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A Cognitive Linguistic Study of Visual Language as a Reflection of Culture: Violence Against Women in Iraq

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دراسة لغوية معرفية للغة البصرية بوصفها انعكاسا للثقافة: العنف ضد المرأة في العراق

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Abstract

The present work is qualitative descriptive. It aims to examine the idiosyncratic schema when deciphering the selected violence-based panel from Nasser Ibrahim's caricatures. The researchers accordingly adopted part of Sharifian's (2011) Cultural Schema model, particularly that part that is concerned with the examining the micro/idiosyncratic level of understanding. The study has revealed that the participants have not only differed among themselves regarding the way a figure is being denotatively conceptualized, they also highlighted different exact conceptualizations for the same figure, such as: using various adjectives that reflect various levels of intensity, emphasizing the behavioral aspect or the appearance of the figure, adopting different patterns of thinking like: metaphoric, metronomic, generic, specific, comprehensive or linear. Besides, based on their various points of attention and cognitive schema, they varied in conceptualizing the type of violence being depicted in this image as: psychological, verbal, physical, domestic violence or as the combination of more than one type. Finally, knowing about cultural schema does not involve to exemplify them in one's behavior.

المستخلص

تعد الدراسة الحالية دراسة وصفية نوعية، تهدف إلى تقصي التجارب والخبرات الشخصية الخاصة بالمشاركين بالبحث عند فك رموز اللوحة القائمة على العنف، والمختارة من رسوم ناصر إبراهيم الكاريكاتورية. وبناءً على ذلك، تبنت الباحثتان جزءاً من نموذج التجارب المعرفية الثقافية لشريفان (٢٠١١)، لا سيما الجزء المعني بفحص مستوى الفهم الجزئي/ الفردي. وكشفت الدراسة أن المشاركين لم يختلفوا فيما بينهم فقط - فيما يتعلق بالطريقة التي يتم بها تصور الشكل الدلالي- بل سلطوا الضوء أيضاً على مفاهيم مختلفة دقيقة لنفس الشكل، مثل: استعمال الصفات المختلفة التي تعكس مستويات مختلفة من الشدة في التعبير عن الشيء، والتأكيد على الجانب السلوكي أو مظهر الشكل، و اعتماد أنماط مختلفة من التفكير مثل: الاستعاري، والكنائي، والعام، والمحدد، والشامل أو الخطي. إلى جانب ذلك - بناءً على نقاط اهتمامهم المختلفة وتجاربهم المعرفية- فقد اختلفوا في تصور نوع العنف الذي يتم تصويره في هذه الصورة وعلى النحو الآتي: عنف نفسي، و عنف لفظي، و عنف جسدي، و عنف عائلي، أو مزيج من أكثر من نوع واحد.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التجارب المعرفية الثقافية، التجارب المعرفية الدينية، الرسوم الكاريكاتورية، العنف، النساء



1. Introduction

The present work tackles the concept of violence from the cognitive linguistic point of view using a caricature mage. This type of study is called by Sharifian's (2011) as "Cognitive Linguistic Studies in Cultural Contexts (hence CLSCC). This is because it focuses on the individual and detailed differences when deciphering a social issue. That is, it takes culture as a stepping stone when construing images. In this regard, Palmer (1996, as cited in Sharifian, 2011) added that what makes a study cognitive linguistic-oriented is its emphasis on the cognitive conceptualization rather than on the cognitive processing as is the case with cognitive psychology. Strandell (2017) also mentioned that "culture and cognition are two intertwined concepts" (p. 1), accordingly, cultural schema is considered a type of cognitive schema, which is a more important in cognitive linguistics, as it is considered an umbrella for the cognitive science. Strauss and Quinn (1997) defined cultural schema in "A Cognitive Theory of Cultural Meaning" as *shared* experiences in a particular group of people. That is, schemas reconstruct the past events and determine the meaning that represents "ongoing experiences" (p. 49). As a consequence, cultural schema is made of meaning that is extracted from experiences. They added that cultural schemas "differ not at all from other schemas learned from humanly mediated experiences, except in being shared.... schemas unique to individuals are built up from idiosyncratic experience, while those shared by individuals are built up from various kinds of common experience" (p. 122).

The problem of the study lies in how pictorial language, which is thought to be more direct and clearer in meaning than the written and verbal ones be by itself a source of disagreement. This idea is reflected in Al-Fatlawi and Al-Bahrani's (2019) statement who found that "to read an image in a strip (simple way) or comprehensive way, there seems to be no one to one correspondence between a figure and its highlighted concept in the mind of the

participant" (p. 434). This is because every person has its own idiosyncratic schema that may share to some extent some of its features with others and divert in other aspects other features. However, it has not found enough information about the sort of differences one might encounter when deciphering a familiar issue by a specific speech community.

Accordingly, the present work is to examine **the participants' idiosyncratic schema when deciphering the violence-based panel** adopting Sharifian's (2011) Cultural Schema model, particularly that part that deals with the micro/individual/ personal/ idiosyncratic schema. That is, the study is to answer the research question represented by "**what are the participants' idiosyncratic schema when deciphering the violence-based panel?**"

Such a study helps linguists to get acquainted with the conflicting and contesting areas that one needs to take into account when uttering or display something. It further helps to know more about the level and depth of participants' understating and knowledge and the degree of visual literacy they enjoy.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Language, Thought, and Culture

Language is usually used by people for the purposes of communication and transmission of cultural ideas. In this regard, Roberts (2008) maintained that a sort of misunderstanding usually arouse among people due to the difficulty in communicating one's culture via language. Since the beginning of the twentieth century till now, most of the studies demonstrated that language and culture are inseparable and must be taught in relation to each other. That is, language and culture together shape people's perception and understanding of reality. Since the time of Edward Sapir's publication of his book, "Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech" (1921), light has been shed on the relationship between language and culture. However, it was Gary B. Palmer's book, "Toward a Theory of Cultural Linguistics" (1996) when the effect of society on the mental level of language has been conceptually framed on all levels. He made a great use of cognitive



linguistics focusing more on verbal language. This is because a word highlights dynamic mental images in one's mind's eye. He further added that "[i]t is likely that all native knowledge of language and culture belongs to cultural schemas, and the living of culture and the speaking of language consist of schemas in action" (p. 63).

Cultural cognition encompasses the cultural knowledge that results from continuous exchanges among community members. Thus, cultural cognition is achieved through one's communication with other individuals within the same culture. Such people share experience and knowledge via sets of words that express their feelings and thoughts (Sharifian, 2017a, p. 38). Malcolm et al. (1999) maintained that cultural schemas help facilitate and debilitate the cross-cultural communications: "[t]he pervasiveness of schemas in approaching and interpreting experience makes them a key element in communicating inclusion or exclusion in intercultural communication" (p. 74). Garro (2000) stated that cognitive schemas are "dynamic interpretive processes taking form in cultural settings. To remember or associate something involves integrating the study of mind and culture. This is in line with what Mark, Smith, and Tversky (1999) explained, a human mind categorizes events and experiences into different and similar categorizations. In this respect, Sharifian (2013) described the process of categorization as "one of the basic human cognitive processes, which plays an important role in [the] cognitive development from early childhood" (p. 6). That is, categorization has a cultural basis.

Shore (1996) further stated that meaning is "twice born" (p. xv), once culturally and another mentally. The former is common, whereas the latter is idiosyncratic and is restricted to some individuals and situations. Culture plays a role in constructing meaning that might be socially constrained due to some schematized experiences highlighted by people in a group community. Shore also added that the process of cultural schematization is considered a mental cognitive representation generated and died in the mind of

an individual. A case in point is the cognitive schema of standing, when the visitor enters the house. Sharifian (2013) elaborated that the mind cognitively has certain fundamental functions, like categorization, which results in generating cultural categories. The onset of such a process is childhood, when they categorize things, happenings, and events depending on similarities and distinctions. When they become older, they start to take these classifications for granted. That is, language shapes culture, control, direct human classification, and make people perceive its existence in "dichotomies like man/woman, child/old, male/female, western/eastern, literate/illiterate, etc." (p. 6).

Here, a reference should be made to Croft and Cruse' (2004) assertion that the main hypotheses of the cognitive linguistic approach is that language is "not an autonomous cognitive faculty". Acquiring knowledge depends a great deal on one's cognitive ability and on his/her "knowledge of language [that] emerges from language use" (p. 1). In other words, and as Geeraerts and Cuyckens (2007) mentioned, language is regarded as a "repository of world knowledge, a structured collection of meaningful categories that help us deal with new experiences and store information about old ones" (p. 5). Language is thus built on the cognitive processes, influenced by social influences, and is subject to change and evolution over time (Bussmann, 1996, p. 627). Evans and Green (2006) further viewed the conceptual meaning as a conceptual organization, background knowledge, and image schema, reflecting as a result the experience of human beings. Accordingly, conceptualization and construal from one hand and image schemas from the other are the causes that help trigger different perspectives for the same scene. So to speak, image schemas are related to construal experiences, in which the scenes and sensation can be understood and communicated. Thus, "culture is the product of conceptualization as meaning" (p. 93), and that "conceptualization is the process of fashioning meaning" (p. 108), as mentioned by Holme (2009). Frank (2008, as cited in Sharifian, 2017b, p. 3) claimed that



"language may be viewed as an emergent phenomenon, the cumulative effect of the heterogeneous and distributed behavior of socio-culturally situated language agents" at the macro (global level). It also can be viewed as "an emergent phenomenon resulting from the utterances produced by these agents; the utterances in turn being based on the individual agent's idiolect".

2.2 Violence Against Women as a Culture-Specific Concept

Violence against women was defined by the United Nations as:

Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. (UN,1993)

When the negative behavior is caused by a woman's intimate partner or ex-partner, the act is called intimate partner violence. Besides, when the negative act is limited to sex using force, it will be called sexual violence. Such a phenomenon is regarded as one of the popular health problems, and socially it represents a violation of women's rights. It aggravated during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns due to an increase in the social and economic pressures. Moreover, social displacement has also played a role in exacerbating the existence of such a phenomenon. Other factors that increased this problem include: low level of education, witnessing family violence, having antisocial personality disorder, harmful use of alcohol, privileging or ascribing higher status to men and lower status to women, low levels of gender equality/discrimination, marital discord, and the weak legal sanctions against this problem (WHO, 2021). A social worker in a women and girls' center run by NGO, PAO in collaboration with UNICEF, maintained that in Basra/Iraq, it has been noticed that the society is patriarchal and considers beating women as one of the man's rights. She added that in Iraq 75% of women and adolescent girls are at risk of different types of gender-based violence (hence GBV), which has

been recently increased due to Corona Virus epidemic (Rfaat, 2021).

Statistically speaking, and despite being preventable, WHO announced that "about 1 in 3 (30%) of women worldwide have been subjected to either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime". Besides, the ages of these women range between 15-49. Such a problem has affected women physically, mentally and sexually; it may also affect women's productivity and increases the risk of HIV (WHO, 2021).

Historically speaking, violence against women (hence VAW) has many forms across countries and periods of time depending on the incidents and intensity of the acts. It arises from senses like "entitlement, superiority, misogyny or similar attitudes" (Wikipedia, 2023). In this regard, the UN (1993) maintained that "violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women" and "is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men."

However, the history of violence against women is vague, due to societal norms, taboos, stigma, and the sensitivity of the subject itself. Besides, much of the violence was accepted, condoned and legally sanctioned. In Rome, for instance, the husbands were given the right to chastise their wives to the point of death, witches were burnt by the church and state. In India, Bangladesh, and Nepal, women are burnt for reasons like dowry violence, bride burning. In Southeast Asia, including Cambodia, men adopted acid throwing. In Middle East and Asia, women are the victims of honor killing. In Africa, and to a lower extent in the Middle East and Asia, women suffer from female genital mutilation. In Ethiopia, Central Asia, and Caucasus, women are subjugated to marriage by capture, abduction, kidnapping. In the sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania, women undergo violence related to the payment of bride price, trafficking and forced marriage. In the West and Central Africa, girls experience breast ironing to let them appear less attractive to boys and men.



Such a practice is usually done by the mothers using hard or heated objects. In most developed countries, women are forced to undergo obstetric violence in the context of labor and birth. Usually such a practice is doomed to be unnecessary or without the woman's consent. In the Western countries, 75% of women experience cyberbullying, that is, violence or harassment. Generally in most of the countries, women suffer from what is called "second order sexual harassment", meaning a threat that is directly oriented towards those who stand by or support battered women. They might also suffer from what is called targeted group violence, such as sex workers, women politicians, female college students, widows, immigrants and refugees, athletes, and transgender (Wikipedia, 2023).

2.3 Religious Schema on Avoiding Violence

Speaking of Islam as the major religion of Iraqi people, one can notice many examples that urge being kind and delicate and avoid violence when dealing with others generally and with family members particularly. These ayas include the following:

١. "يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ادْخُلُوا فِي السِّلْمِ كَافَّةً" (البقرة: ٢٠٨).
1. "O you who believe! Come, all of you, into submission (to Him as Muslims)" (Al-Baqarah. 208)

In the above-mentioned aya, the word "submission" implies three senses: Islam, peace and submission. To submit to Islam involves being submitted to all its principles, including peace and truce, and the fundamental Islamic principles. In Arabic language, the word 'submission' morphologically entails to submit to Islam, be Muslims, and adopt reconciliation and peace in their dealings with others. The aya obviously orders people to have peace, ceasefire and adopt benevolent attitudes among one another. Thus, people who incite dissension, or desire and strife for conflict, and stir up discontent and violence are considered Satan's followers and are characterized as being satanic and wicked (Tabātabā'i, 1982; Integrated Technology Group, 2022/2023).

٢. "فَمَنْ عَفِيَ لَهُ مِنْ أَجِبِهِ شَيْءٌ فَاتَّبِعْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ" (سورة البقرة: ١٧٨).

2. "And for him who is forgiven somewhat by his (injured) brother, then settle it on reasonable terms and payment should be made in fairness" (Al-Baqarah. 178).

Here, first one has to focus on the word 'brother', when referring to a strange person; such a word reflects the sense of being a family, since they are all human beings and share many things in common. This aya addresses the issue that if a person killed by mistake someone, and the family of the late person remitted and forgave him, then, the killer or his representatives should pay a blood-money to his/her heir in a civilized manner and without any unpleasant delay. Besides, the family of the victim should not ask for more and burden the killer or his representative (Tabātabā'i, 1982; Integrated Technology Group, 2022/2023).

٣. "لَنْ بَسَطْتَ إِلَيَّ يَدَكَ لِتَقْتُلَنِي مَا أَنَا بِبَاسِطِ يَدِي إِلَيْكَ لِأَقْتُلَكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ" ... فَطَوَّعَتْ لَهُ نَفْسُهُ قَتْلَ أَخِيهِ فَقَتَلَهُ فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ" (المائدة: ٢٨، ٣٠).

- 3.

Even if you stretch out your hand against me to kill me, I shall not, stretch out my hand against you to kill you, lo! I fear God, the Lord of the Worlds...But (the other's) mind imposed on him the killing of his brother, so he slew him and became one of the losers. (Al-Ma'idah: 28, 30)

These ayas demonstrate that the victim has no intention of murdering his brother, who wronged him. This is because the victim fears God who call for being benevolent and tolerant with others. Violating God's instructions will definitely lead a person to his perdition. That is, the victim is in front of two roads or options; either he kills his wrongdoer and be unjust, or be killed, and so the wrong doer will be befallen by all foregoing penalties. These ayas call for never envies others, as envy definitely leads to fall in utter regret. The ayas are revealed to address the Israeli people, asking them to have faith in the message of the prophet and stop envying him. Otherwise, they will regret and be the losers. They further call for stopping envying anyone, as envy leads one to perpetuate the act of killing,



and leads then to regret (Tabātabā'ī, 1982; Integrated Technology Group, 2022/2023).

٤. "وَلْيَغْفِرُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا أَلَّا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ" (النور. ٢٢).

4. "Let them forgive and show indulgence. Yearn you not that God may forgive you? God is Forgiving, Merciful" (An-Nur, 22).

Here, God call for adopting the principles of forgiveness and overlooking when dealing with life problems. The rich, for instance, should pardon the poor and their relatives, and overlook their faults. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful, and so if people want to be forgiven by Allah, they need to forgive others. This aya has been revealed when some believers had decided to stop their charity to some of the individuals involved in a scandal. God forbids them from doing so, and encourages them to continue giving (Tabātabā'ī, 1982; Integrated Technology Group, 2022/2023).

٥. "وَأْمُرْهُمْ شُورَىٰ بَيْنَهُمْ" (الشورى. ٣٨).

5. "and whose affair is [determined by] consultation among themselves" (Ash-Shura.38).

This aya assures adopting the tent of consultation of wise people to reach and get the proper idea or path. One should not tyrannize his opinion and rush in his actions. Such an adaptation is necessary particularly when the things being discussed are shared and earthly (Tabātabā'ī, 1982; Integrated Technology Group, 2022/2023).

As for the ayas that urge being kind with family members and particularly the wives, they involve the following:

١. "وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ مِنْ إِمْلَاقٍ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكُمْ وَإِيَّاهُمْ" (الأنعام. ١٥١).

1. "that you ascribe nothing as partner to Him and that you do good to parents, and that you slay not your children because of penury" (Al-An'am. 151).

The verse includes some prohibitions, such as: 'Do not associate anything with Him'; 'do not slay your children for fear of poverty'; and 'do not draw nigh to indecencies'. It further involves some commands like: 'show kindness to your parents'; 'give full measure and weight with justice'; and 'when you speak, then be just'.

Human society is a conventional structure that is built, developed and maintained based on the cross-generational love. That is, the parents should love their children, and in return, the latter should reflect kindness and mercy when treating their parents. In fact, such a relation between parents towards their children is naturally inclined. However, the kindness the sons and daughters endow to their parents when the latter grow older and are incapable of taking care of themselves is highly recommended (Tabātabā'ī, 1982; Integrated Technology Group, 2022/2023).

The familial shattering has started to evolve due to the absence of this familial unity, love and mercy, which is as stated earlier cross-generationally constructed. Failure to implant love and mercy in our children will contribute to initiate future members, fathers and mothers who are void of any sense of human kindness, and so participate in splitting the familial unity; what is implanted will be later reared. Consequently, the interest in procreating children will be lessen, the natural desire to establish families will be reluctant, and the human race will be terminated. This ultimately leads to lose affinity across generations, and in families, the smallest social unit, which is highly valued in Islam. Thus, both generations and families will be destructed, and the whole society will be disintegrated. That is, being away from Islam and the social conventions that are based on it will lead to lose any sort of happiness in this world or hereafter (Tabātabā'ī, 1982; Integrated Technology Group, 2022/2023).

Back to the aya, there is a prohibition of stopping killing one's children for fear of poverty, i.e., 'lack of money and provision', a common practice among Arabs before Islam due to the widespread of famine and drought. Such a prohibition helps spare them from a miserable life. Here, one should believe that substances are not provided by human beings, but it is God Who provide it (Tabātabā'ī, 1982; Integrated Technology Group, 2022/2023).

٢. "وَإِذَا الْمَوْءُودَةُ سُئِلَتْ * بِأَيِّ ذَنْبٍ قُتِلَتْ" (التكوير. ٨-٩).



2. **“and when the girl-child that was buried alive is asked for what sin she was slain”** (At-Takwir, 8-9).

Before Islam, there was a prevalent practice of killing girls for fear of being accused of bringing shame to the one who has them. Such a practice represents a heritage of their pagan forefathers, who believe that girls are susceptible to unlawful sexual encounters that ultimately bring shame and disgrace for the woman (even if she repents), but not for the male (even if he persists in that sin). Females have no value, no rights before Islam. Thus, Islam has appeared to clarify the rights of women to have a decent life without being forced to be a slave for the male's desires. It is further stated that when there is evil, dishonor, or a sin, both male and female will be blamed for; that is, both genders are to be blamed, not only females as used to be (Tabātabā'ī, 1982; Integrated Technology Group, 2022/2023).

٣. "وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُم بِالْأُنثَىٰ ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ * يَتَوَارَىٰ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ مِنْ سُوءِ مَا بُشِّرَ بِهِ أَيُمْسِكُهُ عَلَىٰ هُونٍ أَمْ يَدُسُّهُ فِي التُّرَابِ أَلَا سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ" (النحل. ٥٨-٥٩).

3.

And they assign to God daughters—Be He glorified! –And to themselves what they desire; when if one of them receives tidings of the birth of a female, his face remains darkened, and he is wroth inwardly. He hides himself from the folk because of the evil of that whereof he has bad tidings, (asking himself): Shall he keep it in contempt, or bury it beneath the dust. Verily, evil is their judgment. (An-Nahl. 58-59)

Before Islam, giving birth for a daughter was considered a shame to the father. They feared that she would soon reach the marriage age and turn to be a toy in the hands of her husband, who would exploit her for sexual pleasures- a humiliating thing. Such a disgrace would impact her family, particularly her father. Thus, it was preferable to bury her alive, a conduct which God highly and harshly denounce (Tabātabā'ī, 1982; Integrated Technology Group, 2022/2023).

٤. "هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَجَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا لِيَسْكُنَ إِلَيْهَا" (الأعراف. ١٨٩).

4. **“He Who has created you from a single person (Adam), and (then) He has created from him his wife [Hawwa (Eve)], in order that he might enjoy the pleasure of living with her”** (Al-A'raf.189).

٥. "وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا" (الروم. ٢١).

5. **“and among His signs is this, that He created for you wives from among yourselves, that you may find repose in them and He has put between you affection and mercy”** (Ar-Rum. 21).

The Qur'an highly accentuated to have a kind relationship among people in general, as they are created from a single soul or root. At the same time, God further highlight the importance of having good relationship between husband and wife. This is because familial relations represent a miniature of small societies. Here, in these ayas, God refer to the fact that Hawa is created from Adam, i.e., from the same type. This is because belonging to the same type enhances the senses of peace, stability, suitability, harmony, and love. The word 'rest' implies having a restful and peaceful life between a husband and wife. It further indicates to resort to her when meeting his needs, and desires (Tabātabā'ī, 1982; Integrated Technology Group, 2022/2023).

٦. "يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا" (النساء. ١).

6.

O people! Fear your Lord, Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from them both spread abroad a multitude of men and women. Fear God in whom you claim (your rights) of one another, and toward the wombs (that bore you). Lo! God has been a Watcher over you. (An-Nisa'. 1)

The Qur'an highly accentuated to have a kind relationship among people in general, as they are created from a single soul or root. At the



same time, God further highlights the importance of having good relationship between the husband and wife. This is because familial relations represent a miniature of small societies (Tabātabā'ī, 1982; Integrated Technology Group, 2022/2023).

٧. "يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَرِثُوا النِّسَاءَ كَرَاهًا وَلَا تَعْضَلُوهُنَّ لِتَذْهَبُوا بِبَعْضِ مَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُبِينَةٍ وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا" (النساء. ١٩).

7.

O you who believe! It is not lawful for you to forcibly inherit the women (of your deceased kinsmen), nor to hinder them (from remarrying) that you may take away a part of that which you have given them, unless they are guilty of flagrant lewdness. But live with them honorably, for if you hate them it may happen that you hate a thing wherein God has placed much good. (An-Nisa'. 19)

In this aya, there is a direct prohibition to the believers in Islam to inherit women unwillingly, as such an act is considered illegal and unlawful. That is, the aya forbids placing the wife in a precarious situation to force her to repay her husband the portion of the dowry he has already endowed her upon their marriage. It is also illegal for the husband to impose restrictions on women without proper reasons. Of course, if the wife is seen engaged in an evident immorality, her husband may place limits on her. He may also keep her in a straitened condition, in order that she may pay him something to obtain divorce (Tabātabā'ī, 1982; Integrated Technology Group, 2022/2023).

٨. "وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ" (البقرة. من الآية ٢٢٨).

8. "And they (women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them in a just manner, and men are a degree above them. God is Mighty, Wise" (Al-Baqara/ The Cow. 228).

The word "Al-Ma;ruf" has been differently translated as: 'a just manner', 'fairness', a 'lawful'. manner'', 'usage', a 'proper manner' 'and 'proper deeds'. This word shows the amount of importance Allāh attach to

fairness and justice in matters concerning divorce, and men and women's relationships. Comprehensively, Al-Ma'rūfis covers the guidance of reason, the laws of religion, the nobility of a character and the moral and ethical value. Here, God emphasize the necessity of treating people equally, following the natural law of the society. Both men and women should have an equal number of rights and duties. This means that women in Islam are protected in terms of their legitimate worth and position within their families and societies. However, God say that men are a little degree above the women in terms of rights and duties and He hands the family leadership to them and makes them responsible for taking care of all family members. Generally, women are dignified in Islam, and the slight difference in the degree does not affect her position and rights (Tabātabā'ī, 1982; Integrated Technology Group, 2022/2023).

٩. "وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ" (النساء. ١٩).

9. "and Live with them honorably" (An-Nisa.19).

In this aya, there is a call for all men to live with their wives honorably, mix with them, be friendly with them when speaking, clothing, behaving, appearing, and spending on them. That is, as one wishes her to get from her, he has to be as she wishes and based on your ability. It further connotes to imitate the way our prophet behaves with his wives by flirting, being kind, and smiley, and bearing his wives as well (Tabātabā'ī, 1982; Integrated Technology Group, 2022/2023).

١٠. "وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ شِقَاقَ بَيْنِهِمَا فَأَبْعَثُوا حَكَمًا مِنْ أَهْلِهِ وَحَكَمًا مِنْ أَهْلِهَا إِنْ يُرِيدَا إِصْلَاحًا يُوَفِّقِ اللَّهُ بَيْنَهُمَا إِنْ اللَّهُ كَانَ عَلِيمًا خَبِيرًا" (النساء. ٣٥).

10. "If you fear a breach between them send for an arbiter from his people and an arbiter from her people. If both wish reconciliation, Allah will bring success between them. Allah is the Knower, the Aware" (An-Nisa. 35).

God, in this aya, say if there exists a problem and dispute between a husband and wife, one should bring a wise man from each side and discuss with them the problem. These



two wise men should convince the husband and wife to bear one another and be satisfied with what each could offer and pursue their life together. If such an attempt went in vain, then they had to divorce between the two peacefully (Tabātabā'ī, 1982; Integrated Technology Group, 2022/2023).

١١. "وَإِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَبَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ أَنْ يَنْكِحْنَ
أَزْوَاجَهُنَّ إِذَا تَرَاضُوا بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ذَلِكَ يُوعَظُ بِهِ مَنْ
كَانَ مِنْكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَمْ آزْكَى لَكُمْ وَأَطْهَرُ
وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ" (البقرة: ٢٣٢).

11.

And when you have divorced women and they reach their term, place not difficulties in the way of their (re)marrying their husbands if it is agreed between them in a just manner. This is an admonition for him among you who believe in God and the Last Day. That is more virtuous for you, and purer. God knows: you know not. (Al-Baqara/The Cow. 232)

If the wives, after the waiting time, want to return to their husbands and re-establish the marriage-tie, their families should not prevent that. This frequently occurs when the woman's family does not want her to reestablish such a relationship with the same spouse, since they despise him for the initial divorce. People should not let the feelings of despise, resulted due to the husbands' initial divorce to their wives, and stand in the way of such a reunion. Women's decisions should not be controlled by the wishes and desires of their relatives, but by the Islamic laws (Tabātabā'ī, 1982; Integrated Technology Group, 2022/2023).

All these ayas indicate the use of good and kind treatment between the husband and his wife particularly. They further forbid any unjust and aggressive act against them and order the parents to be kind and adopt kindness as an approach in life. This is because having a stable family brings serenity and peace of mind and soul. It further prevents family members from getting array, be vagabonds, or commit crimes.

Violence, on the other hand, is a sinful act and the opposite of being kind. It destroys

relationships, and ruins someone's reputation. In this regard, God say: "God's curse be on the unjust"; "Oh, My followers, I have forbidden oppression for myself, and I have made it forbidden among you, so do not oppress one another"; and "and do not transgress, for God does not like aggressors" (as cited in Bahnasy, 2016, p. 188).

2.4 Previously Conducted Studies

In Iraq, there were many studies conducted on violence on the one hand, and caricatures on the other. For instance, Hussien and Al-Bahrani (2022) did a qualitative descriptive study entitled "A Cognitive Linguistic Study of Battered Woman in Selected Iraqi Caricatures" to examine "the macro-cultural schemata addressing the concept of violence against women in Iraq". To meet the objective of the study, four caricature panels were selected from two famous Iraqi caricaturists, Odeh Al-Fahdawi and Nasser Ibrahim. The theme of these panels was violence against women in Iraq. The researchers used part of Sharifian's (2011) Cultural Schemata model to examine the common points regarding this theme. The study revealed that both caricaturists invested symbols and metaphors when depicting the concept of violence against women. It was further noticed that the participants confirmed the existence of violence in Iraq and that women and children represented the main victims of this phenomena. Besides, based on the macro-cultural schemata, it was noticed that the society's patriarchal structure resulted in having an imbalance of power between men and women/children, in addition to factors related to the unjust societal traditions and conventions.

A study conducted by Abed Al-Hussein and Al-Saaidi, entitled "Women's Rape in Iraq between Legislation and Social Norms: A Critical Discourse Analysis" (2022). The study examined the discursive strategies and ideological viewpoints in selected data to address the problem in the language of legislative provisions from the NGOs' reports (2015; 2019). To achieve the objective of the study, van Dijk's (2011) socio-cognitive approach and van Dijk's (2000) ideological models were adopted to show



how language produces and reproduces domination. The study concluded that the NGOs' reports rely heavily on the dichotomy of positive and negative representation as an ideological strategy, showing as a result the conflict between the legislation and social norms.

Esleem's (2022) study, entitled "A proposed program from the perspective of the general practice of social work to overcome husbands' violence against their wives", examined Husbands' violence against their wives as a highly significant problem within social sciences. The objective of the study was to determine the levels of violence carried by husbands against their wives. This study was descriptive in nature employing a comprehensive social survey method and a two-part questionnaire. It was done in the Safety House to Care for the Abused Women in Gaza. The number of the data was (26) battered women. The study showed that psychological violence was the most common type (81.3%), followed by the physical (68.6%), social (68%), and economic (66.6%). It also showed that there were important differences between the level of violence depending on the variables of wife's educational degrees, as well as children's number.

A qualitative multimodal study was followed by Belgrimet and Rabab'ah (2021) when conducting a study titled "A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of English Posters on Violence Awareness Campaigns Against Women". The study investigated the main intricacies of violence against woman in English posters, and explored the different semiotic modes (linguistic and paralinguistic) in these posters. The researchers adopted Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar (2006) in the analysis of a number of electronic sources with their captions. The researchers concluded that the combination of the two elements visual and textual semiotic modes provided a deployment of meaning. The English posters utilized different semiotic modes; most of the posters were conceptual, whereas the visual representations were usually static and immovable.

Another study entitled "Analysis of the reasons for the violence against women in Iraq and its economic and social effects using Factor Analysis method" was done by Wad (2018). The study examined husbands' physical violence against women. The study employed a questionnaire to detect the key reasons behind violence against women, in addition to the use of SPSS to analyze multivariate variables. The study revealed that women were at risk of being beaten because they lacked a social and legal protection. The latter in return had an adverse impact on their children's development and endangered their future.

Abdul-Hameed (2011) did a quantitative study entitled "Violence Against Women a Practical Study in Baghdad/ Al- Karkh" to examine the reasons of violence in Iraq. To meet this objective, a list of information was applied on five cases of women from different regions in Baghdad, who were molested to violence and visited Al-Karkh court accordingly. The findings demonstrated that domestic violence humiliated women and subjugated them to men's control without offering any social or legal safeguards to protect them in society. It also showed that domestic violence was the most common type of violence in which women suffered from verbal abuse. Moreover, the results revealed that half of the samples suffered from a bad economic situation, which affected their husbands' psychologically and ultimately developed a negative feeling and pushed them to use violence against the children and wives.

Speaking of studies on caricatures, many studies were conducted in Iraq using caricatures. Cases in point are the following:

Dweich, Ghabra and Al-Bahrani in (2022) conducted a qualitative-descriptive semiotic analysis to study the negative and positive non-verbal signs in two selected episodes of "Tom and Jerry". The researchers adopted Peirce's theory (1931), "Trichotomy of signs" that categorizes signs into icons, indexes, and symbols. The study arrived at the conclusions that: an image has more interpretations; it is considered a symbol rather than an icon; and that cartoon in general and



'Tom and Jerry' in particular can be considered a negative dominant aspect in media.

Jaber and Al-Bahrani (2021) did a qualitative cognitive linguistic study titled "A Cognitive Linguistic Study of Construal Operations in Selected Strange Trend Silent Animated Films" to examine the different types and numbers of construal operations as proposed by Croft and Cruise (2004) when deciphering silent animated films. Two silent animated films were selected, called *Strange Trends*, and were then submitted to a number of (30) participants from the university of Baghdad. These movies tackled social and human issues that might be encountered at any time and in any society. The researchers concluded that there were individual differences regarding the number of stages passed through. There was no one-to-one correspondence between the number of figures identified and the ability to decipher the connotative meaning. Being silent films paved the way to have homonymous construes and different points of emphasis.

A qualitative research is conducted by Ali and Al-Bahrani (2021) entitled "A comparative cognitive linguistic study of persuasive/attention strategies in Iraqi and American Facebook advertisements" to investigate the way "visual attention/persuasive strategies" are used in both "Iraqi Arabic and American English Facebook advertisements". To achieve the objective of the study, (2) representative Iraqi Arabic advertisements and (2) representative American English advertisements were selected. The researchers adopted the theory of Frame Semantics (1995) by Fillmore. Results showed that the process of deciphering needs one to be more imaginative, digitally literate and to have a creative thinking. Moreover, there was no balance for both the text and the picture; both of them were important and had a different role in persuading people depending on the way of they were taken/written, their clarity, and comprehensiveness.

Waad and Al-Bahrani (2020) examined the persuasive role of a number of images taken from a selection of tourism brochures. Results showed that what affects the persuasive sense of

an image was the angel that the image was taken from. Besides, there were various content techniques that need to be used when highlighting the associative and conceptual images in the tourists' mind to ultimately push them to get persuaded and visit the place.

Al-Fatlawi and Al-Bahrani (2019) conducted a study on a selection of Iraqi caricatures to see the impact of the number and type of figures on accessing the intended meaning. Results revealed that to fully identify the figures of an image was an important issue. However, what was more important was the type and the way these figures were mentally linked to access the intended meaning.

Azeez and Al-Bahrani (2019) studied the satirical sense of caricatures in a selection of Iraqi caricatures to examine the way Iraqi caricaturists create or produce satirical humor, and receivers respond (i.e., appreciate) to such a type of humor. To meet these objectives, Koestler's theory of bisociation was adopted in the analysis of (20) satiric caricatures drawn by four popular Iraqi caricaturists, namely, Maitham Radhee, Ali Aatib, Dheaa Al-Hajjar, and Hamoudi Athab. The study concluded that satirical humor was emotionally highlighted and that its appreciation depended on the receiver's personality and the content of the message.

Al-Bahrani (2018) did a new cognitive study entitled, "A Cognitive Linguistic Study of Silence/Pause-Based Incongruities in Selected Instances from *Mind Your Language's* Sitcom Series". The study aimed to investigate the main reasons behind using "silence/pause-based unintentional incongruities in selected instances from the British Sitcom *Mind Your Language*" (p.800); and to explore the specific types of "silence/pause-based unintentional incongruities" (p. 800). The researcher adopted Suls' (1983) model in the analysis of three episode (1, 2 &11) of British Sitcom series, "*Mind Your Language*" with (24) instances. The researcher reached a number of conclusions, such as: the use of silence reflected the impression of being inattentive; lack of understanding, or being unfamiliar with what was being heard, etc. However, pause was used to reflect the feeling of



confusion, the sign for something that is interrupting, and give time for oneself to understand, consider, and correct what one has said.

Al-Bahrani and Al-Azzawi (2017) did a mixed mode study entitled “Visual Language as a Source of Creative Cognition” to examine the role a visual caricature plays in highlighting creative cognition. The researchers collected a random social Iraqi caricature from google, and submitted it to a sample of (67) students from the second stage, Department of English Language, College of Education for Women. They further adopted Lyons’ (1977) two types of meanings (descriptive and expressive meanings) in data analysis. Results showed that only (19) respondents could access the exact meaning and the rest managed to give general descriptive meanings. The findings led to conclude that visual caricature can be used to enhance creative expressive meanings, and not necessarily only the intended meaning.

Al-Bahrani, Al-Saadi, and Yousif (2016) conducted a quantitative and qualitative study under the title “A cognitive semantic study of detextualised social caricatures” to investigate whether the deciphering of images is universal or culture- proper at the individual level. To meet the objective of the study, Barthes’ model of "Mythologies" (1957) together with Langacker's (1987) cognitive semantic model of Domain Analysis were adopted. The researchers chose five caricatures; four of them were social and the last one addressed violence against women. The study concluded that a great number of the participants could partially identify the figures of the images in question. However, their identification was meager; a matter which highly affected their process of deciphering the images in a proper way. Besides, the deciphering was individually based, reflecting as a result their creativity and background knowledge when deciphering the images. Furthermore, it was proved that images do not have a universal language around the world.

As it has been noticed, violence as a concept has been tackled mainly from different perspectives, sociological and psychological.

However, they were studies that addressed such a phenomena from critical discourse analysis, semiotic and cognitive linguistics. What differentiates the present work from the one mentioned in the previous works, particularity from the cognitive linguistic point of view is that the former study is centered with investigating the macro-cultural level among the participants rather than the micro-cultural level, as is the case with the present study.

2.5 Sharifian’s Cultural Schema as an Adopted Model

To meet the objectives of the study, the researcher adopted the model of Cultural Schema developed by Sharifian (2011). The theoretical framework of this model is based on human conceptualization. This is because human conceptualization is both an individual and cultural phenomenon; it helps reflect the relationship between culture, cognition, and language, and demonstrates the effect of cultural conceptualization on language production. This model basically consists of two important elements: cultural cognition and cultural conceptualizations. The word conceptualization is not a new term, as concept represents the basic element in cognitive linguistics as Evans and Green (2006) maintained. It is a process that implies two other cognitive processes: schematization and categorization. The former was defined by Talmy (1983) as: “a process that involves the systematic selection of certain aspects of a referent scene to present the whole, disregarding the remaining aspects” (p. 225, as cited in Sharifian, 2011, p. 3). The latter, on the other hand, was defined by Rosch (1987) as “a process by which distinct entities are treated as somehow equivalent” (as cited in Sharifian, 2011, p. 3). It is these two processes together that have led to the development of schemas and categories as stated by Bartlett (1932), Bobrow and Norman (1975), Rumelhart (1980), and Rosch, 1978, as cited in Sharifian, 2011, p. 3). These two processes have been termed by Sharifian (2011) as conceptualizations using the plural form of the word. Here, the word conceptualizations is used instead of the term



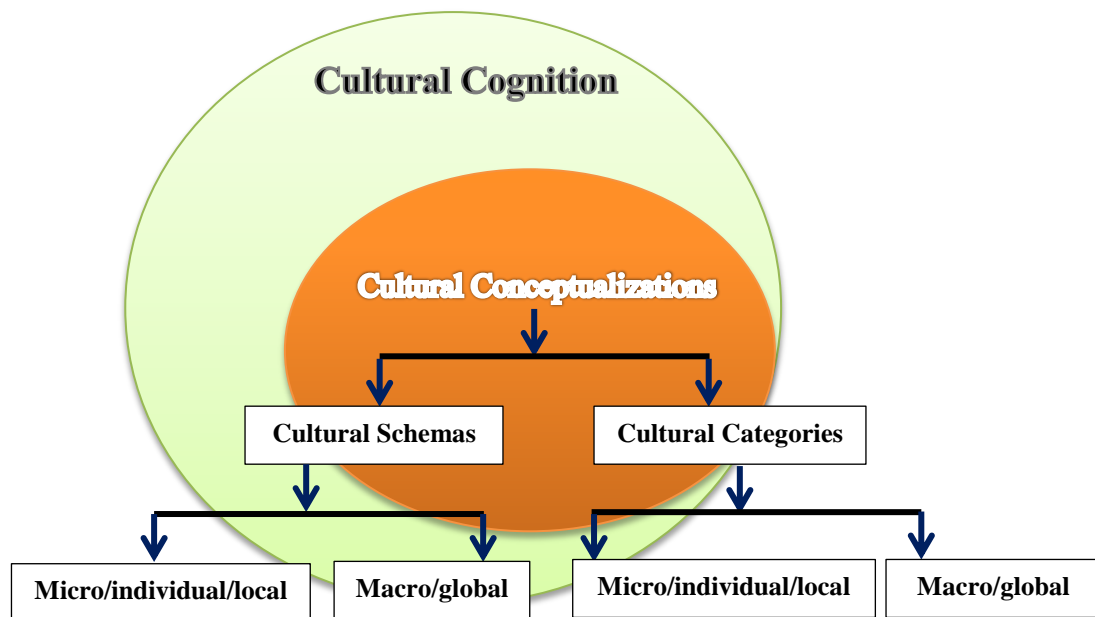
concept to accentuate the dynamic nature of such a cognitive phenomenon.

For Sharifian (2011), “human conceptualisation is as much a cultural as it is an individual phenomenon”. (p. 3). He further added that although conceptualisations can be initiated in individuals’ cognition, they may well emerge as cultural cognitions” (p.5). That is, cultural conceptualizations work at two levels: Macro/Global/collective cognition and the Micro/individual/local/idiosyncratic cognition. In (2017a), Sharifian stated, "each person’s internalisation of a macro-level cultural schema is to some extent collective and to some extent idiosyncratic" (p. 41).

Cultural cognition is a complex adopted system that results from the interaction of the

members of a cultural group, so the macro-level reflects the properties of cultural cognition. It further constitutes all the actions of a cultural group of people and emerges from all the collective cognition in a group. In this respect, the cultural cognition system is an open, dynamic, and "negotiated and renegotiated" system (Sharifian, 2011, p. 37). Moreover, cultural cognition involves “networks of *distributed representations* [emphasis added] across the minds in cultural groups”; such networks might be roughly analogous to those of others in a group. (p. 5). To clarify the adopted model, consider Figure 1, which has been re-drawn by the second researcher of the present work:

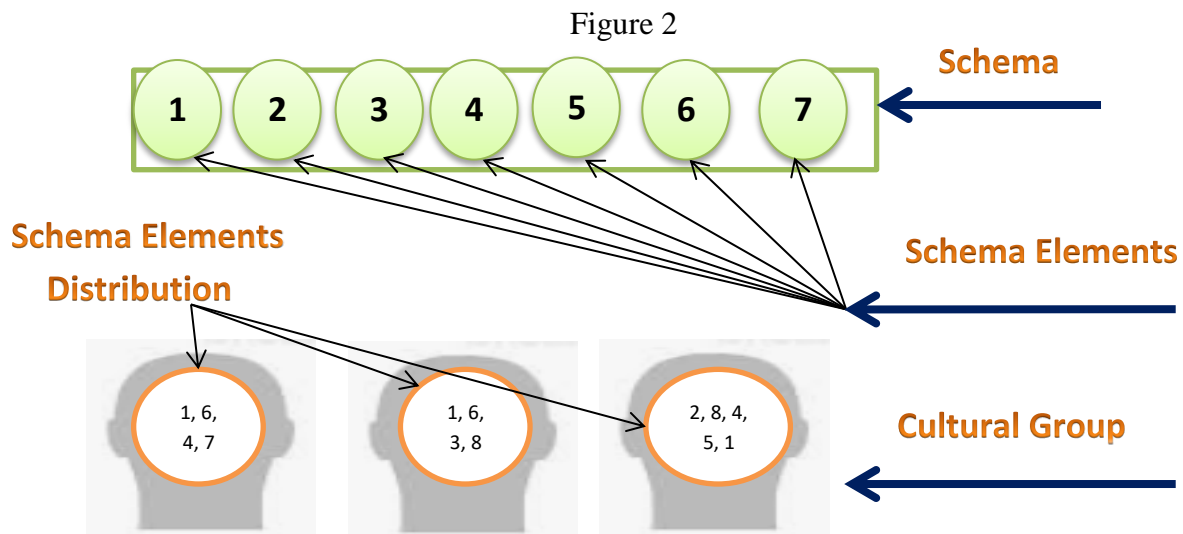
Figure 1



Sharifian’s Cultural schema model 2011

In (2017a), Sharifian referred to cultural schema as "those pools of knowledge that contain a significant portion of the meanings encoded in human languages"(p. 52). It is to be noted here, that it is not necessary for all members that belong to a given culture or a cultural group to obtain all elements of cultural

schema, nor they share these elements equally. However, the cultural conceptualizations highlighted are distributed in a fashion way across the members of that cultural group. That is, knowledge on a given schema is fuzzily highlighted; consider Figure 2:



As far as the present work is concerned, the researchers are to adopt part of Sharifian’s (2011) cultural schema model, particularly the part that is concerned with the micro level.

3. Methodology of the Study

The present study is a qualitative in nature, as it describes and evaluates the participants’ subjective opinions on a particular language issue, or as it was called by Stake (2010, as cited in Patton, 2015) “interpretative perspectives”. In this vein, Denzin and Lincoln (2018) mentioned qualitative research implies “the use and collection of a variety of empirical materials—case study; personal experience; introspection; life story; interviews; artifacts; cultural texts and productions; observational, historical, and visual texts” (p. 43). Such a method enhances the process of understanding the world around by transforming it into “a sequence of representations”. More so, Hadjadj (2015) elaborated that qualitative studies basically involve descriptions, researcher’s observation and interpretation of the data obtained by open-ended questions. In this respect, open-ended questions are considered a more precise and valuable source of data to collect the participants’ opinions.

3.1 Data of the Study

The data of the present study are taken from two sources, the selected panel and the participants’ responses. Speaking of the panel selected, it belongs to **Nasser Ibrahim**. He is one of the most followed and popular caricaturists in Iraq who is interested in special topics, such as domestic, social violence, political issues. The panel selected addresses the phenomenon of violence against women, particularly domestic violence, or intimate violence. It reflects a combination of verbal, physical and psychological violence. In this panel, one can see the following:

- The shadow of the man symbolizes a human being in the form of an animal, a savage bull or monster that has a complete control over the woman. His hands are snakes that poison the woman with his speech and acts. His standing posture reflects his complete dominance over her.



*Domestic violence
(Ibrahim, 2018)*



- The shadow of the woman symbolizes her weakness and fear, and reflects the idea that she is only an object a container or a bottle. Her sitting posture metaphorically reflects the senses of being weak, miserable, being battered, frightened and helpless.
- The facial expressions of the woman metonymically reflect the senses of being battered and frightened. It further reflects the bad treatment she is subjected to, beside fear and persecution. It seems that she has no right to speak, whereas that of the man indicates the act of yelling, getting violent and savage as an animal.
- The half-circled lines metonymically indicate the speech and strength of the physical violence experiences on his wife.

3.2 Population and Setting of the Study

A number of (30) Iraqi fourth level B.A. participants have been randomly or arbitrarily selected from the Department of English-College of Education for Women- University of Baghdad, adopting the probability method of selection. This method ensures that all the participants have the same chance to participate in the study. The participants have been given the freedom to participant or not in the test. Those who have accepted were asked to sign a consent letter that proved their willingness to participate in the test. Their responses have been maintained confidential, treated with respect, and asked to be honest when deciphering the panel after clarifying what is required from them. The test has been done at the College of Education for Women-University of Baghdad. As for the time of the test, it was conducted during the academic year 2020-2021, during the beginning of the first semester, particularly in February.

3.3 Procedures of the Study

To meet the objective of the study, the researchers have selected a caricature panel following the projective technique highlighted by Lapan, Quartaroli and Riemer (2012). The latter maintained that using visual data as images helps to provide comprehensive understanding and construct meaning by the participants.

Then, a set of questions has been formed to be answered by the participants. To maintain the validity of the study, the researcher submitted the chosen image and the explanation of the theory together with the prepared questions to five jury members¹ through a cover letter. A test further has been prepared to collect the participants' responses. Here, Faraday and Plummer (1979) stated, the testing methodology helps to access the inner feelings and experiences of an individual and knows about the way s/he understands and interprets the world around him/her. The test consisted of (4) questions; the first question was concerned with identifying the objects of the panel under question; the second was about explaining the meaning of the panel in general; the third was related to deciphering the highlighted figures; and the final question requested pinpointing the type of violence being depicted in each of the panels selected. To collect the generated or highlighted ideas from the participants, the researcher created an analytical rubric designed by Al-Bahrani to be used in data analysis.

To meet the objective of the study, which entails: **examining the idiosyncratic schema when deciphering the violence-based panel**, the researchers are to do the following:

1. Identifying the conceptual image of each figure in the panel as per each participant; and
2. Categorizing the type of violence reflected in this panel.

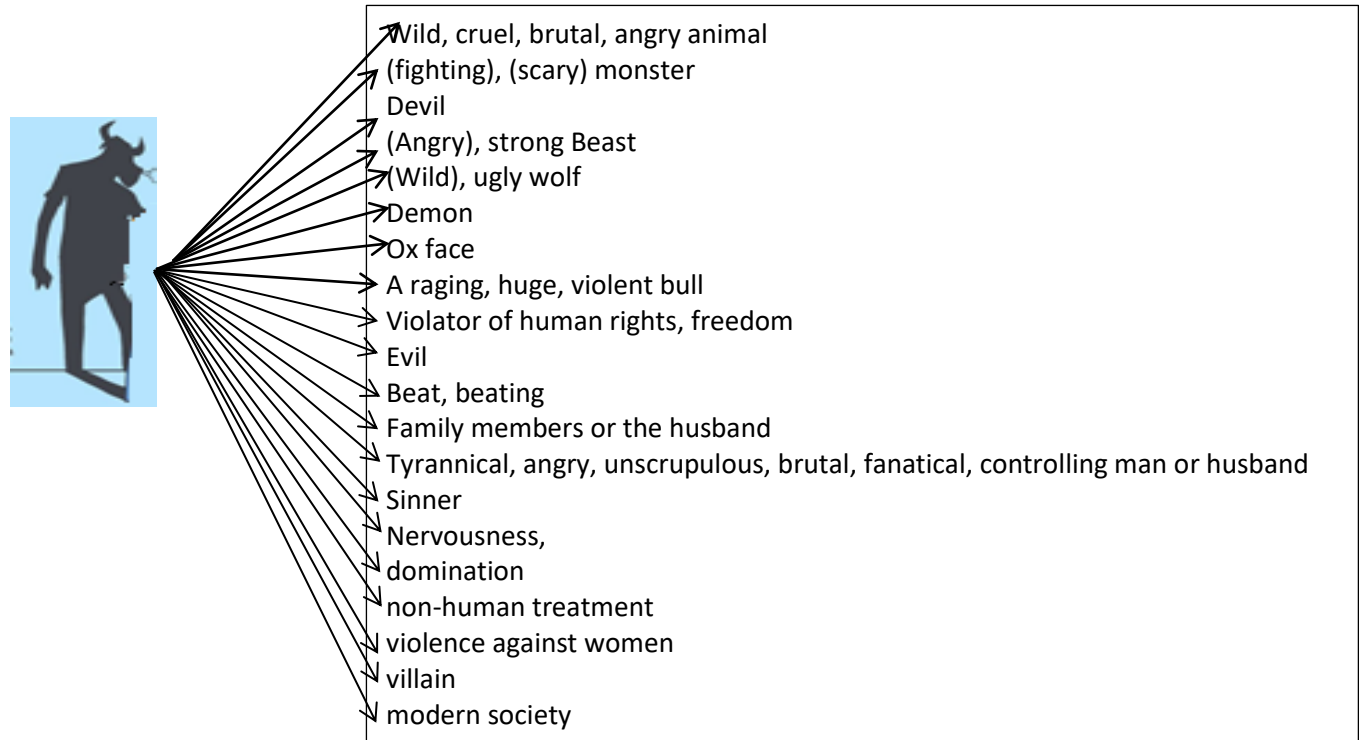
3.4 Data Analysis

After conducting the test and tabulating the participants' responses, it has been noticed the following:

Concerning the man's shadow sign, this sign has been conceptualized differently by different participants, as shown in Figure 3:

¹ Prof. Dr. Shatha K. Al-Saadi, Asst. Prof. Shaima M. Saalh, Asst. Prof. Jinan Ahmed Khalil, Asst. Prof. Iman Muwafaq Muslim, and Asst. Prof. Maysaa Rashid.

Figure 3



The different conceptualizations of the man's shadow

As it is seen, participants have generally conceptualized the man's shadow as an animal, monster, devil, beast, wolf, demon, ox, and bull. That is, generally it is a non-human character in the sense that it has an animalistic behavior or features. Despite their general agreement, however, they have differed in the exact conceptualizations of the figure in terms of the referent and its characteristics. Those, for instance, who agreed that it is an animal, differed in the way they saw that animal. Some saw it as wild, others as cruel, or brutal, and some others as angry. Not only they were different in the way they described that figure, but also in determining the level of description as well. In other words, they differed in terms of the degree of anger. Based on the dictionary definition of these adjectives, one can see that the adjective wild simply means "untamed, not domesticated, [and] uncultivated", whereas cruel indicates "not

[being] nice, mean and heartless"; brutal as a senseid connotes being "savagely violent, vicious, ruthless, or cruel"; while anger entails "a strong feeling of displeasure, hostility, antagonism towards someone or something, usually combined with an urge to harm" (WikiDiff, 2023).

The same thing goes with those who have conceptualized it as a monster; some mentally depicted it as fighting, others as scary, focusing on different points of attention, appearance and behavior. The first adjective, fighting, entails the reactive behavior, whereas the latter, scary implies the causal effect of the figure on the addresser and image reader.

As for the descriptions demon and devil, they entail a superstition sense. They depicted the animalistic human character as something that cannot be seen only in superstitions. This is because to have a human body with an animal



face and a snaky hands does not exist in reality. Here, these two nouns can either metaphorically assimilate human characters to something that belongs to animal, or the usage is metonymic in the sense it highlights some of the animalistic features.

Speaking of the noun beast, it has been associated with two adjectives, strong and angry, reflecting as a result the attention points, the physical feature or the reactive behavior. That is, despite the similarity in terms of the basic referent beast, there has been a difference in the sense that this referent is mentally depicted or conceptualized.

The referent ox face represents a direct reference to the animal based on the facial similarity between the face in the shadow and the ox as an animal. Other participants have seen it as merely a bull, whereas others have mentally depicted it as a wolf. The participants further went further into categorizing that bull by either emphasizing his feelings or his size. Cases in point are the use of the adjectives raging and violent, and that of huge, respectively. Those who characterized it as a wolf also differ in highlighting the attention points by highlighting senses as being ugly that focuses on the facial expressions, or being wild connoting its behavior.

Some other participants conceptualized the shadow metaphorically as a violator of human rights and of freedom. This entails that the shadow metaphorically connotes a savage beast that terrifies and controls or suffocates the woman's life. In the same vein, some participants also thought metaphorically but this time by

referring to the shadow as something evil. Or, it represents the evil and hidden side of the man, reflecting his real feelings and negligence towards the woman, his wife.

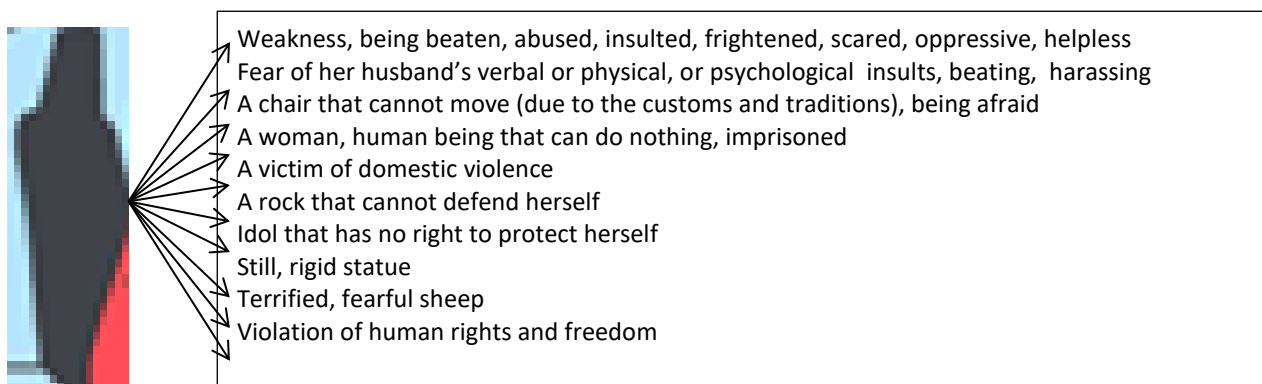
Some participants conceptualized the posture of the man's shadow or his facial expressions metonymically as domination, nervousness, the act of beating, non-human treatment, or as violence against women. Such a process connotes part-part metonymically, as the posture indicates a feature or an action.

Some others conceptualized the man's shadow using a noun to refer to any of the family members, the husband, a sinner or a villain. That is, generally there is a negative reference to the figure of the man, husband, father, brother or even the son. All these people might metaphorically represent a sinner, or villain by focusing on the negative actions of these people. Some others identified that this shadow represents the husband or the man who controls the house. Such people might be further characterized or conceptualized as being tyrannical, angry, unscrupulous, brutal, controlling, or fanatical, highlighting as a result the action of these men towards women.

Finally, some participants have thought metonymically through conceptualizing that man's shadow as modern society. In other words, this man represents part-whole metonymy referring consequently to all men in the modern society.

With respect to the shadow of the women, one can notice that the participants have also varied in their conceptualizations of the figure, and as seen in the Figure 4:

Figure 4





The various conceptualizations of the woman's shadow

Based on Figure 4, it has been shown that some participants mentally depicted the woman's shadow metonymically as being beaten, insulted, weak, abused, frightened, scared, oppressive or a helpless woman. Such a sort of depiction entails part-part metonymy, as the appearance reflects her status. In the same vein, some others conceptualized it as a woman who has experiences verbal or physical, or psychological insults, beating, domestic violence, harassment, or the violation of human rights.

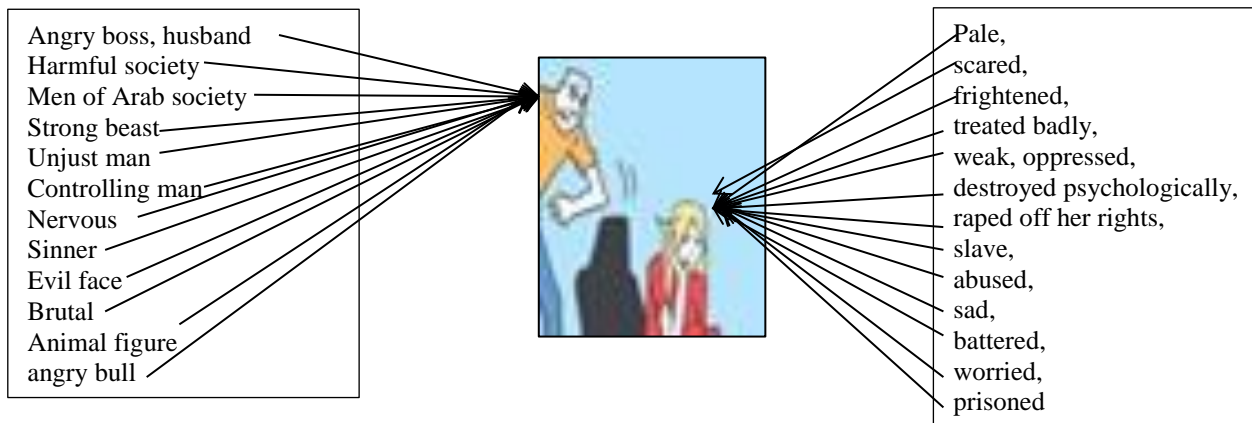
Some participants metaphorically conceptualized it as a chair, idol, a statue, or a rock in the sense that she can do nothing to help herself; she cannot escape or defend, or move as rocks or statues or idols. Being metaphorically assimilated to an idol means that she has no mind

and she is a tool in the hand of her husband; that is, she has no right to say or do anything. Being helpless is owing to the unfair customs and traditions, or because she is afraid from being punished by her husband. Some other participants metaphorically conceptualized the shadow as a sheep, focusing or highlighting as a result the weak part of the woman and the feeling of being afraid or terrified.

Some others metonymically referred to the shadow as representing the woman herself, being imprisoned, shackled and confined. That is, such a depiction represents part-part metonymy, as the shadow connotes her status.

Speaking of the bodily expressions of the woman, again participants have conceptualized them differently as clarified in Figure 5:

Figure 5



The various conceptualizations of the (wo)man's expressions

Based on the facial expressions, majorly (28 participants), the participants focused on the facial and bodily expressions. However, the points highlighted by them are different. Some participants paid the attention to the color of the face and highlighted the feature of being pale. Some others focused on the color and the facial expressions and derived the features of being scared, frightened, sad and worried. Some other participants focused on the face and bodily expressions and highlighted the features of being weak, treated badly oppressed, psychologically destroyed abused, and battered. Finally, there are participants who focused on the status of the

women by highlighting traits, such as: being prisoned, salved, and rapped off her rights.

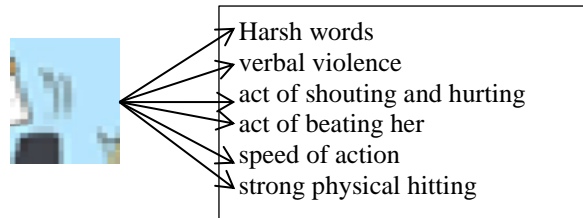
As for the facial expressions of the man, (25) participants recognized them; however, their conceptual images were different. For instance, some participants thought directly focusing on the facial expressions, saying that the man or husband is angry, unjust, nervous, controlling, sinner, evil and brutal. Some others thought metaphorically by assimilating the behavior of the man to an angry bull, animal figure, or a strong beast. Finally, there are participants who thought metonymically by considering this man



an exemplary of the men in the Arabic society or reflects the harmful society.

As for the half circled-lines/ hand sign, one can notice that not all participants paid attention to it, as illustrated in Figure 6:

Figure 6



The various conceptualizations of the half-circled lines/hand expressions

As it is seen, only eleven participants have construed this figure, and as usual, the construes have been various. Some of them stated these lines reflect the impact of harsh words being uttered by the husband to his wife, highlighting as a result the verbal violence. Some others maintained that these lines are the impact of the act of shouting at, hurting the woman, beating her, and hitting her, pinpointing as a result physical violence. Finally, some said these lines are the impact and reflection of the speed of an act whether it is the verbal or physical act toward the woman.

4. Conclusions

To answer the research question, **what is the idiosyncratic schema highlighted when deciphering the selected violence-based panel?**, the researchers have concluded the following:

1. Idiosyncrasy and culture are double sides of the same word or figure. Having belonged to the same culture has led the participants of the study to share and at the same time disagree on certain points at different levels, semantic, conceptual, etc. This conclusion is in line with Shore's (1996) statement, "meaning is "twice born" culturally and mentally, and Al-Bahrani, Al-Saadi, and Yousif's (2016) study in that with the case of images, the deciphering is individually-based, reflecting as a result their creativity and background

knowledge. This conclusion further accentuated Sharifian's (2017a) in that it is not necessary for all members that belong to a given culture or a cultural group to obtain all elements of cultural schema, nor they share these elements equally.

2. There is a sort of differences or disagreement regarding the way a specific figure is mentally conceptualized. This is attributed to the idiosyncratic culture of each of the participants. This conclusion is somehow in line with what Roberts (2008) stated in that there is a sort of misunderstanding among people because of their difficulty in communicating one's culture via language; however, instead of misunderstanding, there is disagreement and differences. In Garro's (2000) words, cognitive schemas are dynamic in nature and necessitate studying them in relation to culture.
3. What Palmer (1996) elucidated, a word highlights dynamic mental images in one's mind eye is also applicable on visual language. This is because each figure has been mentally construed differently taking into account the linear or comprehensive way of analysis, reflecting as a consequence the participants' living cultural schema and knowledge.
4. The majority of the participants have confirmed the existence of violence as a phenomenon in the Iraqi culture and that women are one of the main victims of it. This



conclusion is in line with the Al-Jubori and Al-Bahrani's (2022) study and Abdul-Hameed (2011). That is due to the patriarchal structure that outweighs men over women, and to the unjust societal traditions and conventions adopted or to the passive legislations as Abed Al-Hussein and Al-Saaidi (2022); and Wad (2018) maintained.

5. The use of images in depicting social issues has given an outlet to the participants to freely reflect their cognitive schema about the issue in question. This conclusion is in line with Dweich, Ghabra and Al-Bahrani's (2022) study, which stated that an image has more interpretations.
6. Deciphering images on the part of the participants accentuated the necessity of cognitive linguistics as an approach. This is because it enables them to highlight their myriad points of attention and interest. Such a conclusion also goes with Jaber and Al-Bahrani's (2021) study.
7. The participants have not only differed among themselves regarding the way a figure is being denotatively conceptualized, they also highlighted different exact conceptualizations. They further used various adjectives that reflect various levels of intensity. Some emphasized the behavioral aspect while others paid attention to the appearance of the figure. Some adopted the generic reference, others a specific reference. Some adopted a metaphoric pattern of thinking, whereas others were metonymically-oriented. Some participants highlighted conceptual meaning collectively by taking into account some figures altogether, whereas some others thought in individually or in a linear way by focusing on only one figure at a time.
8. Based on their various points of attention and cognitive schema, they various in conceptualizing the type of violence being depicted in this image. For instance, few participants (8 only) have thought generally by deciphering this violence as domestic violence, other (8) participants deciphered it as merely physical violence, (2) deciphered it as psychological violence, (2) construed it as

verbal violence, (5) conceptualized it as a combination between verbal and physical violence, (1) saw it as a combination between domestic and physical violence, (1) construed it as merely psychological violence, and (1) mentally depicted the type of psychological, verbal, and physical violence.

9. knowing about cultural schema does not involve to exemplify them in one's behavior.

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