



A pragma-semantic analysis of color terms in the Quran and their translations:

The case of white and black

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Abstract

The present study offers a pragma-semantic analysis of two basic color terms (*black* and *white*) in the language of the Quran. Such color terms have been particularly selected as they are largely claimed to be universal, and therefore their associative meanings could be effortlessly grasped and translated. The data set comprised fifteen verses in which '*abyad*'(white), '*aswad*'(black), and other co-referential lexemes are keywords. The study followed a three-step procedure. Firstly, the frequency of the target color terms and their co-referential keywords was calculated and described morphologically and syntactically. Secondly, the underlying context in which the target color terms are used was explained to identify their denotations, connotations, and pragmatic force based on cotextual cues and exegetical interpretations. In light of contextual and cotextual information, the target conceptual domains underlying the figurative use of such color terms were highlighted. Finally, the translations of these color terms were explored to identify the translation strategies followed to render their literal and figurative senses. Findings showed that the color terms *white* and *black* are used both literally and figuratively (both metonymically and metaphorically) to highlight various contrastive physical and mental states of people and objects. While *white* developed positive, neutral, and negative connotations in the Quranic text, *black* developed only neutral and negative connotations. Most of these connotations were found to be motivated by the Muslim habitus or belief system. Furthermore, based on universal experiential associations between darkness and blackness as well as brightness and whiteness, translators of the Quran used the same color-based conceptual metaphor or metonymy or rephrased it.

Keywords: denotation; connotation; color terms; pragma-semantics; the Quran; translation strategies

1. Introduction

Colors are inextricably bound up in language and culture, and therefore they engaged scholars from various disciplines including philosophy, linguistics, psychology, chemistry, physiology, cognitive sciences, etc. Though the study of colors is as old as the human race, Berlin and Kay's seminal book *Basic Color Terms: Their Universality and Evolution* (1969) increased academic interest in the study of colors as they explored 329 colors in 98 languages. They claimed that color terms express universal

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features of perception and cognition that evolve "in parallel with the language of color naming" (*cf.* Schirillo, 2001, p. 180). Though languages differ in the lexemes denoting colors, most languages acknowledge six basic colors: *white*, *black*, *red*, *green*, *blue*, and *yellow*. However, it is largely claimed that their connotations differ cross-linguistically and cross-culturally as they are based on everyday experiences in a particular environment and culture (*cf.* MacLaury, Almási & Kövecses, 1997). For instance, '*red*' is not always a symbol of danger. It might stand for celebrations and good luck (based on the Sun God) as in Chinese, or for love, passion, and blood as in English and Arabic. Due to discrepancies in the use and interpretation of color terms, translating them becomes more complicated, especially if the source text maintains a unique religious significance as in the case of the Quran. The Quranic text does comprise various verses in which the previously mentioned basic colors are divinely used to report unique historical events, moods, and mental states.

Since languages and cultures vary regarding the associations of color terms, "translating material from one language to another poses a potential problem if the translator fails to take into account these differences" (Stanely-Thorne, 2002, p. 79). Therefore, translations of color terms are hypothesized to differ as long as the denotations and connotations of such color terms vary. An initial reading into the translations of the Quran, I found that translators used the same literal color term in some verses, but in other verses they replaced color terms with other word classes due to contextual restrictions and cultural specificity. Hence, the present study seeks to answer three main questions: (1) What are the denotations and connotations of '*abyad*' (white), '*aswad*' (black), and their coreferential keywords in the Quranic text?, (2) How do the literal and figurative meanings of '*abyad*' (white), '*aswad*' (black), and their coreferential keywords influence the perception of the context of verses?, and (3) How did translators of the Quran perceive '*abyad*' (white), '*aswad*' (black), and their coreferential keywords, and how did they translate them? By answering these questions, the study will show the senses imparted by '*abyad*' (white) and '*aswad*' (black) (*i.e.* their semantic domains), and explain how far they are used literally (*i.e.* prototypically) or figuratively (*i.e.* semantically extended) based on their context to decide on their pragmatic force. Also, they will show how and why color terms in the Quran are translated as such by consulting some of the most reliable, widely-cited translations (see section 4.1).

As manifested in the study questions, the study will be confined to *white* ('*abyad*') and *black* ('*aswad*') as they are the most frequent in the Quranic text. Also, they are "universal colours" (Palmer, 1981, p. 73; Finegan & Besnier, 1989, p. 250) as all languages have "designations of black and white" (De Bortoli & Maroto, 2001, p. 4). That is, "if the language has only two color terms, they will invariably be terms for black and white" (Stanely-Thorne, 2002, p. 79). Furthermore, they are always held as contrastive achromatic colors distributed along a cline of transparency with *white* at the top and *black* at the bottom. It is assumed that they are manipulated to describe opposing states and incidents, *i.e.* they are associated with binary oppositions. Therefore, it is assumed that any discrepancies among the consulted translations of color terms in the Quranic text might be ascribed to different perceptions and interpretations of the same context.

The study of color terms in the Quranic text would help to have a better understanding of how colors are psychologically motivated and theologically manipulated to visualize abstract notions related to the Muslim belief system (or *habitus*). Relatedly, it would help to understand how the available exegeses of the Quran favoured particular nuances of the meaning of color terms, and how such exegeses helped translators to make decisions regarding the translation of such meanings. In so doing, the present study will raise attention to the semantic cognitive basis controlling the usage and interpretation of the respective color terms that represent an embodiment of definite theological values and teachings. Also, it will explain what goes in the mind of the translator of color terms as he/she relates the physical (color information represented by the wavelengths of light) to the sensory (color perception) aspects of colors.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 offers a review of related studies on the linguistics of color terms in Classical Arabic and English in general, and in the Quranic text in particular. Section 3 discusses the pragma-semantics of color terms, their perception, and recurrent translation strategies. Section 4 explains the study methodology in terms of the data set and the procedure of analysis. Section 5 analyzes the data set. Section 6 summarizes the findings.

2. Literature Review

There is a widespread scholarly research that addressed the semantics and pragmatics of color terms across languages and cultures (e.g. Hasan, Al-Sammerai & Abdul Kadir, 2011; Al-Adaileh, 2012; Hamilton, 2016; Alotaibi, 2020) as well as their translations (e.g. Newmark, 1981; Kövecses, 2003; Schäffner, 2004; Kalda & Uusküla, 2019) (see Section 3). A similar effort has been reported regarding the methodologies followed for encoding color terms and their senses in thesauruses and dictionaries (e.g. Sylvester, 1994; Coleman, 1999). However, scant research has been conducted on the pragma-semantics of color terms in the Quran (e.g. Al-Ḥafāḡy, 2012; Al-Shawi, 2014; Al Bzour, 2015; Al-Shraideh & El-Sharif, 2019), especially the way they are translated into English.

By means of corpus analysis, Hamilton (2016) posited that colors in English are conceptually motivated, and that they abound with various metaphorical meanings as they draw on diverse experiential domains. Given the focus of the present study, Hamilton (2016) found that through metaphoric and metonymic mappings, *white* is associated with supernatural elements (e.g. *white magic*), legality (e.g. *white mail*), fear (e.g. *white-livered*), moral purity (e.g. *white lie*), blankness (e.g. *whitewash*), and war (e.g. *white war*). Whereas *black* is associated with legality (e.g. *black economy*), evil (e.g. *black-souled*), secrecy (e.g. *black bag*), depression (e.g. *black Sanctus*), disfavor (e.g. *black sheep*), supernatural (e.g. *black magic*), and anger (e.g. *black angry*).

Alotaibi (2020) drew a cross-cultural comparison of some selected color-based idioms in English and Arabic. Findings showed that black- and white-based idioms in English and Arabic share some common associations, e.g. '*white lie*' (i.e. unintended harm) and '*black and white*' (i.e. very clear). Still, each language maintained culture-specific idioms that have no cultural equivalent using the same color term, e.g. '*in the black*'. Similar findings are reported in Hasan, Al-Sammerai, and Abdul Kadir (2011) and Adaileh (2012) as *white* and *black* in Arabic developed positive, negative, and neutral connotations. Yet all the examples analyzed in these studies are decontextualized.

Al-Ḥafāḡy (2012) introduced a thematic analysis of colors in the Quran. He found that each color term developed particular associations that communicate specific divine messages regarding the notions of (dis)belief, God's power, the human psyche, reward, punishment, paradise, and hell. For instance, *white* is associated with brightness, sunrise, happiness, tranquility, and blindness, while *black* is associated with darkness, disbelief, death, distress, and anguish. In a similar vein, Al-Shawi (2014) addressed color terms in the Quran from the perspective of translation in order to show if translators tend to domesticate or foreignize the aesthetic images associated with such terms. The study was built on the hypothesis that explicit and non-explicit color terms perform multi-faceted roles for sensual and moral purposes. The reference translation was that conducted by Al-Hilali and Khan (1983). Findings classified the major connotations associated with particular instantiations of each color term. *White*, for instance, is associated with light, the color of faces in paradise, the miracle of Moses, and roads among mountains. Whereas, *black* is associated with darkness, the color of faces in hell, anguish, and some mountains. Findings also claimed that translators tend to foreignize color terms that are used figuratively.

Al Bzour (2015) explored the denotations and connotations associated with the basic color terms and their functions in the Quran: *white*, *green*, *black*, *yellow*, *blue*, and *red*. Findings showed that

white, on the one hand, is used positively to mark God's absolute power as in the cases of Moses's story with Pharaoh as Moses' hands turned from dark brown to white. Also, having mountains of diverse colors, including black and white, is regarded as a sign of God's power. Believers' faces are described as white to highlight their purity and serenity on the Day of Judgment compared to disbelievers' black faces, especially men who beget girls. Setting the duration of fasting is conducted via comparing white and black threads that stand for day and night respectively. Furthermore, white associates with blindness as in the case of Jacob's severe grief over losing his son Joseph. Relatedly, Al-Shraideh and El-Sharif (2019) conducted a cultural semiotic analysis of the six basic colors in the Quran: *white*, *black*, *red*, *green*, *yellow*, and *blue*. The study followed Saussure's dyadic approach and Pierce's triadic model to identify the denotations and connotations of each color term. Findings showed that such color terms, including *white* and *black*, act as indexical signs (representamen) in the Quranic text with different signifiers (objects) and signifieds (interpretants) creating successive associations. By way of demonstration, in the nominal group *'al-ḥait al-'abyaḍ'*² (white thread) in verse [2:187] (i.e., verse number 187 in the chapter of 'āl'imrān – The People of Imran), the signifier is the sewing object, while the signified is the dawn.

Based on this literature review, I would conclude that most of these studies were much concerned with the connotations of color terms. Little effort has been directed toward the exploration of the cognitive basis governing such connotations. Also, the co(n)textual clues manifesting the pragmatic force of the respective verses were not properly highlighted, and therefore, some nuances of meanings have been ignored. Hence, the present study seeks to offer a comprehensive study of color terms (namely *white* and *black*) through exploring their possible denotations and connotations, their cognitive basis in terms of metaphor or metonymy, and their pragmatic force. Also, the dimension of color terms translation did not receive due attention as the related studies referred to one translation and excluded other vastly cited translations. Therefore, one interpretation was favored, while other plausible interpretations were ignored.

3. Color Terms, Cognition, and Translation

A '*color*' is defined as a property of objects or light sources commonly described in terms of its hue (i.e. wave-lengths), luminosity/brightness, saturation (i.e. the degree of freedom from light) (Palmer, 1981, p. 71), and tone (Biggam, 2012, p. 36). Colors represent an independent semantic field in any language. Generally, they are classified into basic colors (red, blue, and yellow), secondary colors (e.g. violet, orange, and green), and tertiary colors (e.g. purple, turquoise, etc.). Based on this classification, *white* and *black* are not scientifically classified as pure colors, but they show shades of other colors. Berlin and Kay (1969, p. 6) aver that any basic color term is "monolexemic", i.e. its meaning is not predictable from its parts. Indeed, languages differ regarding the number of basic color terms, but as Geeraerts (2010, p. 184) states, the maximum number is eleven color terms. Al-Nimry (1976) mentions that Arabic acknowledges five key pure colors: *white*, *black*, *red*, *green*, and *yellow*. He added that the Arabs regarded any other colors as hues of such basic colors. That is why they tended to assert them using specific qualifying terms to encode certain color distinctions, e.g. *'aswadḥālik* (pitch-black), *'aḥmarqāni* (bright-red), and *'aṣfarfāqi* (bright-yellow). In this regard, Stanely-Thorne (2002, p. 79) asserts that languages that do not have a term for a basic color may resort to "object glosses", e.g. *olive*, *peach*, *brick*, etc.

Berlin and Kay (1969) deposited that any color term represents a referent that has one denotation and various connotations as long as the context varies. For instance, *white* might be associated with birth, marriage, or death. In general, a color term has two distinct types of meaning: literal and

² This study follows Brill's simple Arabic transliteration system (Rietbroek, 2010) (see Appendix 1)

figurative. The literal meaning of any color term refers to its prototypical meaning (*i.e.* hue) based on the "iconic capacity" of that color (Philip, 2006, p. 66). The figurative meaning is metaphorically or metonymically extended to cover non-color concepts, e.g. *'green with envy', 'in the pink of health', 'born to the purple'*, etc. Xing (2009, p. 88) differentiates among three types of meaning for any color term: (1) original meaning which refers to its etymological meaning; (2) extended meaning that is either metaphorically or metonymically motivated; and (3) abstract meaning, *i.e.* the meaning that has been further abstracted from the extended meaning. Furthermore, it is largely claimed that color terms develop different referential ranges across contexts, languages, and cultures. De Bortoli and Maroto (2001) mentions that *'orange'*, for instance, signifies positivity and livelihood in Asia, and hazards, traffic delays, and fast-food restaurants in the US. Such variety of color connotations stress the fact that the meanings of colors are generally symbolic just as the language of color naming is "merely a descriptive device" (Schirillo, 2001, p. 180).

Lucy (1997, p. 323) maintains that the semantic value of color terms, as a language category, relies on patterns of characteristic reference and formal distribution. For instance, in Classical Arabic, absolute whiteness is known as *'al-ġabraḥ'*, while absolute blackness is known as *'as-sumrah'*. Also, *'as-sawād'* (blackness) was used to signify a group of palm trees, dark green trees, dates, stony land, and night, whereas *'al-bayāḍ'* (whiteness) was used to signify water, grease, milk, arid land, and hairless skin. Based on a survey of various Arabic dictionaries, Umar (1997, pp. 69-73) provides various metonyms and collocations associated with *white* and *black*. On the one hand, *white* is associated with purity and generosity (*e.g. yadun baiḍā'* - white hand), silver (*al-baiḍā'*), sword (*al-'abyaḍ*), non-producing earth (*e.g. al-'arḍ al-baiḍā'* - the white land), and sudden death (*e.g. al-maut al-'abyaḍ* - the white death). In English, *white* is associated with fear and anxiety (*e.g. as white as sheet*), defeat (*e.g. raise a white flag*), useless possession (*e.g. white elephant*), illness (*e.g. white as a ghost*), and cowardliness (*e.g. white feather*).

On the other hand, Umar (1997) states that *black* is associated with Arabs, in contrast to non-Arabs (*e.g. al-'arabwāl-'a'āġim* - the Arabs and the non-Arabs), the majority (*e.g. sawād al-qaum* - the majority of people), deep greenness (*as-sawād*), enemies (*e.g. sūd al-'akbād* - people with black livers), and danger (*e.g. al-rāyah al-saudā'* - the black flag). Furthermore, for the Arabs, the denotations and connotations of colors were not clear cut, and this notion is extended to the language of the Quran. For instance, in the verse "(33) كَأَنَّهُ جِمَالَةٌ صُفْرٌ (32) إِنَّهَا تُرْمِي بِشَرَرٍ كَالْقَصْرِ" (*'inhātarmy bi-šararin k-al-qašrika-'anahuġimālatun sufr'*) [77:32-33] (Indeed it throws about sparks (huge) as fortress As if they were yellowish [black] camels), the color term *'sufr'* is interpreted as *'black'*. In English, *black* is associated with darkness (*e.g. black as night*), loss of consciousness (*e.g. blackout*), dirtiness (*e.g. black as skillet*), disgrace (*e.g. black books*), illegality (*e.g. black market*), and strikingly success (*e.g. in the black*). That is, colors influence our perception and mood (*cf.* Marberry & Laurie, 1995) as well as language usage.

Wyer (1992) claims that color terms are innately metaphoric, and therefore came the term *'color metaphors'*. Langacker (1987, p. 148) states that colors represent one of the "basic domains", *i.e.* they represent primitive non-reducible cognitive structures. Indeed, various studies have affirmed the role played by the socio-cultural and linguistic context in comprehending and translating color metaphors (*cf.* Kövecses, 2003; De Knop, 2014; Hamilton, 2016; Kalda & Uusküla, 2019). Theories of conceptual metaphor and conceptual metonymy regard colors as a highly productive metaphoric field. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) introduced the term *'conceptual metaphor'* to represent a cognitive mechanism through which one concept is interpreted in terms of another. They affirmed that metaphors are originated in thought rather than in language. Aspects of meaning are transferred from a source domain (the domain of experience dawn upon) to a target domain (the concept required to be understood) through either a unidirectional or bidirectional process referred to as *'cross-domain*

mapping' (Lakoff, 1993). Such mappings are best viewed as semantic shifts that control our worldviews in a particular culture. A conceptual metaphor is generally structured as TARGET DOMAIN IS SOURCE DOMAIN, and it is instantiated by linguistic expressions. Commonly, we understand the abstract concepts (target domains) in terms of concrete concepts (source domains). For instance, the utterance "*I feel blue*" is underlain by the conceptual metaphor SAD IS BLUE. Unlike conceptual metaphor that is based on a similarity between two domains, Kövecses (2010) maintains that conceptual metonymy is based on contiguity as it works within one single domain of experience, the so-called '*domain highlighting*'. For example, the utterance "*He was black and blind with hatred of his neighbor*" is underlain by the conceptual metonymy HATRED IS BLACK. Still, Goossens (1990, p. 323) regarded conceptual metaphor and conceptual metonymy as "not mutually exclusive", and hence he coined the term '*metaphonymy*'. Therefore, translating metaphorically and metonymically motivated color images is a challenging process.

Colors and color metaphors are largely claimed to be culture- and language-specific concepts, and therefore they represent a real headache for translators (*cf.* Niemeier, 1998, p. 141; Kalda & Uusküla, 2019, p. 690). For instance, as Schirillo (2001) mentions, Welsh does not have different lexemes for blue and green. Glucksberg, McGlone, and Manfredi (1997) maintain that two types of world knowledge are manipulated to understand metaphors: knowledge of the relevant dimensions of the topic, and knowledge of the metaphor vehicle. Therefore, universal color metaphors are easier to translate, whereas culture- and language-specific metaphors cause many problems in translation depending on the cultural gap between the two concerned languages (Nida, 1964, p. 130). What is particular about color metaphors is their underlying ideologies and habitus. Habitus, as claimed by Bourdieu (1977, p. 86), refers to "a subjective but not individual system of internalised structures, schemes of perception, conception, and action common to all members of the same group or class". That is, if a color metaphor encodes aspects of a particular habitus, the process of translation becomes more challenging.

Kalda and Uusküla (2019) assure that the more color metaphor is original, the more translation strategies are conducted as they may require "extra-linguistic knowledge" to be firstly interpreted (Niemeier, 1998, p. 141). Also, of paramount significance is the context (both the linguistic and the non-linguistic) where a particular color is used. That is, each color term activates a set of related (or even unrelated) concepts, but only one of these concepts is applicable in a particular context. Given the present study's third question, I follow Kalda and Uusküla (2019) to identify the key strategies used for translating color metaphors in the Quran. Adopting a descriptive approach, they came up with four main strategies: (1) reproducing the color metaphor in the TL with a color metaphor, (2) replacing the color metaphor without a color word/color metaphor in the target language, (3) converting the color metaphor to a sense or paraphrase, and (4) omission, if the color metaphor is redundant or untranslatable. For instance, Kalda and Uusküla (2019) found that '*rose-colored*' glasses in English remain '*rose-colored*' in Estonian; the English '*blue in the face*' became '*blue, green, red, white, black, or grey*' in Estonian; the English '*yellow-bellied*' became '*having a fat belly*' in Estonian; the English '*red tape*' became '*borderline*' or '*blue movies*' in Estonian.

4. Method

4.1. Data

The Quran is Islam's central religious text that is widely regarded as the finest piece of literature in Classical Arabic (Patterson, 2008, p.10). It consists of 114 chapters (*suwar*), and each chapter comprises a number of verses (*'ayāt*), all thought by Muslims to be revealed to Prophet Muhammad over twenty-three years. The Quran is also believed to cover all aspects of life through a language that

was used at the time it has been revealed. Given the focus of the present study, it is largely claimed that Arabs had known all basic colors. Yet, the data used in the present study is confined to *white* and *black* as it targets the verses in which the color terms *'abyaḍ* (white) and *'aswad* (black) and their coreferential keywords (see Table 1).

The final data set includes eleven verses based on *'abyaḍ* and its coreferential keywords, and six verses based on *'aswad* and its coreferential keywords. To explore how translators transferred the meanings of the respective color terms from Arabic (SL) to English (TL), four translations are consulted. These translations are Pickthall (1930), Ali (1998), Abdel Haleem (2004), Yüksel al-Shaiban, and Schulte-Nafeh (2007)³. The rationale beyond the selection of these translations is three-fold. First, the four translators belong to different backgrounds and cultures. Second, the translations are conducted over a long span, and therefore any new readings of the Quran are presumably considered. Thirdly and finally, these translations are widely-cited, and they are claimed to be the most reliable, especially Pickthall (1930) and Ali (1998) (*cf.* Robinson, 1999, p. 291).

Table 1. The coreferential keywords of *'abyaḍ* (white) and *'aswad* (black) in the Quran

'abyaḍ(white)			'aswad(black)		
1	al-Baqarah [2:187]	<i>al-'abyaḍ</i>	1	al-Baqarah [2:187]	<i>al-'aswad</i>
2	'āl'imrān [3:106]	<i>tabyaḍ</i>	2	'āl'imrān [3:106]	<i>iswadat - taswad</i>
3	'āl'imrān [3:107]	<i>ibyaḍat</i>	3	an-Nahl [16:58]	<i>muswad</i>
4	al-'a'rāf [7:108]	<i>baiḍā'</i>	4	Fāṭir [35: 27]	<i>sūd</i>
5	Yusuf [12:84]	<i>ibyaḍat</i>	5	az-Zumar [39: 60]	<i>muswadah</i>
6	Ṭaha [20:22]	<i>baiḍā'</i>	6	az-Zuḥruf [43:17]	<i>muswad</i>
7	aš-Šu'arā' [26:33]	<i>baiḍā'</i>			
8	an-Naml [27:12]	<i>baiḍā'</i>			
9	al-Qaṣaṣ [28:32]	<i>baiḍā'</i>			
10	Fāṭir [35:27]	<i>bīḍ</i>			
11	aṣ-Ṣafāt [37:46]	<i>baiḍā'</i>			

4.2. Procedure

The present study mixes quantitative (statistical analysis) and qualitative (content analysis) research methods to offer a pragma-semantic analysis of the color terms *white* and *black* in a collection of Quranic verses. The analysis follows three steps. Firstly, the frequency of the lexemes denoting *white* and *black* in the respective verses will be calculated using the online application known as *Al-Bāḥiṭ Al-Qur'āny* (Quranic researcher) which is available at <https://tafsir.app/>, and then their various morphological forms and syntactic functions will be analyzed. Each verse will be referred to between two square brackets where the order of the chapter and the number of verse are separated by a colon, *e.g.* [2:187] refers to verse (187) in *sūrat al-Baqarah* (the chapter of *the Cow*) which is the second chapter in the Quran. Secondly, the context of each verse will be explored to trace the denotation and connotation of each color term and to explain if it is used literally or figuratively (metonymically or metaphorically). If used figuratively, the target conceptual domain will be explained. For this reason,

³ Pickthall's translation (1930) is described as the closest to the original Arabic text though it is claimed to be "artificially archaic" (*cf.* Abdel Haleem, 2004, p. xxviii). Pickthall (1930) affirms the untranslatability of the Quran, and he argues that only its general meaning could be translated. Similarly, Ali's translation (1998) is claimed to be faithful to the Arabic text (*cf.* Wild, 2015), and the most popular among Muslims. One main advantage in Ali (1998) is the use of footnotes that offer significant information to understand the Quranic text. Abdel Haleem's translation (2004) is regarded as the best translation of the Quran introduced by an Arab translator (*cf.* Rippen, 2016). Abdel Halim (2004) claims that he tried to avoid all the peculiarities noted in previous translations by offering an explanatory translation that best fits the "concise, idiomatic, figurative and elliptic" Quranic style. The translation offered by Yüksel, al-Shaiban, and Schulte-Nafeh (2007) is described as a reformist translation that shuns scholarly ancient interpretations. All supporting commentaries are offered in endnotes.

four exegeses are consulted: *Tafsīr Al-FaḥrAl-Rāzy* (The Interpretation of Al-FaḥrAl-Rāzy) (Al-Rāzy, 1981), *Tafsīr At-Taḥrīrwa-At-Tanwīr* (The Interpretation of Compilation and Enlightenment) (Ibn‘Ašūr, 1984), *Rauḥ Al-Ma‘āny* (The Spirit of the Meanings) (Al-‘Alūsy, 1994), and *Tafsīr Al-Kašāf* (The Interpretation of the Investigator) (Al-Zamaḥšary, 2009). These exegeses are particularly selected as they cover the historical, linguistic, and rhetorical aspects of the Quran, and therefore they will hopefully help to offer a full account of the verses under investigation. The Arabic text will be offered first next to transliterations, and it is then followed by the four translations. Thirdly and finally, following Kalda and Uusküla (2019), the four aforementioned translations of the respective color terms are explored to decide on the semantic aspects that the translators considered and the translation strategy they followed. The target color terms in Arabic and English are underlined and bolded.

5. Data Analysis

The Arabic color terms '*abyaḍ*' (white) and '*aswad*' (black) are derived from the trilateral roots '*byḍ*' (pronounced *bayaḍa*) and '*swd*' (pronounced *sawada*) respectively. Throughout the Quranic text, they are used to perform different grammatical functions. That is, they modify singular and plural nouns. Also, they are used as verbs both in the present (imperfect) and past (perfect) tenses. As demonstrated in Figure 1, '*abyaḍ*' (white) is lexicalized as '*al-‘abyaḍ*' (a definite nominative masculine singular adjective), '*baiḍā*' (an indefinite singular feminine adjective), '*bīḍ*' (nominative plural indefinite feminine adjective), '*tabyaḍ*' (third-person feminine singular imperfect verb), and '*ibyāḍat*' (third-person feminine singular perfect verb). In Classical Arabic, *white* is generally associated with purity and clarity. Such associations could be traced back in Greek mythology as *white* was the sacred color of Jupiter. In Christianity, Jesus is usually represented as he wears white clothes, and in the Bible, *white* is associated with optimism. Similar associations are found in the prophetic hadith, e.g. "*Nazala al-ḥaḡar al-‘aswadmin al-ḡanahwa-huwa ‘aš-šadubayādanmin al-laban (at-talḡ) fa-sawadathuḥaṭāyabany‘ādam*" (The Black Stone came down from Paradise and it was **whiter** than milk (snow), but the sins of the sons of Adam turned it **black**).

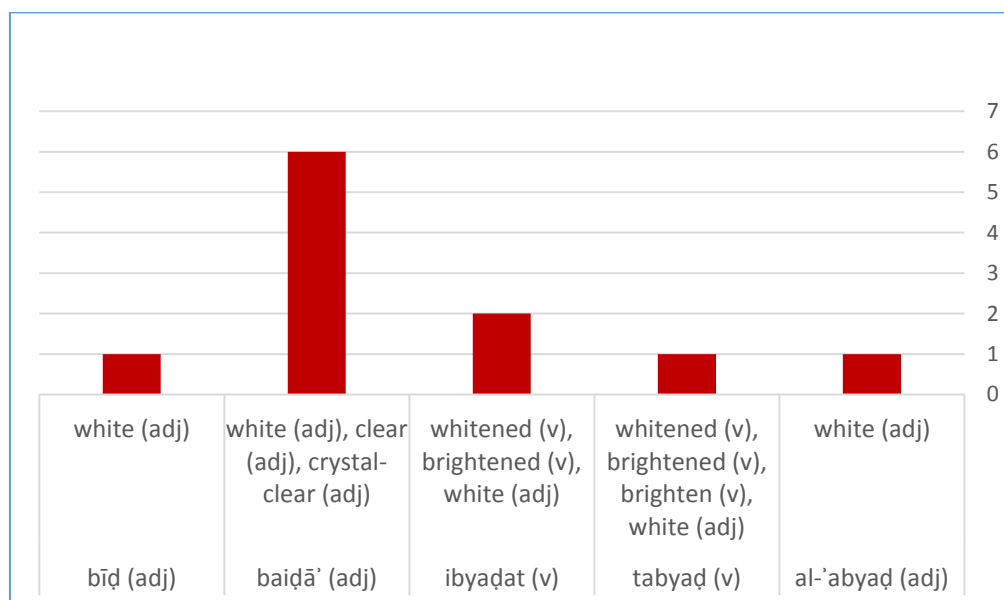


Figure 1. Frequency and translations of '*abyaḍ*' (white) and its co-referential keywords in the Quran

Conversely, as demonstrated in Figure 2, 'aswad' (black) is lexicalized as 'al-'aswad' (definite singular masculine adjective), 'muswad' (indefinite singular masculine adjective), 'muswadah' (indefinite singular feminine adjective), 'sūd' (indefinite plural masculine adjective), 'taswad' (third-person feminine singular imperfect verb), and 'iswadat' (third-person feminine singular perfect verb). In Classical Arabic, black is generally associated with evil, death, and danger. For instance, black is used to signify grudge and hatred as in the prophetic hadith "Tu'raḍ al-fitān'ala al-qulūbka-al-ḥaṣīr'ūdan'ūdan fa-'aiqalbun'uṣribuhānukitaftihinuktatan**sawdā'**wa-'aiqalbun'ankarahānukitaftihinuktatan**baidā'**" (Tribulations will be exposed to the hearts of people like a reed mat woven, stick by stick. Any heart afflicted by them will have a **black** mark put into it, but any heart that rejects them will have a **white** mark put into it).

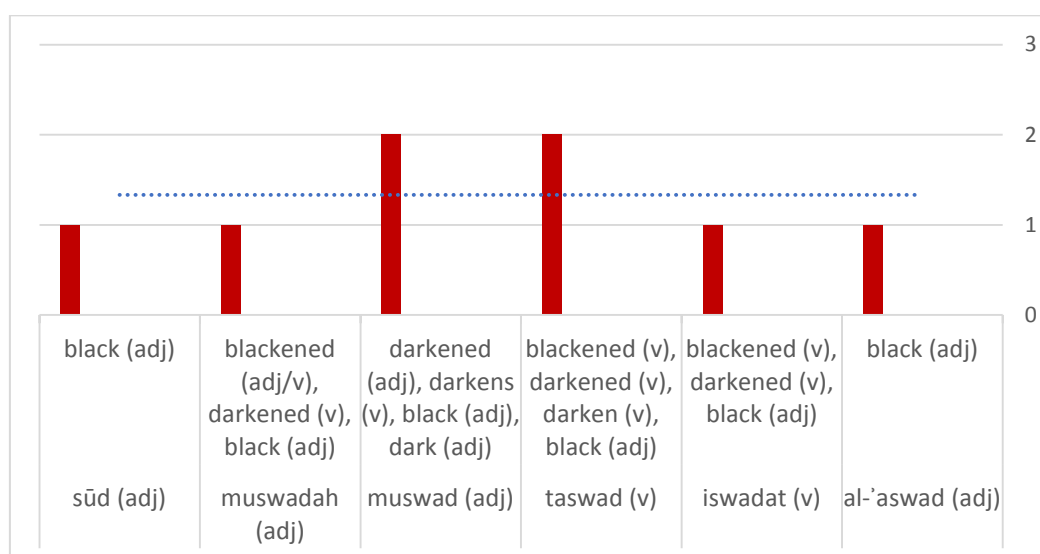


Figure 2. Frequency and translations of 'aswad (black) and its co-referential keywords in the Quran

In the Quranic text, 'abyad' (white) is used either literally or figuratively. The most interesting verse in which the Quran describes the diversity of colors in nature is verse [34:27].

[35: 27] سَوْدًا وَمِنْ الْجِبَالِ جُدَدٌ بَيْضٌ وَحُمْرٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهَا وَغَرَابِيبُ سَوْدًا (1)	
'Alamtara 'anaallaha 'anzala mina al-samā'imān fa'ahrağnābihitamarātimmuḥtalifan' alwānuhāwamina al-ğibāliğudadun bīdun wahumrunmuḥtalifun' alwānuhāwa-ğarābīb sūd	
Pickthall	Hast thou not seen that Allah causeth water to fall from the sky, and We produce therewith fruit of divers hues; and among the hills are streaks white and red, of divers hues, and (others) raven black
Yüksel, al-Shaiban, and Schulte-Nafeh	Do you not see that God sends down water from the sky, thus We produce with it fruits of various colors? Of the mountains are peaks that are white , red, or raven black .
Abdel Haleem	Have you [Prophet] not considered how God sends water down from the sky and that We produce with it fruits of varied colours; that there are in the mountains layers of white and red of various hues, and jet black
Ali	Seest thou not that God sends down rain from the sky? With it We then bring out produce of various colours. And in the mountains are tracts white and red, of various shades of colour, and black intense in hue.

The context of the verse revolves around the celestial and terrestrial pieces of evidence on God's power and magnitude as He causes rain to fall and fruits to grow. Also, He has created mountains with diverse colors. The lexemes '*bīd*' and '*sūd*' are used to intensify the degree of the colors of mountains. Unlike '*bīd*' and '*sūd*', '*humr*' is further modified as '*muḥtalifun 'alwānuhā*' (of diverse hues). This corresponds with the viewpoint that *white* and *black* are achromatic colors. Also, the order of colors reflects the fact that *white* comes on the top of the colors spectrum, while *black* comes at its bottom. The same notion of intensity is affirmed in adding the emphasizing glossing lexeme '*ḡarābīb*' (raven/jet) to '*sūd*'. Strikingly, none of the consulted exegeses affirm that '*ḡarābīb*' is intended to mimic the color of ravens though a raven in Arabic is referred to as '*ḡurāb*'. But, it was conventionally used by Arabs at that time to signify the darkest shade of black. That is why Ali's translation (1998) denied the similarity between the blackness of mountains and that of ravens, i.e. he translated it as "*black intense in hue*". In this regard, Al-Baidāwy (2000, p. 120) avers that '*ḡarābīb sūd*' means '*mutaḥīdat al-'alwān*' (with unidentifiable colors) in contrast with '*muḥtalifun 'alwānuhā*' (of diverse hues/colors). Hence, '*bīd*' and '*sūd*' could be claimed to be used literally as both have neutral connotations being used as attributes of mountains. That is why they are translated as '*white*' and '*black*' in the four translations.

White and *black* are used three times to compare and contrast physical and mental states. These verses are [2:187], [3:106], and [35:27]. Consider the following verse which identifies the time frame of fasting in Ramadan.

(2) وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ ثُمَّ أَتُمُوا الصَّيَامَ إِلَى اللَّيْلِ [2:187]	
<i>Wakulūwaašrabūḥatayatabainalakum al-ḥaitu al-'abyadu mina al-ḥaiti al-'aswadi mina al-fağrṭuma 'atimū al-ṣiyāma 'ila al-laili</i>	
Pickthall	And eat and drink until the white thread becometh distinct to you from the black thread of the dawn. Then strictly observe the fast till nightfall
Yüksel, al-Shaiban, and Schulte-Nafeh	You may eat and drink until the white thread is distinct from the black thread of dawn; then you shall complete the fast until night
Abdel Haleem	Eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct from the black . Then fast until nightfall
Ali	And eat and drink until the white thread of dawn appear to you distinct from its black thread then complete your fast till the night appears

The lexeme '*al-'abyaḍ*' is used once in the Quranic text (a hapax legomenon) presumably as the source of all colors. '*Al-'abyaḍ*' here modifies the definite noun '*al-ḥait*' (the thread) that is used metonymically to stand for the day time in the case of '*al-ḥait al-'abyaḍ*' (the white thread), and for night time in the case of '*al-ḥait al-'aswad*' (the black thread). The denotation and the connotation of '*al-'abyaḍ*' and '*al-'aswad*' in this verse are different, and their connotations are typically neutral. Conventionally, blackness is related to darkness, and whiteness is related to brightness. This conventional physical experience facilitates the metonymic shift from darkness to blackness, and from brightness to whiteness based on the perceptual proximity between them. Al-'Alūsy (1994, Part 2, p. 166) argues that verse [2:187] is based on a simile rather than a metaphor as God presumably meant to say '*day and night are like this white thread and black thread*'. Yet, Al-Zamaḥṣary (2009, p. 115) goes for the metonymic shift rather than the simile. Ibn 'Aṣūr (1984, Part 2, p. 183) argues that '*al-ḥait*' is polysemous as it signifies the ray of light that extends through the darkness. Therefore, it would be perceived as a part of a whole (i.e. metonymic). Interestingly, since the denotation and the connotation

of *'al-'aswad* and *'al-'abyaḍ* are different, the four translations kept the superordinate term *'black*' rather than *'dark*'.

More interestingly, *white* and *black* and are used in verse [3:106] to highlight the state of believers and disbelievers on the Day of Judgment.

[3:106] يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوهٌ وَتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوهٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ اسْوَدَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ أَكْفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ (3)	
<i>Yaumatabyadu</i> wuḡūhwataswaduwuḡūh fa'amā al-laḍīnaiswadatwuḡūhuhum 'akafartumba 'da'imānikum faḍūqū al-'aḍābimākuntumtakfurūn	
Pickthall	On the day when (some) faces will be whitened and (some) faces will be blackened ; and as for those whose faces have been blackened , it will be said unto them: Disbelieved ye after your (profession of) belief? Then taste the punishment for that ye disbelieved.
Yüksel, al-Shaiban, and Schulte-Nafeh	The day on which faces will be brightened and faces will be darkened ; as for those whose faces will be darkened : "Did you reject after acknowledging? Taste the retribution for what you rejected."
Abdel Haleem	On the Day when some faces brighten and others darken , it will be said to those with darkened faces, 'How could you reject your faith after believing? Taste the torment for doing so
Ali	On the day when some faces will be (lit up with) white and some faces will be (in the gloom of) black ; to those whose faces will be black (will be said): "Did ye reject faith after accepting it? Taste then the penalty for rejecting faith."

Based on the context of this verse, belief and disbelief would be manifested on people's faces as the face is the most honourable organ in one's body. God would reward believers and punish disbelievers. That is, *white* associates with belief, while *black* associates with disbelief. Ibn 'Aṣūr (1984, Part 4, p. 44) stresses that such colors are physical hues that mark believers and disbelievers on the Day of Judgment. So, believers would be more joyful to see themselves and their companions rewarded, while disbelievers would get more distressed. Conversely, Al-'Alūsy (1994, Part 4, p. 25) and Al-Rāzy (198, Part 8, p. 185) argue that whiteness and blackness are figurative as they symbolize extreme happiness and extreme distress respectively. Al-'Alūsy (1994, Part 4, p. 25) goes further to aver that the whole body will be either white (in case of believers) or black (in case of disbelievers). The lexeme *'wuḡūh*' (faces) is a synecdoche for the whole body. Indeed, throughout the Quranic text, the face is divinely manipulated to mirror people's state in case of reward and punishment. The change of skin color into black due to extreme distress and fright represents a typical case of conceptual metonymy (BELIEF/REASSURANCE IS WHITE versus DISBELIEF/FRIGHT IS BLACK).

Back to the strategic use of *white* and *black*, Pickthall (1930) and Ali (1998) made a translation shift as they translated *'abyaḍ*' as *'white*' and *'iswadat/taswad*' as *'blacken/''black*'. Ali (1998) was much keen on accentuating both the literal meaning through explicating both color terms within parentheses: "(lit up with) white" versus "(in the gloom of) black". However, Abdel Haleem (2004) and Yüksel, al-Shaiban, and Schulte-Nafeh (2007) translated *'abyaḍ*' as *'brighten*' and *'iswadat/taswad*' as *'darken*'. That is Yüksel, al-Shaiban, and Schulte-Nafeh and Abdel Haleem did not regard *white* and *black* as true colors. However, all translations are contextually plausible though the denotation and the connotation of the two color terms are different.

Al-'Alūsy (1994, Part 4, p. 25) mentions that God started verse [3:106] with *'al-laḍīnaiswadatwuḡūhuhum*' because it is adjacent to *'taswad*'. Verse [3:107] comes to describe the other party *'al-laḍīnabyaḍatwuḡūhuhum*' (i.e. the believers). That is, the description starts and ends with lexemes signifying whiteness to have a pleasant impact on the text recipients. Complementarily, in

verse [3:107] below, *'ibyaḍat'* takes *'wuḡūhuhum'* (i.e. believers' faces) as its subject. The context of the verse is a promise from God to true believers that they will eternally dwell in His mercy in the Paradise of Eden as the prepositional phrase *'fyrāḥmatiAllāh'* (in God's grace) functions as an adverbial of place (i.e. paradise).

(4) وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ابْيَضَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ فَفِي رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ [3:107]	
<i>Wa 'mā al-laḍīnāibyaḍatwuḡūhuhum fafyrāḥmatiAllāhi hum fīhāḥālidūn</i>	
Pickthall	As for those whose faces have been whitened , Lo! in the mercy of Allah they dwell forever
Yüksel, al-Shaiban, and Schulte-Nafeh	As for those whose faces are brightened , they are in God's mercy, in it they abide eternally
Abdel Haleem	But those with brightened faces will be in God's grace, there to remain
Ali	But those whose faces will be (lit with) white they will be in (the light of) God's Mercy; therein to dwell (forever)

The description of believers' faces as white in the Hereafter is meant to show that they would be purified from all that caused them to suffer in life. So, such whiteness is abstract (in the sense of purity) rather than physical, and also it becomes clear that the denotation and the connotation of *'ibyaḍat'* in this verse are different. This interpretation has been captured by Abdel Haleem (2004) and Yüksel, al-Shaiban, and Schulte-Nafeh (2007) who translated *'ibyaḍat'* as *'brightened'*. Yet, translating *'ibyaḍat'* as *'have been whitened'* (Pickthall, 1930) or as *'will be white'* (Ali, 1998) implies that such faces would be originally black, and God's mercy would cause them to be white. Therefore, I suggest that *'brightened'* is more plausible in this context.

The state of having a black face is repeated in three other verses: [39:60], [43:19], and [16:58]. The context of verse [39:60] below is the Day of Judgment as people who lied against God will surely have blackened faces due to their arrogance and haughtiness.

(5) وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ تَرَى الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ وُجُوهُهُمْ مُسْوَدَّةٌ أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِّلْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ [39: 60]	
<i>Wayauma al-qiyāmatitara al-laḍīnakaḍabu 'alaallāhiwuḡūhuhummuswadāh' alaisafyḡahanamamaṭwā li al-mutakabrīn</i>	
Pickthall	And on the Day of Resurrection thou (Muhammad) seest those who lied concerning Allah with their faces blackened . Is not the home of the scorners in hell?
Yüksel, al-Shaiban, and Schulte-Nafeh	On the day of resurrection you will see those who lied about God their faces will be blackened . Is there not an abode in hell for the arrogant ones?
Abdel Haleem	On the Day of Resurrection, you [Prophet] will see those who told lies against God, their faces darkened . Is there not ample punishment for the arrogant in Hell?
Ali	On the Day of Judgement wilt thou see those who told lies against God; Their faces will be turned black ; is there not in hell an abode for the haughty?

In verse [39:60], God talks to Prophet Muhammad telling him disbelievers are destined to have hell as an eternal abode. Due to their ignorance of God and His teachings, those disbelievers' faces would

be darkened since arrogance is typically manifested in their countenances. Therefore, the lexeme '*muswadah*' could be regarded as a metonymy of gloominess and affliction. Ibn 'Ašūr (1984, Part 24, pp. 49-50) and Al-'Alūsī (1994, Part 24, p. 19) accept both the literal and figurative meanings of '*muswadah*', but Al-'Alūsī (1994) supports the literal sense as it intensifies their repulsive deeds, highlights their denigration, and marks them on the Day of Judgment. Al-Rāzy (1981, Part 27, p. 9) considers the context of this verse as a threat to disbelievers and a promise to make hell their eternal abode. He goes for the figurative meaning of black and considers it as a particular type of black that reflects the blackness of disbelievers' hearts. That is, the denotation and connotation of '*muswadah*' are different. Therefore, it seems that the translations offered by Pickthall (1930), Ali (1998), and Yüksel, al-Shaiban, and Schulte-Nafeh (2007) are more effective as '*black*' or '*blackened*' would cover both the literal and figurative meanings. Whereas Abdel Haleem's (2004) translation of '*muswadah*' as '*darkened*' excludes the literal meaning.

Visualizing disbelief as a black hue is also noted in verse [43:17]. Disbelievers at Mecca at the beginning of Islam hated females and they used to kill them once they were born. Due to their hatred of the idea of monotheism and the message of Islam, they claimed that angels are females, and that they are God's offspring. Due to their ignorance and arrogance, God threatens them that their faces would be darkened on the Day of Judgment.

(6) وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُمْ بِمَا ضَرَبَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ مَثَلًا ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ [43:17]	
<i>Wa 'idābuššira 'aḥaduhum bimāḍaraba li al-raḥmānimaṭalanazallawaḡhuhumuswadanwahuwakaẓīm</i>	
Pickthall	And if one of them hath tidings of that which he likeneth to the Beneficent One, his countenance becometh black and he is full of inward rage.
Yüksel, al-Shaiban, and Schulte-Nafeh	When one of them is given news of what he cites as an example for the Gracious, his face becomes dark , and he is miserable!
Abdel Haleem	When one of them is given news of the birth of a daughter, such as he so readily ascribes to the Lord of Mercy, his face grows dark and he is filled with gloom
Ali	When news is brought to one of them of (the birth of) what he sets up as a likeness to (God) Most Gracious, his face darkens , and he is filled with inward grief!

Al-Zamaḡšary (2009, p. 987) affirms that the verb '*zalla*' signifies the continuity of the disbelievers' horrible state. In this regard, Ibn 'Ašūr (1984, Part 25, p. 180) argues that the tidings of having a female baby caused them to go furious that blood pressure increases in their faces. The extreme redness of their faces then turns into blackness due to deep affliction and distress. Yüksel, al-Shaiban, and Schulte-Nafeh, Abdel Haleem (2007), and Ali (1998) translated '*muswadan*' as '*dark*' which means that they went for the figurative sense of black, i.e. the color of their faces changes as a psychological reaction to the bad news of having a female baby. Conversely, Pickthall (1930) translated '*muswadan*' literally as '*black*'.

Relatedly, verse [16:58] describes any father's reaction once he is told that his wife gave birth to a female baby.

(7) وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُمْ بِالْأُنثَىٰ ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ [16:58]	
<i>Wa 'idābuššira 'aḥaduhum biil- 'unṭāzallawaḡhuhumuswadanwahuwakaẓīm</i>	
Pickthall	When if one of them receiveth tidings of the birth of a female, his face remaineth

	darkened , and he is wroth inwardly.
Yüksel, al-Shaiban, and Schulte-Nafeh	When one of them is given news of a female, his face becomes darkened and he is in grief!
Abdel Haleem	When one of them is given news of the birth of a baby girl, his face darkens and he is filled with gloom
Ali	When news is brought To one of them, of (the birth Of) a female (child), his face darkens , and he is filled with inward grief!

'Muswadan' here denotes the color of the face due to distress and agitation as girls were regarded as a social stigma. Hence, 'muswadan' is metonymic of such distress based on a cause-result relationship. Like verse [43:17], this melancholic atmosphere is further emphasized by the lexeme 'kazīm' meaning filled with inward grief. Al-'Alūsy (1994, Part 14, p. 168) argues that the literal and figurative meanings of the color adjective 'muswad' are applicable in this context. Al-Rāzy (1981, Part 20, p. 56) goes for the semantic relation between 'buššira' (literally meaning 'to give news') and 'bašrah' (complexion), i.e. a piece of news might cause a change in the color of skin either due to happiness or sadness. For instance, Arabs tended to describe an afflicted, agonized person as 'murbad al-waḡh' (a person with a gloomy face). Ibn 'Ašūr (1984, Part 14, p. 184) argues that 'muswad' is an exaggerative form, while the actual color is dusty (*ḡabraḥ*). The four translations above used 'darken(ed)' as an equivalent to 'muswad', i.e. they did not perceive it as a color. In verse [43:17], the same lexeme is translated as a true color by Pickthall (1930). Yet, both 'darkened' and 'blackened' have the same pragmatic force. Taking verses [43:17] and [16:58] together, I would claim that both are underlain by the conceptual metaphor AGONY/AFFLICTION IS BLACK.

The past tense verb 'ibyadat' is also used in verse [12:84] to culminate Jacob's distress and sadness over losing Joseph, his beloved son. The Quran reports that Joseph's brothers, out of envy, drawn him in a well as he was his father's most favourite son.

[12:84] وَتَوَلَّىٰ عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا أَسْفَىٰ عَلَىٰ يُوسُفَ وَأَبْيَضَّتْ عَيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْحُزْنِ فَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ (8)	
<i>Watawala 'anhum waqālyā 'asafa 'alayusufawaiibyadat 'aināhu mina al-ḥuzni fahuwakaẓīm</i>	
Pickthall	And he turned away from them and said: Alas, my grief for Joseph! And his eyes were whitened with the sorrow that he was suppressing
Yüksel, al-Shaiban, and Schulte-Nafeh	He turned away from them and said, "Oh, my grief over Joseph." His eyes turned white from sadness, and he became blind
Abdel Haleem	And he turned away from them, saying, 'Alas for Joseph!' His eyes went white with grief and he was filled with sorrow
Ali	And he turned away from them, and said: "How great is my grief for Joseph!" And his eyes became white with sorrow, and he fell into silent melancholy

Jacob's sorrow and crying over eight years for losing Joseph and Benjamin (Al-Zamaḡšary, 2009, p. 572) caused him to lose sight or to be near-sighted. Sight loss is manifested through having the eyes' color turning from black to white. Ibn 'Ašūr (1984, Part 13, p. 43) states that white eyes are metonymic as they stand for near-sightedness rather than blindness. Yet, Al-'Alūsy (1994, Part 13, p. 40) goes for the idea that Jacob went blind because after his reunion with Joseph, he returned once again seeing (*fa artaddabašīran*). Al-Rāzy (1981, Part 18, p. 196) argues that such whiteness is due to such continuous crying. Yet, the lexical clue '*min al-ḥuzn*' (from sorrow) rather than '*min al-bukā*' (from crying) might defy Al-Rāzy's (1981) viewpoint. Notably, there is a metonymic shift from crying (*al-bukā*) that is a main function of eyes to sorrow (*al-ḥuzn*). From a scientific perspective, the human eye as a hypernym

consists of four main parts: cornea (*al-qaraniyah*), pupil (*al-ḥadaqah*), iris (*al-qazahiyah*), and sclera (*al-ṣulbah*). The cornea is colorless; the pupil may be green, blue, grey, brown, hazel, or black; the iris is the color of the eye that we can see; and the sclera is white. Deep sorrow has been proved to cause high rates of adrenalin which might lead to cataract (*al-miyāh al-baiḍā*). Based on this understanding it could be concluded that the denotation and connotation are different. Also, it motivates the conceptual metonymy BLINDNESS IS WHITENESS. In English, white is not associated with blindness or near-sightedness. However, while Ali (1998), Abdel Haleem (2004), and Yüksel, al-Shaiban, and Schulte-Nafeh (2007) translated *'ibyaḍat* as *'turned white*', *'went white*', and *'became white*' respectively, Pickthall (1930) translated it as *'were whitened*'. That is, white is perceived literally rather than figuratively.

The feminine adjective *'baiḍā*' appears five times in the Quranic text, four of which reiterate one of the most crucial incidents in the story of Moses and his challenge to Pharaoh. These four verses are [20:22], [26:33], [27:12], and [28:32]. Here is verse [27:12].

[27:12] (9) وَأَدْخِلْ يَدَكَ فِي جَيْبِكَ تَخْرُجَ بَيْضًا مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوءٍ فِي تِسْعِ آيَاتٍ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَقَوْمِهِ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ	
<i>Wa 'adhīyadakaḥḥayyibikataḥruḡḡbaiḍā' min ḡairsū 'fytis 'ayātin 'ilafir 'aunawaqaumihi 'inahumkānūqaumanfāsiqīn</i>	
Pickthall	And put thy hand into the bosom of thy robe, it will come forth white but unhurt. (This will be one) among name tokens unto Pharaoh and his people. Lo! they were ever evil living folk.
Yüksel, al-Shaiban, and Schulte-Nafeh	"Place your hand into your pocket; it will come out white with no blemish, one of nine signs to Pharaoh and his people."
Abdel Haleem	Put your hand inside your cloak and it will come out white , but unharmed. These are among the nine signs that you will show Pharaoh and his people; they have really gone too far.
Ali	"Now put thy hand into thy bosom, and it will come forth white without stain (or harm): (these are) among the nine signs (thou wilt take) to Pharaoh and his people: For they are a people rebellious in transgression."

Having a white hand in Arabic means to be generous (*e.g. lahu 'yādinbaiḍā*). But the sign of having a white hand in this verse draws a miraculous scene in which Moses is the central character. Most of the Quranic exegeses affirm that Moses was dark-skinned, yet God caused Moses' hand to be white (*baiḍā*). For Arabs, such whiteness was conventionally associated with leprosy. Therefore, the prepositional phrase *'min ḡairsū*' (unharmed) is used euphemistically to refer to leprosy that was the most hideous disease for Arabs (Al-Zamaḥṣary, 2009, p. 777). Such prepositional phrase is repeated three times in the Quranic text to affirm that Moses' white hand is one of the miracles (*'ayāt*) rather than a blemish. Al-'Alūsy (1994, Part 19, p. 167) and Al-Zamaḥṣary (2009, p. 777) affirm that Moses' arm had an extremely bright light, and Al-Rāzy (1981, Part 24, p. 84) mentions that it was like lightning. Therefore, it could be claimed that whiteness in Moses' story is motivated by the conceptual metaphor PURITY IS WHITE. *'Baiḍā*' is literally translated as *'white*' in the four respective translations. Since the denotation and connotation are equal, the four translators favoured the superordinate color term *'white*' that simultaneously captures the quality of being extremely bright and highlights the underlying divine sign by contrasting Moses' skin color before and after the divine order *'put your (dark-skinned) hand into your bosom, it will come white*'.

Furthermore, in verse [37:46], *'baiḍā*' is used to describe wine in the Paradise of Eden according to the Muslim faith.

(10) <u>بَيْضَاءٌ لَذَّةٌ لِلشَّارِبِينَ</u> [37:46]	
<i>Baidā' laḍatin li al-šāribīn</i>	
Pickthall	White , delicious to the drinkers
Yüksel, al-Shaiban, and Schulte-Nafeh	Clear and tasty for the drinkers
Abdel Haleem	White , delicious to those who taste it
Ali	Crystal-white , of a taste delicious to those who drink

This verse comes to exemplify some of the rewards that God created for true believers in the Paradise of Eden. Based on the previous verse [37:47], Ibn 'Ašūr (1984, Part 23, p. 113) and Al-Zamaḥšary (2009, p. 905) state that '*baidā'*' describes the color of the glass of wine known as '*ka's*' which is a feminine noun. Just as whiteness is associated with moral purity, it is also associated with physical purity. The noun '*laḍah*' (delicious/tasty) describes the taste of wine. Yet, Al-Zamaḥšary (2009, p. 905) affirms that '*baidā'*' describes the glass of wine. Furthermore, Al-'Alūsī (1994, Part 23, p. 87) maintains that wine in the Paradise of Eden is whiter than milk, while wine at that time was either red or yellow. Taking all these aspects of meaning together, the verse stresses the color of either the glass or the wine rather than their quality. Such description is pragmatically intended to affirm the dissimilarity of world and paradise wines taking into consideration that wine is illegal in Islam. In either case, the verse involves a metonymic link where '*baidā'*' stands for the glass or the wine. Such conceptual metonymy could be phrased as PURITY/CLARITY IS WHITE. Therefore, translating '*baidā'*' as '*white*' by Pickthall (1930) and Abdel Haleem (2004) is compatible with such meanings. Ali (1998) added the intensifier '*crystal*' to exaggerate its whiteness. Yet, Yüksel, al-Shaiban, and Schulte-Nafeh's (2007) translation of '*baidā'*' as '*clear*' denies the notion of the color itself and restricts the description to wine rather than the glass.

6. Findings and Conclusion

This study sought to answer three main questions: (1) What are the denotations and connotations of '*abyaḍ*' (white), '*aswad*' (black), and their coreferential keywords in the Quranic text?, (2) How do the literal and figurative meanings of '*abyaḍ*' (white), '*aswad*' (black), and their coreferential keywords influence the perception of the context of verses?, and (3) How did translators of the Quran perceive '*abyaḍ*' (white), '*aswad*' (black), and their coreferential keywords, and how did they translate them? *White* and *black* in the Quranic text are generally epiphenomenal, *i.e.* they are represented as attributes of people or objects. They are meant to motivate particular perceptions about contrastive physical and mental states as well as situations. Used literally, both colors are represented as a part of the surrounding nature as manifested in the colors of mountains. Also, they marked a temporal shift from day to night and vice versa during fasting. As far as belief (morality) and disbelief (immorality) are contrasted, the use of *white* and *black* has been proved to be highly effective in communicating particular divine messages concerning the reward and punishment of believers and disbelievers on the Day of Judgment respectively. One particular case associated *white* with blindness (verse [12:84]).

White and *black* are used figuratively to visualize abstract notions related to the Muslim system of beliefs or habitus. Psychological states and moods are also communicated through contrasting both colors either euphemistically as in verse [12:84], or orthophemistically (straight-talking) as in verse [16:58]. This finding is also affirmed in Steinvall (2002) who stated that the connection between colors and specific moods has become almost metaphorical. Still, the psychological recognition of *white* and *black* accord very closely with their physical properties. Furthermore, the situations underlying the use of *white* and *black* in the Quranic text are based either on real specific stories (as in the case of Jacob and Moses), common attitudes and reactions in a particular time (as in the case of disbelievers' who get

distressed due to giving birth to a female baby), futuristic events (representing aspects of the Day of Judgment or the Paradise), or analogies (as in the case of explaining the duration of fasting). I would argue that the lexemes that are associated with both color terms in the Quranic text could be thought of as ideological collocations. That is, such collocations are revealing much of the Muslim belief system.

Though Arabic and English are genetically unrelated languages, the analysis showed that they agree regarding the connotations associated with *white* and *black*. All verses comprising both color terms are metonymically motivated, and some are then developed into metaphors. In other words, the color-based conceptual metaphors are essentially motivated by metonymies through part-whole or cause-result relationships since colors are never experienced in isolation throughout the Quranic text. Overwhelmingly, the figurative uses of *white* are positive, while those of *black* are negative. That is, *white* proved to be associated with positive, neutral, and negative connotations, *black* has neutral and negative connotations. Such connotations could be summarized into two major conceptual metaphors: BELIEF, PURITY, BLINDNESS, REWARD, and MORALITY ARE WHITE, and DISBELIEF, DISTRESS, ANGUISH, PUNISHMENT, and IMMORALITY ARE BLACK. The mappings between the source domains WHITE and BLACK and the respective target domains are markedly unidirectional, i.e. moving from the source domain to the target domain. In this regard, Sherman and Clore (2009, p. 1019) aver that *black* implies "a potent impurity that can contaminate whiteness". Indeed, such color-based conceptual metaphors and metonymies add to the vividness and fulsomeness of the images conjured in the respective verses.

Regarding the translations of the '*abyaḍ*' and '*aswad*' and their co-referential keywords, choosing *white* and *black* in the respective contexts proved to be strategic since their connotations cover similar foci in most languages (Palmer, 1981, p. 73; Finegan & Besnier, 1989, p. 250; De Bortoli & Maroto, 2001, p.4). In this regard, Wierzbicka (1990) affirmed that color terms are anchored in specific universally identifiable human experiences, e.g. day and night. These experiences are then neurophysiologically recalled once any of these color terms is used. Based on the universality of *white* and *black*, the theological value of the teachings inherent in the respective verses is stressed. Therefore, Pickthall (1930), Ali (1998), Abdel Haleem (2004), Yüksel, al-Shaiban, and Schulte-Nafeh (2007) sought formal correspondents that are contextually motivated. They used two main strategies to translate both color terms, with some few differences. First, they used the same color metaphor in the TL, i.e. '*abyaḍ*' and its coreferential keywords are translated as '*white*'/'*whitened*', while '*aswad*' and its coreferential keywords are translated as '*black*'/'*blackened*'. Second, they converted the colour metaphor to a sense or paraphrase, i.e. '*abyaḍ*' and its coreferential keywords are translated as '*bright*', while '*aswad*' and its coreferential keywords are translated as '*dark*'/'*darkened*'. Translating *white* and *black* as '*bright*' and '*dark*' focuses on the color illumination rather than its hue (i.e. the spectrum of the visible light). Translators translated '*aswad*' to '*black*' or '*dark*' based on their conventional association. In this regard, Barcelona (2003, p. 40) argues that there an "experiential association" between lack of light and "certain physiological and psychological reactions". Translating '*abyaḍ*' as '*white*' or '*bright*' could be perceived similarly.

7. Ethics Committee Approval

The author confirms that ethical approval was obtained from Mansoura University & Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University.

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Appendix A. Brill's simple Arabic transliteration system (Rietbroek, 2010)

ا	a, ā	ط	ṭ	ى	ā
ب	b	ظ	ẓ	ي	ī
ت	t	ع	ʿ	و	ū
ث	ṭ	غ	ġ	َ	a
ج	ġ	ف	f	ِ	i
ح	ḥ	ق	q	ُ	u
خ	ḫ	ك	k	يَ	ai
د	d	ل	l	وَيَ	au
ذ	ḏ	م	m	يِ	īy
ر	r	ن	n	وَيِ	ūw
ز	z	هـ	h	ة	a, ah, āh, at, āt
س	s	و	w, ū		
ش	š	ي	y, ī		
ص	ṣ	ء	ʿ		
ض	ḏ				