

## The Semantics of Colors in Taizzi Dialect: Culture and Cognition

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### Abstract

The existence of colors in our everyday life is undeniable. They are ubiquitous. It is nearly impossible to imagine even a single entitle (be it an object, things, or living creature) devoid of them. This omnipresence of colors around us has made its way through abstract and less tangible entities through the interaction between culture and cognition. This paper, through shedding more light on how color meaning could be extended in languages and cultures using cognitive mechanisms such as metonymy, metaphor, and sense of opposite relation, sought to investigate the semantic extension of Taizzi dialect color terms namely red, white, black, and green, based on cultural data. The findings revealed the existence of three types of meanings: the original meaning, the extended meaning, and the abstracted meaning of color terms in Taizzi dialect and culture. It also revealed that Taizzi people used mechanisms like metonymy, metaphor, and sense of opposite relation based on their experience of the physical world as well as cultural data in understanding and perceiving the meaning of color terms. It found that it is possible to predict the direction and development of the new extended meanings of color in a specific language.

**Key words: Color, culture, semantic extension, cognitive mechanism**



## 1. Introduction

There are fundamental names for colors in every language. These color designations, however, do not precisely split the meanings of color. In other words, every language has its own unique representation of the cognitive linguistic idea of "color." There are two main reasons why cognitive science should care about the study of culture. The first is that human cognitive capacities both appear and are an effect of culture itself, at least in part. The second factor stems from the culture of modern human communities, which includes all facets of life, but especially cognitive activity. Since the emergence of cognitive science in the second half of 20th century and the pioneering work of Barlin and Kay (1969), color has become an area of extensive scholarly worldwide research (e. g., Baxter, 1983; Hardin & Maffi, 1997; Kay & McDaniell, 1978; Philip, 2006; Socelia, 2008; Wierzbicka, 1990, 1996, 2008; Xing, 2009, ...ect). What is important here is that there appeared two competitive and controversial accounts. The first one led by Kay and McDaniel (1978) who adopted the neurophysiological perspective which claims that the semantics of basic color terms in all languages is the result of neurophysiological processes where differences in wavelength of light reaching the eye are transformed into response differences in the visual nervous system. The second one led by Wierzbecka (1990) who adopted the cognitive perspective, which is adopted in this study, and which in opposition to Kay and McDaniel's claims and which suggests that color concepts are interwoven in certain universal identifiable human experiences, such as light, sun, vegetation, the ground and the sky. Furthermore, Wierzbicka (2008) believes that semantic universal of color terms can be established only by examining real speech, in many languages, and trying to pinpoint the commonalities of linguistic usage.

On the other hand, and according to Wilson and Keil (1999), the study of culture and cognition is interwoven since human cognition takes place in social and cultural context. Cognitive science uses tools provided by culture, such as words, concepts, believes, and experience. Moreover, the study of cognition is all about social and cultural phenomenon. Thus, Wierzbivka's cognitive view and Keil and Wilson's cultural view both emphasize the importance of involving culture in the study of cognition. This paper investigates the semantics of white, black, red and green color terms in Taizzi dialect, which has not been investigated yet at least in English language research. Based on cultural data, thus, this paper seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the basic and extended meanings of white, black, red, and green color terms in Taizzi dialect?
2. Which mechanisms are used by Taizzi people in extending the meanings of color terms?
3. Is the development of semantic behavior of colors accidental or is it systematically based on the early developed semantic properties of color terms?

The results of this paper should provide evidence that support the view that the meanings of colors have vary according to universal identifiable human experiences. The researchers' understanding of the cognitive relationship between language and culture led

them to further classify color concepts in Arabic into two categories: positive and negative meanings. It appears that it is in human nature to associate a descriptive language sign (green) with a real-world physical object (like grass), and then to express a viewpoint about the described object. Since everyone believes that paradise is good and that they are all green or green land, it makes sense that the color green would also have positive implications. These connotations might logically have either a positive or negative meaning. This also clarifies the reasons behind the study's discussion of the classification of color terms in Arabic, which have several semantic roles in common. Therefore, people's comprehension of their own real experiences and culture has driven the extension of colors, which is solely cognitive.

## 2. Literature review

Besides their literal senses, color terms could be used loaded with different connotative meanings that are realized in conventional linguistic expressions. This indeed implies that "the connotation of a language expression is clearly distinct from its senses. Allan (2007) defined connotative meaning as "pragmatic effects that arise from encyclopedic 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 colors seem to be grounded, at least to some extent, in reality. Moreover, Leech (1981: 23) 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 whereas Connotative meaning is defined as what is communicated by virtue of what language refers to. So Connotative meaning, in comparison with conceptual meaning, is relatively unstable and may vary according to culture, historical period, and the experience of the individual.

Color terms seem to have a great potential of developing different extended meanings. Such extension of meanings could be developed either through metaphoricalization, which is "the analogical mapping of more concrete terms from source domain onto a more abstract term in the target domain" (Traugott – Dasher 2002: 72), or through metonymization, defined as the semantic process of using a part for the whole or one entity is used to stand for another associated entity (Lakoff – Johnson 1980; Lakoff 1987, 1993).

(Traugott – Dasher 2002: 24) states that "The semantic extension is said to be grounded in people's understanding and interpretation of the physical world and is not accidental but pragmatic because it is always context-dependent". In this regard, Xing (2008) differentiate between three types of meaning: original meaning, extended meaning, and abstract meaning. Original meaning is defined as the etymological meaning of the color term; extended meaning is the meaning extended from the original meaning through metaphor, metonymy, or other cognitive means; and abstract meaning refers to the meaning that has been further abstracted from the extended meaning.

Because of the pragmatic and semantic focus of color research, a number of studies concentrate mainly on how people in a specific language and culture use color to convey different meanings. Zhang (2006) in his semantic study of Chinese and English colors, claims

that people might have different fondness of colors based on their languages and cultures. For example, green means taboo for Brazilian, Yellow for Japanese, Red for Belgians, however Zhang maintained that such different cultures might still have similarities in their thinking and social activities which would lead to similar color connotations as white, for example, has connotations of purity in both English and Chinese (2006).

Xing (2009) showed, through his diachronic and synchronic evidence, how the meaning of color terms has been extended in Chinese and English cultures through mechanisms such as metaphor, metonymy, sense of opposite relation and pragmatic inference. Xing argued that the differences in the extended and abstracted meanings of English and Chinese color terms have its root in the semantic properties that have been developed earlier.

Philip (2006) In his comparative study between English and Italian and based on general reference corpora as well as traditional reference works, maintained that the correspondence between conventional linguistic expressions and the several meanings attributed to colors have a dual function in language and culture. First, color metaphors are influenced by metonymy because connotative meanings assigned to color seem to be grounded in reality. Second, connotative values of colors in conventional linguistic expressions support and perpetuate folk beliefs about color meanings. He further hypothesized that the colors selected in these expressions are not actively selected by speakers, but rather predetermined by habitual pattern by language, these habits consequently influence the speaker's and the language community's perception of color.

In a study conducted by Hasan Al-Sammerai and Kadir (2011) in an attempt to show how meanings of colors in Arabic and English are similar and different for color terms. They compared six color terms in Arabic, namely, White, black, red, green, blue, and yellow with their English counterparts. They found that Arabic and English have more in common similarities than differences and the findings provide evidence that the language etymology of the color terms in neither culture is accidental, as they were found to be systematically developed based on the already existing semantic extensions of these color terms. It was also found that the extension of colors is purely cognitive and has been stimulated by the people's own understanding of their real experience.

Another study by Bilal. A. Adaileh (2012) insisted on the importance of cultural context claiming that differences in cultural context might lead to significant differences in the extended meanings of colors across languages. He followed Hasan and Kadir (2011) approach in classifying the extended meanings of color terms into positive and negative meanings. He found that green, yellow, red and blue have more negative meanings than positives ones whereas white has more positive meanings than negative ones. He contended that black color has extended meanings such as solid, evil, mischievous, and hostility.

In agreement with Hasan Al- Sammeria and Kadir and in a line with Xing (2008) Habibollah Mashhady, Hossein Salarvand, and Nasser Fallah (2013), found that the extension of color meaning is mainly cognitive and have been stimulated by the people's own understanding of

their real experiences. It was inferred that the development and extension of positive and negative meanings is based on the people's understanding throughout their culture.

A study by Sarmanbetova Rajivmandal on Symbolism and semantics color in Kazakh culture (2019), using an etymological analysis to analyze the meaning and symbolism of yellow, blue, green, red, brown, and white, colors he claims that colors do not show or mean the color, rather they describe the shape, character, and kazakh' world cognition. These symbolisms or to say connotative meanings stems from religious, spiritual, social or historical events. He further claims that color characterizes tradition, world mentality, custom, culture, show every ethnic nations' world outlook and even shape the way we feel.

Despite the abundance of studies on color terms in relation to culture and cognition. there found no study on color terms in Taizzi dialect based on cognitive approach and for this reason this study investigates the extension of the meanings of four color terms namely, white, black, red and green in Taizzi dialect.

### 3. Methodology and Data Collection

Although there are many color terms in Taizzi dialect and culture, this focused only on four color terms namely white (abyadh), black (aswad), red (ahmar), and green (akhdhar), which are more basic color terms. Using the cultural and cognitive categorization for each color terms, this paper identified three types of meaning. Original meaning which referred to the etymological meaning of color terms, extended meaning which referred to the meaning extended from the original meaning through metaphors, metonymy, and other cognitive devices, abstracted meaning which referred to the meaning that has been further abstracted from the extended meaning. Positive and negative associations with these colors were presented. Then, attempts were made to explain the cultural points regarding each color term and the mechanisms underlying each color's meanings. Detailed analysis and explanation for color terms of Taizzi dialect were handled.

The data were collected through personal and social media questionnaire. People from different areas in the city were asked questions like what are the meanings associated with (white) color in your area? Or how the (white) color is used in your area? They gave examples. The researchers recorded these examples. The researchers are also native speakers of Taizzi dialect, so they provided examples from their own areas. Then a detailed qualitative descriptive analysis was conducted using cognitive mechanisms like metaphors and metonymy to detect the meaning of colors.

### 4. Findings and Results

#### 4.0 The categorization of different meanings of Taizzi Dialect color terms

##### 4.1. White color (اللون الابيض)

White color has positive connotations worldwide. Connotations like clarity, cleanness, innocence, purity, beauty exist in almost all cultures. Negative connotation of white color



varies across culture. In East Asia, white color indicates mourning, and death beside its positive connotations. In Iranian culture white color indicates negative meaning in example like white eye (sefied eye) which means rude, impertinent and disrespectful. White eye in Taizzi culture implies negative meaning (blind).

#### 4. 1. 1. Meanings of white color in Taizzi Dialect and Culture

**A. Original meaning:** white means the white color.

For example, white snow or white cheese. (تَلج أبيض أو جبن أبيض)

#### **B. Extended meanings**

1. blank, clean or empty in examples like ‘white sheet’ (waraqah bidhaa’ ورقة بيضاء)
2. old as in white beard (lihiah bidaa’ لحية بيضاء) and, white hair (Sharuh abyad شعره أبيض).
3. beautiful or handsome as in ‘white face (wajh abyadh وجه أبيض).
4. good reputation, white-record (safatuhu baydhaa’ صفحته بيضاء), is often used to describe a person who has a good reputation.
5. Future as in white color in a flag.

#### **C. Abstracted meanings**

- 1- purity and innocent, harmless, and evil-free issues. Seen in this light, (white-hearted (قلبه أبيض) and in a white lie (kiðbih baydhaaa’ كذبة بيضاء) is an acceptable and harmless lie.
- 2- having done a lot of good deeds as in white-handed man (ðu al-ayadi al-bayd ذو أيادي بيضاء).
- 3- lucky as in white day! (yaum abyadh يوم أبيض). Expression like may Allah whiten your face (bayyadallah wjihak ببيض الله وجهك) is used in Taizzi dialect to thank someone who helps you get out of difficult problem.
- 4- fertility and wedding as in white wedding dress. (fustan orus abyadh فستان عرس أبيض).
- 5- white weapons (silaah abyadh سلاح أبيض).

#### **D. Discussion**

As mentioned above, the extended and abstracted meaning are derived from the original meaning either through the use of metaphor that is construed as analogical mapping of more concrete terms from a source domain onto a more abstract term in the target domain (Traugott & Dasher, 2002, p. 75) or through metonymization which is the semantic process of using a part for the whole or one entity is used to stand for another associated entity (Lakoff – Johnson 1980; Lakoff 1987, 1993). In the first extended meaning (white sheet) the color white



has been metaphorically used to refer to blankness based on the assumption that if something is white then it has nothing written or printed on it. The second extended meaning has been developed through the use of part-whole metonymy. The white beard and hair of an old man have been used to refer to him. The examples white beard or white hair in Taizzi dialect has an abstracted meaning beside this extended meaning and which extended from it. This meaning is experience in life. This meaning has been metaphorically abstracted based on the assumption that the more you practice something the more experience you get and from this assumption old people have been living for long time and experienced life more, so become experiments. The third extended meaning has been developed using metonymy. The white taints on the eyes of blind people have been used to refer to them.

The fourth extended meaning is an extension of the original meaning. To describe the attractiveness and beauty of someone supposing that people who have a white complexion are also beautiful or handsome. The meaning of white color in Yemeni flag has been politically developed from the original meaning. White colour in flag refers to clear future, emptied from oppression of previous decades. A person who has white-record (safatuhu bayda) is a man with good reputation.

The first abstraction has been metaphorically developed from the original and extended meaning. So If somebody has white heart that is with no black spot, he or she has a heart empty of evil, sin, grades, or malevolence. Especially in this sense, In Taizzi culture the black color (as it will be explained later) has opposite connotations such as sinfulness, wickedness, impurity. The second abstraction, through the use of metaphor, has related meaning to the previous meaning in that if someone has white heart he has no impurity or sin. consequently, people with white hands have done a lot of good deeds and help poor people. It is not their hands which are white but their good deeds. This is called metonymy where white hands stand for people who do good deeds.

The third abstraction is explained through opposite relation with black. White day vs black day. In this respect expression like "May Allah whiten your face (bayyadh Allah wajhak)" is said to someone who helps you get out of difficulties vs "May Allah blacken you face (sawwad Allah wajhak)" is said to someone who has done something shameful. The fourth abstraction has been developed from the fourth extended meaning. The white dress of the bride stands for the fertility of the marriage and the wedding itself. The last meaning white weapons (silaah abyadh) which is a common Arabic term has developed from the Arabic culture for any non-firearm type weapon used for self-defense or killing, including swords, daggers, spears, batons, and cleavers. These weapons were the basis of arming the troops before the spread of firearms in the 15th and 16th century.

#### 4.2 Black color (اللون الأسود)

Black color is the opposite of white color. Black color has negative connotations worldwide. It is directly related to evil, hatred, depression, pessimism. Black color symbolizes fear in Mexico. Black color in western color symbolizes death, mourning, and funeral. Despite its negative connotations, black color has positive meaning in Arabic culture

especially when describing the beauty of women. A woman with long black hair and black eyes is a beautiful woman in Arabic culture.

#### 4.2.1 Meanings of black color in Taizzi dialect

##### A. Original meaning is the name of the color

Black color

Black bag, black-handed (aswad alyadayn) could be used to signify a person with unclean or dirty hands.

##### B. Extended meanings

1- darkness as in dark night. (ليلة ظلمة)

##### C. Abstract meaning.

- 1- poor and hapless as black day, black year (black day (yawm aswad يوم أسود), Sanaah swdaa سنة سوداء أو غبراء).
- 2- Famine and starvation (black year (sanaah sawdaa سنة سوداء أو غبراء).
- 3- Ominous or having bad luck (haḍ aswad حظ أسود).
- 4- malevolent as in black-hearted (aswad al-qalb أسود القلب).
- 5- sinful, wicked (black-deeds (amaluh asawd? عمله أسود), a black mark in one's record (alamah sawda? fi safat almr? بقعة سوداء في صفحته), black market, black magic سحر أسود).
- 6- To be avoided as in black list (alqa'imah assawda قائمة سوداء), shameful (may Allah blacken your face (sawwad Allah wajhak سود الله وجهك), . Black color has positive meaning such as beauty (black eyes عيون سوداء, black hair شعر أسود), youth (شعر أسود).

#### Discussion 2

The extended meaning of black color as in 'dark night' has been metaphorically developed based on the assumption that if something is dark it is black and then abstracted meanings have been developed from the original and extended meanings. The first abstraction (black day) has been developed based on the assumption that if someone is in black day or has black day, he or she has no light in life and or ray of hope. So the sense of haplessness and mischance is created. The second abstraction is related to the previous sense so the meaning of (black year (سنة سوداء) or also as Taizzi people may also describe a year full of famine and starvation (gray year (sanah ghabraa سنة غبراء) has been metaphorically developed to refer to a year full of starvation and devoid of prosperity. The third abstraction (black luck) is used to describe someone who brings bad luck with him or who has no luck at all. The fourth abstraction (black-hearted) describes a negative and unfavorable characteristic and



used to describe people with hearts full of hatred, and malevolence. Fifth abstraction (black deeds (amal sawdaa') is related to previous meaning and is used to describe people whose deeds are black. It refers to people whose deeds are unfavorable or full of sins. So a black mark in someone's record means he or she has done unfavorable and sinful deeds and has bad reputation. Sixth attraction is developed to refer to unfavorable people to be avoided. Black color could also mean aggressive and suffering past. This is what the black color in Yemen's flag may stands for.

Despite the fact that black color connotes negative and unfavorable meanings, it also has positive meaning in Taizzi culture as in black long hair, and black eyes, especially when one describes the beauty of women. So a woman with black eyes and long black hair is a beautiful woman but if a woman is black-skinned, then she is not beautiful and this expression is used in Taizzi culture to describe a woman who belongs to an ethnic class in Taiz society with black skin.

In a whole picture, we can say that from the original meaning of black color and from its extended meaning of darkness, more abstracted meanings have been derived through metaphors, metonymy and opposite relation. Negative and unfavorable meanings of black color like haplessness, famine, sinfulness, and malevolence are all used to refer to terrible condition or bad and unacceptable traits.

More interestingly, there is evident contrast between the connotation of black and white in Taizzi dialect. More clearly, Taizzi people use white for favorable things and black to refer to unfavorable things. White color is used with meanings like purity, clarity, good luck, and good deeds, benevolence and beauty. On the contrary, black color is used with meaning like darkness, haplessness, poverty, bad luck and bad deeds. Which is ultimately the opposite of white color.

#### 4.3 Red color (اللون الأحمر)

Red color's negative connotations exceed its positive ones. Negative connotations like death (red death) to refer to something very bad. It also describes a painful disease such as renal colic. Red is associated with danger as in give somebody a red card, and red line. Anger is also associated with red color in many languages like French in an expression like 'rouge de rage' (red with anger). A red heart is an angry person in Zulu. Red has also positive connotation like love (red rose), sacrifice.

Connotations of red color vary from one culture to another. For example, red means lucky in China, Denmark and Argentina, unlucky in Germany and Nigeria, ambition and desire in India, love in China, Japan and Korea (Paul-Okan 2010: 953).

#### 4.3.1. Meanings of red color in Taizzi dialect

##### A. Original meaning

Red color.



Red blood, and red traffic light.

### B. Extended meaning

1. Flaming and gazy.

Red fire (naar hammra نار حمراء), red sun ( shams hammra شمس حمراء).

2. Shy and embarrassed.

Red face, his face becomes red, (حمّر وجهه - أصبح وجهه أحمر)

3. Anger.

Red eye , عيني حمراء منه my eyes are red off him

4. Braveness and energy.

Red heart (قلبه أحمر)

### C. Abstracted meaning

1. Love and passion, sex.

In red rose (wardah hamra وردة حمراء), If your lover an ox, wear red clothes, red night (sahrah hamra? ليلية أو سهرة حمراء), Spending a red night (laylah hamra ليلية أو سهرة حمراء).

2. Expulsion

To give a player a red card (al-bitayah al-hamra? بطاقة حمراء) in a game.

3. Threat and warn.

Show someone a red eye (raweeh el-ein al-hamra وريه العين الحمراء).

4. Hardship and bad things.

red death (mawt ahmmar مافي عندي إلا موت أحمر)

5. Sacrifice.

Red flag.

6. Banned, prohibited.

Red line. تجاوز الخطوط الحمراء (تجاوز الخطوط الحمراء)

### Discussion 3

The expansion or red follow the same process of white and black. The original meaning has been developed to include meaning like flaming, glazy and shiny. So a red fire is flaming fire and a red sun is very shiny. To put it in another way red color has been metaphorically extended to describe things which are too shiny and too flaming. The second and third meanings have been metonymically extended from the original meaning, the red eye or red face are part- whole metonymy where the part stands for the whole. These extended meanings are based on the assumption that when someone is shy, embarrassed or angry turns red in the eyes or face. The fourth meaning has been metonymically developed from the original meaning a red heart refers to a person who is brave and energetic.

The first abstraction has been metaphorically developed from the original meaning based on cultural belief that a red rose symbolizes love and that passion and sex are related to love so a red night or to spend a red night means to spend a pornographic night full of love, passion and sex. The second abstraction has been metaphorically developed from the first and third extended meanings based on the assumption that when someone approach fire he approaches danger and when a player in a game make wrong things the referee get angry and give him a red card to expulse him from the game. To show someone a red eye means to threaten and warn him because he has done or you expect him to do something wrong to you. The fourth abstraction has developed from the second meaning. Fire symbolizes danger, death so to die because of fire it is bad, hard and painful. In Taizzi culture, to give someone a red death مافي عندي إلا موت أحمر means to kill him by shooting him. The fire of a gun has been metonymically used to refer to feat. The fifth abstraction has developed from the original meaning based on the assumption that red blood symbolizes sacrifice and that is why there is a red colour in Yemeni flag. The red color in Yemeni flag symbolizes sacrifices and blood of the twenty-sixth of September, fourteenth of October, and thirtieth of November's revaluations martyrs. The last abstraction has been developed from the second meaning, so a red line is dangerous and prohibited to be approached so when someone crosses the red lines he or she did what mustn't be done.

#### 4.4 Green color ( اللون الأخضر )

Green is the color of nature. Although Green color has positive meanings such as growth, harmony, health and safety, it has negative connotations. Meanings of green color, like other colors, varies from one culture to another culture based on people's cultural, religious believes, experiences, and cognition. For examples, Green symbolizes danger, and disease in Malaysia, envy in United states, Spanish, Islamic identity in Arab culture as in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's flag and green color is the color of our prophet Muhammed slogan May Allah's prayers and peace be upon him.

##### 4.4.1. Meanings of green color in Taizzi dialect and culture

###### A. Original meaning

1. Green color.



green nature (طبيعة خضراء), green jungle. (غابة خضراء)

### B. Extended meaning

1. Unripe and green.

Unripe, green tomatoes (طماط أخضر), green potatoes (بطاط أخضر)

2. Covered with plants.

green land (أرض خضراء) green jungle (غابة خضراء)

3. Living and not dry.

green tree (شجرة خضراء), green clothes (غسيل أخضر), green leaf (ورقة خضراء), burning green and dry. (بحرق الأخضر واليابس).

### C. Abstract meanings

1. Youth.

green-heart (قلب أخضر)

2. Permission.

green light (تم إعطاؤه الضوء الأخضر), He got the green light. (ضوء أخضر)

3. Health.

Doctors' clothes during surgical operations. (ملابس الدكاترة في غرف العمليات الجراحية).

4. Inexperience and immaturity.

He is a green wood. (عوده عاده أخضر).

5. Prosperity.

green way (دريك أخضر) a phrase said to bid farewell to a traveler.

### Discussion 4

By paying close attention to the original, extended, and abstracted meanings of green color, one can infer that they followed the same expansion procedures that the other colors follow. The original meaning has been developed to include extended meaning like unripe and green based on the assumption that unripe crops and fruits are still green. Thus, their greenness has been metonymically used to refer to them. The second extension of the original meaning has been developed based on the assumption that an area that is overfilled with

plants and trees looks greener, so in the sense of opposite relation green jungle and green area are greener than other areas and that is why they are green. It is assumed, in Taizzi culture, that green areas are full of fresh air which is good for health. The third extension of the original meaning has been metaphorically developed based on the general assumption that living (not dry) plants and trees are green while dry plants and trees are gray. And that is why living trees are green and dry ones are gray. The example 'to burn green and dry' means to destroy everything. In Taizzi culture Green color gains a negative meaning, for example, when someone try to touch or walk on something that is already cemented they are told do not do that it is green which means it is still wet and not tough enough.

Abstractions of the color green are related to the extended meanings. The first abstraction has been metaphorically developed from the third extended meaning, so in Taizzi dialect a green-hearted man is used to describe an old and married man who, however old and married, loves the opposite sex and keeps trying to make self, through some patterns of behavior, younger in the eyes of women. So a green heart (living) has been metonymically used for an old man. The second abstraction has been developed in sense of opposite relation with red light, so to give someone a green light means to give him permission and allow him to do what he or she wants. The third abstraction has been developed from the extended meaning based on the assumption that green nature is good for health that is the reason why do doctors wear green clothes during operation. 'Doctors wearing green clothes' means that they are taking care of patients' health and bringing him back to life. The prosperity meaning of green color has been abstracted from the extended meaning based on the idea that greenness means prosperity. So when a mother tells her son or husband "Go may Allah make your path green." " الله يجعل دربك أو طريقك خضراء " she wishes good luck and prosperity for him.

Green colour is used negatively in Taiz culture. When a person is described as a green wood (uduh akhdhar عوده أخضر, it means that he is immature or inexperienced. Green-handed (يده خضراء) seems to be positively used to describe a successful gardener; everything he/she plants in the ground grows well. In this respect, the connection between green and plant life is also used in English and present in the expression to have green fingers (Philip 2006: 83). Color green has religious symbolism in Taizzi culture parts of the city are lighted green and also green flags are spread during The Prophet Mohammed's birthday festival. Expressions like خُضْرِي refers to the person who sells vegetables. This meaning has been metonymically developed where the goods stand for the seller.

In short, the color green has positive meanings in Taizzi culture. Meanings like nature, youth, and health were found. Negative meanings like unexperienced, unpalatable which are associated with color green were found in examples like green apples, green tomatoes, green wood عوده أخضر positive meanings of green color are more than negative meanings. Cognition, culture, and people's experience and religious believes paly fundamental role in color perception.

## 5. Conclusion

This study focuses on the meanings of four colors in Taizzi dialect and culture. The

study includes the colors (white أبيض, black أسود, red أحمر, and green أخضر). Different levels of original, extended, and abstracted meanings have been identified. The findings reveal that the extended and abstracted meanings of these colors have been developed from the original meanings based on cognitive mechanisms such as metaphor and metonymy. The original meaning of the black color and its extended meaning darkness have developed to include abstracted meanings such as evil, haplessness, and pessimism. And the original meaning of white has led to various abstracted meanings such as purity, innocence, good reputation and bright future. A white beard and white hair are metonymically used to refer to people. Thus, every term for a color has three different meanings: the basic meaning, which is the term's original meaning; the extended meaning, which is the meaning the term has borrowed from human experiences; and the additional meaning, which is the meaning that has been further abstracted from the extended meaning. In this research, the earliest meaning is always the initial fundamental meaning; any particular color term's expanded meaning develops next, and its abstract meaning is its most recent extension.

Both negative and positive meanings are associated with each color. Positiveness and negativeness vary from one color to another. The positiveness of white color predominate its negativity. Although White color is associated with positive meanings such as purity, future, and innocence, its negative association with death such as "white coffin" is found. On the contrary, black color is associated with negative meanings such as pessimism "black day", evil and harmful "black heart". Negative meanings of black are more than its positive meanings. In Taizzi dialect and culture black color is associated with positive meanings like beauty and youth especially when describing the beauty of women. Red color has negative meanings such as anger, danger, death, and prohibition. Positive meanings of the color red are love, and sacrifice. The green color's positive meanings predominate its negative meanings. Meanings such as prosperity, health, living and not dry are positive meanings associated with green color. Despite its positivity, green color has negative associations such as immaturity, unripeness, wetness and unexperienced.

Cognition, cultural, political, and religious beliefs and people's experience affect people's understanding of colors' meanings. White, black, and red colors have special meanings for Taizzi people. They are the three color of the national flag. Black symbolizes past full of oppression, famine, starvation and red symbolizes revolution martyrs' blood and white symbolizes future, time after the revolution. Based on people's cognition and experience red rose stands for love, green spring is full of prosperity, black-hearted person is full of hatred, evil and white-hearted person is innocent and pure. Extended and abstracted meanings are predictable.

Color meaning has been systematically expanded. The extended meanings have developed from the original, and the abstracted meanings are further developed from the extended meanings. Culture and cognition play a fundamental role in this expansion.

The findings also show that the etymology of the color terms in the culture is not coincidental; rather, it is methodically developed based on the semantic extensions of these terms and the question of whether there would be a conflict between their current meaning



and their potential new meaning. Therefore, it can be said that this study has demonstrated that the semantic extension of the color words' initial meanings may be expanded into multiple meanings at the same time, and that these expanded meanings can then be further expanded into several abstract extra meanings.

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