knowledge); grey software, a grey area of software / серое программное обеспечение / תוכנות אפורות (trusted apps and malware together, suspicious, unwanted apps, advertisements, activities, mine cryptocurrency); grey SEO / серое SEO / קידום אתרים אפור (search engine optimization to increase a page's rankings, spectrum between white SEO and black SEO, black masquerading as white); grey goo / серая слизь / עיסה אפורה (popular press or science fiction, global catastrophic scenario in which out-of-control self-replicating nano robots will consume all the Earth's biomass, carrying out their self-reproduction program).

**Mail:** graymail / серая почта (mass bulk email, periodic newsletters, announcements, advertisements targeted; Russian, unpaid, unaccounted postage).

**Literature:** grey character (culture, art, literature, English – not completely good or evil, wobble between hero and villain; Russian – boring character); grey literature / серая литература / ספרות אפורה (publications through nontraditional distribution channels, academia, government departments, agencies, civil society, non-governmental organizations, academic centers, departments, private companies, consultants, non-commercial sources scientific, technical public information as reports, working papers, government documents, organizations).

**Conflict, confrontation:** grey zone / серая область / תחום אפור, אזור אפור (border war zone; competitive interactions between and within state and non-state actors that are between the traditional duality of war and peace, no-man's-land between warring parties, military zone of special status, smuggling, uncertainty about the future); grey war, grey space, grey zone strategy, grey activities / серая война (between normal state relations and armed conflict; cyber conflict, English, U.S., confrontation strategies, harassment of the victim state, hybrid warfare, undermining the economy, political stability and morale of the population; struggling with an implicit rival in conditions of uncertainty; Russian – globalize terrorism and organized crime); grey diplomats (warships, between diplomacy and intimidation, diplomacy from a strength position).

### C. Mental and Ethical Issues

**Depressing, pessimistic, gloomy, dismal:** to look grey (to look dull), grey thoughts / серая тоска / מוצב רוח אפור (grey longing, hopeless).

**Boring, monotonous, ordinary, unattractive, similar to other others:** a gray life, gray existence / серая жизнь, серое существование / חיים אפורים; серые будни, серая суета / gray days, gray work (monotonous, weekdays, vanity, dull, unpleasant, low quality).

**Anonymous, faceless, lacking individuality:** gray man, little gray men in suits / серая личность, серенькие человечки / טיפוס אפור; greyness / серость (a feeling that nothing is interesting or exciting); all cats are gray in the night / ночью все кошки серы.

**Hidden, invisible, unofficial:** grey eminence, grey man / серый кардинал, серый человек / קרדינל אפור (a shadow of an actual true ruler, Hebrew-transliteration גרדינל גריי); someone in grey / некто в сером (mysterious, indefinite personality, secret organizer, leader of terrorists).

**Psychology:** the grey rock method / техника серого камня, метод серой скалы / שיטת הסלע האפור (strategy for interacting with manipulative, abusive people, become unresponsive, boring, similar to a rock); office relations grey area/ серая зона офисных отношений (ambiguous, "frenemy", a cross between friend and enemy).

**Moral, ethics:** grey morality / серая мораль / מוסר אפור (moral dilemma, the vague boundary between good and evil as in euthanasia vs. black & white morality); black-grey morality / чёрно-серая мораль / מוסר שחור אפור (computer games, no good, only Evil); white-grey morality / бело-серая мораль / מוסר לבן אפור (computer games, it is Good, but there is no Evil); grey-grey morality / серо-серая мораль / מוסר אפור אפור (computer games, every side not good nor Evil).

**Lying & Deception:** grey area of lying and deception / серая область публичных отношений (PR, the lack of a clear solution, hard in recognizing the right thing, between truth and lies vs Black & White Areas).

**Unexpected:** a grey rhino / серый носорог / קרנף אפור (politics, expertise, investments, predictable crisis) parallel with the elephant in the room and black swan, extreme rarity events with severe impact, that were obvious in hindsight.

### 3. 2. Original and Unique GRIS

**English. Hair color and older generation:** grey-haired, grey-bearded, old grey hairs, grey-haired old man (vs white, already, old age; Russian – седой, седовласый; Hebrew – שָׁעַר כָּסוּף); to go grey, to become grey (Russian – поседеть; Hebrew – לְהִכָּסִיף (to become or turn grey); pensioners: grey nomad (Australian elderly person traveling in a motorhome); grey voice; grey economy (Australia and New Zealand, lobbying groups for the elderly people, USA – Grey Panthers, countering ageism); Grey Power (organization of welfare and well-being of the elderly); grey pound (purchasing power of the elderly against the pink pound); **Miscellaneous:** shades of grey (struggle against child abuse, imminent danger, risk of harm or injury); grey car (from another country, need to register in the US); grey job (paramilitary espionage around the world).

It should be noted that grey Grey (Gy) / Грей / גרי (a unit of absorbed radiation) is not related to GRIS, as it is named after the British physician L. Harold Grey (1905-1965), an authority on the use of radiation in cancer treatment.

**Russian. Fauna:** серая опасность (grey danger, mice and rats); серый (grey, wolf); **Roughly, low quality and value:** серый хлеб (food, grey bread, dark-colored from wheat flour); серая бумага (grey paper); серый фильм, серый спектакль, серая пьеса (culture, art, literature, grey film, performance, play; mediocre); ordinary origin, low social-economics status: серая кость, серый люд (grey bone, grey people); **Ignorance, cultural backwardness:** серость, серый народ, серый человек (grey people, narrow-mindedness, lack of education); **Miscellaneous:** серое спокойствие (grey calm, indifference); серая мышь, серая мышка; (grey mouse, minor person); в сером (in grey, unfashionable, cheap), в сером и чистом (in grey and clean, iron, recommendation for teacher clothes); серая шинель (grey overcoat, Gogol's character, a poor, defenseless person); Law conflict: серые арендодатели (grey landlords illegally renting an apartment for cash or transfers without paying taxes); серые каналы (YouTube, earning on content using other people's videos); серая схема заработка (шантаж в Интернете); серые патенты (grey patent registration of already patented product); Medicine: серая зона (the grey area of the test for antibodies to COVID-19 (questionable result, neither positive nor negative); оттенки серого (shades of grey, conflict of morality and politics); **Conflict, confrontation:** серая зона (frontline settlement); серая книга (book about a danger of fascism revival).

It should be noted that lexeme сивый translated as grey: Lie, nonsense: врать как сивый мерин (lie like a grey gelding, shamelessly, stupidly); бред сивой кобылы (grey mare drivel, abolished).

**Hebrew.** סוס עבודה האפור (grey workhorse, ŠKODA's car); רישוי אפור (motorcycle grey licensing, only closed, approved tracks); חינוך אפור (grey education, after school lessons paid by parents); גל אפור (elderly manpower).

### 4. Analysis

As a result of a study of modern English, Russian, and Hebrew GRIS, a total of 228 GRIS were identified (English – 90 or 100%; Russian – 85 or 94%; and Hebrew – 53 or 59%). The ratio of trilingual GRIS is similar to that of trilingual black idioms (361 in total; English – 140 or 100%, Russian – 127 or 91%, Hebrew – 94 or 67% (Kigel, Black Idioms, in press).

According to the researchers [5, p. 308–309], [34, p. 34], GRIS have a small part in the total amount of color idioms (English: grey 3-4%; black 23, white 16%; Russian: grey 2%; black 24%, white 25%) and have about an equal frequency in English and Russian while the data about Hebrew colorative idioms is lacking. The amount of GRIS roughly six times smaller than black-white idioms and the ratio of equivalent and original grey and black idioms are similar (Kigel, Black Idioms – in print). The similarity between English and Hebrew grey metaphors is obviously due to the close relations between the two cultures.

The presence of about 80% of GRIS equivalents for three or at least two languages (grey day, grey person) is evidence of a common base of effective communication for different language speakers. Thus, there is research that in Europe, secondary color terms seem rather homogenous and there is more union than nonunion in their perception [30, p. 67] and this statement is correct for English, Russian, and Hebrew GRIS, languages of different systems.

The presence of 20% original GRIS proves the linguistic and cultural diversity that contributes to the global Linguistic Picture of the World and is a result of nature, weather conditions, religion, and cultural differences. A part of GRIS in different languages describes different aspects of Human Activity (grey character in English and Russian; grey medicine, grey education in Russian and Hebrew) and also found some lacunar idioms in the three languages (grey power in Russian and Hebrew). Nowadays, modern medicine, technique, political, and social terms are quickly adopted in all three languages (grey economics; grey rock method) and this largely increased the number of equivalents in the overall balance.

After identification, various trilingual GRIS were integrated with equivalent trilingual GRIS into semantic associative chains, based on logically related meanings (Economy-Employment-Professionals) and then into three key microsystems: A. Natural object's color: Physical objects; Fauna; Weather; Human body; Artificial object's color; Medicine; Sex; Psychoactive substances (drugs). Comparison Textiles – Clothing Metallurgy Public Utilities; B. Human Activity: Economy-Employment-Professionals; Law; Computers, devices; Mail-Literature; Conflict, confrontation; C. Mental and Ethical Issues: Depressing, pessimistic, gloomy, dismal; Boring, monotonous, ordinary, unattractive, similar to other others; Anonymous, faceless, lacking individuality; Hidden, invisible, unofficial; Psychology; Morally, ethics – Lying & Deception; Unexpected.

GRIS parallel black & white color idioms (for comparing, black/blue/green/yellow paradigm is wider), and to a small extent to silver idioms (grey/silver worker) but they do not create antonyms with other color idioms as black – white, red – green idioms or blue – rose idioms.

There is clear coordination between the visual greyscale and existing many common associative chains of black-white, on one hand, and grey idioms, on the second hand (Medicine–Sex–Drugs; Economy–Employment). The results of the work prove Philip's statement [29, p. 77] that black and grey metaphors are often metaphorically linked, and often appear together in many metaphorical expressions and there is more similarity between black and grey idioms than between white and grey ones. The adjectives partially near, and imperfect before black idioms help to understand the grey idiom as a milder form of black metaphor (imperfect body or grey body).

In comparison to black idioms, GRIS also have neutral, informational connotations (grey body – black body), and many disapprobation connotations (grey salary) but much fewer negative connotations (grey mail – black mail). In addition to GRIS's smaller amount, they concentrated around fewer themes, have less polarized meaning, fewer variations (turn grey, make grey), and shorter associative chains.

The metaphor 'grey zone' deserves special attention because of its wide use nowadays both in natural and social science. It has versatile and sometimes complicated meanings, and numerous definitions: unclear, obscure, debatable, indefinite, indefinable, ambiguous, uncategorized, ambiguous, debatable, with difficulty-defined boundaries.

'Grey zone' could be connected to a mix with a clear distinction between black and white (grey-box testing, grey SEO), a combination (greywater, grey economics, grey collar), a mid-way point between extremes (grey economy, good–bad, legal – illegal), and can both temper the negativity of black and detract from the positive meaning of white [29].

The other meaning of the metaphor 'grey zone' is an indefinite, inconsistent intermediate, vague, non-clear mix of black – white (grey war, grey moral), which Hamilton [20, p. 34] defined as the "in-betweenness, vagueness, lack of clarity" and Allan [10, p. 626] as indeterminable. Sometimes a clear distinction between right and wrong is difficult or impossible (grey character, grey diplomacy). This mix with a blurred border, maybe a little black and a little white, and is neither black nor white, at the same time legal and illegal, and neither legal nor illegal [29, p. 10-11].

Linguistics of color attributed the similarity of the color metaphor to the general perception, and the national identity of idioms to the unique living environment, lifestyle, customs, tradi-



tions of the ethnocultural community, religion, cultural experience, and the national worldview of philosophy.

There is a different proportion of original trilingual GRIS in English (16%), Russian (28%), and Hebrew (1%). In part of the original GRIS, English GRIS is associated with aging, middle age, pensioners, and related external and spiritual characteristics – hair color, wisdom, and experience. A considerable number of GRIS with a variety of original topics: animals' color, low quality and value, and many metaphors about law conflict exist in Russian. Grey isn't a preferable color for the Hebrew-speaking community as proving a little Hebrew GRIS amount.

## 5. Discussion

We conclude that for the first time in this study Hebrew GRIS idioms were collected and also for the first time were analyzed English, Russian, and Hebrew metaphors with the color lexeme grey / серый / אפור.

In the work, the quantitative composition of grey idioms was presented. In addition, to organize a large phraseological material, associative chains of meaning and grouping of meanings were created based on selected features. With the help of the analysis, a comparison of GRIS and black idioms was made, and common and different meanings of Gris in three languages were found, it was emphasized that despite the relatively small number of grey idioms in phraseology, they are very productive at present and are actively used in all three languages. A detailed analysis of the concept of 'a grey zone' led to the conclusion about the importance of the novelty and uniqueness of GRIS denoting new areas for which laws and rules have not yet been formulated. The research results are important to intercultural communication, psycholinguistics, cultural studies, cognitive and comparative linguistics as well as educational L2 practice. The automatic translation should especially be enriched because idiom translation currently is an unresolved problem since literal translation does not allow understanding of phraseological units, expressions, and their stylistic coloring. In the study, we discussed the GRIS polysemy and different ways for the organization of meaning microsystem.

To build a more complete picture, we need to overcome the restrictions given below: considering etymology and diachronic aspect, proverbs, and trilingual sayings of professionals, individual writers, and journalists' GRIS. The work has the following limitations: it focuses on the modern meanings of GRIS and does not take into account the diachronic aspect, and the scope of the work does not permit citation, although this could make the conclusions more reasonable. It is not excluded that the list of GRIS may include additional goes but this will not change the overall picture to analyze five types of cultural motivation of idioms [17, p. 214]: social interaction; material culture; inter-textual phenomena; fictive conceptual domains (e.g., ancient folk theories), and cultural symbols.

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