



THE USE OF COLOR TERMS IN ENGLISH AND ARABIC CULTURE: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY

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Abstract:

Every color has many different meanings in different cultures. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to study the different meanings for the same color in two different cultures; the Arabic culture and the English culture. It is very important to understand what the impact of communication and color use. The researchers will focus on the use of colors in connotations. Consequently, the data will be collected by using dictionaries. Therefore, there will be two questionnaires; the first one will be written for Arabic students who are specialized in the English language, however, the second will test the understanding of English students who are studying Arabic at the language center at the University of Kufa for the meanings of colors in the Arabic culture. Finally, the research sums up with a conclusion that is following with the references.

1. Introduction:

Color terms play a very important role in human communication by describing things, expressing words' meanings, strengthening languages' influence and appearing as a universal character. Colors terms do not express the colors themselves, but also they are endowed with the cultural characteristics of each nation. Within the same culture, colors may also stand for different things in different contexts, and have been subject to change over the years. For example; at European royal courts the traditional color of aristocracy was the purple for its rareness in nature and its high price. But then the blue color took the place of the purple to stand for the aristocracy people in the middle ages. In addition, white can stand for two different things; as a religious symbol which reflects purity, joy and glory; however, a white flag can stand for surrender during times of war. (Internet 1)

Color connotation cannot be translated if the two languages have different symbols because when a color is translated into another language "*can take on an entirely different meaning.*" for instance; describing that someone is in blue in English means that he feels sad or depressed, but in Germany to be blue means to be drunk. However, in Arabic the enemy who is described as blue is considered as someone who is very tricky. Therefore, meanings of colors need to be taught for students who study more than one language or culture. (Dilloway 2006, p.4)

Also Lyons mentioned "*now it is a well-established fact that word-for word translation of colour terms across languages is frequently impossible.*" Green is connected with different cultures in different ways; Islam uses the green flag as a symbol for its ideology, however, China uses the Green as a symbol for betrayal; "If a wife betrays her husband, he issued to wear a green hat (Mamshag 1999, p.3).

Horizonti clarifies that the green colour in Ireland is a symbol for luck and that in Japan and Vietnam there is no separate word denoting the color 'green'. In addition, he modifies that recently business communications tend to focus on the cultural color meaning in their ads and products (Horizonti 2006, p.114)

Hasan et al. (2011) study the use of colours in the Arabic culture and the English. They focus on the etymological meaning of six color terms. Also, they provide different three meanings; basic meaning, extended meaning and additional meaning. They conclude that the extension of colors is stimulated by the people's own understanding of their experiences (Hasan et al. 2011, p.4,3).

Mamshag modifies that the gap between the English culture and the Arabic is wide; therefore, translating English idiomatic expressions into Arabic is very difficult. Her conclusion can prove the huge differences between the two cultures. Her study is about translation from English to Arabic; it is not concerned with similarities and differences between the cultures and the reflected knowledge by the people of both cultures (Mamshag 1999, p.58).

2. Literature Review:

2.1 Meaning and Connotation of Colors in Arabic Culture:

Arabic colour terms could be used loaded with different connotative meanings that are realized in conventional linguistic expressions such as black-handed, white record, and yellow leaf. This indeed implies that "the connotation of a language expression is clearly distinct from its sense, denotation and reference" (Allan 2007, p.39). Seen as a thoroughly pragmatic category of meaning, the connotations of a language expression are defined by Allan (2007, p.1047) as "pragmatic effects that arise from encyclopaedic knowledge about its denotation (or reference) and also from experiences, beliefs, and prejudices about the contexts in which the expression is typically used," and this implies that most of the connotative meanings assigned to colours seem to

be grounded (Allan 2009,p.61) to propose that objects that give rise to the connotations of colour terms have to be colour bearing objects.(Allan 2009, p. 627)

The connotative meaning is defined as the secondary meaning of a word or expression besides its explicit or primary meaning. Leech (1981) classifies meaning into conceptual meaning and associative meaning. He defines the conceptual meaning as the essential part of what language is and the central factor in verbal communication. Conceptual meaning is called cognitive, logical, or denotative meaning. Leech (1981) also recognizes six types of associative meaning: connotative, social, affective, reflective, collocative, and thematic meaning. Connotative meaning is defined as what is communicated by virtue of what language refers to. Social meaning is the meaning which an expression conveys about the contexts or social circumstances of its use. Affective meaning is what is communicated of the feelings and attitudes of the speaker/writer. Reflected meaning is what is communicated through association with another sense of the same expression. Collocative meaning is what is communicated through association with words which tend to occur in the environment of another word. Finally, thematic meaning is defined as what is communicated by the way in which the message is organized in terms of order and emphasis. Connotative meaning, in comparison with conceptual meaning, is relatively unstable and may vary according to culture, historical period, and the experience of the individual. In the cultural context of Arab, white and green may be viewed positively, in that white normally stands for innocence, purity, and peace; and green is almost associated with safety and agriculture. However, black, red, and yellow could be valued negatively, as black is often associated with evil-related issues, red could signify danger and crime, and yellow is nearly always linked to sickness. In what follows, I review some of the previous studies conducted on the extended meanings of the basic color terms (Leech, 1981, p.23).

2.2 Meaning and Connotation of Colors in English Culture:

Colors are imbued with great symbolic power. Even in the modern English-speaking world, where superstitious beliefs have largely faded in the light of scientific knowledge, many colors have retained their ancient associations. Most people know that brides should wear white, that "seeing red" means being angry, and that one can feel "green with envy." But learning why these connotations exist requires a look back to the beliefs and practices of the ancients. (Natalie wolchover.2010) (Internet 2)

(Red) has a range of symbolic meanings, including life, health, vigor, war, courage, anger, love and religious fervor. The common thread is that all these require passion, and the "life force" that drives passion blood is red when people become angry their faces become flushed with color. When they're happy and healthy, they have rosy cheeks (whereas when they're sick or dying, they have a deathly pallor, lacking in red). When men fight, blood is spilled. In all cases, red blood manifests itself in connection to passion,

(White), in a wide range of cultures, the color white symbolizes purity and innocence, and white robes and garments are worn to convey spiritual and/or sexual purity. It isn't surprising that white became associated with purity, as even the smallest drop of dye, or a smudge of dirt, destroys the color,

Many ancient cultures believed that black were "the color of mystery and of the mysterious ways and wisdom of God," the historian Ellen Conroy wrote in her book "The Symbolism of Colors" (1921). This was because night, as well as darkness the absence of light transcended human perception in the same way that the wisdom of God was thought to be beyond comprehension,

Purple symbolizes royalty, nobility and imperialism. In many European societies, the symbolism was even established by law: From ancient Rome to Elizabethan England, "sumptuary laws" forbade anyone except close members of the royal family to wear the color, blue mainly conveys sadness and despair. When you've "got the blues," you're down in the dumps. The connotation may relate to tears and rain (with its depressive effects), as water was typically represented in people's minds as blue. In Greek mythology, Zeus made it rain when he was sad, the color green represents nature and the environment; more abstractly, it symbolizes wisdom. The latter association has ancient roots, yellow symbolizes happiness, warmth and sunshine in most cultures; these are characteristics of the yellow sun and its effects, orange has come to denote a warning, and is used for high visibility clothing (such as spacesuits) and safety equipment (such as traffic cones). This association is a practical one: Orange contrasts most strongly with the color blue and therefore is highly visible against a clear sky. (Internet2)

3. Methodology:

This study is divided into two parts; Arabic and English. Therefore, two questionnaires (see appendix 2) are distributed; the first one is given to Iraqi students (N:15) who are studying at the University of Kufa for the M.A degree in Linguistics written in the English language. This questionnaire examines the knowledge of these students for the English connotations of the selected colors. However, the second questionnaire is given to English students (N: 6) at the University of Kufa who are studying the Arabic language as a second language.

4. Semantic:

Every language has a set of basic colour terms. However, these colour terms do not divide the meanings of colour in the same place. In other words, the cognitive linguistic concept for "colour" is idiosyncratically reflected in each language. According to (Wilson & Keil, 1999, p.17), "the study of culture is of relevance to cognitive science for two major reasons. The first is that the very existence of culture, for an essential part, is

both an effect and an appearance of human cognitive abilities. The second reason is related to the culture of today's human societies, i.e. from every aspect of human life, and in particular, of cognitive activity.

This fact is particularly true for all the societies studied by anthropologists from New Guinea to Silicon Valley. Human cognitive takes place in a social and cultural context. It uses tools provided by culture: words, concepts, beliefs, experiences, books, microscopes and computers. Moreover, a great deal of cognitive is about social and cultural phenomena." Thus the two possible views, the cultural and cognitive views, are reasonable and should be parallel. In this research, culture and cognitive were connected in the attempt to highlight the similarities and differences as well as the probability for greater cross cultural semantics account (Brown, 2005, p.33)

So, this study examined the semantic of the colour terms in Arabic, and compared them with the terms in English language so as to show how colour terms in these two different languages extend their semantic functions from their original to different meanings based on the cultural data. The results of this work should provide evidence which supports the view that the meanings of colour have accordingly varied based on certain universal identifiable human experience, which also extends our understanding of why some colour terms appear to have different semantic meanings or functions cross-linguistically, despite the fact that they have similar mechanisms in expanding their meanings.

4.1 Theories of Semantics:

The theories are stressing the primacy of the culture and the language for human cognition and non-linguistic behavior. The most typical one is (Edward Sapir's 1921, p.23) theory of linguistic relativity. According to that each language is semantically arbitrary relative to every other language. So different languages categorize the colour continuum in a different way and a certain colour term in one language need not signify the same colour domain as its equivalent in another language. This would mean that the association colour evoked in different languages by the word red is different. All colour names within the semantic space of colours of that particular language have an equal status that does not depend on their different frequency of usage. The signification of a colour name, e.g. red, does not depend on some kind of quality in the surrounding world or on the visual perception of the speaker. This only depends on the position of the word within the structure of semantic space of colours of that particular language. If a language has the words for orange and yellow, it certainly reduces the sphere of denotation of red. So, language is unquestionably primary to the perception of colours and affects its development.

The cultural relativist conception of colour terms, as it drifts from work to work, was formulated already by (L. Bloomfield 1933, p.140) "Physicists view the color-spectrum as a continuous scale of light-waves of different lengths, ranging from 40 to 72 hundred- thousandths of a millimeter, but languages mark off different parts of this scale quite arbitrarily and without precise limits, in the meanings of such color-names as violet, blue, green, yellow, orange, red, and the color-names of different languages do not embrace the same gradations".

5. Color Terms:

According to Berlin and Kay's 1969 work Basic Colour Terms, there are, from a linguistic standpoint, only 11 basic colours black, blue, brown, green, grey, orange, purple, pink, red, white and yellow. Their research involving 98 languages indicated that no language has more than these 11 basic colours and that colour names evolve in languages in a particular order. In priority, comes black and white followed by red. Then comes yellow and green (in either order) and then blue and brown. The colour words of all those languages studied which had, for example, only five words for colours would always be black, white, red, yellow and green (Johan Ruskin, 2003, p.35).

5.1 Color terms in English:

- White As in the Arab's culture, white symbolizes purity and innocent, harmless, and evil-free issues. Also, it is associated with clouds, snow and wedding. However, it has negative connotations. - 'As white as a ghost/ a sheet' It describes someone who is very pale because of fear or shock or illness. However, the Arabic culture uses the yellow to describe the same thing. - 'Black and white' here, white describes the good things, unlike the black which is associated with the bad things. This expression is similar in the two cultures. - 'in black and white' It describes something written officially. - 'a white flag' the same expression exists in the two cultures that indicates a situation of surrendered. - 'white elephant' It describes something which is useless. - 'white lie' In both cultures, it describes a harmless or small lie told to avoid hurting someone's feelings. White night It describes a sleepless night. 'White mouse' It is associated with someone who is mean. 'white tie' It represents a formal evening. 'white wash' It describes something wrong which is deleted or covered. 'white-hearted' It refers for someone who is coward. (Mams hag, 1999, p. 60)
- Red: Red symbolizes blood, danger, anger and hardships. - 'to catch (someone) red-handed' It describes a situation where someone is caught in the middle of doing something wrong. - 'ears are red' One's ears are red from embarrassment - 'in the red' It associated with someone who is in debt. - 'like waving a red flag in front of a bull' It describes someone who is doing something which makes others angry or upset. - 'out of the red' Someone is out of debt. - 'paint the town red' It describes someone who wants to go out

and party and have a good time. - 'red-carpet' It is associated with VIP people. - 'red herring' It describes an unimportant matter that draws attention away from the main subject. - 'red in the face' It is associated with embarrassment - 'red-letter day' It describes a memorable day.

- Yellow: Yellow is a symbol for gold. However, it is associated with negative. - 'yellow alert' It refers to danger. - 'have a yellow streak' It describes someone who is coward. 'to wear yellow hose' It is used to refer to someone who is jealous. 'yellow-livered' It associated with someone who is coward. 'yellow pages' It refers to the classified section of or supplement to a telephone directory, listing firms, products, and services.
- Black: Black symbolizes mischievous, soiled, and evil issues. 'Black Prince' It is associated with Satan. 'black and blue' It describes something as being injured. 'black market' It describes the place where goods or money are illegally bought and sold. 'black mouth' It describes someone as a foul-mouthed. 'black out' Someone who lost consciousness 'black sheep (of a family)' It describes a person who is a disgrace to a family or group 'blackmail (someone)' It is used when somebody extorts or takes money from someone else by threatening him or her. 'in (someone's) black books' It is used when somebody is in disgrace or in disfavor with someone else. 'in the black' It describes something as successful and profitable.
- Blue: Blue in English is associated with negatives more than positives. 'true blue' It describes someone as faithful. 'blue blood' It describes the blood of a noble or aristocratic family. 'blue in the face' It describes someone who is very angry. 'the blues' It describes someone who is sad or depressed. 'out of the blue' It describes something which is not expected. 'blue snow' It describes something which is impossible. (ibid68)

5.2 Color Terms in Arabic:

- Black: In Arabic, black could be used dysphemistically, euphemistically, and orthophemistically. When used dysphemistically, black is nearly always associated with mischievous, soiled, and evil issues. Therefore, a black plot (xt^{ah} sawda?)² is a secret plan to accomplish hostile, unlawful, or evil purpose; black-handed (aswad alyadayn) could be used to signify a person with unclean or dirty hands; and the expression black-deeds (a^{mal} sawda?) may signify deceit, malice, and evil. Also, a black mark in one's record (šalamah sawda? fi s^{af}hat almr?) is used to represent things that have a negative impact; black magic (assi^{hir} al-aswad) could be used to describe the unseen and demonic magic; and black spite (hiqid aswad) connotes a high degree of hostility, frowning, and outrage. Dysphemistic uses of black seem to be more common than euphemistic and even more common than orthophemistic ones., it is often associated with bad luck, and a black-hearted. Realizing the negative connotations of black, some people strategically avoid the mentioning of black. In Egyptian Arabic, for instance, the word black could be phonetically modified to the extent it is no longer recognised as black. So, instead of (yanhar iswid!) what a black day! Egyptians are more likely to say (yanhar iswih). Alternatively, Egyptians are also more inclined to replace black by white, and this seems to be clear when saying what a white day! (yanhar abyad ,) or what white news! (ya xabar abyad) in reaction to bad and black news. Such lexical replacement is mostly enhanced by the need of being polite while addressing others. That is, people are aware of the need to protect the addressee's as well as the speaker's face. Worldwide, black has negative connotations, and in many languages it is directly related to depression, pessimism or anger (Soriano – Valenzuela 2009, p.422). It is associated in all nations, with the exception of Mexico, with fear (Hupka et al. 1997, p.166). It is worth noting that, like red and white, when black appears in dual form in Arabic, it is interpreted as referring to precisely two of the entities. The dual black could have either euphemistic or dysphemistic connotations, in that al-aswadan = the two blacks (nominative case) signifies date and water, whereas al-aswadayin = the two blacks (accusative case) is another way to mention snake and scorpion. In relation to this, two points need to be clarified. First, water is not black in colour, yet because it is used in combination with date which is mostly black, both date and water are called the two blacks. This is to propose that date and water are irreversible coordinates in that water and date is rarely used. The foregrounding of date is not without reason. That said, date collocates with water only but water could collocate with many words other than date. Second, whereas al-aswadan = the two blacks (nominative case) is used euphemistically to symbolise date and water, al-aswadayin = the two blacks (accusative case) is used dysphemistically to signify snake and scorpion. Euphemistic uses of black in Arabic include the black hair and black eyes of women, which are considered as signs of the beauty of women (Ibid423)
- White, which symbolizes mourning or death in East Asia (Paul – Okan 2010, p. 950), is viewed positively in Arabic as it is mostly associated with purity and innocent, harmless,. In Arabic, a white-handed (du al-ayadi al-bayd) person is associated with a philanthropist who has altruistic concern for human welfare and advancement, usually represented by donations of money, property, or work to needy people and to socially useful purposes. White revolution (athawrah al-bayd) signifies a peaceful, bloodless political coup that achieves targets without resorting to the use of violence.

However, if violence is used, the revolution is called a red revolution (aḥḥawrah al-ḥamra?). This opposition indeed seems to be consistent with that between white terror and red terror, in that “[...] red has the connotation of revolution and white that of reaction, as the fixed collocation White ter-ror shows” (Crisp – Chang 1987, p. 53). In an article published in Ammonnews (an electronic Iraqi newspaper) on the 24th of October, 2010, The Iraqi Minister of Education announced that “we are on the verge of a white revolution in the education sector” and this means, as ratified by what was mentioned in the body of the article, that positive and constructive developments will be in effect and use as a way to uplift education in Jordan. White helmets (al-xawḍat al-bayd) is used to describe a commission whose main target is to provide relief and assistance services to the Palestinian population in Gaza strip. Viewed in this way, white has been used positively.

- White-faced (al-waḍjih al-bayd) Black-faced (al-waḍjih al-aswad) are oppositional in that they are often used to represent success or failure to fulfil one’s promise. White and black are the two colours that have the longest history among colour terms in all languages in the world including Chinese (Xing 2009, p.87). This is because they are the most contrastive and easily identified colours (Allan 2009, p.628). In relation to this, (Philip 2006, p. 75) says that “while black – the antithesis of light – is linked to activities that take place under the cover of darkness, white is the reflection of light and thus assumes positive connotative values associated with daylight, including clarity, visibility, honesty, and perfection”. However, there is an opposition of red and white in English with regard to the directly opposed connotations of purity-chastity and lurid sexuality; “the connotations of purity and chastity for white have already been noted, that of lurid sexuality for red is shown in fixed collocations such as a red light district” (Crisp – Chang 1987, p. 53).
- In Iraq, there are many proverbs that highlight the significance and positive meaning of white. As a result, in not all appeared white is a back of camel (Ma kul abayd ʔ ḍʔahir ḍalool), a white-backed camel is used as a metonymy for a fat camel. In other words, the back of camel turns white due to camel carrying many loads and due to being overridden. The pragmatic implicature of this Arabic metonymy is that not every fat animal is fit for carrying heavy loads and for riding in much the same way camels are. The proverb he cut it and the place of cutting is white (qassaha waiḍa maqassuha abayd) is a metonymy for the high cutting speed. If a limb of the body is quickly cut, then the cutting place appears white, as blood hasn’t gushed yet. If slowly cut, the cutting place appears red as blood will have rushed out already. As outlined in Section 1, white is almost viewed positively in the Iraqi context, and the same perception of this colour could be true in the whole Arab world. (Ibid 55)
- Yellow, in line with (Allan 2009, p.630), is less likely to be used euphemistically. “Yellow is nearly always orthophemistic, but occasionally dysphemistic”. In Iraqi Arabic, yellow is likely to be viewed overwhelmingly negative. That said, as yellow as lemon (asʔfar kasʔafar allaymoon) could be used in Arabic to describe people who are fearful or dis-eased. Yellow-eyed (ṣuyounuh sʔufur) and yellow-skinned (ḍjilduh asʔfar) are used metonymically to stand for people with liver disease; people who are jaundiced. A yellow leaf (waraqatuh sʔafra) person may be used to describe an elderly person who, due to illness, is expected to die soon. This is because when leaves turn yellow in autumn, they start to fall of the trees, and yellowness is seen in this context as an indication of the end of their life cycle. Yellow air (al-hawaʔ al- asʔfar) is used to connote cholera, whereas the yellow wind (arreeḥ al-sʔafra?) is a book by David Grossman who describes the conflict between the Jews and Arabs in Palestine. Yellow pens (al-aqlam al-sʔufur) refer to pens whose owners’ main aim is to fulfil personal interests in their writings at the expense of others’. Summing up, the connotations of yellow seem to be predominantly dysphemistic (Allan, 2009, p.630). Yellow represents warmth in the USA, but infidelity in France. It is associated with jealousy in Russia, but pleasant, happy, good taste, royalty in China (Paul – Okan 2010, p. 953). Examining the patterns of connotation in Chinese and English colour terms, (Crisp – Chang 1987, p.57) report that though the predominant connotations of yellow and huang (yellow) are both attitudinally negative, their contents are different. That is, whereas yellow is associated with cowardice, huang refers metonymically to pornography. They state that other connotations of huang such as nobility, reverence, honor and maturity are positive.
- Red In addition to its orthophemistic uses, red could be used both euphemistically and dysphemistically. However, negative connotations seem to be more common than their positive counterparts. Red is associated with dangers and hardships. So, when a player receives a red card (al-bitʔaqah al-ḥamra?) in a game, it means expulsion from the game. In Arabic, the perception of red by the two sexes could be different, in that red clothing (al-malabis al- ḥamra?) may be sought after by women and rejected by men. In Arabic, red death could be negatively associated with something that is too bad. A possible interpretation is that because one could be blinded by horror and anger, one could see the world red in one’s eyes. Red death could also be used to describe any extremely painful disease such as renal colic, murdering death, hard death, or any hardship one might be in. Anger is associated with red in many languages, where one can find expressions such as the French rouge de rage (“red with anger”), though in

Thai, a “body turning green” belongs to an angry person (Soriano – Valenzuela 2009,p.422). In Zulu, the angry heart is said to be red (Taylor – Mbense 1998,p.202–3). By the same token, Japanese connect red with anger and jealousy.

- In Arabic, to show someone a red eye (fardzah el-ʿein el-ḥamra) is to warn and threaten him. Spending a red night (amḍa laylah ḥamra?) or a red evening (sahrah ḥamra?) is an expression that is always associated with a pornographic night or evening. By the same token, red wax seal (jamiʿ aḥmar) has dysphemistic connotation, in that it is often understood as a mark of the closure of law-violating shops, institutions, etc. However, red is positively used in The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in that this humanitarian movement was founded to protect human life and health and to assuage the human suffering, without any discrimination based on nationality, race, sex, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. (ibid)
- Worldwide, red means unlucky in Nigeria and Germany, but lucky in China, Denmark and Argentina. It represents ambition and desire in India and love in China, Korea and Japan (Paul – Okan 2010,p.953). (Philip 2006,p.80) says that as part of the metonymically-motivated meanings associated with red is found in finance, where credits are notated in black ink, and debits in red. The expressions in(to) the red and out of the red / into the black serve to differentiate and highlight the contrasting sides of the account. Though the previous examples highlight the negative and dysphemistic uses of red, the same colour has many euphemistic uses in many languages. This being the case, red could serve as the colour of authority, importance and royalty and this is represented by rolling out the red carpet for someone to give him/her a [right] royal welcome (Philip 2006: 80). Moreover, euphemisms for menstruation use figures such as the Red Sea’s in, it’s a red letter day, riding the red rag, flying the red flag, surfing the red wave, red sails in the sunset, snatch box decorated with red roses, and her cherry is in sherry (Allan 2009,p.632).
- Ancient Arabs also used red to connote positive and negative meanings. This being the case, the two reds (al-aḥmaran) could stand for gold and saffron, bread and meat, or bread and wine. A red afternoon (ḥamra? al-ḍaheerah) is often associated with a very hot afternoon. If someone is called red then he might be unarmed. It is also insulting and dysphemistic to call someone red nowadays. For ancient Arabs, red was sometimes used to signify white and was used to describe non-Arabs, whereas black is used to describe Arabs. Because Arabs tend to be brown in colour they are called black, and because non-Arabs tend to be white, they are described red, bearing in mind, as said, that what was white was called red. Red camels (ḥumal-niṣam) are really white camels. If red was perceived white by ancient Arabs, then what was the colour white used for? Indeed, it was used to indicate anything pure and free from defects. (Ibid 633)
- **Green** Though green symbolizes danger or disease in Malaysia (Paul – Okan 2010,p. 953) and envy in Spanish (Soriano – Valenzuela 2009,p.422) and in the United States (Hupka 1997,p.167), it could be seen, in agreement with Allan (2009: 633), as the most restful colour, as it symbolizes different positive concepts such as growth, harmony, health, and safety. In Arabic, a green-toothed (axḍar annawāḍiḍ) person could be used to describe a healthy person who constantly eats spring onion and leek. A green light (adḍu? al-axḍar) is viewed as the mark of safety and permission to pass through something and walk. Though green apples, pears and peaches, said Allan, are unripe and thus unpalatable, green fish (samak axḍar) could be used positively in the Iraqi context to symbolize fresh fish. Green-handed (alayadi al-xaḍra?) seems to be positively used to describe a successful gardener; everything he/she plants in the ground grows well. The connection between green and plant life is also used in English and present in the expression to have green fingers (Philip 2006,p.83).
- **Blue** is the colour of the unclouded sky and sea, and is often associated with highly positive values such as tranquillity and calmness. Light blue is a symbol of cleanliness, in that most hospitals are internally painted light blue. Filters used to purify water, and cleaning liquids are mostly blue in colour. Light blue as such is associated with health, healing and tranquillity. Because boys, in comparison with girls, are dressed in blue, some propose that blue is a masculine colour. In colloquial Iraqi Arabic, metaphorical uses of blue seem to be predominantly dysphemistic, in that blue-blooded (dammuḥ azrag) – which symbolizes a person of noble birth in English – could be used as equivalent to black-hearted (aswad al-galb). Someone with blue canine tooth (nabuh azrag) could stand for a fox-like person who is skillful at deception. When someone’s face is described as turning blue, then someone seems to be getting sick, or someone fell unconscious. If someone says the blue demons are playing in front of my eyes, then someone could be in a state of extreme anger. A blue prison uniform is associated with convicts, and the colour of prison uniform could differ from one country to another. It could be insulting to call someone blue, and the colour blue was used by ancient Arabs in their prose and poetry to describe an enemy of a high degree of hostility. In relation to this, Al-Hareere 1900,p.33) says:
- What is that better than green living and visiting the yellow beloved? My white day was blackened, and my black hair was whitened and when the blue enemy was visible to me, then (I said) how lovely the red

death is. (Translated by the author)

- In the above text, green living is used as a metonymy for the state of being healthy, happy, or prosperous. The yellow beloved is the diseased sweetheart. The blackening of the white day is a metonymy for the many worries and hardships. The whitening of the black hair is another metonymy for old age and weakness. The blueness of enemy is a metonymy for the enemy's high degree of hostility. Red death is a metonymy for the severity of the type of death which might include blood shedding.
- Blue bead (al-xarazaeh azzarga) could be used euphemistically in Iraqi culture as part of the preventive measures against the evil eye which is believed to be a look causing bad luck, and sometimes death, for the person at whom it is directed for reasons of envy or dislike.

In Iraqi culture, like the case in some other Arab cultures, babies and young children are thought to be the main victims of the evil eye because they are often praised by strangers and childless men and women. As a preventive measure to avoid the evil eye, some parents in Iraqi culture attach a blue bead to the clothes of babies and young children. Though this is a superstitious belief, people keep hanging blue beads inside cars, houses, and on babies' clothes as a way to avoid the envious and ill-wishing looks of others. Seen in this light, blue seems to be viewed positively by people. (Ibid 35)

The story of blue beads dates back to pharaohs who used to believe that gemstones such as blue beads have magical and protective power besides their function as adornments (Al-dred 1978, p.66). Ancient Egyptians believed in three colours: red, green, and blue; the colours that were prevalent in their jewelry. Red symbolizes the red blood that goes on in the veins and gives life and activity. Green symbolizes the greenery of crops. Blue is linked to the bluesky where the sun (the symbol of the god of ancient Egyptians) swims and where the god, that protects and blesses people, lives. The belief in the magical power of gemstones such as blue beads passed from one generation to generation until it reached today's world with the people knowing nothing about the origin of that myth.

Though blue bead is used for the prevention of envy, blue-eyed (ṣuyounuh zurug) seem to be always used dysphemistically to connote the worst enviers. In Iraqi culture, the common metonymy of "blue-eyed and spaced-teeth" (ṣuyounuh zurug wa snanuh furug) person could describe an enormously envious person. Blue-eyed is currently used to always describe detrimental envious people, and ancient Arabs used blue-eyed to describe enemies of a high degree of hostility. In spite of the positive connotation of blue bead, the uses of blue seem to be predominantly dysphemistic. This finding does not conform to (Allan 2009, p.41), in that the uses of blue are found to be rarely euphemistic in Iraqi culture.

6. Model and Data Analysis:

- Arabic students (N: 15) who are studying at Kufa University for the M.A degree in Linguistics.
- English students (N: 6) at the university of Kufa who are studying the Arabic language as a second language.
- The researchers distributed a cloze test to a number of English students which is eleven. Only six students scored above 60%, therefore, the researchers chosen them, and excluded the other five students.

6.1 Analysis Data:

The findings of the study will be reported and discussed in two sub-sections; the first questionnaire which is given to Arabic students (N: 15), the second one which is given to English students (N: 6).

6.2 Arabic Students' Performance:

Table 1: Below shows the number and percentage of the responses that are made by the fifteen Arabic students.

Iraqi students' performance

Question Student	3	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1	c	c	c	Un	c	C	C	Un	C	C	un	un	C	C	Un
2	c	un	c	c	c	un	c	c	un	c	un	un	c	c	c
3	c	un	un	un	c	c	un	un	un	c	c	c	un	un	c
4	c	un	un	un	c	c	c	un		un	un	un	c		un
5	c	un	c	c	un	c	c		un	c		un	c	un	
6	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	un		c		un	c	c	un
7	c	c	c	un	un	c	c		un	c	un	un	c	c	un
8	c	un	un		un	c	c	un	un	c	c		c	c	c
9	c	c	c	c	un	c	un	un	c	c	c	un	c	un	c
10	c	un	un	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	un	c	un	un
11	c	un		un	un	un	un		un	c	un	un	c	c	un
12	c	c	c	c	c	c	un	c	c	c	c	un	c	c	c
13	c	un	c	c	un	c		un	c	c	c	c	un	un	un
14	c	un	un	c	c	c	un	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c
15	c	c	C	Un	Un	c	c	un	un	c	c	c	c	un	un

%	c	c	C	Un	Un	c	c	un	un	c	c	c	c	un	un
100%	46%	66%	60%	53%	86%	66%	46%	53%	93%	66%	33%	86%	60%	15	(46%)

The entire sample answered the first question correctly which proves (Eckman 1985,p.3) modification that students will lack difficulty if NL and TL are similar; ‘White lie’ as a connotation exists in both languages; Arabic and English. However, the least percentage is 67. For the connotation ‘white elephant’ (33%)-question 12. This percentage proves the validity of ‘those areas of the TL that are different from the NL and are relatively more marked than in NL will be difficult’ (Eckman 1985,p.4). However, ‘blue blood’ which is 46% exists in both languages so the percentage cannot prove if there are similarities then there are no difficulties. Here, the researchers will refer to Eckmans Degree of difficulty. ‘Blue blood’ in both languages means the same thing, but do Iraqis know this connotation? From the percentage, one can realize that most of the Iraqi sample is not aware of this connotation. They are not used to use it in their daily communication unlike ‘white lie’; therefore, it can be recognized as marked which modifies the low percentage. Question number four reflects the students knowledge of ‘blue snow’. This connotation exists only in the English culture; therefore, it must be recognized as difficult. However, their percentage (60%) is acceptable. The reader can analyze this percentage for two reasons; the previous knowledge of this connotation specifically, or their knowledge of the associations with the blue color as in ‘once in a blue moon’ so they generalize their knowledge of this idiom to solve the question.

Question number eight reflects that some of the sample tries to infer their first language. The white color in the Arabic culture is associated with beautiful and calm things. Therefore, some of the sample found it difficult to know the correct connotation of the ‘white night’ as ‘sleepless night’. The association of ‘red’ with going out and having unacceptable fun - according to the Arabic culture- exists in both cultures. Therefore, most of the sample chose the correct answer. However, the incorrect answer can be analyzed into two reasons; their previous knowledge lack this connotation in both languages, or because in the English culture it is used in “paint the town red’ but in Arabic, it is ‘red night.

6.3. English Students Performance:

English performance is different from the Iraqis. Table 2 shows the accurate responses made by them.

Table 2: English students` performance g

Question Student	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14\15	
1	c	un	c	un	c	un	c	un	un	C	un	C	un	c	c
2	c	un	c	un	c	c		c	un	C	c	Un	un	c	c
3	c	un	c	c	un	c	c	un	c	C	c	Un	c	c	c
4	c	un	c	un	c	c	c	un	un	Un	un	C	c	un	un
5	c	c	c	un	un	c	c	c	un	Un	un	Un	c	c	un
6	c	c	c	c	un	c	un	c	c	C	c	C	c	c	un

Percentage% (1, 100%) (2, 33%) 3, 100%) 4, 33%) 5, 50%) 6, 83%) 7,66%) 8, 50%) 9, 33%) 10, 66%) 11, 66%) 12,50%) (13, 66%) (14, 83%) (15, 50%)

The first connotation ‘white heart’ does not exist in the English culture; however, the percentage is 100% correct. This percentage reflects the theory that not every different thing between NL and TL is a reason for difficulty. Eckman modifies “those areas of the TL that are different than the NL but are not relatively more marked then in the NL will not be difficult.”(Eckman.1985,p.4). Therefore, the percentage is 100%. However, the second question is only 33%. Here, the reader can analyze this percentage as a reason of the associations for the white. In general, White is associated with clearness and purity; therefore, most of the students did not guess the right meaning because it is not only different but also it is marked. On the otherhand, the percentage of the third question is 100% because the meaning of the ‘white flag’ is similar in both cultures; this percentage reflects the similarities between the two languages will not cause a problem. Question number nine is considered difficult because of the low percentage which is 33%. In general, the English culture associates the yellow with cowardice and not with jealousy like the Arabic culture. Consequently, most of the English did not know the right connotation for the ‘yellow eyes’. Therefore, it is considered as a marked difference. On the other hand, red is associated with anger in both cultures; therefore, the percentage of question number six (83%) is acceptable.

Question number five reflects a problem in teaching Arabic as a foreign language. In general, foreign students are taught the standard Arabic and not the spoken language that is used between Arabs themselves. Therefore, most of the foreigners do not understand the colloquial Arabic. Wishing someone a ‘white day’ is used as a colloquial and not as a standard. So, only 33% answered the question correctly. Also, this question can reflect the interference of the first language; in the English culture ‘white night’ is associated with disturbed and sleepless unlike the Arabic culture where ‘white day’ is associated with happiness and pleasure. Accordingly, the difference between the two cultures is marked (Ibid5)

7. Results and Conclusions:

The color systems of Arabic and English are not identical. Consequently, this study investigated the similarities and dissimilarities with respect to the connotations of these basic color terms (white, red, yellow, black, and blue) in Arabic and English. For example; the ‘white flag’ exists in both cultures; however the

connotation of the yellow is completely different. Also, the study found that only 63% from the selected Iraqi Students who are studying the English language at Kufa University interpreted the meanings of the colors that are used in the English Culture correctly. In addition to, only 61% of the selected English Students who are studying the Arabic language at the same University interpreted the meanings of the colors that are used in the Arabic Culture correctly. The total percentage of the accurate responses for the two cultures;

7.1. Total Percentage:

63% Arabic - 61% English

The percentages of the two cultures are similar. This shows that Arabic and English students have almost the same problems. Some of these problems are;

- The interference of the first language.
- The low level of the cultural knowledge for the second language and even sometimes for the first language.
- Teaching depends on standard more than colloquial; therefore students will not be able to understand some colloquial expressions. Accordingly, students must be aware of the differences between standard and colloquial especially the students who are studying Arabic as a second language.
- Some answers reflect the literal meaning of the connotation, for example; some students associated a 'black prince' with an African prince. Therefore, students must be taught the difference between literal meaning and figurative meaning.
- Some curriculums do not cover cultural differences.

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