

## Investigating Color Idioms and their Translation from English into Arabic

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### Abstract

Colors are universal, and throughout the ages, they have been associated with various religious, social and spiritual meanings. They symbolize a galaxy of things to designate certain ideas or symbols that are sometimes contradictory.

The present study is an attempt to investigate colors, their meanings and symbolism, and the approaches to translating color idioms from English into Arabic. It fathoms one of the thorny areas for translation theorists let alone practitioners. Various definitions, classifications of types and symbolism across cultures are provided. After reviewing idioms and methods of translating them, a survey of 114 sentences that include color idioms was conducted to see which method is mostly adopted by professionals. The survey has revealed that, among the methods available for the translator, the most common strategy in translating color idioms from English into Arabic is paraphrase, followed by loan translation. In addition, the equivalent effect principle sought by Nida (1964) would not be achieved and the color element found in the source language is lost in translation, simply because it has neither linguistic nor cultural correspondent equivalent in the target language.

### 1. Introduction

Imagine living in a one-color world where everything is black: we work in black offices, drink black water and eat black bread. What if all things in this wide world are just white? We drink white water, eat white food and have white eyes, hair and hearts. Would we perceive the world and react to things in a different way?

Color conveys meanings either by natural association or by symbolism. Specialists say that the human eye can distinguish a few millions of colors. Therefore, color is so important in the formation of culture across the globe that one cannot imagine himself living in a colorless world. The significance of color is perhaps manifested in Arabic by means of employing an expression where color is involved, that is, “شلونك” (lit. What is your color?) (How are you (doing)?), which is commonly used in daily communication of a number of Arab states.

Colors add more charm and beauty to things. The world without colors would seem gloomy, boring and lacking cheerfulness. They represent the first source of beauty and can be regarded as fruit of the eye. History records color as a silent, and

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in many cases, a universal language that has political, religious, psychological and even ecological overtones. It holds information and transmits messages.

## 2. Color in Language

### 2.1. Color Defined

Color is defined differently depending on the field of knowledge as follows:

**Medical:** the general appearance of the skin; the skin pigmentation of a person not categorized as white. (The American Heritage Medical Dictionary, 2009)

**Legal:** disguise, pretext especially the false appearance of a claim to legal right, authority, or office. (Webster's New World Law Dictionary, 2006)

**Scientific:** the property of reflecting light of a particular wavelength, allowing the eye to distinguish red, orange, yellow, etc.

**Art:** the way of using color, especially to gain a total effect.

**Mining:** a trace of gold found in panning. ([www.yourdictionary.com/color](http://www.yourdictionary.com/color))

**Music:** Quality of tone or timbre

**Military:** a flag or banner, as of a country or military unit; the salute made during the ceremony of raising or lowering a flag. ([www.answers.com/topic/color](http://www.answers.com/topic/color))

The lexical item 'color' is also used to denote a number of things; it refers to a substance, such as a dye or paint, one's opinion or position and character or nature (often in the plural form), as in the idiom "show the true colors".

### 2.2. Color Classification

Colors can be classified depending on the angle from which one looks into various categories. The following is a brief discussion of these categories.

#### 2.2.1. Abstract vs. Descriptive Color Words

Though the distinction is blurry in many cases, abstract words are words that only refer to a color. In English, white, black, red, yellow, green, blue, brown and gray are definitely abstract color words. Obviously, some of their corresponding colors are not so in Arabic. The colors قهوائي or بني which are corresponding equivalents of brown, and رمادي or رمادي of gray are actually not abstract color words in Arabic. As for descriptive color words, they are secondarily used to describe a color but primarily used to refer to an object or a phenomenon that has that color. "Rose", "saffron" and "lilac" are descriptive color words in English because they refer natural colors of rose flowers, infusion of saffron's pistils, and lilac blossoms respectively. Often, a descriptive color word is a hyponym or a superordinate of a basic color term. Moreover, the status of some color words as abstract or descriptive is debatable within the same language, let alone across languages. (See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Color\\_term](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Color_term) ).

### 2.2.2. Basic Colors

Jernudd and White (1983) report that the concept of basic color terms has emerged as a cornerstone of much of the research on color categorization. Berlin and Kay (1969) define them as “those color names which are (a) morphologically simple, (b) not subsets of other terms, (c) not specific to certain objects, and (d) frequently used”. They give three classes of the eleven basic colors:

1. Black, gray, white (achromatic color terms)
2. Red, green, blue, yellow (primary color terms; when mixed in various ways they produce secondary colors.
3. Brown, orange, purple, pink (secondary color terms)

In Arabic, the primary colors according to Khalil (2006) are six: black, white, red, green, yellow and blue. (The last is so confusing that some linguists excluded it, making basic colors five only) “Brown” is a basic color in English but the Arabs did not know it. Instead, they had alternatives for brown: الأسمر والأدكن. The word بني is from بن ‘coffee’. The Arabs also did not know البرتقالي ‘orange’, which is relatively a new comer to the Arabic language.

Moreover, there are also colors of the solar spectrum that are red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. Finally, colors in art have a special classification. They are of three groups: cool colors which are blue, green and violet, warm colors which are three red, yellow and orange, and neutral colors which are black, white and gray.

### 2.3. A Glimpse at Studies of Color

In an extremely influential work, the anthropologists Berlin and Kay (1969) analyzed the appearance of “basic color terms” in different languages. They found that there was a strict hierarchy of color terms that obeys a single set of rules. Thus of a language has only two color terms these are black and white; if a third is added it is always red, and the fourth and fifth will always be green and yellow, although the order varies in different languages. The sixth term is always blue and the seventh always yellow. The reasons for this undisputed consistency of order appearance of color terms are not clear and are yet to be explained. ( See McManus (1983)).

This led Berlin and Kay to argue that color naming is not merely a cultural phenomenon, but is one that is also constrained by biology, that is, language is shaped by perception. This runs contrary to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which theorizes that perception is shaped by language. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/color\\_term](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/color_term) .

Discussing Berlin and Kay's work, Tanner (2001) argues,

**When B&K introduced basic color terms in their 1969 book... a new way of thinking about colors and color terms had begun. The predominant view of linguistic relativity gave way to cross-cultural color universals that could be identified for all languages. The study was widely accepted and it became a landmark which later studies built on.**

It is an undisputed fact that color perception is similar for all people, whereas its interpretation is different among different nations. In this respect, Lindsey (2009) stresses that "though culture can influence how people name colors, inside our brains we're pretty much seeing the world in the same way".

The fact that green is the color of vegetation can be considered a universal and timeless association. Occurrences of colors in nature are universal and timeless. Color may generate another level of meaning in the mind. This symbolism arises from cultural and contemporary contexts. On the other hand, green may also be symbolic of good luck, money, greed- all of which have nothing to do with green plants. Green has other associations in other languages such as fear (French), anger (Thai, Italian), off-color sexual context (Spanish), and nausea (Mandarin Chinese). <http://www.starchamber.com/colors/colors-and-language.html>

As such, it is not universal and may be unrelated to its natural associations. It is worth noting that Berlin and Kay's book has inspired a lot of work on color terms. Though more than 40 years have passed since it was first published, it is still the most influential in the field.

#### **2.4. Color Symbolism and Connotations**

Dealing with color symbolism is of significance in this context simply because idioms, let alone color idioms, reflect more than other language components the cultural as well as the linguistic aspects of a given language. Scholars have long struggled to understand the nature of color, the cultural role it plays in our lives, in universal experience, in art, and as a metaphor for emotions. Understanding the nature of color, however, has proved a daunting task.

Colors can mean extremely different things; this is not because colors themselves have meaning, but because language users have culturally assigned meanings to them. For example, white in Hinduism is a mark of mourning and widows are expected to dress in white in order to show their grief, while red is the traditional bridal dress.

According to Schnyder (2002), Women owe Queen Victoria a lot for giving them the dress code for brides. She was supposedly the first one who married in white. Before that, women wore their most expensive dress. Moreover, white, which many Western and some Eastern cultures consider a symbol of purity and cleanliness, is considered bad luck in China and Japan, where it is the color of death and mourning. However, in Catholic Europe, purple is a symbol of death and

crucifixion. People celebrate Chinese New Year by wearing red clothing and decorating homes with red and gifts of money are traditionally given in red packets. Interestingly enough, Stock-market gains in China and other East Asian countries are displayed in red, while losses are displayed in green. In Russia, red represents beauty and Russian word for beauty is derived from the word 'red' and has the same root. Black is a multi-dimensional color that can mean classic or new. It has the ominous characteristic symbolizing death. Therefore, it is used in Western cultures for funerals. Red is the color of celebration and good luck (China), purity and integrity (India), and mourning (South Africa). Red is also the color of the devil in modern Western culture. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Color\\_psychology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Color_psychology))

Color symbolism is actualized in all walks of life and is seen in almost all fields of knowledge. In the following pages, a brief discussion of the most significant religious, psychological, political, and racial symbolism is given.

#### **2.4.1. Religious**

Colors are heavily charged with meaning and symbolic power. For example, the meaning of yellow in Europe is different from that in Asia. One stands for jealousy (Europe), the other for divine (Asia). Christians think of heaven as white or blue, while in Islam the color green is the color of heaven. In UK cities where Catholic and Protestants have a history of conflict, the use of green (Catholicism) or orange (Protestantism) are seen as almost taboo by opposing socio-religious groups. It follows, then, that colors are employed in very different ways in different color idioms across different languages and cultures. <http://www.starchamber.com/colors/colors-and-language.html>

The Umayyads fought under white banners, the Abbasids chose black, the Fatimids used green, and Ottomans chose red. These four colors dominate the flags of Arab states. The color green has a special place in Islam, and is often used to represent it among other world religions. According to the Glorious Quran, the inhabitants of paradise will wear green garments of fine silk. Regardless of its origins, the color green has been firmly cemented in Islamic culture for centuries. In Asia, orange typically symbolizes Hinduism and Buddhism, but it symbolizes Protestantism, particularly in Ireland (Orange Order). [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Color\\_psychology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Color_psychology). As for blue, many diverse cultures believe that it is significant to keep the bad spirits and misfortune away.

#### **2.4.2. Psychological**

Most evidence suggests the lack of a single, universal psychological reaction to a particular color. For example, death is symbolized by black in most Western as well as Arab cultures and by white in many other Eastern cultures. Red stands for 'stop' traffic lights, 'danger' warning light, 'love' as with Valentine's Day. Therefore, symbolism differs within the same culture for various situations. This is attributed to the fact that color associations, natural and otherwise, arise from a

complex assortment of sources. Although there are no absolutes, there are logical sources for the range of complex and sometimes contradictory psychological and cultural meanings of colors. [www.colormatters.com/symbolism.html](http://www.colormatters.com/symbolism.html)

Furthermore, color may have both positive and negative symbolism. For example, although blue is the beautiful color of the sky on a sunny day, it can be symbolic of sadness as is seen in phrases like ‘singing the blues’. Red is another example of dual symbolism. On the one hand, as the color of fire and blood, it is an energizing, aggressive and bold color. In direct contrast, red is used for “STOP” signs throughout the world today.

To Cathy Lamancusa (2003), color plays a major role in mood associations that determine the way we feel about a product. Researchers have shown that up to 60% of a consumer’s first impression of a product comes from its color.

The best color to wear to an interview is blue, psychologists advise us. Blue is non-threatening, yet confident and stable. Many police uniforms are blue because of this. Thailand considers purple to be the color of mourning. This is not so in Western culture, where purple is the color of royalty and wisdom. Pink is a tranquilizing color and that is why in many prisons, the cells of the most dangerous residents have been painted pink.

One study found that weight lifters have performances that are more powerful in blue rooms. A second study found that babies cry more frequently in yellow rooms, and another used pink to calm prisoners. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Color\\_psychology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Color_psychology)

In addition, white is often associated with cleanliness and sterility .Therefore, doctors wear white to convey these attributes. White is also associated with neutrality- hence a white flag for surrender.

### **2.4.3. Political**

Many colors have gained political connotations and overtones for one reason or another. Orange is symbolic of the Royal family of the Netherlands. Red typically symbolizes conservatism (US politics), Liberalism (Canadian politics), wealth (China), and marriage (India). Certain organizations use color to identify themselves, as is the case with Red Cross, Red Crescent, Green Peace and Green Party.

The color of flags, political parties, royalty, etc. (for example, green is the color of Libya’s flag; it is the source for ‘Green Day’ in Japan, and in the US, the Green Party. Blue can symbolize liberalism (US politics), and conservatism (UK, Canadian &European politics)

Moreover, some colors were used very pragmatically, and the symbolic meaning was added to it later. One reason why so many “older” countries have red and blue in their flags is the fact that neither color faded over time!

#### 2.4.4. Gender and Race

It is noticed that man, throughout history, is targeted by the color effect. During wars, faces were painted to terrify the enemies. Men are tempted by women by putting make-up to influence them. This might reflect a significant idea concerning a man's brain and a woman's brain. Colors and dimensions dominate the former's feelings, while the latter is dominated by language. Perhaps that is why man approaches woman by poetry, whereas woman approaches man by beauty. He loves by his eye, while she loves by her ears. According to Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840), human beings are classified in a five-color typology: white people (the Caucasian or white race), more or less black people (the Ethiopian or black race), yellow people (the Mongolian or yellow race), cinnamon-brown or flame colored people (the American or red race) and brown people (the Malay or brown race). The first major scientific model was introduced in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when Carolus Linnaeus recognized four main races: Europeanus, (white race), Asiatic, (yellow race), Americanus, (red race), and Africanus, (black race). [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Color\\_terminology\\_for\\_race](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Color_terminology_for_race)

The good versus bad dualism associated with white and black provides prejudiced connotations to color metaphors for race. In Western fashion, black is considered reliably stylish. This seems to be for reasons of contrast with the light skin.

Following World War II and the discredit of such racial classification, more and more biologists and anthropologists began to question the concept itself of "race". Thus, *The Race Question* statement by the UNESCO, in the 1950s, proposed to substitute the term "ethnic group" to the concept of "race", arguing that human communities were defined as much by cultural traits (language, religion, etc.) as by biological characteristics.

Interestingly enough, in the 2000 US Census, the white race refers to a "person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa." (ibid)

In America and Europe and, to some extent, in the Arab world, pink is a symbol for girls and blue for boys. While this has prevented boys from wearing pink, it has not prevented girls from wearing blue. In general, girls and women tend to prefer brighter colors and boys and men are more comfortable with muted colors. In addition, Lindsey and Brown (2002) believe that languages spoken near the equator tend to lack separate terms for green and blue because expressive exposure to ultraviolet radiation from sunlight yellows the lenses of people living in this region.

### 3. Translation of Color Terms

It has been mentioned previously that, in spite of the similarities among languages and cultures in interpreting colors due to the shared human experience, differences are always there. Lyons (1981:313) stresses this fact in these words:

**It is a well-known, and undisputed fact that languages differ in the number of basic color-terms that they have. It is also well known that, independently of this fact, word-for word translation of color-terms across languages is frequently impossible because no word in the one corresponds exactly to a word in the other.**

At first sight, it seems quite simple and straightforward to transfer any color term from English into Arabic. A practitioner of translation would disagree with this view.

'Pink' for instance is given four different renditions in four different Arabic dictionaries (الأحمر الوردي). Crimson and scarlet are treated as one color in Arabic, that is, قرمزي. Violet and lilac are rendered into بنفسجي.

There is no magical unified method for rendering color terms and idioms into Arabic.

Sometimes transliteration is adopted, as in, crimson, scarlet beige بييجي قرمزي. khaki (لون أحمر ماروني) كاكبي, كاكبي. At other times, translation couplet is given (داكن)

At still others, translation proper is followed, as in black أسود.

Moreover, sometimes certain colors are used to refer to things that have a different color in reality. For example, neither red hair nor red wine is anything like blood red, nor is white coffee anything like snow white, and is not of course 'white' at all, as the word is normally used. In a nutshell, color naming is not about the ability to discriminate, for all normal people are equally good at discriminating. It is the naming that varies so much.

In the table below, thirteen color words are compared in six different English-Arabic dictionaries.

	Al-Mawrid	Elias' Modern	Al-Rafidain	An-Nafees	Al-Nibras	Oxford Wordpower
beige	بييجي, بلون الصوف الطبيعي	لون الرمل الأسمر أو الصوف	بييجي: بلون الصوف الطبيعي	بييج (مغرب) أسمر فاتح كلون الصوف الخام	بييج (شيء أو لونه)	بييج: لون رملي
brown	اللون الأسمر أو البني	لون أحمر أو أسمر داكن	اللون الأسمر أو البني	اللون البني	بني, أسمر	اللون البني أو الأسمر
crimson	اللون القرمزي	قرمزي اللون	اللون القرمزي	قرمزي	قرمزي, الأحمر القاني	اللون القرمزي
gray	اللون الرمادي	رمادي	اللون الرمادي	رمادي, رصاصي	رمادي	رمادي
khaki	لون أسمر ضارب الى الصفرة	كاكي	Not mentioned	كاكي اللون	كاكي (ضرب من القماش الفارسي أو اللون المتعلق به)	اللون الخاكي أو الكاكي
olive	اللون الزيتوني	بلون الزيتون	اللون الزيتوني	اللون الزيتوني	زيتوني	اخضر مائل الى الصفرة
maroon	لون أحمر داكن	Not mentioned	لون أحمر داكن	لون أحمر داكن	Not mentioned	لون أحمر داكن مائل الى البني
pink	اللون القرنفلي الأحمر الوردي	أحمر وردي	اللون القرنفلي (الأحمر الوردي)	اللون الوردي "بمية" اللون القرنفلي الأحمر الوردي	زهري (شيء في لونه أو اللون ذاك اياه وبالتالي أحمر فاتح	(لون) وردي أو زهري أو بمية

purple	لون الأرجوان	Not mentioned	لون الأرجوان	اللون الأرجواني	ارجواني (شيء في لونه أو اللون ذاك اياه)	اللون الأرجواني
rose	لون وردى	وردى	اللون الوردي	اللون الوردي	لون وردى	Not mentioned
scarlet	اللون القرمزي	بلون القرمز	اللون القرمزي	قرمزي	قرمزي(شيء أو لونه)	اللون القرمزي
turquoise	الفيروزي: لون ازرق مخضر	Not mentioned	الفيروزي: لون أخضر مزرق	فيروزي اللون	تركزاني(شيء أو لونه الازرق)	اللون الفيروزي
violet	اللون البنفسجي	بنفسجي اللون	اللون البنفسجي	اللون البنفسجي	بنفسجي(شيء أو لونه)	لون بنفسجي

From the table above, the following points can be inferred:

1. The first color “beige” is either transliterated into ‘بيج’ (3 times) or ‘بيجي’ (2 times), or is paraphrased (1 time)
2. The second color ‘brown’ is given two different renditions; it is either translated into ‘أسمر’ or ‘بني’, or both by adopting translation couplet.
3. The color ‘crimson’ is rendered into ‘قرمزي’, but either modified by the lexical item ‘color’, that is, ‘اللون القرمزي’ or ‘اللون القرمزي’ or by adopting the translation couplet method, i.e., ‘قرمزي الأحمر القاني’.
4. The color ‘gray’ is almost unanimously rendered into ‘رمادي’, except for one dictionary, where both ‘رمادي’ and ‘رصاصي’ are given.
5. “Khaki” seems to have caused some trouble. It is paraphrased by explanation (once) ‘لون أسمر ضارب الى الصفرة’, transliterated as ‘كاكى’ (3 times), not mentioned at all (once), and translated by means of translation couplet as ‘اللون الخاكي أو الكاكي’.
6. ‘Olive’ is translated into ‘لون الزيتون’ (once), ‘بلون الزيتون’ (once), ‘اللون الزيتوني’ (three times) and ‘أخضر بلون الزيتون’ (once).
7. Two methods are adopted in rendering ‘maroon’, that is, ‘لون أحمر داكن’ (4 times) and was dropped (twice).
8. “Pink” does not seem to be easy to deal with. It is either ‘أحمر وردى’, ‘اللون القرنفلي’, ‘بمية’, or ‘أحمر فاتح’, ‘زهري اللون الوردي’.
9. Five dictionaries render ‘purple’ as ‘لون الأرجواني’ or ‘لون الأرجوان’, whereas one does not mention the color word at all.
10. Also five dictionaries render ‘rose’ as either ‘اللون الوردي’ or ‘وردى’, except for the last dictionary on the table, where the color term is not mentioned.
11. All of the six dictionaries consulted agree on ‘قرمزي’ as an equivalent for ‘scarlet’. However, they express this differently: ‘اللون القرمزي’, ‘بلون القرمز’, ‘قرمزي’.
12. Four dictionaries translate ‘turquoise’ into ‘فيروزي’, one did not mention it, and one transliterate it as ‘تركزاني’ with explanation.
13. All of the six dictionaries agree on ‘بنفسجي’ as an equivalent for ‘violet’, but this unanimity is expressed in various ways as, ‘لون بنفسجي’ or ‘بنفسجي اللون’.

## 4. Translation of Idioms

### 4.1. Idiom defined

Many translation problems cause translators headache. Idioms are surely one of these problems. An idiom is a multiword expression with a fixed meaning that cannot be derived from its constituting parts. It is one of the most frequently used

means of non-literal language. According to Baker (1992:63), an idiom is “a linguistic pattern, which often carries meaning which cannot be deduced from its individual components.” On their part, Beekman and Callow (1974:121) define it as “at least two words which cannot be understood literally and which function as a unit semantically.”

A language user cannot usually manipulate with an idiom, which is often fixed and resists variation in form. Makkai (1972:122) proposes four criteria for identifying idioms:

1. The term ‘idiom’ is a unit realized by at least two words.
2. The meaning of an idiom is not predictable from its component parts. However, some idioms are more transparent than others are.
3. Idioms display a high degree of disinformation potential. Their component parts are polysemous and therefore can be misunderstood by the language user. Here, the context is indispensable for interpretation and understanding. For example, ‘red tape’ if taken literally would mean ‘a tape whose color is red’.
4. Idioms are conventionalized expressions that have been re-used so many times in certain language situations.

Chen (2009) is of the opinion that idioms are usually culture-loaded expressions. In some sense, they are the reflection of the cultural concepts of certain social community and they embody the cultural properties of languages in the most concentrated and profound manner. Thus, idioms can be regarded as linguistic products of cultures, and they are either restricted by or unique to a particular culture.

The difference between the mentality of the source language and the target language will be reflected in the way of expression. This is especially felt in the translation of color idioms because color idioms are inherently culture-specific.

#### **4.2. Strategies of translating idioms**

Idioms are considered one of the hardest and most interesting parts of the English vocabulary. They are often culture-bound, which usually cause even greater problems for the translator. Therefore, in order to transfer a source idiom into the target language the translator must choose the most appropriate strategy.

Straksiene (2009) mentions that in translating idioms the translator encounters various difficulties that are not so easy to overcome. The main problem is the lack of equivalence on the idiom level. It would be perfect if a translator could find an idiom in the target language that was the same in its form and meaning as that of the source language. However, even though each language has its idioms, it is still hard to find the exact equivalent.

In a study on translating dubbed children’s cartoons, Zitawi (2003) suggests six strategies for rendering idiomatic expressions, namely: a. dynamic translation, b. naturalization, c. localization, d. addition, e. deletion and f. word-for-word. There seems to be a confusion and interference among these strategies.

In a study of the translation of idioms into Arabic, Abu-Ssaydeh (2004) gives an analysis which reveals that “statistically, the most common strategy applied is paraphrasing(1), followed closely by literal translations and semantic equivalence, with omission, compensation and other strategies being of significantly less importance.” Moreover, “Literal translation has allowed certain English idioms to become part of Arabic lexis.”(2)

Idioms and culture are inseparable, for they share an organic relation with the culture from which they spring. Because they are culture-bound, word-for-word translation mostly leads to funny and meaningless translations. Partly for this reason, an idiomatic translation is usually considered the best kind of translation as, if well done, it comes across as the way a native speaker would talk or write. Nevertheless, it is very difficult for an English into Arabic translator to achieve equivalent effect. It is very seldom that an idiom in one language like English can be appropriately translated by an equivalent idiom in another language, like Arabic. Communicative translation (in Newmark’s(1988) terms ) rather than semantic translation seems to be the appropriate method for rendering color idioms. <http://london-translations.co.uk/Idioms>

The main problems that idiomatic expressions pose in translation relate to two main areas: the ability to recognize and interpret an idiom correctly; and the difficulties involved in rendering the various aspects of meaning that an idiom conveys into the TL.

In discussing the translation strategies of idioms, Baker (1992:72-78) suggests four strategies:

1. Using an idiom of similar meaning and form
2. Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form
3. Translation by paraphrase
4. Translation by omission

It is worth mentioning that context is a decisive factor in determining the meaning of a color idiom, in fact of any idiom. In English, the sentence ‘He is green’ can mean, a. He is inexperienced, b. He is envious, c. he is environmentally aware. The color idiom ‘black out’ means, in different contexts, a. loss of electricity, b. censorship, c. loss of memory. A group of people wearing black might be the crowd at a gallery opening, priests, ninjas, women from the Gulf States, mourners or a mime troupe. Therefore, in the survey below, some idioms are used in sentences with certain meanings but not necessarily the only meaning. They might have other meanings in other contexts.

## **5. Translation of Color Idioms**

Since colors mirror the culture and customs of language users, one would expect to find dissimilarities among these cultures. We know that there is a big cultural gap between Arabic and English. Accordingly, discrepancies are quite expected.

In this section, the strategies suggested by Baker (1992) will be taken as a model to follow. The reason for adopting this model for translating idioms is that the researcher has found that it is the most suitable among the models discussed for translating color idioms. However, after reading and analyzing the translation of 114 sentences, the researcher found out that two additional strategies, namely, (5) **loan translation** and (6) **translation couplet**, were employed by the translators, which makes the total number of the strategies six.

In the following section, an attempt is made to translate the most common abstract color idioms of English. The reason why those colors were selected is that they constitute the backbone of color idioms in English, for they include the most frequently employed color idioms. The selection was also because those colors are frequently used in Arabic as well. The 114 sentences are selected from monolingual and bilingual dictionaries in addition to the internet. Four professional translators and academicians who have a good experience in the field translated them.

#### A Survey of English Abstract Color Idioms with Translated Examples and the Strategy Adopted in Translation.

No	Abstract Color Idiom	Example	translation	No. of strategy adopted
1	Black box	They could not determine why the plane crashed until the <b>black box</b> was recovered.	لم يستطيعوا تحديد السبب وراء اصطدام الطائرة حتى استرجاع الصندوق الأسود	5
2	Black comedy	Hollywood often produces <b>black comedy</b> movies.	عادة ما تنتج هوليوود أفلام الكوميديا السوداء	5
3	Black day	This is a <b>black day</b> for the peace process.	إنما هذا يوم اسود في تاريخ عملية السلام	5
4	Black list	The writer was put on the <b>black list</b> for criticizing the government.	وضع الكاتب في القائمة السوداء لانتقاده الحكومة	5
5	Black market	He was arrested for selling rice on the <b>black market</b> .	القي القبض عليه لبيعه الرز في السوق السوداء	5
6	Black sheep	His youngest brother was the <b>black sheep</b> of the family. He dropped out of school at fifteen.	كان أخوه الأكبر شادا عن بقية أفراد العائلة فقد ترك المدرسة في الخامسة عشرة من عمره	3
7	Black eye	The man received a <b>black eye</b> when he bumped into the door	لحق بعين الرجل أذى عندما ارتطم بالباب	3
8	Black death	The <b>black death</b> caused the death of hundreds of thousands of people in the 14 <sup>th</sup> century.	سبب الطاعون الموت لمئات الآلاف من الأشخاص في القرن الرابع عشر	3
9	Black tie	Dress for the wedding is strictly <b>black tie</b> .	على حضور حفل الزفاف أن يرتدوا ملابس سهرة رسمية	3
10	Black hole	A <b>black hole</b> is a region in the outer space from which no radiation can escape.	الثقب الأسود هي منطقة من مناطق الفضاء الخارجي لا ينفذ من خلالها أي إشعاع	5
11	Black Maria	The prisoners were taken to prison by <b>Black Maria</b>	اقتيد السجناء إلى السجن بعربات مصفحة	3
12	Black mark	The public scandal left a <b>black mark</b> on his record.	تركزت الفضيحة العلنية نقطة سوداء في سجله	5

13	Black spot	This is a notorious <b>black spot</b> where car accidents often happen.	هذه منطقة حمراء سيئة الصيت عادة ما تقع عندها حوادث الطرق	2
14	Black heart	<b>Black heart</b> is a kind of cherry.	البلاك هارت (القلب الأسود) نوع من أنواع الثوت البري	6
15	Black hearted	Her boss is a <b>black hearted man</b>	رئيسها في العمل صاحب قلب اسود	1
16	Black and blue	After the fight, they were both <b>black and blue</b> .	بعد الشجار بدا الأذى على كليهما	3
17	Black art	She was taken to prison for practicing <b>black art</b> .	أرسلت إلى السجن لممارستها السحر	3
18	Black and white	It is plain as <b>black and white</b> .	الأمر واضح وضوح الشمس	2
19	In the black	He earns three thousand Dinars a month. He is always <b>in the black</b> .	يكسب ثلاثة آلاف دينار شهريا وهو دوما في غنج من العيش	2
20	Black cloud	He always looks like there is a <b>black cloud</b> hanging over him.	يبدو دائم القلق	3
21	Black leg	They could keep the factory open only by using <b>blacklegs</b>	يمكنهم إدامة العمل في المصنع باستئجار عمال بأجور رخيصة	3
22	Black look	He gave her a <b>black look</b> .	رمقها بنظرة احتقار	3
23	Black coffee	Do you want white or <b>black coffee</b> ?	أترغب بنفجان قهوة لوحدها أم بالحليب؟	3
24	Black belt	He got the <b>black belt</b> in Karate.	حصل على الحزام الأسود في الكاراتيه	5
25	Black dog	My psychiatrist claims he never had a <b>black dog day</b>	يزعم طبيبي النفسي انه لم يمر بيوم اسود في حياته	5
26	Black Thursday	"The Great Depression" began on <b>Black Thursday</b> .	الخميس الأسود كان بداية الكساد الكبير	5
27	Blue	Try to cheer her up. She is feeling <b>blue</b> these days	حاول أن تسعدها، فهي تشعر بالاكئاب هذه الأيام.	3
28	Blue chip	Even though the stock market fell sharply, the <b>blue chip</b> stocks held their values.	بالرغم من الانخفاض الحاد في سوق الأوراق المالية، فقد حافظت الأسهم الراقحة على قيمتها.	3
29	Blue in the face	After the breakup with her fiancé, she was really <b>blue in the face</b> .	كان الحزن واضحا على وجهها بعد أن انفصلت عن خطيبها.	3
30	Blue bloods	Many of the <b>blue bloods</b> of the town went to the opening of the opera.	الكثير من نخبة البلدة حضروا افتتاح الأوبرا.	3
31	Blue book	It was a nice wedding; everyone invited was in the <b>blue book</b> .	لقد كان زفافا جميلا حقا وجميع من حضره كان من الشخصيات المهمة.	3
32	Blue collar	The recession has hit <b>blue-collar</b> workers much harder than civil servants.	اثر الركود الاقتصادي على العمال أكثر من الموظفين.	4
33	Blue funk	She was in a <b>blue funk</b> after she lost her job.	كانت تشعر بالقلق والتوتر بعد أن فقدت وظيفتها.	3
34	Blue law	He could not buy beer in town because of its <b>blue laws</b> .	لم يتمكن من شراء الجعة بسبب قوانين البلدة الصارمة بهذا الشأن.	3
35	Blue Monday	I can say that my day was a <b>blue Monday</b> .	لقد كان يومي كئيبا.	3
36	Blue moon	My brother only rings home once in a <b>blue moon</b> .	نادرا ما يأتي أخى إلى البيت.	3
37	Blue movie	He caught his son watching a <b>blue movie</b> .	مسك ابنه وهو يشاهد فلما اباحيا.	3
38	Blue nose	She does not dance, sing, or have any fun; she is a real <b>blue nose</b> .	هي لا ترقص ولا تغنى ولا تمرح فهي متعالية جدا.	3
39	Blue ribbon	She won a <b>blue ribbon</b> for her apple pie.	فازت بجائزة أحسن فطيرة تفاح.	3

40	Blue streak	When I asked her about her husband, she talked a <b>blue steak</b> .	عندما سألتها عن زوجها تكلمت عنه بسوء.	3
41	Blue pencil	As soon as you <b>blue pencil</b> the draft I will take it over for typing.	عندما تنتهي من كتابة النسخة الأخيرة سأقوم بطباعتها.	3
42	Out of the blue	The news of the factory's closing come <b>out of the blue</b> . No one was expecting it.	كان خبر إغلاق المصنع مفاجأة للجميع، فلم يكن احد يتوقع ذلك	3
43	Blue joke	He does not like <b>blue jokes</b> .	هو لا يحب النكات البذيئة.	3
44	true blue	One nice thing about dogs is that they make <b>true blue</b> companies.	الوفاء صفة جميلة تتمتع بها الكلاب.	3
45	Brown shirts	They will do anything to further their cause; they are <b>brown shirts</b> .	سيفعلون أي شيء لإنجاح قضيتهم فهم متعصبون لها.	
46	Brown-out	Because of the heat wave, the electrical company initiated a series of <b>brownouts</b> .	بسبب موجة الحر فقد بدأت شركة الكهرباء بتخفيض الطاقة المجهزة بشكل مبرمج.	3
47	Brown nose	He is a real <b>brown nose</b> . He just wants to please his boss.	انه متملق حقاً، فكل مايفكر به هو إرضاء رئيسه بالعمل فقط.	3
48	Brown study	The details of the two companies merger required a <b>brown study</b> .	تحتاج تفاصيل دمج الشركتين إلى دراسة متأنية.	3
49	Gray beard	He is a <b>gray beard</b> now.	انه كبير في السن الآن.	3
50	Gray matter	You can figure out the problem if you just use your <b>gray matter</b> .	تستطيع أن تحدد المشكلة إذا استخدمت ذكائك.	3
51	Gray-dated	His idea about freedom is <b>gray</b> . He is definitely living in the Middle Ages.	فكرته عن الحرية قديمة فهو يعيش في القرون الوسطى.	3
52	Gray area	The issue of the tax on children's toys was a <b>gray area</b> for the accountant.	إن مسألة الضريبة على ألعاب الأطفال غير واضحة بالنسبة للمحاسب.	3
53	Gray mood	Do not talk with him now; he is in a <b>gray mood</b> .	لا تتحدث معه لان مزاجه سيء.	3
54	Green with envy	I was <b>green with envy</b> when I heard that he would go to London for six months.	كانت الغيرة تنهشني عندما سمعت انه سيذهب إلى لندن لسته أشهر.	3
55	Green light	The manager gave me the <b>green light</b> on the project.	أعطاني المدير الضوء الأخضر (الموافقة) لبدء المشروع.	6
56	Green belt	The city has a policy of increasing the <b>green belt</b> around the city.	للمدينة سياسة قائمة على توسيع الحزام الأخضر حول المدينة.	5
57	Green memories	She had <b>green memories</b> of the trip.	مازالت ذكريات الرحلة عالقة في ذاكرتها.	3
58	Green horn	The young man was a <b>green horn</b> and he had much to learn about his job.	كان الشاب قليل الخبرة وبحاجة لتعلم الكثير عن عمله.	3
59	Green fingers (thumb)	Mother has <b>green fingers</b> .	لوالدي مهارة في البستنة.	3
60	Green-eyed monster	The <b>green-eyed monster</b> consumed the woman and it was affecting her life.	استحوذت الغيرة على المرأة مما أثر في حياتها.	3
61	Turn green	He suddenly <b>turned green</b> and was about to faint.	اصفر وجهه فجأة وكان على وشك الإغماء.	3
62	Red carpet	He is an important customer. Make sure to roll the <b>red carpet</b> .	انه زبون مهم. احرص على أن يتلقى اهتماما خاصا.	3
63	Red cent	Frankly, I would not give one <b>red cent</b> for her opinion.	بصراحة، لن أدفع فلسا واحدا لقاء آراءه ( إن آراءه لا تساوي شيئا)	6
64	Red eye	We caught the <b>red-eye</b> flight and we are very tired today.	ركبنا طائرة المساء المتأخرة لذا نشعر بالتعب الشديد هذا اليوم.	3

65	Red-faced	I was <b>red-faced</b> when I found out she was married.	شعرت بالإحراج عندما اكتشفت أنها متزوجة.	3
66	Red flag	The fallen trees along the road raised a <b>red flag</b> for the public safety inspectors.	كانت الأشجار الهاوية على الطريق قد دقت ناقوس الخطر لمراقبي السلامة العامة.	3
67	Red-handed	The manager caught the new employee <b>red-handed</b> taking money out of the box.	ضبط المدير الموظف الجديد متلبسا وهو يأخذ النقود من الصندوق.	3
68	Red hot	That information about the relationship between them is <b>red hot</b> .	هذه المعلومات حول العلاقة بينهما جديدة ومثيرة.	3
69	Red light	She was very upset when her vacation requests got a <b>red light</b> .	أصببت بالانزعاج عندما واجه طلبها للإجازة الرفض.	3
70	Red neck	Our new co-worker is a real <b>redneck</b> . He does not seem to know anything about life.	زميلنا الجديد في العمل بليد فعلا. إذ يبدو أنه لا يعرف عن الحياة شيئا	3
71	Red tag sale	We must go to the mall this weekend. They have a great <b>red tag sale</b> .	علينا الذهاب إلى السوق المركزي نهاية هذا الأسبوع هناك تخفيضات هائلة.	3
72	Red tape	I want to start a new business but the <b>red tape</b> involved is very frustrating.	أريد أن أبدأ في مشروع جديد. لكن روتين المعاملات يبعث على الإحباط	3
73	Red herring	The manager brings up some <b>red herring</b> every time the budget is to be discussed.	يُفحم المدير مواضع جانبية في كل مرة تناقش فيه الموازنة.	3
74	Red letter day	The day they got married was truly a <b>red-letter day</b> .	كان اليوم الذي تزوجا فيه يوما مشهودا حقا.	3
75	Red light district	The guys wanted some excitement so they went to the <b>red light district</b> .	أراد الأصحاب الحصول على بعض الإثارة فتوجهوا إلى الماخور.	3
76	Red card	The accountant was shown the <b>red card</b> for hiding company money.	صُرف المحاسب من عمله لإخفاء أموال الشركة.	3
77	Red planet	No trace of water has yet been discovered on the <b>red planet</b> .	لم يُكتشف اثر للماء حتى الآن على الكوكب الأحمر ( المريخ )	6
78	Red Cross	Her uncle works in the <b>Red Cross</b>	يعمل خالها (عمها) في الصليب الأحمر.	5
79	Red Crescent	<b>Red Crescent</b> is an international organization.	الهلال الأحمر منظمة دولية.	5
80	In the red	The company has been <b>in the red</b> for three years now.	الشركة مدينة منذ ثلاث سنوات خلت.	3
81	See red	The stockholders were <b>seeing red</b> over the company's losses.	كان حملة الأسهم غاضبين بسبب خسائر الشركة.	3
82	Paint the town red	When my cousin came to visit us, we decided to go out and <b>paint the town red</b> .	عندما جاء قريبي لزيارتنا قررنا الخروج والاحتفال .	3
83	White as sheet	After the robbery, they were as <b>white as a sheet</b> .	بدا عليهم الارتياح بعد السرقة.	3
84	White collar	The recession has hit factory workers much harder than <b>white-collar</b> workers.	كان أثر الركود في الطبقة العاملة أشد منه على الموظفين.	3
85	White elephant	The harp that he bought is a <b>white elephant</b> for he does not know how to play.	ان القيثارة التي اشترها بلا نفع فهو لا يعرف العزف عليها.	3
86	White flag	After the last charge, the defending troops had to show the <b>white flag</b> .	بعد الهجوم الأخير. كان على القوات المدافعة رفع الراية البيضاء (راية الاستسلام).	6
87	White hot	When the negotiators started to discuss salaries, the talks became <b>white hot</b> .	احتدم النقاش عندما بدأ المفاوضون مناقشة الرواتب.	3

88	White lie	When he told her she looked 'very beautiful', it was a <b>white lie</b> .	عندما أخبرها أنها غاية في الجمال, كانت مجرد <b>كذبة بيضاء</b> .	5
89	White-tie	I attended a <b>white-tie</b> dinner in honor of the president of the university.	حضرت حفل عشاء رسمي على شرف رئيس الجامعة.	3
90	Whitewash	The government was accused of trying to <b>whitewash</b> the scandal about the illegal money.	أتهمت الحكومة بمحاولة التغطية على فضيحة الأموال غير المشروعة.	3
91	white sale	We needed new sheets but decided to wait for the <b>white sale</b> .	كنا بحاجة لبعض الأغطية لكننا قررنا التريث حتى موسم تنزيمات على البياضات.	3
92	White Christmas	We have not seen a <b>white Christmas</b> for years.	لم نشهد تساقط الثلوج في عيد الميلاد منذ سنين.	3
93	Yellow race	People living in Mongolia, China and Tibet belong to the <b>yellow race</b> .	تنتمي شعوب الصين ومنغوليا والتبت للعرق الأصفر.	5
94	Yellow press	The newspaper was well-known for its <b>yellow press</b> .	كانت الجريدة معروفة بصحافتها الصفراء (بمبالغتها).	6
95	Yellow light	When he began to present the budget, he got a <b>yellow light</b> from the looks on their faces.	حينما بدأ يعرض الميزانية شعر بنظرات الاستهزاء على وجوههم.	3
96	Yellow Peril	If the Americans do not keep up their defenses in the Pacific, they will be flooded by the <b>Yellow Peril</b> .	إذا لم يحافظ الأمريكيون على دفاعاتهم في المحيط الهادئ فسوف يجتاحهم الخطر/ الطوفان الأصفر	6
97	Yellow streak	He should have confronted her, but he has a <b>yellow streak down his back</b>	كان عليه أن يواجهها , غير انه لا يجرو على ذلك.	3
98	Yellow-bellied	He is <b>yellow-bellied</b> and is never willing to fight for what is right.	انه جبان/ خائف ولم تكن لديه الرغبة في الدفاع عن الحق.	6
99	Yellow fever	The whole area was infected with <b>yellow fever</b> .	لقد تعرضت المنطقة برمتها إلى العدوى بالحمى الصفراء	5
100	yellow	Go ahead and jump, or are you <b>yellow</b> ?	تقدم واقفز, أم انك خائف؟	3
101	With flying colors	My friend passed the course with <b>flying colors</b> .	اجتاز صديقي المساق بعلامات باهرة.	3
102	Off color	He was known for telling <b>off-color jokes</b> .	كان معروفاً بنكاتاته السمجية.	2
103	Colorless	Nothing he said stands in my memory. I am afraid he is a dull, <b>colorless</b> man.	لا شيء مما قاله علق في ذاكرتي. أخشى أن يكون رجلاً بليداً ومملاً.	3
104	Horse of a different color	I was talking about trees, not bushes. Bushes are a <b>horse of a different color</b> .	كنت أتحدث عن الأشجار لا الشجيرات. فالشجيرات مسألة أخرى.	3
105	Show one's true colors	It is hard to tell way she is thinking. She never <b>shows her true colors</b> .	من الصعب أن نعرف كيف تفكر. فهي لا تفصح عما يجول في خاطرها.	3
106	Colored report	I read the government's highly <b>colored report</b> on the state of the great health services.	قرأت تقرير الحكومة المتحيز بشأن الوضع الممتاز للخدمات الصحية.	3
107	Sail under false colors	The ship, <b>sailing under false colors</b> , suddenly started to pursue our ship.	إن السفينة التي تبحر بهوية مزيفة بدأت بشكل مفاجئ التعرض لسفينتنا.	3
108	Person of color	As a <b>person of color</b> , he felt threatened by the racist jokes that my coworker told.	لكونه شخصاً ملوناً (زنجي مثلاً), شعر بالتهديد بالنكت العنصرية التي قالها زميلي في العمل.	6
109	Call to the colors	All young men were <b>called to the colors</b> .	دُعي جميع الرجال الشباب إلى الخدمة العسكرية.	3
110	Rose-Colored glasses (spectacles)	She is nostalgic for a past that she sees through <b>rose-colored glasses</b> .	إنها تواقفة بشغف إلى الماضي الذي تراه أجمل مما هو عليه في الواقع.	3

111	Lend color to something	The excellent master of ceremonies will <b>lend color</b> to an otherwise dry panel discussion.	إن عريف الحفل الممتاز سيضيف رونقا إلى حفلة لولاه لكانت مجرد مناقشة عامة.	3
112	See the color of someone's money	I want to <b>see the color of your money</b> before we go any further with this business deal.	أريد أن أتأكد أن لديك ما يكفي من المال قبل المضي بهذه الصفقة.	3
113	True color	When he lost his temper at his wife, I began to see his <b>true colors</b> .	عندما فقد أعصابه مع زوجته, بدأت أرى معدنه الحقيقي.	2
114	Riot of colors	The landscape was a <b>riot of color</b> each autumn.	كان المنظر ينم عن تشكيلة واسعة من الألوان.	3

From the table above it is obvious that the overwhelming majority of the sentences cited are rendered by means of paraphrase. Out of (114) color terms, (82), which constitutes 71, 90%, were translated by paraphrasing, (16), which constitutes 14%, by loan translation and (9), which represents 7, 90%, by adopting translation couplet. Only five sentence were translated by adopting the second strategy, that is, using an idiom of a different form but similar content, which approximately represents 4,4%. The first (using an idiom of similar structural form and semantic content) and the fourth (omission) strategies were resorted to only once each. They both represent only 1,8% . Obviously, the general tendency in the translations adopted here is TL- oriented (communicative translation), that is, the translator's main concern is to satisfy the TL reader even if this would be at the expense of the stylistic features of the SL text. In addition, it seems that there is no problem on the part of the translators in producing foreign features to the translated text (by means of loan translation) (3). This would be in conformity with Toury (1995:65), who opines that adequate translations might implicate some departure from the TL norms since sticking to them would entail "shifts from the source text."

## 6. Concluding Remarks

Meaning does not exist in the color itself but in what language users agree to attach to a certain idiom. The recognition and interpretation of color are determined by many factors: cultural, religious, biological, and psychological. However, the messages conveyed by colors often go beyond ethnic, racial, or gender boundaries. The human eye can discern the differences among a galaxy of colors but even the most advanced languages contain no more than twelve basic color words. English has eleven basic color terms while Modern Standard Arabic has just six.

Having studied color idioms and their place in language, one can notice that a considerable number of them are in fact instances of metonymy that are hard to translate because they are culture-bound. Therefore, the most frequently employed method in dealing with color idioms, according to the survey, is paraphrasing. This is the most feasible solution, although it usually results in a less forceful translation (an instance of undertranslation where the level of the target language text is lower

than that of the original). In addition, the problem with paraphrasing is that color, linguistically and symbolically, is completely lost. Loan translation, if digested by the target language users, would also be an appropriate alternative. The third method employed is translation couplet that seeks securing full understanding on the part of the reader.

### Notes

1. There are plenty of terms used to refer to translation by paraphrase: ‘metaphor into non-metaphor’ (Toury, 1995:82), ‘communicative paraphrase’ (Hervey and Higgins, 1992:32), ‘reducing a metaphor to sense’ (Newmark, 1988:109).
2. Instead of the loose term ‘free translation’, the researcher would rather use the well-established terms in translation studies, namely, calque or loan translation.
3. It is worth noting that the researcher is not against loan translation. On the contrary, they may represent a means of language enrichment that would help in coping with the world today. However, this does not mean open borrowing from foreign languages.

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## تقصي اصطلاحات الألوان وترجمتها من الإنجليزية الى العربية

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### الخلاصة:

الألوان عالمية الطابع واقتترنت عبر العصور بمختلف المعاني الدينية والاجتماعية والروحية. فهي ن المسائل التي تصف أفكارا ورموزا بعينها تكون متناقضة احيانا. تسعى هذه الدراسة الى تقصي الألوان ومعانيها ورمزيتها وطرق ترجمة اصطلاحات الألوان من الإنجليزية الى العربية. وتسبر غور حقل من الحقول الشائكة سواء لمنظري الترجمة أم لمحترفيها. وقدمت تعريفات وتصانيف لأنواعها ورمزيتها عبر الثقافات المختلفة. وبعد استعراض الاصطلاحات وطرائق ترجمتها , اصطلاحا لونيا وهي الأكثر شيوعا في الإنجليزية. هي الأكثر استخداما لدى المترجمين. وأظهر المسح أنه من بين الطرائق المتاحة للمترجم , كانت الترجمة التفسيرية (paraphrase) هي الأكثر شيوعا في ترجمة اصطلاحات الألوان من الإنجليزية الى العربية. وتلتها ترجمة الاقتراض ( loan translation). علاوة على ذلك, فإن مبدأ التأثير المكافيء (equivalent effect principle) الذي سعى Nida الى تحقيقه لن يتحقق وأن عنصر اللون الموجود في النص الأصلي سيختفي في الترجمة وذلك لأنه يفتقر الى المكافيء اللغوي والثقافي المناظر في اللغة المترجم اليها.