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Linguistic Analysis of the Significance of Colors in 2014 Iraqi Elections Logos

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Abstract

Color means many different things to different people and cultures. We all have our own favorite colors. People like different colors like they like different foods. Color also represents feelings, people, countries, cultures, and color symbolism. It has been proven scientifically, especially in the field of psychology, that colors do have a considerable effect on people since each color represents some kind of emotion, tendency or even concepts people unconsciously associate with it. Having realized that, many businesses started spending huge amounts of money² to make sure that they are introduced in the best way they could to the consumers. This is basically achieved by the logos these businesses are known by. Everything associated with the logo plays a significant role in "selling" the acceptability of the business to the public. One of the main players in this process is the colors factor. Having proven its effectiveness, the color factor's use has been extended to many different domains. One of which is the elections logos. Logos are that first handshake with a voter. They provide an initial touch point, so they should express exactly what the candidate wants to be seen as, whether that's reliable, loyal, honest or perhaps 'maverick'. This study aims at analyzing the logos used in the latest Iraqi elections by different campaigns and bodies. The main focus of this study is to establish whether the colors used in these logos do actually complement the meaning intended by the other elements used in it. In order to arrive at such a conclusion, a general introduction is given over colors, their signification in psychology, their effects in marketing and what different colors represent in different cultures. These accounts are provided to draw a full colorful picture for the reader on the significance of colors. Finally, the researcher conducts a practical analysis on four logos used in the elections and states the conclusions derived from the analysis.

Keywords: Colors, color's Associations, Sacred Colors, Marketing, Positive meaning and Negative meaning.

1. Introduction

Our world is a world of color but the amount of color varies from place to place and time to time. Except to those blinded to it, color is all around but it is not everywhere treated in the same way. The terms people use to describe color give us another means of exploring the relationships between different languages and cultures. The color spectrum is a physical continuum showing no breaks at all. Yet we parcel it out in bits and pieces and assign names to the various component parts: *green, blue, yellow, red*, and so on. We also find that we sometimes cannot directly translate color words from one language to another without introducing subtle changes in meaning, e.g., English *brown* and French *brun* (Wardhaugh, 2010).

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We can see over 7 million colors. These are built from some basic building blocks:

- 1- **Primary colors.** Red, blue and yellow are the basis of all other shades, and cannot be created by combining other colors. If all three are mixed together in equal amounts, they will make black.
- 2- **Secondary Colors.** This is the term used to describe the three colors that are created by mixing two primary colors together. There are three secondary colors: violet (made up of red and blue); orange (made up of red and yellow) and green (made up of yellow and blue).
- 3- **Tertiary Colors.** These come from mixing one primary with one secondary color. These are six: saffron (red and orange); lime (yellow with green); lavender (blue with violet); purple (red with violet); amber (yellow with orange) and turquoise (blue with green).

When combining white or black to the above-mentioned colors you obtain tints and shades, while tones describe the depth of a color. Neutrals are subtle shades from the palest range of colors (beige, cream) and are used for balancing vibrant or rich colors. Cold colors have a high proportion of blue in their make-up, such as violet blue and some greens, and they have a calming effect. Warm colors have more red and yellow in their make-up. They are energizing (Russow, 2001).

2. Color and Language

The world surrounding us is a colored world. Where there is light there is always color. All languages make use of basic color terms. A basic color term must be a single word, e.g., *blue* or *yellow*, not some combination of words, e.g., *light blue* or *pale yellow*. Nor must it be the obvious sub-division of some higher-order term, as both *crimson* and *scarlet* are of *red*. It must have quite general use; i.e., it must not be applied only to a very narrow range of objects, as, for example, *blond* is applied in English almost exclusively to the color of hair and wood. Also, the term must not be highly restricted in the sense that it is used by only a specific sub-set of speakers, such as interior decorators or fashion writers.

According to Berlin and Kay, an analysis of the basic color terms found in a wide variety of languages reveals certain very interesting patterns. If a language has only two terms, they are for equivalents to *black* and *white* (or *dark* and *light*). If a third is added, it is *red*. The fourth and fifth terms will be *yellow* and *green*, but the order may be reversed. The sixth and seventh terms are *blue* and *brown*. Finally, as in English, come terms like *gray*, *pink*, *orange*, and *purple*, but not in any particular order (Wardhaugh, 2010).

The English language abounds with expressions pointing to connections between colors and emotions. It is possible, for instance, to be purple with rage or green with envy. Sometimes one sees the world through rose-tinted glasses; at other times one is feeling blue (Color and Emotions, 1). Bradford J. Hall, the author of "*Among Cultures: The Challenge of Communications*," defines language as "a rule-governed symbol system that allows users to generate meaning and in the process, to define reality." By this definition alone, we can see that words that convey color bring meaning to the person deriving information from that word. A survey asked participants to correlate a specific color to types of words that don't inherently assume to be linked to any specific color. These words include "trust, security, speed, and high-technology". The word *trust* is defined by the *American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition* as a Firm reliance on the integrity, ability, or character of a person or thing. Below is a graphical representation of the survey results for the word 'trust.'

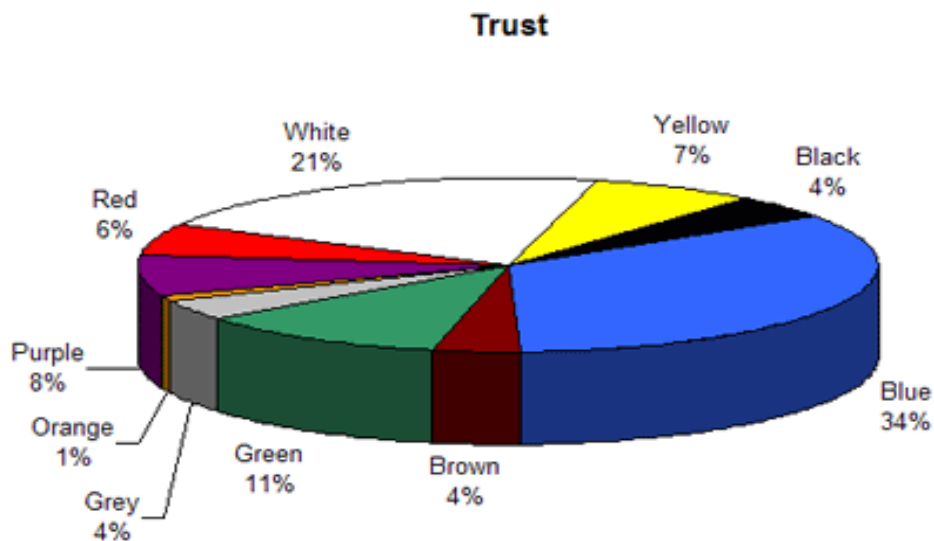


Figure 4: 1- Association with Trust.

As you can see, the color blue gathered the most results from the participants. Birren correlated the color blue to the emotional feeling of sadness or depression (*Color Psychology and Color Therapy*, 170). This came about, Birren continues, because the color blue once referred to the insane, then expanded to symbolize mental depression in a general sense. A correlation between sadness and trust couldn't be found, therefore, for the purposes of this study, this represents the first contradiction between published research and this survey.

The next word 'security' shares close relational ties (in terms of definition) to the previous word 'trust.' The *American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition* defines security as Freedom from risk or danger; safety. One could say that without trust, security is hard to establish. Below is a graphical representation of the survey results for the word 'security.'

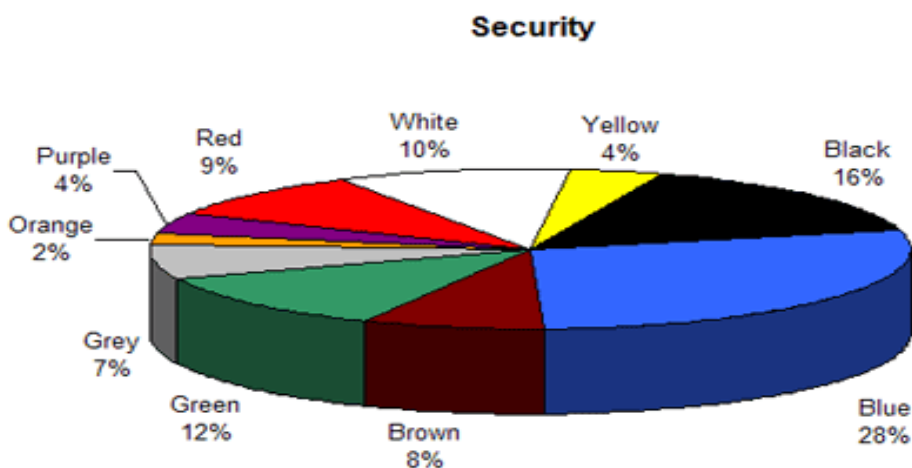


Figure 4.2- Association with Security.

‘Speed’ is noted by Birren as a subjective impression for the color red in his Modern American Color Association table (*Color Psychology and Color Therapy*, 143). Below is a graphical representation of the survey results for the word ‘speed.’

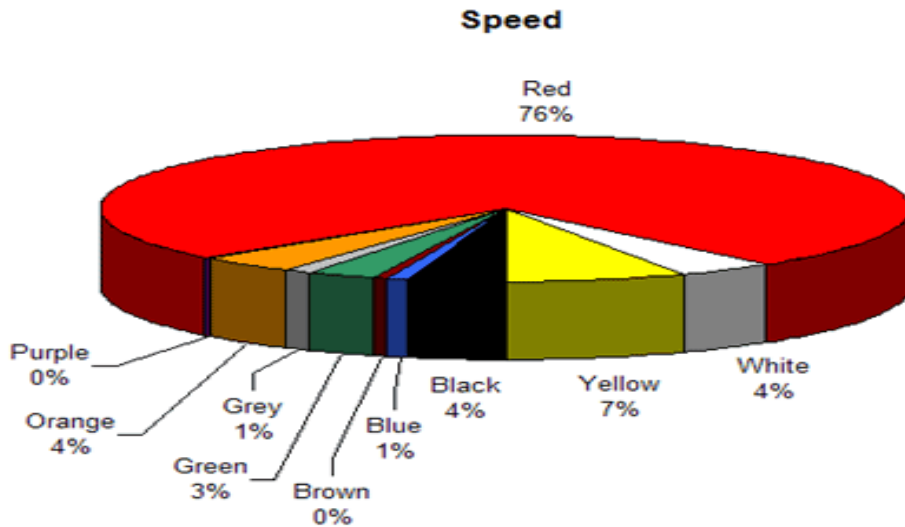


Figure 4.3- Association with Speed.

It’s easy to see that red dominated the results of this question. Red is considered to carry the association of intensity, rage, rapacity, and fierceness (*Color Psychology and Color Therapy*, 143). Furthermore, R. Gerard, the author of (*Differential effects of colored lights on psychophysiological functions*), maintained that “the color red and the emotion of anger both have an energizing effect that calls for actions and are therefore linked to each other.” Taking this statement into account, one could say that the word speed carries the same “call for action” that anger does (although the type of action may be different) (Color Assignment).

Language users in their everyday communications will form oppositional groups like:

red berries	↔	black berries
raspberries	↔	blackberries

Such pairs are also found with figurative usage as in ‘to be in the red figures’ ‘to be in the black figures’, or in politics where ‘red’ stands for socialist parties as opposed to ‘black’ for conservatives or, in some countries, for Catholics. In more recent times ‘green’ has assumed a political meaning where ‘the Green Party’ or ‘the Greens’ stands in opposition to all the non-green parties (Labour-red, Conservatives/Catholics-black). It is possible to speak of a ‘red-green alliance or coalition’ where the Green Party and the Socialists go together. A well-known “oppositional” pair is formed by the two shades of ‘blue’ as emblematic colors of Oxford University and Cambridge University. ‘Black’ and ‘white’ as components of oppositional pairs occur in ‘black magic’ vs. ‘white magic’ or ‘a black lie’ vs. ‘a white lie’. In some occurrences, one color component of the pair is only imagined or unknown but not explicitly verbalized, for example in ‘a white elephant’ (a grey elephant) or ‘a white slave’ (a black slave (U.S.)). In all cases where a color term is used which can stand in opposition to another color term with the same head noun, the color component would appear in the componential analysis of a lexeme functioning as a color word, also if it is not part of a specific “collocational cluster”. The

examples given above reveal that “color” is a component or a feature along with other semantic features of a lexeme:

'turquoise' has the features: [—ANIMATE], [+OBJECT], [+MINERAL], [+SOLID], ... [+COLOR], ...

'abelone' has the features: [+ANIMATE], [-HUMAN], [+OBJECT], ... [+COLOR],

Oppositional pairs also reveal another property of color terms in. When used in a question such as “which do you prefer, the red or the green apple?” the person asked may prefer the ‘red apple’ because she or he thinks the ‘green apple’ may not yet be ripe. Some people may have an aversion to ‘grey animals’ because they associate them with mice and rats which they abhor. They may prefer brown animals because in their childhood they were fond of ‘brownish yellowish teddy-bears’. Consequently, ‘brown animals’ are considered to be friendly and entertaining animals. We need hardly point out the historical attitude of the majority of ‘white people’ towards ‘black or colored people’: color was indicative of human characteristics. ‘White’ in ‘white people’ has a semantic feature [+EUROPEAN] (including White Americans and a few others), whereas ‘black’ in the context of people or person has a component [—EUROPEAN] and, if we consider racist or political bias, even a component [+SUPERIOR]. ‘Green’ in the context of apples or berries may have a component [—RIPE], whereas ‘red’ has the components [+RIPE], [+EATABLE]. In all such cases color terms are much less descriptive, denotative morphemes designating chromatic appearance than references to origin or social status as it is the case with ‘white people’ and ‘black people’, ripeness when we speak of apples or berries, toxicity when we warn somebody about consuming berries or mushrooms of a particular color.

In all these instances colors also imply either a positively or negatively valued state attributed to the object expressed by the head noun in question. Thus colors in oppositional pairs acquire a semiotic quality. They are markers which help people, either visually or by their linguistic representation, to distinguish between objects of the same class with different properties. This evaluative capacity of color terms that have a semiotic signaling character is in some cases strong enough to create pairs of colors or color terms which make it possible to use color terms in this function without an appertaining head noun in order to induce a positive or negative evaluation by the person “addressed”. The best-known example is certainly ‘red’ in its signaling function of warning of “danger” in general or, for instance, “fire” in particular or, “danger” vs. “no danger” in alternation with ‘green’ signaling “stop” vs. “go/ walk” (Wylter, 1992).

3. Color and Psychology

For many years, psychologists have been shown great interest in investigating the psychological aspects of colors and the most dominant among all these aspects is the effects of colors on certain human emotions. Several researches have been carried out that have yielded surprising facts about colors and color psychology is now being perceived as a new field of psychology while color therapies are being used by psychologists to relieve individuals from emotions such as anxiety and anger (Jacobs & Suess, 1975, pg. 207).

There are some colors that have a universal meaning and are known for their strong impact. For instance, psychologists have discovered that colors belonging to the red color spectrum, mainly including red, orange and yellow, are warm colors as they evoke certain emotions, from feelings of relaxation and warmth to hostility and rage. Whereas the colors that lie on the blue

spectrum including blue, purple and green, although often perceived as colors calmness, they can also arouse feelings of sorrow and indifference.

Each primary color has certain positive and negative properties that affect human mind, body and emotions. For example, red has more physical effects as it increases the pulse rate and can stimulate the instinct of 'fight or flight' and at the same time, it can also trigger aggressiveness. Similarly, yellow is considered the most psychologically strong color as it stimulates emotions, lift self-esteem and bring confidence, however, too much of it can work in the other way round. Violet is studied to have spiritual properties as it encourages meditation and is also associated with royalty. Excessive use or wrong tone of the color communicates introversion and suppression (Birren, 2016).

Recognized color theorist Faber Birren in his book *Color Psychology and Color Therapy* lists what he calls "Modern American Color Associations". For example, he lists the associative attributes of different colors in terms of their General appearance, Mental associations, Direct associations, Objective impressions, and Subjective impressions.

(a. Color Psychology)

Red

General appearance Brilliant, intense, opaque, dry

Mental associations Hot, fire, head, blood

Direct associations Danger, Christmas, Fourth of July, St. Valentine's, Mother's Day, flag

Objective impressions Passionate, exciting, fervid, active

Subjective impressions Intensity, rage, rapacity, fierceness

Orange

General Appearance Bright, luminous, glowing

Mental Associations Warm, metallic, autumnal

Direct Associations Halloween, Thanksgiving

Objective Impressions Jovial, lively, energetic, forceful

Subjective Impressions Hilarity, exuberance, satiety

Blue

General Appearance Transparent, wet

Mental Associations Cold, sky, water, ice

Direct Associations Service, flag

Objective Impressions Subduing, melancholy, contemplative, sober

Subjective Impressions Gloom, fearfulness, furtiveness

Purple

General Appearance Deep, soft, atmospheric

Mental Associations Cool, mist, darkness, shadow

Direct Associations Mourning, Easter

Objective Impressions Dignified, pompous, mournful, mystic

Subjective Impressions Loneliness, desperation

Green

General Appearance Clear, moist

Mental Associations Cool, nature, sky

Direct Associations Clear, St. Patrick's Day

Objective Impressions Quieting, refreshing, peaceful, nascent

Subjective Impressions Ghastliness, disease, terror, guilt

Yellow

General Appearance Sunny, incandescent, radiant

Mental Associations Sunlight

Direct Associations Caution

Objective Impressions Cheerful, inspiring, vital, celestial

Subjective Impressions High spirit, health

White

General Appearance Spatial - light

Mental Associations Cool, snow

Direct Associations Cleanliness

Objective Impressions Pure, clean, frank, youthful

Subjective Impressions Brightness of spirit, normality

Black

General Appearance darkness

Mental Associations night, darkness and emptiness

Direct Associations negativity

Objective Impressions death and depression

Subjective Impressions mourning, evil or negation of spirit.

(b. Color Psychology)

4. Color across Cultures

Colors like symbols have specific meanings associated with them. Since the times immemorial civilizations have made use of colors for manifesting emotions. Different cultures have varying connotations for colors. Understanding various cultural color implications would help conveying some particular message. Moreover, over the years the ideas related to colors'

psychology have changed. Many eastern societies have adopted the western ideas and vice versa. Here is a list of some colors' inferences as used in different societies.

Red

Usually the color "red" is associated with energy, passion, warning or danger. It is also called the color of "love". In Eastern societies, red connotes good luck, this is the reason it is worn by brides in India and Pakistan. In Western culture, red combined with green implicates the feeling of "joy" or "celebration". Whereas in eastern culture, the same inference is taken when red is combined with white. In China "Red" is the most versatile color that is worn on weddings and funerals alike. It is the "color of festivity", therefore most of the celebrations in China including the New Years' Eve are "red themed". In India red is the color of "beauty, fertility and wealth". In Japan red symbolizes "life and anger". Australians take red as a ceremonial color.

Orange

The color range signifies fun, friendship, happiness and autumn. It is also the color of optimism and communication. The negative implications of this color include pessimism and showiness. In Western cultures "orange" is the color associated with affordable items or comfort. It is also the "Halloween color". Eastern cultures take "orange" color as a sign of happiness and spirituality. It is the color symbolizing religion in Ireland. The Irish flag has it along with green and white. In India, mild orange is considered a sacred color. In Netherlands "orange" is an exclusive color used by the Dutch Royal family. Orange is also the color of "youth, heat and energy". This is the reason most of the youth's products we come across have orange color tones.

Yellow

Being the symbol of hope, comfort and caution yellow is one of the most striking colors. In the Western societies, "yellow" represents joy and optimism. The negative implications include cowardice. It is also used strongly as a color of "warning". In eastern cultures yellow signifies imperialism and purity. In China "yellow" shows masculinity, honor and royalty. In India and Thailand "yellow" is the sacred color. It is taken as the color of Buddhism and represents wisdom. In Egypt and Burma it is the color of sorrow. In Japan yellow implicates courage, joy and beauty. In France wearing yellow means you are jealous. Yellow is also known as the color of cleanliness and integrity.

Green

Also known as the color of nature, "green" connotes life, money, health, luck and security. In the West "green" is taken as the color of good luck, spring, Saint Patrick's Day and Christmas. In East this color is representative of new life and optimism. In USA "green" implicates money or jealousy. In China green is taken as the color of fertility, exorcism and new life. Its' negative connotations include disgrace. In India and Pakistan it is the color of Islam, virtue and hope. Japanese wear green to show youthfulness and eternal life. In Ireland "green" implies Catholics' population. In Egypt it is the color of spring. In Middle East and Saudi Arabia "green" is emblem of luck, prestige, fertility and religion. Brighter tones of green color are used for conveying the meanings of safety. This explains why banks and most of the pharmaceutical companies use green themes for their logos. Green is also the traditional color of Islam. The Islamic flag is green. Green is also mentioned in the Quran as the color of garments, cushions and carpets in paradise.

Blue

One of the favorite colors of people around the world, blue implies calmness, authority, stability and nature. Western societies take “blue” as the color of peace, trust and baby boys. The negative meanings associated with “blue” include depression. In the East blue represents immortality and generally taken as the color of females. In India “blue” is the color of Lord Krishna. In Japan it is the color of life. In Korea it is the opposite, blue symbolizes mourning. In Belgium baby girls wear blue. In Egypt and Middle East it is symbol of protection. Different religions have varying blue color implications, in Christianity, it is the Jesus’ color, in Judaism it represents purity and in Hinduism it is taken as the Lord Krishna’s color. Blue has very strong political meanings attached to it. In USA, UK, European politics it is used for manifesting moderation and conservativeness.

Purple

The color of creativity, purple generally signifies fun, femininity and royalty. In the West purple is the color symbolizing fame, wealth, authority (particularly military). Eastern cultures also take purple as the color of prestige. In India, it is used as a manifestation of sorrow and comfort. In Thailand purple is worn by the widows. In Brazil too, it implies sorrow and death. In Europe and Japan purple color is used to show off wealth, royalty and honor. Opulence of luxury and wealth are represented through “purple”. It is also one of the preferred celebrity colors.

White

The symbol of purity, peace and salvation, white has more multicultural contexts than any other color. In the West white is the color perceived with weddings, spirituality and angels. In the East however, white is worn for funerals and death. It is the color of sorrow. In China white implies humility, purity and bad luck. In India white is used for expressing sorrow, usually worn at the death of close family members, relatives and friends. In Japan white is taken in the similar context. In Thailand and Korea, white color signifies purity, innocence and morality. The strongest universal implication of white is birth and death. This connotation is vividly used in the movies for conveying a certain message to the audience.

Black

The color of mystery, darkness, power and simplicity. Black used to have more negative implications. However in the recent times black is becoming the color of attitude and fashion. In the Western societies, black is used as a symbol of power, mourning and rebellion. In East it signifies wealth and success. Indian people use black color for showing darkness, negativity and anger. Japanese take black as the color of night and mystery. Thai people associate black color with unhappiness and evil. Judaism has similar inferences regarding this color. In Africa, black represents wisdom. Australians merrily use black in their art designs. It is also worn on festivities there. The most explicit meanings of black are power and strength, which is why corporate world use this color for branding.

Brown

This color represents practicality, comfort, elegance and sensuality. Also called the color of “earth” brown connotes richness and comfort. In the Western societies, it is the color signifying stability, humbleness and nature. In the East especially in India it is taken as the color of sorrow. In Nicaragua, it shows displeasure. Chinese consider brown as the earthly color in their horoscopes. For its strict association with nature, brown is widely used for organic products’ packaging as the target audience is more likely to perceive the product “natural”.

Pink

The color of femininity, love, fun and youth, pink is becoming a hot favorite color in fashion industry. The Western culture associates this color with care, romance and love. In both Eastern and Western societies pink is a feminine color. In Europe pink is worn by the baby girls however conversely in Belgium it is the color for baby boys. In Japan pink is popular with both the genders. In Korea pink symbolizes trust. Being the color of women breast cancer organizations and NGO's working for women's issues use this color in their logos and manifestos. The brands catering to women products also prefer pink for their packaging designs.

(Colors and Cultures â Meanings of Colors across Different Cultures)

5. Color and Religion

Colors are also used in religious ceremonies or represent aspects of religion. Native Americans include colors in religious ceremonies. The Navajo Nation considers four colors to be important: Turquoise, white, yellow, and black. These colors represent four sacred mountains. The Apache Nation also considers four colors to be important: Green, white, yellow and black. These are sacred colors of the white mountain and are also used in government. The Iowa Nation also considers four colors to be sacred: Black, yellow, red and white. They represent direction, their flag, and what they consider to be four races of man.

In Tibetan Buddhism, blue is the color of Vairochana, a celestial Buddha, whose image is the immensity of sky blue. Buddhist monks wear orange (specifically the color saffron) robes primarily due to tradition. That was the least expensive color dye at the time and that is what they continued to wear. The robes themselves symbolize "simplicity and detachment of materialism."

In Hinduism, saffron is their most sacred color. Saffron represents fire that burns our impurities. Yellow represents knowledge and learning. The color green of the Maharashtra represents life and happiness. The color blue is like infinity like the vastness of the oceans and sky.

In Christianity, the color red symbolizes the blood of Jesus Christ and of sacrifice. White represents the body of Christ. Black represents sin in Catholic liturgy. Gray is the color of ash and this represents repentance in Catholicism. Purple is the liturgical color for the seasons of Advent and Lent. Heaven is described as having a lot of gold in buildings and streets. White and silver are used in liturgy during Christmas and Easter (TrackStar)

Islam is a monotheistic religion originating with the teachings of the prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.), a 7th-century Arab religious and political figure. The word "Islam" means submission, or the total surrender of oneself to God, Allah. An adherent of Islam is known as a Muslim, meaning "one who submits (to God)". There are between 1 and 1.78 billion Muslims, making Islam the second-largest religion in the world. Since the study is conducted in an Islamic country, certain colors associated with Islam are worth mentioning.

5.1. Sacred Color of Islam: Green

Revered is the color green, which has been associated with Islam as a symbol of the religion itself. Green is the sacred color of Islam, and is used for the bindings of the Qur'an (the Muslim Holy Book) and in the silken covers of the Sufi saints. It has been suggested that green is

revered because it was worn by Muhammad, but it also symbolizes life and nature. When finally reaching paradise in the afterlife, the Qur'an states, "ornaments shall be given to them therein of bracelets of gold, and they shall wear green robes of fine silk and thick silk brocade interwoven with gold, (18:31)" and they will be "Reclining on green cushions and beautiful carpets (55:76)." In Islamic culture green and gold are the colors of paradise. Green is the traditional color of Islam which can be seen clearly characterizing the Islamic flag.

5.2. Peace and Mourning

As in Western Culture, white is used to symbolize purity and peace. While attending Friday prayers, many Muslims will wear white. White is perhaps the second-most associated color with Islam. The color white is often worn when performing sacred rites of pilgrimage. The color black is considered the color of mourning in Western and Mediterranean countries. It is also the color of the chador worn by devout Iranian Shi'a women and of the cloaks worn by the ayatollahs, the Shi'a clergy. In many Shi'a countries, a black turban is worn only by male sayids, men who descend from Muhammad through his daughter Fatima and his son-in-law Ali.

5.3. The Blue Mosques

In the Middle East blue is a protective color and it can be found coloring many of the most famous mosques. These famous Blue Mosques can be found in Afghanistan, Malaysia, Egypt, Armenia, etc. One of the most famous is located in Istanbul, Turkey. Sultan Ahmed Mosque is one of the greatest tourist attractions in Istanbul, the former capital of the Ottoman Empire.

5.4. The Kaaba and the Black Stone

The Kaaba is a large cuboidal building located inside the mosque known as al-Masjid al-Haram in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. The Kaaba is the holiest place in Islam. The qibla, the direction Muslims face during prayer, is the direction from their location on Earth towards the Kaaba. Within the eastern corner of the Kaaba is the Black Stone, which is said to date back to the time of Adam and Eve. While the stone itself is not worshiped, kissing the Black Stone emulates the kiss that Muhammad gave to it when placing it in the Kaaba. Making the trip to the stone is a sign of trust and respect in Muhammad. Thus, the black color may symbolize submission to Allah's will and piety.

5.5. The Holy Qur'an

The Qur'an is the central religious text of Islam. Muslims believe the Qur'an to be the book of divine guidance and direction for mankind and consider the text in its original Arabic to be the literal word of Allah, revealed to Muhammad over a period of twenty-three years and view the Qur'an as God's final revelation to humanity. It is also characterized by the green color, in most cases.

5.6. Influence on Flags

The colors of the flags of many Muslim nations feature at least two of four colors that were used to symbolize the dynasties that ruled sprawling Middle Eastern empires that spanned from the west coast of Africa to Turkmenistan. Each dynasty flew a different banner. The first among them was the Umayyad Dynasty, who flew a white banner. Second was the Abbasid Dynasty under black. Third came the Fatimid Dynasty, under a green banner. The colors of the banners representing these three dynasties have become a part of those nations today because each dynastic family was said to have descended from Muhammad by either a common ancestor, from his daughter and son-in-law, or an uncle. Additionally, because of the many red

flags of the Persian nations, white, black, green, and red became the defining colors of Muslim nations (Colors of Religion).

6. Color in Marketing

Understanding color meanings in marketing is essential when you are establishing a business profile. Color psychology affects our lives in so many ways, yet we often don't realize the impact of our color choices. Color has a powerful subconscious effect on every part of our lives, without even saying a word; an understanding of color meanings in marketing gives us an invaluable tool to get the best response to marketing and promotional efforts and ultimately to achieve the results intended of using such strategy.

Like businesses, election campaigns are becoming increasingly aware of the considerable effects the designs of their logos have on the audience, since logos are the visual interpretation of a campaign personality. Candidates can only be in one place at one time, but their logos can be anywhere, thus a great amount of financial resources and effort is put into designing such logos. In order to be able to deliver the effect intended, a study is made to find the effect of colors in marketing and what the positive and negative associations of each color are (Color Meanings in Business).

Red

Red is a very physical color which draws attention to itself and calls for action to be taken. It means a passionate belief in an issue or undertaking. It commands attention, alerts us, creates sense of urgency, and symbolizes heat, fire, blood, love, warmth, power, excitement, energy, strength, passion, vitality, risk, danger and aggressiveness, associated with debt.

Positive Meanings in Marketing

- action, power, energy, speed
- passion, desire
- strength, courage
- attention-getting, motivating, stimulating, energizing
- driven and determined
- exciting, warm, spontaneous, assertive and confident

Negative Meanings in Marketing

- aggression and anger
- domineering, over-bearing and tiring
- quick-tempered, ruthless, fearful and intolerant
- rebellious and obstinate
- resentful, violent and brutal

Blue

Blue is the favorite color of businesses, suggests sanctuary and fiscal responsibility, inspires confidence, most popular and second most powerful color, darker shades are authoritative, dark and bright shades represent trust, security, faithfulness and dignity, paler shades imply freshness and cleanliness, although they can imply weakness.

Positive Color Meanings in Marketing:

- loyalty, trust and integrity
- tactful, caring and concerned
- reliability and responsibility
- conservatism and perseverance
- idealistic and orderly
- authority, devotion and contemplation
- peace and calm

Negative Color Meanings in Marketing

- rigid, deceitful and spiteful
- self-righteous, superstitious and emotionally unstable
- too conservative, predictable and weak
- unforgiving and frigid
- manipulation, unfaithfulness and distrust

Yellow

Yellow represents sunshine hue, spiritual color, energy, represents warning, happiness, warmth, optimism, positivism, creamy and warm shades most preferred, bright shades can be irritable to the eye in large quantities, often used to highlight or draw attention. It is also established that the color yellow and red are the first to be perceived and processed by the eye.

Positive Meanings in Marketing

- cheerful, happy, playful, fun
- optimistic, uplifting, illuminating
- logical, mental clarity, aids decision-making
- confidence, originality, creativity
- challenging, academic and analytical
- wisdom and logic
- communication of new ideas

Negative Meanings in Business

- critical and judgmental, overly analytical
- impatient and impulsive
- egotistical, pessimistic, an inferiority complex
- spiteful, cowardly, deceitful
- non-emotional and lacking compassion

Orange

Orange is associated with vibrancy, tropics, warmth, contentment, instills sense of fun and excitement, implies health, suggests pleasure, cheer, endurance, generosity and ambition, makes product seem more affordable, appeals to a wide range of people, both male and female.

Positive Meanings in Marketing

- adventurous, risk-taking, vibrant, flamboyant
- stimulating to the senses

- affordable
- warm, sociable, optimistic, enthusiastic, cheerful
- self-confident, independent, extroverted and uninhibited
- creative flair
- warm-hearted, agreeable and informal

Negative Meanings in Marketing

- superficial and insincere
- dependent, over-bearing, self-indulgent
- exhibitionist, pessimistic
- cheap, unsociable, and overly proud

Green

Green represents money, nature, health and freshness, environmental concerns, suggests fertility, freedom, healing and tranquility, represents jealousy, businesses use to communicate status and wealth, is calming, refreshing, easy on the eyes.

Positive Color Meanings in Marketing

- growth and vitality, renewal and restoration
- self-reliance, reliability and dependability
- being tactful, emotionally balanced and calm
- nature lover and family oriented
- practical and down to earth
- sympathetic, compassionate and nurturing
- generous, kind and loyal with a high moral sense
- adaptable and flexible
- encourages 'social joining' of clubs and other groups, a need to belong

Negative Color Meanings in Marketing

- possessive and materialistic
- indifferent and over-cautious
- envious, selfish, greedy and miserly
- devious with money
- inconsiderate, a hypochondriac and a do-gooder

Purple

Purple represents royalty and luxury, darker shades wealthy, suggests spirituality and sophistication, paler shades, such as lavender, feminine and romantic.

Positive Color Meanings in Marketing

- unusual and individual, creative and inventive
- psychic and intuitive
- humanitarian, selfless and unlimited
- mystery, fantasy and the future

Negative Color Meanings in Marketing

- immaturity

- impractical
- cynical and aloof, pompous and arrogant
- fraudulent and corrupt
- delusions of grandeur and the social climber

Pink

Pink is very feminine, represents gentleness, romance, well-being and innocence. Pink's message varies by intensity. Hot pinks convey energy, youthfulness, fun and excitement. Dusty pinks appear sentimental. Lighter pinks are more romantic.

Positive Color Meanings in Marketing

- unconditional and romantic love
- compassion and understanding, nurturing
- warmth, hope, calming
- sweetness, naïveté
- innocence and inexperience
- feminine and intuitive energy

Negative Color Meanings in Marketing

- over-emotional and over-cautious
- having emotional neediness or unrealistic expectations
- being immature and girlish
- lack of will power and lack of self-worth

White

White is associated with innocence, purity, peace and contentment, considered clean and sterile, cool and refreshing, can have a calming, stabilizing influence.

Positive Color Meanings in Marketing

- innocence
- purity, cleanliness
- equality, complete and whole
- simplicity
- immaculate and neat
- self-sufficient, pristine and open
- new beginnings

Negative Color Meanings in Marketing

- sterile, stark
- fastidious
- empty, isolated
- cautious, critical and boring

Black

Black is the ultimate power color. It suggests strength, potency, authority, boldness, seriousness, stability and elegance, distinguished and classic, great for creating drama, connotes sophistication, more weight than other colors, too much can be ominous.

Positive Color Meanings in Marketing

- authority, power, control
- protection and comfort
- strong, contained, formal
- sophisticated
- seductive, mysterious
- endings & beginnings

Negative Color Meanings in Marketing

- aloof
- depressing and pessimistic
- secretive and withholding
- conservative and serious
- power & control
- sadness and negativity

Gold

Gold is considered very classy. It represents inner wisdom, quality and wealth. It is associated with prestige, luxury and material wealth. It can induce great feelings of happiness and bliss or alternatively, deep anxiety and fear. It implies generosity of time, money and spirit. It is the color of victory, hence the use of gold medals for winners.

Positive Color Meanings in Marketing

- wealth and prosperity, abundance
- value, quality, luxury, expensive, opulence
- victory, achievement, grandeur, importance
- happiness, beauty
- excellence, prestige, nobility, extravagance
- attraction, wisdom

Negative Color Meanings in Business

- pretentiousness - a sense of self-importance
- intense and overwhelming

Gray

Gray is a conservative color signifying neutrality, indifference and reserve. Gray can drain you of energy, be depressing or uplifting. Gray suggests security, reliability, modesty, maturity and dullness. It can imply that you can't make decisions, 'the fence-sitter', that you don't have an opinion on anything. Gray lacks energy; it is neither reassuring nor soothing, neither stimulating nor exciting, neither pleasing nor inviting. It needs to be combined with other colors to give it passion, energy and life.

Positive Color Meanings in Marketing

- intellect, knowledge, wisdom, security
- perceived as long-lasting, and classic
- sleek, professional, mature

- refined, dignified, conservative
- controlled and inconspicuous
- color of compromise - between black and white
- neutral, contemporary

Negative Color Meanings in Marketing

- boring, rigid
- melancholy, lonely
- lifeless (without color)
- bareness, subtle, staid
- indifferent, reserved, subtle, cold, poverty

Silver

Silver is associated with conservative qualities and considered traditional, business-wise symbolizes high tech and suggests authority, practicality, earnestness and creativity.

Positive Color Meanings in Marketing

- modern, sleek, high-tech, scientific
- glamorous, distinguished, elegant
- conservative, prestige
- calming and balancing
- illusion, intuition, imagination
- feminine power, sophisticated
- wealth and riches
- aids mental, emotional and physical releasing and cleansing
- illumination

Negative Color Meanings in Marketing

- cold and impersonal
- emotional and ever-changing
- introspective
- fence-sitting
- hiding from others

Brown

Brown is associated with nature and the earth, dark shades represent wood or leather, associated with warmth and coziness, suggests richness, politeness, helpfulness and effectiveness, solid, credible, mature and reliable, light shades imply genuineness.

Positive Color Meanings in Marketing

- practical, earthy and down-to-earth
- comfort, reassurance, strength, security, simplicity
- reliable, dependable, credible and durable
- friendly and approachable
- stability, humility
- homely, comfortable, warm
- wholesome, natural and organic

Negative Color Meanings in Marketing

- lack of humor, too serious
- lack of sophistication
- heavy and dull, despairing
- staid, passive
- dirty

7. Logos' Color Analysis

Parliamentary elections were held in Iraq on 30 April 2014. Each and every inch of the walls in the streets was covered with an election banner carrying the logo of the party it represents. Different elements, including colors, were used to deliver the message the party is trying to say. Such elements are supposed to collaborate and complement each other in conveying this message in a way that best manages to sell the acceptability of its party to the people. Four of the logos used in the Iraqi elections are listed below along with their analysis.

a. Iraq Coalition (I'tilāf Al-I'raq) إنتلاف العراق



Iraq Coalition is the largest body running in the elections since it includes the largest number of parties united in one coalition as the number of these parties and bodies within it reached 29 with great diversity and various political orientations which somehow overcomes the trap of sectarianism. The coalition members are politicians, academics, heads of tribes, businessmen, officials, retirees and governmental employees, males and females, Sunni and Shia...etc. The logo of the coalition captures this unity within this great diversity in a very artistically smart way through the use of colors. As it can be very obviously seen, a flower with eight petals each with a different sparkling color is situated in the middle of the logo. Having surpassed the solar spectrum which consists of seven colors, the logo adds to the denotations of the message conveyed by the other elements used in it another layer which signifies openness to versatility and variety and all the values of modern civilization.

A noticeable point about the different colors is that the color blue has been used twice with different intensity. The reason for that is what the colors signifies as stated earlier: "Blue suggests sanctuary and fiscal responsibility, inspires confidence, is most popular and second most powerful color, darker shades are authoritative, dark and bright shades represent trust, security, faithfulness and dignity, paler shades imply freshness and cleanliness". Such message can be clearly seen in the fact that both colors "brown" and "black" are not used while any of which could have replaced one of the different blue degrees. The reason behind that is, although the color "brown" indicates richness of nature signifying the role of agriculture in Iraq which is extremely essential for the economy of the country and the lives of the people, the designers of the logo managed to deliver this meaning through the use of another element signifying the same and more ideas, that is the yellow spikes at one side and the green palm leaf at the other. Such symbols have a long history in Iraq and they are directly related to agriculture which is in turn related to farmers and working power behind the prosperity of the country. Such colors as "yellow"; indicating sunshine, warmth and positivism; and "green"; indicating nature, health, freshness, wealth and high moral senses are used instead of "brown" to avoid any of its negative connotations signifying dirtiness and despair, and instead of "black" which may indicate darkness, negativity, depression and pessimism.

b. The Citizen's Coalition (I'tilāf Al-Muatin) ائتلاف المواطنين



The Citizen's Coalition's banner and logo are characterized by the intense yellow color which makes it impossible to be missed by the eye since the color yellow is proven to be the first (along with red which is also used in the banner to mark the number of the coalition) to be perceived and processed by the eye. The purpose behind the employment of such colors is obviously to attract people's attention to the body they represent and once they have achieved that, other elements in the banner come into play to strike the viewer with the message the body intends to convey. Such elements include a picture of two children which represents the people (the citizens) especially those in need for care, and being surrounded by the color yellow; which represents sunlight, warmth, optimism and joy; it delivers a sense of protection and caring which is complemented by the another significant element, the palm tree. It is well

known that sunlight is crucial for plants' growth and prosperity, using the symbol of the palm tree along with its signification seen in the children picture and both being surrounded by the yellow umbrella delivers a clear message which states that people need this body as much as plants need sunlight, and moreover, it provides a guarantee that this body shall be worthy of the trust put in it and shall assume its responsibilities and carry them out the same way sunlight never fails those plants dependent on which. Furthermore, besides the fact that the palm tree is perceived to have a local theme and to be associated with Arabs in general and Iraqis in particular which further establish the association assigned to it with the Iraqi citizens intended by the logo, it also has another dimension related to religion. The palm tree was a sacred tree in the ancient Iraqi cultures and is described as being "our aunt" by the prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H.). This religious dimension is emphasized by the color characterizing the palm tree, green. Besides symbolizing life and nature, the color green has been associated with Islam as a symbol of the religion itself. Combining the two facts that the Quran very clearly and in more than one occasion associates the color green with paradise, and that the Islamic flag raised in battles to indicate victory was characterized by the color green, leads to more implications one can deduce from the logo. Some of which is that, in some way, the coalition is playing the religion card to persuade people to elect it by implying that it is the right path to take and he who chooses to take it shall be rewarded considerably.

c. **The National Coalition (I'tilāf Al-Wataniya) إنتلاف الوطنية**



The National Coalition comes third in terms of the number of parties united within which as they are fifteen in number with different orientations and social identities as some of them are academics, others are businessmen, media figures, heads of tribes, politicians and officials all came under one umbrella under which all differences are fused, the umbrella of "Nationalism" which is the main theme and title of this coalition. The coalition's logo loudly vocalizes the theme just referred to, starting with the most national symbol used, the Iraqi flag within which the other elements are located; the palm tree whose connotations were mentioned earlier; and the two blue lines representing the Tigris and the Euphrates. Moreover, the use of the crescent shape representing the flag indicates a religious dimension to the theme since the crescent is a famous Islamic symbol. Using such different variety of national symbols and adding some

religious flavor serves to address all classes and layers of the Iraqi social, religious and cultural fabric.

The use of colors is minimal as the logo shows since it depended fully on the national elements associated with Iraq which already have established colors. Yet, some points can be raised concerning the two shades of blue used to characterize the two rivers. Blue signifies water, so, its employment here is completely justified. Moreover, Blue suggests fiscal responsibility and inspires confidence. Darker shades are authoritative, dark and bright shades represent trust, security, faithfulness and dignity, paler shades imply freshness and cleanliness. It also does emphasize the religious connotations embedded within the logo since the color blue is associated with protection and people wear blue to fend off envy, evil spirits and negative energy. So, in some sense, combining the connotations of blue (water, cleanness and protection) the coalition seems to communicate a very significant concept to the public, which is the promise to wash the country clean from all those factors which have been staining it and to provide full protection to all layers of society.

It may be claimed that the previously stated view is challenged by the presence of the color brown characterizing the fruits of the palm tree, since the color brown has negative connotations signifying dirtiness which goes against what has just been established. Yet, the positive connotations of brown seem to overcome such claim as it colors the fruits of the palm tree which communicates the idea that it is about time the Iraqi people start enjoying the wealth of their country and using the brown color to characterize such concept signifies the an important message the coalition tries to deliver to the people, which is a promise to make their country's resources easily accessible to all of them since the color brown signifies cheapness, richness, approachability, reassurance, security and durability.

d. Coalition of the Free (Kutlat Al-Ahrar) كتلة الأحرار



This coalition very clearly combines both its national and religious orientations within its logo. The logo national identity is represented by the Iraqi flag wrapping the stick which used to accompany the late influential Shia religious figure Al-Sader everywhere even when he used to give Friday's speeches, hence the religious implications. The use of colors in this logo is the

least in terms of significations since it fully depends on the symbols stated which are emphasized by the statement (Allah is The Greatest) on both sides of the stick which is the statement written on the Iraqi flag and the two lines on both sides, one is red and the other is black, which also characterize the Iraqi flag.

8. Conclusions

All languages have a color system and terminology but these differ from one another in terms of their precise denotation. The color brown is found in both English and French, yet it doesn't denote exactly the same density of the color. As a result, translating colors across languages may pose a serious problem.

The use of colors to indicate particular concepts is widely employed in different aspects of life to achieve certain goals. Unconsciously, people associate different colors with a variety of ideas, emotions and conceptions, both positively and negatively. Such associations vary across cultures, languages and religions. Nevertheless, some colors seem to have some universal connotations due to psychological facts established experimentally like the fact that the colors yellow and red are the first to be perceived and processed by the eye.

Upon realizing the significant role colors can play in marketing businesses, politicians extended the employment of colors as a means to serve their political aims. This can be clearly seen in the elections all over the world. Iraq is not an exception, as a matter of fact; elections in Iraq present the perfect material for researchers to investigate the effects of colors used in the election logos of different parties since the streets at such times seem as if a multi-color bomb has gone off leaving no spot intact.

Having carried out analyses of four logos used by parties participating in the latest Iraqi elections, the researcher concluded that in most cases colors used in the elections logos did capture the message the parties intended to convey. Yet, the employment of colors varies among the logos used. Some logos had their basic concepts delivered fully by the use of colors (like the logo of Iraq Coalition), others employed colors in a way that complements their message conveyed via national and religious symbols (like the logo of The National Coalition) while some logos depended fully on elements other than colors to convey their concepts like (Coalition of the Free "Ahrar"), yet, even these elements had their own colors whose connotations (national, religious, ...etc.) have already been established and taken as a fact (like the colors of the Iraqi flag which represents nationalism and the Iraqi identity: black, red, white and green).

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