

An HTOED-Based Contrastive Study of the Color Concept between English and Chinese

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Abstract

Color is both a general concept which interrelates with other concepts and a category which encompasses various subcategories. Chinese and English are of different language systems which result in the potential differences in language cognition. The present research aims to reveal the differences and similarities of the same concept in different cultures like English and Chinese by comparing color as a concept and a category between English and Chinese on the basis of the Historical Thesaurus of *Oxford English Dictionary*.

Keywords

HTOED, Color, Contrastive Study

1. Introduction

In discussing cognitive differences in different languages like Chinese and English, color is often regarded as the window and the starting point for the comparison, including color categorization and color concept. Color categorization has aroused lots of interest among linguists, as every language has color terms which are often used to categorize colors. According to Berlin and Kay's Basic Color Theory, there are seven stages of color evolution, and they categorize English as a language of Stage VII with 11 basic color terms and Chinese or Mandarin as a language of Stage V with 6 basic color terms. But they also note that the case of Chinese basic color terms is problematic as to color terms like *grey*, *pink*, *blue*, *green* and *brown* as they admit more data for Chinese terms in their future research (Berlin & Kay, 1969: p. 42).

Firstly, color is looked up in The Historical Thesaurus of *Oxford English Dictionary* (hereafter *HTOED*) as a concept, aiming to see its interrelations with

other concepts. Secondly, lexicographic comparison of the term *color* as well as its derivative forms in different languages is searched for more information of color conceptualization which lays the foundation for color models in Chinese and English.

2. Theoretical Framework

Though color is a feature of matters in the world, we may conceptualize colors into other concepts. The HTOED is organized in terms of concepts and shows the historical development of concepts. And the concepts are listed in a hierarchical manner. There are altogether three general concepts: *the world* (01), *the mind* (02) and *the society* (03). The world is further divided into seventeen sub-concepts, among which *color* (01.10.09) is arranged as a subsidiary concept to *matter* (01.10). The mind entails seven sub-concepts: *Mental Capacity* (02.01), *Attention and judgment* (02.02), *Goodness and badness* (02.03), *Emotion* (02.04), *Will* (02.05), *Possession* (02.06) and *Language* (02.07). And the society includes thirteen sub-concepts, such as *Society and the community* (03.01), *Inhabiting and dwelling* (03.02), *Armed hostility* (03.03), *Authority* (03.04), *Law* (03.05), *Morality* (03.06), *Education* (03.07), *Faith* (03.08), *communication* (03.09), *Travel and travelling* (03.10), *Occupation and work* (03.11), *Trade and finance* (03.12) and *Leisure* (03.13), as shown below.

01 The world

01.01 The earth 01.02 Life (01.02.01 Source/principle of life 01.02.02 Biology 01.02.03 The body 01.02.04 Death) 01.03 Health and disease 01.04 People 01.05 Animals 01.06 Plants 01.07 Food and drink 01.08 Textiles and clothing 01.09 Physical sensation 01.10 Matter (01.10.01 Alchemy 01.10.02 Chemistry 01.10.03 Properties of materials 01.10.04 Constitution of matter 01.10.05 Liquid 01.10.06 Gas 01.10.07 Physics 01.10.08 Light **01.10.09 Colour** 01.10.10 Condition of matter) 01.11 Existence and causation 01.12 Space 01.13 Time 01.14 Movement 01.15 Action/operation 01.16 Relative properties 01.17 The supernatural

02 The mind

02.01 Mental Capacity 02.02 Attention and judgment 02.03 Goodness and badness 02.04 Emotion 02.05 Will 02.06 Possession 02.07 Language

03 The society

03.01 Society and the community 03.02 Inhabiting and dwelling 03.03 Armed hostility 03.04 Authority 03.05 Law 03.06 Morality 03.07 Education 03.08 Faith 03.09 Communication 03.10 Travel and travelling 03.11 Occupation and work 03.12 Trade and finance 03.13 Leisure¹

Taking the word *color* as a key word via the search engine, we can get a total of 43 results:

01.02.03.09.06 <i>n.</i>	<i>The body::Complexion</i> color (1297-1634)
01.02.03.09.06.05/01 <i>n.</i>	<i>The body::Redness::with health</i> color (a1300-)
01.02.03.09.06.05/01 <i>vi.</i>	<i>The body::Redness::blush</i> color (1721/1800-1755)

¹<http://historicalthesaurus.arts.gla.ac.uk/category/?type=search&qsearch=black&word=black&page=1#id=229305>. Extracted on September 15, 2017.

	<i>Dict.</i> +1787-)
01.02.03.24.03.02/04 n.	<i>The body::Brain::faculties of color</i> (1840-)
01.04.06.02/01 n.	<i>Ethnicities::Division by physical peculiarities::racial characteristic color</i> (1796-)
01.10.07.05.04.07/11 n.	<i>Physics::Quark::property giving strong interaction color</i> (1973-)
01.09.09.02/01.21 n.	<i>Hearing/ noise:: Thing heard::sound quality of sound color</i> (1866-)
01.10.09 n.	<i>Color color</i> (1398-)
01.10.09/01 n.	<i>Color::a color color</i> (c1290-)
01.10.09/25 n.	<i>Color::heraldic tincture color</i> (c1450 Scots+1486-)
01.10.09.03 vt.	<i>Color color</i> (c1325-)
01.10.09.03.04 n.	<i>Color::coloring matter color</i> (1580-)
01.10.09.05 vi.	<i>Change color color</i> (1667-)
01.10.09.07.06.03/02.01 n.	<i>Color::Blue coloring matter::blue pigment::specific ultramarine blue/ color</i> (1698-)
01.11.01.05.03/01 vt.	<i>Exist in/ be situated in::Introduce/ bring something in::infuse color</i> (1835-)
01.16.02 n.	<i>Kind/ sort color</i> (1600-)
02.01.10.02.02/01 n.	<i>Intelligibility::Meaning of linguistic unit::shade of color</i> (1657-1826)
02.01.12.08.07.03.03/03 n.	<i>Knowledge::Duping, making a fool of::gullible person, dupe color</i> (1719)
02.01.12.08.07.07/01 vt.	<i>Know, be aware of::Pretend, stimulate, feign::lay claim to, personate color</i> (a1502-a1655+1726Dict.)
02.01.12.08.07.07.01 n.	<i>Knowledge::Semblance, outward show color</i> (1297-1863)
02.01.12.08.07.07.01 vt.	<i>Know, be aware of::Present speciously color</i> (1377-1862)
02.01.12.08.07.07.01/08.01 n.	<i>Knowledge::Semblance, outward show::specious quality::statement exhibiting color</i> (1429-1818)
02.01.12.08.08 vt.	<i>Know, be aware of::Misrepresent color</i> (1393-)
02.02.06.01.03 vt.	<i>Test::Modify, qualify color</i> (1835-)
02.04.01.04.02 n.	<i>Aspects of Emotion::Quality appealing to emotion/ imagination color</i> (1938-)
02.04.01.07/04.01 vi.	<i>Manifest itself::change color::be/ become red with emotion color</i> (1721-1755 Dict. +1787-)
02.05.06/02.06 n.	<i>Motivation::specious motive/pretext::motive:: alleged/ allegeable motive/ excuse color</i> (c1380-1724)
02.07.04.03.01.02/09 n.	<i>Linguistic::Vowel::qualities of color</i> (1934-1948)
03.05.12.06. 02/13.08 n.	<i>Administration of justice::Pleading::a pleading plea:: false plea color</i> (1607-1824)
03.05. 15/08 n.	<i>Legal right:: Apparent right color</i> (1531-Law)

03.06.01.02.01.01/05 vt.	<i>Behove/be the duty of::Excuse (a person/fault)::extenuate color</i> (1377-1862)
03.09.04.07.01.13/04 n.	<i>Indication::Heraldic tincture::color color</i> (c1450-)
03.09.08.10.01/04 n.	<i>Prining::Arrangement/appearance of printed matter::qualities of print color</i> (1808-)
03.13.03.02.01/06 n.	<i>The Arts::Musical sound::timber/quality color</i> (1866-)
03.13.03.02.06.01 n.	<i>The Arts::Expression color</i> (1597+1887-)
03.13.03.03.04.04.01/02 n.	<i>The Arts::Art of coloring::general effect/scheme color</i> (1661-)
03.13.03.03.05.01/09 n.	<i>The Arts::Engraving::representation of color color</i> (1784-)
03.13.03.03.10/02 adj.	<i>Pertaining to the Arts::Pertaining to photography::color color</i> (1872-)
03.13.03.04.05.08 vt.	<i>The Arts::Embellish color</i> (c1300-)
03.13.03.04.07.04.06/03 n.	<i>The Arts::Fiction::a work of fiction color</i> (1509-)
03.13.04.02/04 n.	<i>Sport::Player/sportsman::at college/university color</i> (1955-)

From the results, it is clear to see that though color is listed as among the first batch of general concepts, it is closely associated with other concepts, related with the three layers of concepts such as concepts of *the world* (01)—*Life* (01.02), *People* (01.04), *Physical sensation* (01.09), *Matter* (01.10), *Existence and causation* (01.11), concepts of *the mind* (02) including *Mental Capacity* (02.01), *Attention and judgment* (02.02), *Emotion* (02.04), *Will* (02.05), *Language* (02.07), and concepts of *the society* (03) like *Law* (03.05), *Morality* (03.06), *Communication* (03.09), and *Leisure* (03.13). The interrelation between color and other concepts can be shown in **Figure 1**:

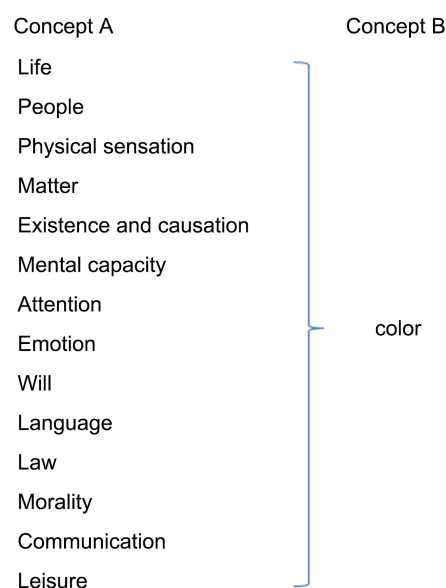


Figure 1. Interrelations between color and other concepts in HTOED.

Figure 1 shows a format of relations between color and other concepts. The color concept involves with many other concepts, but not every involves metaphorical thinking. Or put it more precisely, there is a hierarchical system of metaphorical associations between color and other concepts.

3. Color and Its Interrelation with Other Concepts in HTOED

Viewed from the HTOED, the color concept is listed as a sub-concept of *matter* (01.10), which is subsidiary to *the world* (01). Color terms usually co-occur with words of other sub-concepts of *the world* (01), metaphorically referring to other sub-concepts of *the mind* (02) and *the society* (03). It lists 10 basic colors as sub-concepts of *Color* (01.10.9): *white/whiteness* (01.10.09.07.01), *black/blackness* (01.10.09.07.02), *red/redness* (01.10.09.07.03), *green/greenness* (01.10.09.07.04), *yellow/yellowness* (01.10.09.07.05), *blue/blueness* (01.10.09.07.06), *brown/brownness* (01.10.09.07.07), *grey/greyiness* (01.10.09.07.08), *purple/purpleness* (01.10.09.07.09), *orange* (01.10.09.07.10).

And each color is semantically related with sub-concepts of the three general concepts—*the World* (01), *the Mind* (02) and *the Society* (03)—in **Table 1**, as shown above. **Table 1** shows the color concept in HTOED is frequently associated with other concepts, such as *Animals* (01.05), *Life* (01.02), *Matter* (01.10), *Emotion* (02.04), *Authority* (03.04), *Occupation and work* (03.11), and *Leisure* (03.13). There are three concepts not included *Space* (01.12), *Movement* (01.14), and *Language* (02.07).

In the case of Chinese color terms, because HTOED is English-language anchored, the concepts related with color terms in Chinese are abstracted on the basis of HTOED, as shown in **Table 2**.

And a comparison of related concepts with colors in Chinese and English in HTOED is made by referring to two influential dictionaries of native such as LDOCE and CCD languages and the result is shown in **Table 3**. From **Table 3**, it is clear to see that Chinese and English share some commonplaces in conceptualizing colors. Both cultures associate color with *Life* (01.02), *Health and disease* (01.03), *People* (01.04), *Plants* (01.06), *Food and drink* (01.07), *Textile and clothing* (01.08), *Physical sensation* (01.09), *Matter* (01.10), *Mental capacity* (02.01), *Attention and judgment* (02.02), *Goodness and badness* (02.03), *Emotion* (02.04), *Authority* (03.04), *Morality* (03.06), *Occupation and work* (03.11), *Trade and finance* (03.12), and *Leisure* (03.13).

Of course, there are cultural differences still to be seen. In Chinese *white* and *red* are more metaphorical than those in English. And as to *green* and *yellow*, Chinese and English have strikingly different conceptualizations. But the greatest difference lies in the conceptualization of blue, which carries few metaphorical extensions in Chinese. *Brown* and *orange* are metaphorical in English but not in Chinese. The different concepts in the cultures show different color conceptualizations, involving colors like *white*, *black*, *red*, *yellow*, *green* and *grey*.

Table 1. Concepts closely connected with the ten English colors in HTOED.

Colors	the world (01)	the mind (02)	the society (03)
white/whiteness	01.02, 01.03, 01.04, 01.05, 01.06, 01.07, 01.08, 01.09, 01.10, 01.11, 01.15	02.01, 02.02, 02.04, 02.05	03.03, 03.04, 03.06, 03.08, 03.09, 03.11, 03.12, 03.13
black/blackness	01.01, 01.02, 01.04, 01.05, 01.06, 01.07, 01.08, 01.09, 01.10, 01.15	02.01, 02.02, 02.03, 02.04, 02.06	03.04, 03.06, 03.09, 03.11, 03.12, 03.13
red/redness	01.01, 01.02, 01.03, 01.04, 01.05, 01.06, 01.07, 01.08, 01.09, 01.10, 01.13, 01.15	02.02, 02.04,	03.03, 03.04, 03.10, 03.11, 03.12, 03.13
green/greenness	01.01, 01.02, 01.03, 01.05, 01.06, 01.07, 01.08, 01.09, 01.10, 01.13, 01.15	02.01, 02.05,	03.02, 03.04, 03.09, 03.10, 03.11, 03.12, 03.13
yellow/yellowness	01.02, 01.04, 01.05, 01.06, 01.07, 01.08, 01.09, 01.10	02.04	03.03, 03.04, 03.09, 03.11, 03.13
blue/blueness	01.01, 01.02, 01.03, 01.05, 01.06, 01.07, 01.08, 01.09, 01.10, 01.11	02.01, 02.03, 02.04, 02.05	03.01, 03.03, 03.04, 03.05, 03.06, 03.07, 03.11, 03.12, 03.13
brown/brownness	01.02, 01.04, 01.05, 01.07, 01.10, 01.16		03.03, 03.09, 03.12
grey/greyness	01.02, 01.05, 01.08, 01.10, 01.16	02.02, 02.04	03.11, 03.13
purple/purpleness	01.02, 01.03, 01.05, 01.06, 01.08, 01.09, 01.10	02.03	03.01, 03.04, 03.06, 03.13
orange	01.05, 01.06, 01.07, 01.10		03.01, 03.04, 03.08, 03.09, 03.11
highest frequency	01.05, 01.10, 01.02	02.04	03.04, 03.11, 03.13
concepts not included	01.12, 01.14	02.07	
concepts most frequently associated	Life (01.02), Animals (01.05), Matter (01.10)	Emotion (02.04)	Occupation and work (03.11), Leisure (03.13)

Table 2. Concepts closely connected with the ten named colors in HTOED.

Colors	the world (01)	the mind (02)	the society (03)
white/whiteness	01.02, 01.03, 01.04, 01.07, 01.08, 01.13, 01.15	02.01, 02.03, 02.04, 02.07	03.03, 03.04, 03.06, 03.09, 03.11, 03.13
black/blackness	01.08, 01.10, 01.13, 01.16	02.01, 02.03	03.05, 03.06
red redness	01.03, 01.07, 01.08, 01.09, 01.15	02.01, 02.03, 02.04,	03.04, 03.06, 03.09, 03.12, 03.13
green/greenness	01.02, 01.03, 01.04, 01.06, 01.07, 01.08, 01.15	02.01, 02.04	03.06, 03.11
blue/blueness			
yellow/yellowness	01.03, 01.08, 01.09, 01.15	02.02	03.06, 03.12
brown/brownness		02.01, 02.04	
grey/greyness	01.08, 01.09		03.11
purple/purpleness			
orange		02.03	
highest frequency			
concepts not included			
concepts most frequently associated			

Table 3. Comparison between Chinese and English.

Colors	Chinese	English
white	01.03, 01.04, 01.07, 01.08, 01.13 , 01.15 02.01, 02.03 , 02.04, 02.07 03.03, 03.04, 03.06, 03.09 , 03.11, 03.13	01.03, 01.04, 01.07, 01.08, 01.15 02.01, 02.04 03.03, 03.04, 03.06, 03.11, 03.12 , 03.13
black	01.08, 01.10, 01.13 , 01.16 02.01 , 02.03 03.05 , 03.06	01.03 , 01.04 01.07 , 01.08, 01.09 , 01.10 02.02 , 02.03, 02.04 03.06, 03.12
red	01.03 , 01.07, 01.08, 01.09 , 01.15 02.01, 02.03, 02.04, 03.04, 03.06, 03.09 , 03.12, 03.13	01.07, 01.08, 01.13 , 01.15 02.01, 02.03, 02.04 03.04, 03.06, 03.12, 03.13
green	01.02 , 01.03, 01.04 , 01.06, 01.07, 01.08 , 01.15 02.01, 02.04 03.06 , 03.11	01.01 , 01.03, 01.06, 01.07, 01.15 02.01 03.04 , 03.12
blue		01.02 , 01.03 , 01.04 , 01.07 , 01.08 02.01 , 02.04 03.01 , 03.06 , 03.11 , 03.12
yellow	01.03, 01.08 , 01.09 , 01.15 02.02 03.06 , 03.12	01.03, 01.04 02.04 03.12
grey	02.01, 02.04	01.03 02.01, 02.04
pink	01.08, 01.09 03.11	01.03 , 01.07 , 01.08, 01.09 03.11, 03.12
brown		01.07 02.02 , 02.04
purple	02.03	02.03 03.06 , 03.09
orange		01.07
All Common Concepts	Life, People, Plants, Health and disease, Food and drink, Textile and clothing, Physical sensation, Matter, Time, Action, Mental capacity, Attention and judgment, Goodness and badness, Emotion, Authority, Morality, Occupation and work, Trade and finance, Leisure	
different concepts	Chinese only: Relative properties, Law, Language	

4. Lexicographic Evidence for Color and Its Chinese Equivalents

Looking up *color* in the [Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English](#) (LDOCE), we can get the following lexicographical definitions shown as below:

Color 1) *red, blue, yellow, green, brown, purple, etc.*; 2) *(also colours) the appearance of something as a result of the way it reflects light, especially when its appearance is very bright or is made up of a lot of different colors*; 3) *how dark or light someone's skin is, which shows which race they*

belong to; 4) people/women/students etc. of color: (especially American English) people, women, etc., who are not white; 5) a substance such as paint or dye that makes something red, blue, yellow, etc.; 6) in full colour: a television programme, film, or photograph that is in colour contains colours such as red, green, and blue rather than just black and white; 7) if you have some colour in your face, your face is pink or red, usually because you are health or embarrassed; 8) interesting and exciting details or qualities that someone or something has

The third, fourth, seventh and eighth sense of *color* show the metaphorical thoughts of *color* in general. Metaphorically, there are LIFE IS COLOR, PEOPLE ARE COLOR, EMOTION IS COLOR, and MORALITY IS COLOR.

The Chinese equivalent of *color* is yán (颜), sè (色) or yán-sè (颜色). In Chinese most of the time one Chinese character is more expressive and productive than a phrase. Therefore, yán-sè (颜色), for many times, is often abbreviated as yán (颜) or sè (色). Table 4 shows lexicographical definition of yán (颜), sè (色) and yán-sè (颜色) in CCD. The definitions, to some degree, indicate Chinese people's general conception of color. From the definitions of Chinese color, we can get a glimpse of how color is conceptualized. For one thing, color is a sensory perception of objects or people. For another, color is an abstract perception of people, such as facial expression or countenance, a woman's beauty, lust, etc.

The word *color* has several derived adjective forms in English: colored, colorful and colorless. Each has specific variant lexicographical meanings. Firstly, three dictionaries, Oxford English Dictionary (OED), LDOCE and MacMillan English Dictionary (MED)² are chosen for the lexicographical meanings of *colored*, *colorful*, and *colorless*. The three derivative forms of *color* have their Chinese equivalents respectively in CCD: yǒu-sè-de (有色的 colored)³, cǎi-sè-de (彩色的 colorful)⁴, and wú-sè-de (无色的 colorless). The senses for each entry in the three dictionaries are shown in Table 5 as follows.

In Chinese, *color* is connected with one's inner face, a woman's beauty, lust, etc., which is seldom found in English. *Colored* also has varied interpretation in the two cultures. In English *colored people* involves social etiquette and is regarded as a social taboo, while in Chinese *colored glasses* is not only colorized glasses, but also refers to people's well-established biased opinion toward something or somebody. As for *colorful*, *colorful language* is conceived as a rude or

²The three dictionaries are all online free dictionaries. OED represents British English (BE) and MED is a dictionary of American English (AE). LDOCE is a dictionary which does not bias either BE or AE.

³Yǒu-sè-de (有色的 colored) is not an independent entry in CCD, but occurs in a part of sub-entry of yǒu (有 having).

⁴Actually "colorful" has more than one equivalent: cǎi-sè-de (彩色的 colorful), duō-cǎi-de (多彩的), wǔ-yán-liù-sè-de (五颜六色的), wǔ-cǎi-bīn-fēn-de (五彩缤纷的), and fēng-fù-duō-cǎi-de (丰富多彩的). duō-cǎi-de (多彩的) is a part of fēng-fù-duō-cǎi-de (丰富多彩的), but has similar meanings. Both are not independent entries in CCD. Similarly, wǔ-cǎi-bīn-fēn-de (五彩缤纷的) is not an independent entry. wǔ-yán-liù-sè-de (五颜六色的) is an independent entry, a sub-entry of wǔ (五). Only cǎi-sè-de (彩色的 colorful) is the best candidate for in practical use, it is abbreviated as one Chinese character cǎi (彩 colorful) without changing the meaning.

Table 4. Lexicographical definitions of yán (颜), sè (色) and yán-sè (颜色).

Entry	Definition in Contemporary Chinese Dictionary (CCD)
yán (颜)	(1) face, facial expression, countenance (2) face; prestige; (3) color; (4) a family name
sè (色)	(1) color; (2) look, countenance, facial expression; (3) kind, description; (4) scene, scenery; (5) the quality of object, especially precious metals, goods, etc; (6) a woman's beautiful looks; (7) lust, sexual desire; (8) a family name
yán-sè (颜色)	(one sub-entry of yán (颜)) (1) color perceived by sensors (2) (written) countenance; (3) facial expression; (4) a lesson (to teach somebody) or a countenance (to show your emotion)

Table 5. Lexicographical meanings of *colored*, *colorful*, and *colorless*.

Dictionary	colored	colorful	colorless
LDOCE	1) brightly/highly/richly etc coloured; 2) having a colour other than black or white; 3) a very offensive word used to describe sb. who is a member of a race of people with dark or black skin. 4) to describe sb. whose parents or grandparents were not of the same race as each other.	1) having bright colours or a lot of different colours; 2) interesting, exciting, and full of variety; 3) colourful language, speech etc uses a lot of swearing.	1) having no colour; 2) if your face, hair, eye, skin, or lips are colorless, they are very pale, usually because you are ill or frightened; 3) not interesting or exciting.
OED	1) having a colour or colours, especially as opposed to being black, white, or neutral; a) imbued with an emotive or exaggerated quality; 2) wholly or partly of non-white descent; 3) used as an ethnic label for people of mixed ethnic origin, including Khoian, African, Malay, Chinese, and white.	1) having much or varied colour; bright; 2) full of interest; lively and exciting; 2.1) involving variously disreputable activities; 2.2 (of language) vulgar or rude	1) (especially of a gas or liquid) without colour; a) dull or pale in hue; 2) lacking distinctive character or interest; dull.
MED	1) red, green, orange etc instead of black and white or transparent; 2) coloured hair has been treated with a chemical to make it a different colour; 3) sb. who is coloured is a black person. Older white people sometimes use this word thinking it is polite, but black people consider it offensive.	1) sth. that is colourful has bright colours or a lot of different colours; 2) interesting, exciting, and sometimes funny; 3) involving exciting, but slightly shocking or illegal activities; 4) colourful language is rude or uses offensive words.	1) sth. that is colourless has no colour; 2) not interesting, exciting, or original;
CCD	1) yǒu-sè-jīn-shǔ (non-ferrous metals) a general name for metals except black metals like iron, manganese, and chromium; 2) yǒu-sè-rén-zhǒng (有色人种 colored people) non-white people; 3) yǒu-sè-yǎn-jìng (有色眼镜 colored eyeglasses) bias or prejudice which prevent right opinion	1) variegated color; 2) colored silk, color festoons especially for festivals; 3) applauses and a shout of praise; 4) variety; the interesting or brilliant part; 5) lottery prize; winnings; 6) special effects in Chinese theater or magic; 7) blood from a wound 8) a family name	(no entry)

vulgar way of speaking in English. Sometimes *colorful* refers to something interesting or exciting, but often involving disreputable or illegal activities. In addition, *colorful* and *colorless* are thought to be a pair of opposite words, similar to the antonyms *interesting* and *dull*. But there is no such color conception in Chinese.

In Chinese, *colorful* is usually used positively, as in *zhāng-dēng-jie-cǎi* (张灯结彩 to decorate with lanterns and colored festoons for celebration), *mǎn-táng-cǎi* (满堂彩 applause and a shout of appraisal throughout the room), *wén-cǎi* (文彩 the interesting or brilliant part in writing), *cǎi-tóu* (彩头 good luck in business or gambling), etc. Another two metaphorical associations which are not found in English are the sixth and seventh senses, either. Taking these into consideration and looking them up in HTOED, the Chinese *color* is related to concepts like *Blood* (01.02.03.03.04), *Belief* (02.01.13.03.06), *entertainment* (03.13.01.05.04), and *The arts* (03.13.03.04.05).

5. Conclusion

Based on the concepts and concept interrelations in HTOED as well as the lexicographic definitions of the term *color* and its derivative forms as well as *colors* both in CCD and LDOCE as shown in **Table 2** and **Table 3** in the former section, English and Chinese have some common color metaphorical extensions as well as the differences.

From the comparison, it can also be found that both languages *color* encompasses 10 common basic color terms, excluding *pink*. Among the 10 basic color terms, *blue* is least metaphorical but *white* and *red* are most metaphorical in Chinese, while in English *black*, *white*, *red*, *green* and *blue* are more metaphorical than the other basic color terms.

The contrastive study of *color* as well as its derivative forms in English and Chinese dictionaries meanwhile help reveal the metaphorical potentials of *color* in different cultures and prove to some extent that both languages have some similarities in color concept.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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