

A Study of the Verbal and Non Verbal Signs on National Islamic Flags

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Abstract

Every autonomous country has a unique national flag that represents its identity and serves as a symbol of nationalism. This "rectangular piece of fabric of distinctive design that is used as a symbol of a nation), as a signaling device, or as a decoration" is the literal definition of a flag according to the Merriam Webster Dictionary. However, this item of clothing serves a crucial purpose in solidifying national identity between citizens. For example, its frequent use in rituals and allegiance pledges by the general public and its design, which incorporates elements of ethnic and religious significance. This study focuses on the Islamic identity revealed in the verbal and nonverbal signs of national flags. Consequently, it tries to answer these main questions: What are the symbols seen on Islamic country flags? What are the various connotative meanings of those signs and how do they show the country's Islamic identity? What importance do those indications have for Muslims? How those signals are inspired by the Holy Quran. The aim of the study is to find out the connotative meaning of each sign with the messages it conveys to confirm the Islamic identity in thirty two national Islamic flags. The adopted model is based on the field of semiotic science, i.e., it clarifies and explains signs by using Barthe's model(1977a) (1977b) of signs and meaning. The nature of the study is a qualitative one depending on the content of the data; nevertheless, there has been some statistics to support the findings.

Keywords: Connotations, Denotation, Flags, Semiotics, Signs



دراسة الرموز اللفظية وغير اللفظية في الأعلام الوطنية الإسلامية

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المستخلص

تتمتع كل دولة مستقلة بعلم وطني فريد يمثل هويتها للعالم الخارجي ويكون بمثابة رمز للقومية. "قطعة قماش مستطيلة ذات تصميم مميز تستخدم كرمز للامة أو إشارة أو كديكور" هو التعريف الحرفي للعلم وفقاً لقاموس ميريام ويبستر. وعليه فإن العلم يخدم غرضاً حاسماً في ترسيخ الهوية الوطنية وتعزيز الروابط بين المواطنين. ومن الأمثلة على ذلك استخدامه المتكرر في الطقوس وتعهدات الولاء من قبل عامة الناس. ان تصميم العلم يتضمن في كثير من الأحيان عناصر ذات أهمية عرقية ودينية. تركز هذه الدراسة على الهوية الإسلامية التي تتجلى في العلامات اللفظية وغير اللفظية للأعلام الوطنية. من خلال الاجابة على هذه الاسئلة: ما هي الرموز التي تظهر على أعلام الدول الإسلامية؟ ما هي المعاني الضمنية المختلفة لتلك العلامات؟ كيف تظهر هذه العلامات الهوية الإسلامية للبلاد؟ وما أهمية تلك المؤشرات بالنسبة للمسلمين؟ وتصف الرسالة كيف أن تلك الإشارات مستوحاة من القرآن الكريم. تهدف الدراسة إلى معرفة المعنى الدلالي لكل علامة من هذه العلامات مع ما تحمله من رسائل لتأكيد الهوية الإسلامية في اثنين وثلاثين علماً إسلامياً وطنياً. ويعتمد نموذج الباحث في التحليل على مجال العلم السيميائي، أي أنه يوضح ويفسر العلامات باستخدام نموذج بارت (١٩٧٧ أ) (١٩٧٧ ب) للعلامات والمعنى. طبيعة الدراسة نوعية حسب محتوى البيانات؛ ومع ذلك، استخدم الباحث بعض الإحصاءات لدعم النتائج.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الدلالات المخفية، الدلالات الواضحة، الأعلام، السيميائية، الإشارات

1. Introduction

There is a well-known fact that national flags are one of the most common aspects or ways by which country identities are signified. A national country flag is a symbol of dignity, a country's leadership, honor and sovereignty. Every country must have its own individual national flag that is used to instill pride in the country and as a declaration of it to the rest of the world, i.e., each flag consists of symbolic signs which may be verbal or nonverbal. They are used to convey a message to anybody who sees it.

The problem in those flag signs appears in the connotative meanings they hold. Signs that are found on the national flags in general and on Islamic national flags in particular are shown in different verbal and nonverbal forms such star, emblem, figure, crescent and colors with many connotative meanings. The purpose of those signs is to reveal the Islamic identity of the country to which each flag belongs. Accordingly, the study will try to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the signs that are used on Islamic national flags?
- 2) What are the different connotative meanings that those signs hold?
- 3) How do those signs are inspired by the Holy Quran .

The current study aims at: **a.** Exposing the types of signs that are used in national Islamic flags **b.** Showing the connotative meaning of each sign in the national Islamic flags. **c.** Revealing whether the meaning of the same sign is repeated in other flags. **d.** Showing how the meanings of the verbal and non-verbal signs are inspired from the Holy Quran. Thus, the researcher proposes the following hypotheses: **I.** Each national Islamic flag has its own verbal or/and nonverbal signs that distinguish it from other flags. **II.** National Islamic flags depend more on nonverbal signs to reveal their Muslim identity than verbal ones. **III.** Meanings of the verbal and non-verbal signs in the national Islamic flag are inspired by the Holy Quran.

This study is limited to the analysis of thirty-two national Islamic flags that can be divided into two groups. The first one is that of the Arabic countries which are sub classified into two other groups: The first one is that of Asia continent and the second is of African one. The second group of the flags belongs to Islamic countries but they are not Arabic. The researcher has also chosen one of the semiotic models of analysis, namely, Barthes's model Barthe's model (1977a) (1977b) by which the researcher can make a clear distinction between Denotative meaning and Connotative meaning.

This study has its own importance for the researchers and the linguists in general and those who are working in semiotic field in particular. It is hoped that this work will be of valuable benefit to English language learners and all those who are involved in the study of connotative meaning which is implied within the field of semiotics. With the aid of the sign system, language learners can better understand the social and cultural cues used in the target language. Such representations also facilitate the cultural integration of the learner of a foreign language, i.e., the students have the chance to improve their sociolinguistic proficiency, which broadens their education by exposing them

to additional cultural information and gives them the ability to use semiotic signs in a range of activities. Consequently, the content of this study is tackled to be a great contribution to the field of the study.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Meaning of Sign

Most of the scholars (Morris, 1938; Guiraud, 1975; Echo, 1986; Bal & Bryson, 1991; Danesi, 2004, 2007; Chandler, 2007) agree that semiology or semiotics is the science that studies the sign system. But what is meant by a sign? Morris (1983, pp.4-5) concentrates on the function of sign in other sciences rather than linguistics as when he argues that signs which refer to the same object need not designate,

"since that which is taken into account in the object may differ for various interpretants. A sign of an object may, at one theoretical extreme, simply turn the interpretant of the sign upon the object; while at the other extreme it would allow the interpretant to take account of all the characteristics of the object in question in the absence of the object itself. There is thus a potential sign continuum in which with respect to every object or situation all degrees of semiosis may be expressed." (1938, pp.4-5)

What Morris wants to say is that signs have triple functions of the object studied in all sciences: Signs focus on either the things themselves, the properties of the things in their functions of use as signs, or the relations between the things standing for something else.

Voloshinov (1973) on the other hand, focuses on the entity of signs and considers it "a phenomenon of the external world" and that 'signs are particular, material things'. Every sign 'has some kind of material embodiment, whether in sound, physical mass, color, movements of the body, or the, i.e., all signs have 'concrete material reality'"(Voloshinov, 1973, p.65).

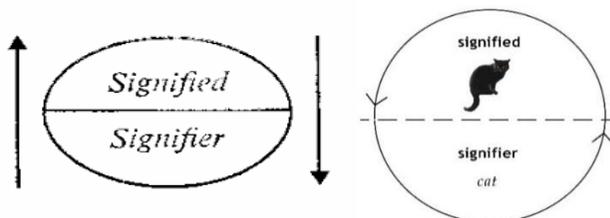
In his book *Course in General Linguistics*, Saussure introduces three new terms: *signified*, *signifier* and *sign*. A *signified* is a conceptual image; a *signifier* is a physical sound linked to the *image*; and a linguistic *sign* that is an association of a signified with a *signifier*, in other words

"A linguistic sign is not a link between a thing and a name, but between a concept [signified] and a sound pattern [signifier]. The sound pattern is not actually a sound; for a sound is something physical. A sound pattern is the hearer's psychological impression of a sound, as given to him by the evidence of his senses. This sound pattern may be called a 'material' element only in that it is the representation of our sensory impressions. The sound pattern may thus be distinguished from the other element associated with

it in a linguistic sign. This other element is generally of a more abstract kind: the concept." (Saussure 1983, p.66) cited in (Yakin & Totu, 2014)

The mathematical relation between them is $x=y$: the signifier corresponds to the (X) and the signified corresponds to the (Y). However; the relation between the signifier (x) and signified (y) is an arbitrary one established for particular social purpose. (Danesi, 2004:2425). Illustrated in figure (1):

Figure (1)



Saussure's Model (1916) of the sign

The concept 'cat is not connected by any internal relation to the sound sequence $c + a + t$ which forms the corresponding acoustic image, i.e., the word 'cat' is a word sign because it has a recognizable phonetic structure that generates a mental concept (a pet). When we say the word cat, the image of a pet comes to mind, and this image cannot be blocked; similarly, when we see a pet, the word cat appears to come to mind automatically.

Echo (1976) defines sign as "anything that can be interpreted as a significant substitute for something else. This something else does not have to exist or be present at the time when a sign serves as a substitute for it" (Echo, 1976, p.7). In other words, Echo wants to say that "everything that on the grounds of a previously established social convention, can be taken as something standing for something else" (Echo, 1976, p.7). He distinguishes three types of sign vehicles, and it's worth noting that the differentiation is based, at least in part, on material form and they are as follows:

1. Signs in which there may be any number of tokens (replicas) of the same type (e.g. a printed word, or exactly the same model of car in the same color);
2. 'Signs whose tokens, even though produced according to a type, possess a certain quality of material uniqueness' (e.g. a word which someone speaks or which is handwritten);
3. 'Signs whose token is their type, or signs in which type and token are identical' (e.g. a unique original oil-painting or Princess Diana's wedding dress)" (Echo, 1976, p.7).

Hodge & Tripp (1986) share the view with Echo and note that "fundamental to all semiotic analysis is the fact that any system of signs is carried by a material medium which has its own principles of structure" (Hodge

& Tripp, 1986, p.17). Furthermore, some media use a variety of interacting sign systems, for example, television and film use spoken, visual, aural, and motor indicators. Each media has its own limits and, as a result, is not 'neutral.' In other words, each sign is "charged with cultural signification" (Echo, 1976, p.267). Photographic and audio-visual media, for example, are always virtually thought to be more 'real' than other types of representation. Bal and Bryson, on the other hand, link signs with culture activity when they argue that:

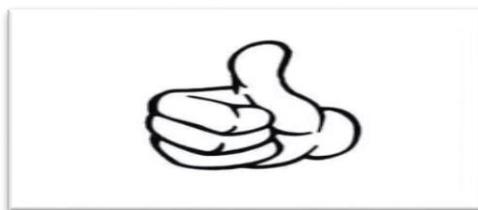
“Human culture is made up of signs, each of which stands for something other than itself and the people inhabiting culture busy themselves making sense of those signs. The core of the semiotic theory is the definition of the factors involved in this permanent process of sign making and interpreting and the development of conceptual tools that help us to grasp that the process as it goes on in various areas of cultural activity.” (Bal and Bryson,1991, p.174)

Bolter (1991) argues that signs need medium in order to be effective as when he states:

"signs are always anchored in a medium. Signs may be more or less dependent upon the characteristics of one medium - they may transfer more or less well to other media - but there is no such thing as a sign without a medium" (Bolter,1991,pp.195-6).

Danesi (2004, pp.5-6) defines a sign in its general sense “as anything that symbolizes something other than itself”. He also represents “the thing” to which a sign refers, as the “referent”. And he classified Referents into two categories: (1) Concrete referent is something that can be shown to exist in the real world; for example, a "tree" can be referred to simply by referring to an actual tree. (2) Abstract referent is fictitious and cannot be shown simply by referring to it as seen in figure (2):

Figure (2)



The Abstract Referent

The figure may symbolize the phrase *GOOD JOB*. It does so by a thumb signal, also known as a thumbs-up which is a common hand gesture achieved by a closed fist held with the thumb extended upward in approval. Signs enable us to refer to things or ideas that are not physically present but our senses to perceive. For example, when we say or hear the word apple, the image of the apple in question comes instantly to mind, even if the actual apple is not around

for us to perceive with our senses (Danesi ,2004, pp.5-6). He further compares the relationship between a sign and its referent with the mathematical X and Y relationship as when he declares:

The X can be as simple as a single sound or gesture or as complex as an entire musical composition or TV program. The "magnitude" of X may vary, but the fundamental nature of the investigation does not". , i.e., If we represent the encoder's meaning (x) with the letter (y), the focus will be on determining the nature of the relationship $x=y$ (Danesi ,2004,p4)

For example, the meaning of the word green, in this case, our X constitutes an English color term. If we ask what X means, then there are many answers to this question. At a basic level, it refers to one of the colors of the visible spectrum. However, this color can have a host of other meanings, like:

- Green is often used in cartoons to express the disease.
- Green is associated with drawings that depict aliens or alien creatures.
- In Dante's Divine Comedy, green symbolizes the powers of hope.
- Green is used in traffic lights, railway signals and navigational signals as a sign of progress.
- In North American stock market, green is used to denote a rise in stock prices.

So, there may be no one to one relationship between a referent and its sign, i.e., a sign may refer to something else other than what it looks like.

Little john (cited in Sobur, 2004, p.64) confirms that "a sign indicates something other than itself to produce meaning, and meaning is the relation between an object or idea and a sign. Signs can be accessed or accepted by the senses that we have. "This means that in every activity and human behavior, signs will always transmit information or written messages for other people So the main characteristics of a sign can be summarized in the following points:

1. Signs are part of culture
2. They are verbal and non-verbal
3. They may or may not refer to the same object it denotes for there is no one to one relation between a sign and its objects
4. They transmit information to the others
5. They need a medium.

2.2 Related Works

In the section, the researcher presents three previous studies to show the originality of his work. In this section, he extracts the most important components from the previous studies starting from the title of the studies and ending with the conclusion. A brief idea about the problem, research questions, objectives or aims of the studies and hypotheses of the works are tackled respectively. Each one of these studies will be discussed at the end of the section to show the difference between this work and the previous studies.

- Study NO. One: “A Semiotic Analysis on the A-Mild Advertisements Using Roland Barthes’ Theory”. Written by Tazkitatul Fikriyah in 2011.

Exposing the connotation meaning of the verbal and non-verbal signs of the sample under study which is (A-Mild advertisements) is one objective of this study. Another objective is showing the myth that is responsible for motivating those advertisements. A descriptive qualitative method is used in this kind of study in which the researcher collects the advertisements and analyses them by interpreting them through their description. The data of the study are six types advertisements chosen from some big billboards on the bank of the central road of Jakarta. In the process of analysing the data, the researcher finds that there are different types and numbers of signs in each version of the advertisement. They are five signs in “Go Green” version. The number of signs in “Two Boys Skateboarding” is seven. “Five People I” version contains six signs while “Five People II” version contains seven signs. There are six signs in “Sign Language” version with the same number in A Flava Click Mint” version. In conclusion, the researcher finds out that all of those advertisements have the same verbal sign but with different colors and different pictures.

- Study NO. Two: “Semiotics and Marketing: A Case Study of the Renault Co. on Iranian Market”. written by Parisa Sepehr in 2011.

This study is based on the idea of Jean Baudrillard (1968) who affirms that “An object must have a sign in order to be consumed”. The aim of this paper is to investigate the way by which a product as sign is related or associated with product consumption. Consequently, it studies the way by which marketers do their best to apply semiotics to analyse a product and the market at the same time in order understand the customers need. A qualitative research method is applied in this study. The sample of this paper are collected through the Marketing Department of the Renault Commercial Division in Iran. The model adopted is that of Jean Baudrillard’s idea. The Renault products are manifested as signs and the consumption of Renault products is studied through the Iranian customers’ expectations.

- Study NO. Three: “Roland Barthes’ Denotation, Connotation, and Myth in the Change of Four Starbucks Logos: A Study of Semiotics”. Written by Rifa Nadira (2018)

The Analysis of the changes that occur on the Starbucks logo is the focus of this paper. Starbucks creates four changes to the logo to be distinguished from others. The changed elements have the same reference to the first logo done by Starbucks. The problem of this study appears because the researcher has an idea that Starbucks has become popular and famous among other coffee shops not only in Britain but around the world. This fame is not only because of the name of its brand, but Starbucks Coffee logo has its own role in this fame. By time, this logo has been changed by Starbucks four times to satisfy the needs of time. In the four logos, some factors and elements such as shape,

colour, and text have been changed. The researcher tries to identify the four Starbucks logo and their different meanings through the theory of Roland Barthes. The researcher tries to answer the following questions:

1. What is Starbucks logo and how does it change?
2. What are denotation, connotation and myth that disclose in four Starbucks logos?

He depends on qualitative method that analyses the data by describing and depicting circumstances of subjects, objects and other data. The research follows Barthes 'approach of denotation, connotation. The findings of this study are: (1) The four changes of the Starbucks logo occur in figure 'Siren' that does not resort to the use of cloth on the upper body. It becomes covered by the flowing hair of siren. The colour of Logo is changed from brown into green colour (2) There is a change in the denotation and connotation meaning of each logo (3) The myth has its great role and has appearance in the figure 'Siren' and in the symbols of the colours that reflect a development and luxury. It is clear from the above researches that this study is different because the model is the same but the data and the analysis are different. The data is Islamic, the analysis is concerned with the Islamic identity, and how this identity is revealed through the semiotic analysis .This difference makes this study an original one in its topic and analysis.

3. Methodology of the Study

3.1 The Model of Analysis

The model adopted in this study is Barthe's model (1968, 1977a, 1977b) of sign and its meaning. Barthes analyzes the signs in visual objects by utilizing the denotative and connotative "levels of meanings." Barthes separated the analysis of signs into two categories: nonverbal and verbal. The verbal sign is similar to the poster's text, which includes the movie's title, cast bios, release date, and many other details. The nonverbal cues on the poster are the pictures that bolster the spoken cues to make the poster an engaging piece of advertising signals.

3.2 Types of Analysis

The researcher will use a qualitative with the help of a quantitative analysis which essentially implies judging anything based on its quality rather than its quantity, and exploring how things are characterized, i.e., descriptions, feelings, ideas, and perceptions are the operated things in this type of analysis.

3.3 Procedures of the Analysis

In Table (1) below the basic analysis of the data takes the following steps:

1. Listing the name of the country alphabetically with its flag image.
2. Giving a brief description of the flag with all its components.
3. Showing the verbal and the non-verbal signs in the flag.

4. The Analytical Framework

4.1 Analysis of the Flags

The analysis of the verbal signs on those flags, as well as the non-verbal signs, namely the stars, crescents, and colors employed in the data are all

indicated in table (1):

Table (1)

The Islamic signs in the national flags

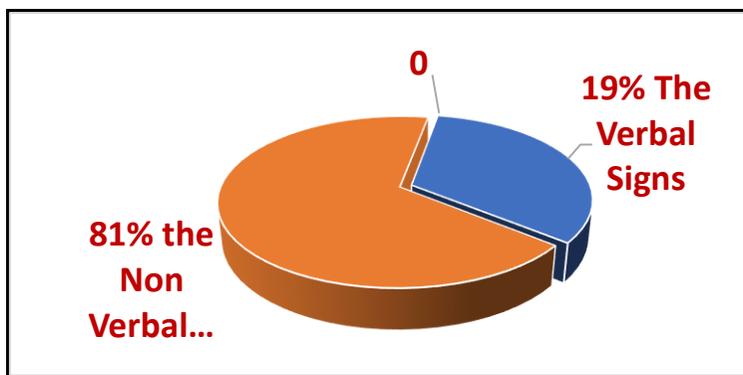
Flag NO.	The National Flag	The Islamic Signs
	The Bahrain Flag	The five triangles with white and red colors.
	Iraq Flag	The verbal phrase "Allahu Akbar" The white, green, and black colors
	Jordan Flag	A Star with seven points with white, green red, and black colors
	Oman Flag	The colors red, white and green
	Palestine Flag	The white, red, green and black colors
	Qatar Flag	The white and red colors
	Saudi Arabia Flag	Al Shahada with the green and white colors
	The United Arab Emirates Flag	The white, red, green and black colors
	The Algeria Flag	Astar, crescent with the white, red, and green colors
	Chad Flag	The colors red, blue and yellow

	Egypt Flag	The colors white, red, and black
	Ethiopia Flag	The star and the green, yellow, red, and blue colors
	Libya Flag	The Star presenting the pillars, the crescent and the white, red, green and black colors
	The Morocco Flag	The Star with the red and green colors
	The Sudan Flag	The colors: white, red, green and black
	Tunisia Flag	A star, crescent with the white and red colors
	Afghanistan Flag	The first version: the mosque with Mihrab and Menbar. Red, green, white and black colors. The second version: Al shahada plus the white and black color
	Albania Flag	Red and black colors

	Azerbaijan Flag	A star, crescent with red, white, blue and green colors
	Bangladesh Flag	Red and green colors
	Bosnia and Herzegovina Flag	Stars with blue, white, yellow colors
	Brunei Flag	Black, white, red and yellow colors
	The Comoros Flag	Stars, crescent with red, white, blue, yellow and green colors
	Iran Flag	Al shahada, Allah, with red, green and white colors
	Kosovo Flag	Stars with white, blue and yellow colors
	Malaysia Flag	Sun, crescent with red, blue, yellow and white colors

	Maldives Flag	A crescent with red, white, and green colors
	Pakistan Flag	A Star, crescent and the white and green color
	Tajikistan Flag	Stars with white, green, red and yellow colors
	Turkey Flag	A star, crescent and red and white colors
	Turkmenistan Flag	Stars, crescent and red, green, yellow and white colors
	Uzbekistan Flag	Stars, crescent and the white, red, blue and green colors

The incidence and percentages of both verbal and nonverbal indicators will be examined below: flags represent Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Afghanistan, Brunei, and Iran with text written on them. They are six in number and account for 19.5 percent of the overall number of flags being studied as seen in figure (3):

Figure (3)*Percentage of the verbal and non-verbal signs of the data*

The non-verbal signs presented by the stars, crescents and colors are as follows:

- The star appears sixteen times on the flags of: Jordan, Algeria, Ethiopia, Libya, Morocco, Malaysia, Tunisia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Comoros, Kosovo, Pakistan, Turkey, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. They make up 50% of the overall proportion of the data. All of the flags' stars have five triangular points, which stand for the five pillars of Islam, with the exception of the Jordanian flag, which has seven points, which stand for the number of ayahs in the Al Fatiha Surah. Another example is the difference between the flags of Malaysia and Al Bahrain, where the five triangle points on the Al Bahrain flag are depicted as a straight line while still referencing the five pillars of the Islam. In the Malaysian flag, the star has been replaced by the sun.
- The crescent symbol is found on the flags of twelve countries, including Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, Azerbaijan, Comoros, Brunei, Maldives, Malaysia, Pakistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. They account for 38% of the overall amount of data.
- The thirty-two flags are dispersed with the six colors—green, black, white, red, yellow, and blue—in various amounts (see table 1). The green appears 21 times with a 66% frequency. Ten instances of the color black with a 31% proportion. There are 26 instances of the color white, making up an 81% frequency. The red hue appears 27 times with an 84% frequency. With a 25% frequency, both colors yellow and blue appear eight times. With a ratio of 25% for each of them.

4.2 Findings of The Analysis

The researcher's attention will be drawn to the various signs utilized in the data, their connotative interpretations, and the ways in which they convey the Islamic identity.

4.2.1 The Verbal and Non-verbal Sign Findings

Two flags, those of Iran and Iraq, both features the first verbal Islamic word (Allahu Akbar). One of the most significant Muslim expressions in the entire globe is this one. The Arabic phrase "الله اكبر," which means "Allah is the greatest," is frequently used by the more than 1 billion Muslims around the world. When Allah orders His Messenger to warn mankind, he gives him takbeer as his first gift as shown in the following Ayahs:

{ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ . قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ . وَرَبَّكَ فَكَبِّرْ } (المدثر: ١- ٣)

"O you who covers himself [with a garment], Arise and warn And your Lord glorify". (Al-Muddaththir, 1-3, P.599)

After establishing his divinity and oneness, Allah tells His Messenger that he should increase his takbeer shown in the ayah below

{ وَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وِليٌّ مِنَ الذَّلِّ وَكَبِّرْهُ تَكْبِيرًا } (الإسراء: ١١١)

"And say, "Praise to Allah, who has not taken a son and has had no partner in [His] dominion and has no [need of a] protector out of weakness; and glorify Him with [great] glorification". (ALIsra, 111, P.275)

As a result, the word "Allahu Akbar" has a significant meaning for Muslims because it is frequently used as a call to prayer. For instance, Muslims frequently use this forceful declaration during their prayers and on other occasions. For example, they are the very first words fathers say to their infants as a "celebration of life." Or they are used to show gratitude when Allah bestows something on someone that He would not have otherwise been able to, or when He is being benevolent. It is a strong statement that serves as a reminder that Allah is greater than all of humanity's concerns. The divine term "Allah," which is utilized in the data as the second word, refers to "the one who is worshiped" and "the Creator" in monotheistic deistic faiths in general and Islam in particular. It's also known as "the word of majesty" in Arabic. The universe has been created, managed, and watched over by "Allah," who is said to be all-powerful. He is undetectable and incomprehensible. The word "Allah" is one aspect that gives Islam its identity. Which is mentioned in the Holy Quran 26 times, including the following Ayah

{ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَحْيِي أَنْ يَضْرِبَ مَثَلًا مَّا بَعُوضَةٌ فَمَا فَوْقَهَا فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَيَقُولُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا مَثَلًا يُضِلُّ بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَيَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَمَا يُضِلُّ بِهِ إِلَّا الْفَاسِقِينَ } (البقرة ٢٦)

"Indeed, Allah is not timid to present an example – that of a mosquito or what is smaller than it. And those who have believed know that it is the truth from their Lord. But as for those who disbelieve, they say, "What did Allah intend by this as an example?" He misleads many thereby and guides many thereby. And He misleads not except the defiantly disobedient" (Al-Baqarah, 26, p5)

The word "Allah" is utilized both verbally and non-verbally in the data. In the center of the Iran flag, one may see the verbal one inscribed in red. While the Uzbekistan flag, where the stars are placed to spell out the word "Allah," is an example of nonverbal usage. The third Islamic feature identifier employed

in the flags is the five pillars of Islam, which are represented by the five acts of faith (shahada), prayer (salah), almsgiving (zakat), fasting (sawm), and pilgrimage (hajj). No matter the ecclesiastical, geographic, or sectarian differences, Muslims everywhere recognize them. Both male and female faithful followers of the Prophet Muhammad are obligated to uphold the pillars as demonstrated in the ayahs below:

{ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ } (النور ٥٦)

"And establish prayer and give Zakah and obey the Messenger –that you may receive mercy." (Al Noor, 56, p.343)

{ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ } (البقرة ١٨٣)

"O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous" (AlBaqarah, 183, p.25)

{ وَاتَّمُوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ } (البقرة ١٩٦)

"And complete the Hajj and Umrah for Allah" (AlBaqarah, 196, p.27)

The flags display the pillars both vocally and non-verbally. The first tenet of Islam is the shahadah, or spoken confession of faith, which is displayed on the flags of Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan's second flag (the flag of the Taliban). Muslims affirm the exclusivity of Allah by repeating, "There is no Allah but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." This simple but profound word expresses a Muslim's complete acceptance and allegiance to Islam. The pillars of Islam are symbolized nonverbally by stars on twelve of the thirty-two flags. A five-pointed star can be found on the flags of Algeria, Libya, Ethiopia, Morocco, Tunisia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Comoros, Kosovo, Pakistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. As a result, the star sign could be regarded as the fourth Islam identity employed in the data. The word "star" appears thirteen times in the Holy Quran. The stars that are nearby and far away, large and little, fixed and moving, existing alone and in groupings of other stars, were all created by Allah for certain purposes. As can be seen in the following Ayahs, he uses them as an adornment for the sky, a tool for stoning demons, and a way to lead walkers:

{ وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ النُّجُومَ لِتَهْتَدُوا بِهَا فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ } (سورة الأنعام: ٩٧)

"And it is He who placed for you the stars that you may be guided by them through the darkneses of the land and sea. We have detailed the signs for a people who know." (AlAnam, 97, p.126)

{ وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ وَجَعَلْنَاهَا رُجُومًا لِلشَّيَاطِينِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابَ السَّعِيرِ } (سورة الملك: ٥)

"And We have certainly beautified the nearest heaven with lamps [i.e., stars] and have made [from] them what is thrown at the devils and have prepared for them the punishment of the Blaze." (AlMulk, 5, p.579)

The word "mosque" stands for the fourth Islamic identity. The Afghan flag's insignia depicts the mosque, complete with the Mihrab and the Menbar, as the Muslim community's house of worship demonstrated in the Ayah

{قُلْ أَمَرَ رَبِّي بِالْقِسْطِ وَأَقِيمُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ عِندَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ كَمَا بَدَأَكُمْ تَعُودُونَ} (الأعراف: ٢٩)

"Say, [O Muhammad], "My Lord has ordered justice and that you direct yourselves [to the Qiblah] at every place [or time] of prostration, and invoke Him, sincere to Him in religion." Just as He originated you, you will return [to life]" (AlAraf, 29, p138)

The crescent, which is typically seen as being a universally known emblem of Islam, is the sixth identity. Numerous Islamic countries' flags, such as those of Algeria, Brunei, Comoros, Turkey, Tunisia, Libya, Maldives, Malaysia, Azerbaijan, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, include a crescent. The appearance of the crescent coincides with the dates of Hajj and the start of fasting, and both the Holy Qur'an and the Noble Prophet's Sunnah make reference to the crescent where Allah Almighty says:

{ يسألونك عن الأهلة قل هي مواقيت للناس والحج } (البقرة ١٨٩)

They ask you, [O Muhammad], about the new moons. Say, "They are measurements of time for the people and for Hajj" (AlBaqarah, 189, p26)"

The moon and crescent are mentioned in fifty verses of the Holy Qur'an. In the Prophet's Sunnah, the moon is mentioned 836 times, and the crescent is mentioned 2027 times.

4.2.2 The Color Sign Findings

Islamic identities are likewise displayed in color, making up the sixth type of identification sample in the data as seen in table (2):

- Note that the stars in the table mean that there is no such color on the country flag.

Table (2)

The Connotative Meanings of the Different Colors

Country Name	Types of colors					
	Red	White	Black	Green	Blue	Yellow
Iraq	Blood	Peace	History	Islam	*	*
Saudi Arabia	*	Peace	*	Islam	*	*
Jordan	Blood	Peace	History	Islam	*	*
UAE	Blood	Island	History	Islam	*	*
Bahrain	Blood	Peace	*	*	*	*
Qatar	Blood	Peace	*	*	*	*
Oman	Blood	Peace	*	land	*	*
Palestine	Blood	Peace	Injustice	Hope	*	*
Egypt	Blood	Free	History	hope	*	*
Libya	Blood	Peace	History	land	*	*
Algeria	Blood	Peace	*	Hope	*	*
Tunisia	Blood	Peace	*		*	*
Morocco	Power	*	*	Wisdom	*	*
Chad	Blood	*	*	*	Hope	The sun
Sudan	Blood	Peace	land	land	*	
Ethiopia	Power	*	*	land	*	Peace

Iran	Blood	Peace	*	*	*	
Malaysia.	Blood	honest	*	*	peace	Loyalty
Turkey	Blood	Peace	*	*	*	*
Turkmenistan	*	Peace	*	land	*	*
Afghanistan	Blood	Peace	History	land	*	*
Azerbaijan	Blood	Peace	*	land	History	*
Pakistan		Peace	*	Islam	*	*
Tajikistan	Blood	Purity	*	Islam	*	*
Brunel		minister	Minister	*	*	Sultane
Comoros	Island	island		*	island	Island
Maldives	Blood	*	Land	*	*	*
Uzbekistan	*	peace	land	*	*	Sky & water
Bangladesh	Blood	*	land	*	*	*
Albania		Purity	*	*	*	sun
Kosovo	Strength	*	sovereignty	*	freedom	*
Bosnia and Herzegovina		*	*	*	freedom	wealth

The six hues featured on the flags under study—white, green, black, red, yellow, and blue—are all mentioned in the Holy Quran with distinct connotative meanings in which the formulation of the flags depend on them. Following is a discussion of those six colors. The Green color is most widely linked hue with nature, vitality, and life (Heller, 2000, p.99). The color green is mentioned eight times in the Holy Qur'an's noble verses with the same connotative meanings as seen in the following Ayahs.

{ ويلبسون ثياباً خضراً من سندس وإستبرق متكئين فيها الأرائك نعم الثواب وحسنت مرتفعاً }
(الكهف: ٣١)

"and will wear **green** garments of fine silk and brocade, reclining therein on adorned couches. Excellent is the reward, and good is the resting place"
(Alkahaf, 31, p.279)

{ إني أرى سبع بقرات سمان يأكلهن سبع عجاف وسبع سنبلات خضر وآخر يابسات } (يوسف: 43)
"I have seen seven fat cows being eaten by seven lean, and seven green spikes and others dry."
(Yusuf, 43, p.219)
{ الذي جعل لكم من الشجر الأخضر ناراً فإذا أنتم منه توقدون } (ياسين: ٨٠)
[It is] He who made for you from the green tree, fire, and then from it you ignite. (Yaseen, 80, p.437)

In the data, the green color occurs ten times in Arabic flags and eleven times in the second sample. The appearance of the green color in the flags reflects the green land and Islam.

The White Color: is the color of serenity, purity, guidance, love, goodness and truth, and arousing noble human feelings. It is primarily an expressive color, as well as a symbolic color. This color is mentioned in nine noble verses with the same implications. Two of them described the believers, the people of obedience:

وأما الذين ابيضت وجوههم ففي رحمة الله هم فيها خالدون(ال عمران:١٠٧).
"But as for those whose faces turn white, [they will be] within the mercy of Allah. They will abide therein eternally."(AlImran, 107, p.57)

In another passage, Prophet Jacob is depicted in the height of his sorrow for his son Joseph. In addition, five honorable verses mention the Prophet Moses holding his hand to his arm and how it emerged white. The Almighty declares that it shines brightly at night:

{يوم تبيض وجوه وتسود وجوه } (آل عمران، ١٠٦)
"On the Day [some] faces will turn white and [some] faces will turn black
"(Al Imran, 106, p.57)

{ ونزع يده فإذا هي بيضاء للناظرين } (الشعراء، ٣٣)
"And he drew out his hand; thereupon it was white for the observers."(Al Shuara, 33, p.356)

It appears thirteen times in Arabic flags and eleven times in the non-Arabic flags. The appearance of this color reflects the desire of people to live peacefully.

The Black color: Four Ayahs refer to the color black, three of which describe hypocrites, disbelievers, and criminals whose features would turn black with sorrow and the harshness of the agony on the Day of Resurrection.

{وإذا بشر أحدهم بما ضرب للرحمن مثلاً ظل وجهه مسوداً وهو كظيم} (الزخرف:17)
"And when one of them is given good tidings of that which he attributes to the Most Merciful in comparison [i.e., a daughter] his face becomes dark, and he suppresses grief "(Al Zukhruf,17, P.488).

{ويوم القيامة ترى الذين كذبوا على الله وجوههم مسودة} (الزمر:60)
"And on the Day of Resurrection you will see those who lied about Allah [with] their faces blackened". (Al Zumur,60, P.461)

In the data the color black which is found to reflect the dark ages that these countries faced under the occupation. It appears seven times in Arabic flags and three times in non- Arabic ones. In the ayah below, the word "color" is substituted for the word "food," which is used to indicate when to begin eating in Ramadan.

{وكلوا واشربوا حتى يتبين لكم الخيط الأبيض من الخيط الأسود من الفجر}. (البقرة:١٨٧)
"And eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct to you from the black thread of night". (AlBaqarah,187, P26)

The Yellow Color: This color is used in different cases in the Holy Quran. It is used in health and illness cases, for example, it is the hue of fire, as well as dried and mature crops as seen in the following ayah when it describes three conditions: The stage of fruiting and maturation in plants and flowers.

{ اعلموا أنما الحياة الدنيا لعب ولهو وزينة وتفاخر بينكم وتكاثر في الأموال والأولاد، كمثل غيث أعجب الكفار نباته ثم يهيج فتراه مصفراً ثم يكون حطاماً وفي الآخرة عذاب شديد } (الحديد: ٢٠)
"Know that the life of this world is but amusement and diversion and adornment and boasting to one another and competition in increase of wealth and children – like the example of a rain whose [resulting] plant growth pleases the tillers; then it dries and you see it turned yellow; then it becomes [scattered] debris. And in the Hereafter is severe punishment"(Alhadeed,20, P.552).

Sometimes the yellow color has a pleasant effect on the human soul, and the Holy Qur'an uses it to emphasize this:

{ قالوا ادع لنا ربك يبين لنا ما لونها قال إنه يقول إنها بقرة صفراء فاقع لونها تسر الناظرين } (البقرة: 69):

They said, "Call upon your Lord to show us what is her color. He said, "He says, 'It is a yellow cow, bright in color –pleasing to the observers.'" (AlBaqarah,69,P10)

It appears in Malaysia flag to reflect the loyalty of the people to their king. It appears twice in Arabic states and five times in non-Arabic ones.

The Blue Color: It is one of the seven primary hues seen in the sky, the sea, and the horizon. It is referenced once in the Holy Qur'an to indicate a state of affliction and anguish, near the end of a story about a nation who disbelieved in Allah and resisted Him:

{ ونحشر المجرمين يومئذ زرقاً } (طه: ١٠٢)

"The Day the Horn will be blown. And We will gather the criminals, that Day, blue-eyed" (Taha,102, P.303)

Blue is found in Azerbaijan flag to reflect specific dark period of time in its history. It appears twice in Arabic states and six times in non-Arabic sample.

The Red Color: The color red is not directly mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, with the exception of one terrifying incident, which occurs between the colors white and black.

{ ومن الجبال جدد بيض وحمر مختلف ألوانها وغرابيب سود. } (فاطر: ٢٧)

"And in the mountains are tracts, white and red of varying shades and[some] extremely black" (Fatur,27, P.427)

In the Almighty's words, it was also mentioned in another term to indicate the sky when its gates open for the descent of the angels:

{ فإذا انشقت السماء فكانت وردة كالدهان } (الرحمن: ٣٧)

"And when the heaven is split open and becomes rose-colored like oil" (Al Rahman, 37, p.542)

The hue of the rose is a symbol for the immense fear of the Day of Resurrection. The implied meanings of the different colors in the thirty two flags are exposed in table (2).

5. Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn for study:

1. Islamic national flags are recognized by the signs they bear. These signals might be verbal, non verbal, or both as seen below:
 - a. The written verbal marks on the flags of Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Afghanistan.
 - b. The emblems in Oman, Egypt, Afghanistan, Albania, Iran, Kosovo, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan.
 - c. Many Islamic national flags incorporate the star as a distinguishing feature, i.e., it accounts for half of the total data fraction. Still those stars differ from one flag to the other in the number of points, in colors, in its place on the flag as seen in Jordan, Algeria, Ethiopia, Libya, Morocco, Malaysia, Tunisia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Comoros, Kosovo, Pakistan, Turkey, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan stars.
 - d. The crescent is a defining characteristic of many Islamic country flags. Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, Azerbaijan, Comoros, Brunei, Maldives, Malaysia, Pakistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan all have the crescent symbol on their flags. They account for 38% of total data volume. Those crescents, however, differ from one flag to the next in size, direction, crescent aperture, color, and placement on the flag.
 - e. The flags in the data are colored differently. Six identifiable colors-green, white, black, yellow, blue, and red-have been used in various distributions, i.e. some flags have one, two, three, four, and five colors, but none of them have all six colors. Flags having the same number of colors as those in Jordan, Palestine, the United Arab Emirates, and Sudan are sometimes distinguished by the way they are arranged or by the addition of other signs with them, and the coat of arms.
 - f. Colors on flags have different tinges, so red is not always the same red, and blue is not always the same hue of blue everywhere. Hue means the color is slightly different in terms of lightness or intensity, For example the red color (Al Anabi) in Qatar flag, and the green color in Bangladesh flag.

Thus, the above point validates the First Hypothesis which reads "Each national Islamic flag has its own verbal or/and nonverbal signs that distinguish it from other flags."

2. With a percentage of 81% to 19%, respectively, Non verbal signs are used more frequently than verbal ones because they may convey a lot of information in a limited amount of space, including a country's fundamental values, history, events, and what it stands for. In other words, national flags use nonverbal cues to convey thoughts and information quickly and clearly. By this the second hypothesis which

reads "National Islamic flags depend more on nonverbal signs to reveal their Muslim identity than verbal ones" is validated.

3. Islamic Culture has increasingly dominated over the history and civilization based on the teachings of the Quran as the Islam religion. In reality, the holy Quran has influenced all societal issues and people's lives, including the design of national flags. The Holy Quran is the source of meaning of the verbal and nonverbal signs in the national Islamic flags exemplified by the verbal signs of the almighty Allah and Al-Shahada. The implication of nonverbal signs such as the star, the crescent, and the colors are all taken from the verses of the Holy Quran. This validates the last hypothesis "Meaning of the verbal and nonverbal signs in the national Islamic flag are inspired by the Holy Quran".

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