

Color Connotations in Two Cultures; the Arabic and American Culture-A Contrastive Study

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Abstract

Every color has many different meanings in different cultures. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to study the different meanings for the same color in two different cultures; the Arabic culture and the American culture. It is very important to understand what the impact of communication and color use. The researchers will focus on the use of colors in connotations. Consequently, the data will be collected by using dictionaries. In addition, the researchers will test the understanding of the associations of the selected colors. Therefore, there will be two questionnaires; the first one will be written for Jordanian students who are specialized in the English language, however, the second will test the understanding of American students who are studying Arabic at the language center at the University of Jordan for the meanings of colors in the Arabic culture. Finally, the researchers will discuss the results with providing some recommendations.

Keywords: Color, Connotation, Arabic culture, American culture

1. Introduction

Color terms play a very important role in human communication by describing things, expressing words' meanings, strengthening languages' influence and appearing as a universal character. According to Rasekh and Ghafel (2011), colors terms do not express the colors themselves, but also they are endowed with the cultural characteristics of each nation. Within the same culture, colors may also stand for different things in different contexts, and have been subject to change over the years. For example; at European royal courts the traditional color of aristocracy was the purple for its rareness in nature and its high price. But then the blue color took the place of the purple to stand for the aristocracy people in the middle ages. In addition, white can stand for two different things; as a religious symbol which reflects purity, joy and glory; however, a white flag can stand for surrender during times of war.

Color connotation cannot be translated if the two languages have different symbols because when a color is translated into another language “can take on an entirely different meaning.” (Dilloway 2006: 4), for instance; describing that someone is in blue in English means that he feels sad or depressed, but in Germany to be blue means to be drunk. However, in Arabic the enemy who is described as blue is considered as someone who is very tricky. Therefore, meanings of colors need to be taught for students who study more than one language or culture. As Lyons is cited in Mamshag (1999:3) “now it is a well-established fact that word-for word translation of color terms across languages is frequently impossible”. Green is connected with different cultures in different ways; Islam uses the green flag as a symbol for its ideology, however, China uses the Green as a symbol for betrayal; “If a wife betrays her husband, he is said to wear a green hat.” (Horizonti 2006: 114) Also, Horizonti (2006: 114) clarifies that the green color in Ireland is a symbol for luck and that in Japan and Vietnam there is no separate word denoting the color 'green'. In addition, he modifies that recently business communications tend to focus on the cultural color meaning in their ads and products.

Hasan et al. (2011) study the use of colors in the Arabic culture and the English. They focus on the etymological meaning of six color terms. Also, they provide different three meanings; basic meaning, extended meaning and additional meaning. They conclude that the extension of colors is stimulate by the people`s own understanding of their experiences.

Al- Adaileh (2012) investigates the X-phemistic uses of Jordanian Arabic color terms. The connotations of Arabic color terms are judged on the basis of whether the color expressions are orthophemistic, euphemistic, or dysphemistic. He concludes that colours have many orthophemistic connotations, and that dysphemistic connotations of the colors under study are more common than euphemistic connotations.

Mamshag (1999:58) modifies that the gap between the American culture and the Arabic is wide; therefore, translating English idiomatic expressions into Arabic is very difficult. Her conclusion can prove the huge differences between the two cultures. Her study is about translation from English to Arabic; it is not concerned with similarities and differences between the cultures and the reflected knowledge by the people of both cultures.

2. Objectives of the Study

The color systems of Arabic and English are not identical. Consequently, this study will investigate the similarities and dissimilarities with respect to the connotations of these basic color terms (white, red, yellow, black, and blue) in Arabic and English. Therefore, it aims to answer these questions:

- Are there any similarities between the Arabic Culture and the American culture in the meaning of colors?
- Can the Jordanian Students who are studying the English language at the University of Jordan interpret the meanings of the colors that are used in the American Culture correctly?
- Can the American Students who are studying the Arabic language at the University of Jordan interpret the meanings of the colors that are used in the Arabic Culture correctly?
- What are the problems that challenge students in order to get the meaning of the color?

This paper proceeds as follows. Section 4 focuses on studying the meaning and connotation of the selected colors (white, red, yellow, black, and blue) in Arabic. Then, section 5 studies the meaning and connotation of the same selected colors in English. After that, section 6 is the methodology and then section seven which investigates the results of the two questionnaires; the first one is given to Jordanian students (N:15) who are studying at the University of Jordan for the M.A degree in Linguistics. This questionnaire examines the knowledge of these students for the English connotations of the selected colors. Also, this section examines the second questionnaire which is given to American students (N: 6) at the university of Jordan who are studying the Arabic language as a second language. Therefore, the second questionnaire will examine the knowledge of the selected American Students for the Arabic connotations of the selected colors. Finally, the paper ends with comparing the two cultures` percentage and some of the possible problems that face learners.

3. Meaning and Connotation of Colors in Arabic Culture

The researchers study the meanings and the connotations of most commonly used colors in the Arabic culture namely white, red, yellow, black, and blue. For the objectives of the study which examines the colors connotation in Arabic and English.

White:

White symbolizes purity and innocent, harmless, and evil-free issues. Also, it is associated with clouds, snow and wedding. In Islam, people use to dress white dresses during their pilgrimage as a sign for purity. Also, white symbolizes for death (the white coffin) and surrounding (the white flag). Therefore, these are some examples of the connotations of the white color;

- `alyad `albda?

Hand white

‘white hand’

It symbolizes someone who is generous, kind and humanitarian.

- al-galb `albda

heart white

‘white heart’

It symbolizes someone who has a pure heart which is honest and giving.

- naharak abyadʕ

day white

‘white day’

It indicates the abstract positive meaning of good, worthy and fine day.

- al-ḥamamah al-baydʕ?

Dove white

‘white dove’

It is associated with peace.

- ʕeinuh beidʕa

his eye white

‘his eye is white’

It is used to describe someone who lost sight.

- `al-ardʕ `al-baydʕ?

land white

‘a white land’

It symbolizes the unplanted land.

- `aḥḥawrah `al-baydʕ

revolution white

‘white revolution’

It indicates a peaceful political coup that achieves targets without violence.

- `assilah `al-bayd

weapon white

‘white weapon’

It symbolizes a non-firearm type weapon used for self-defense as swords.

- `al-mawt `al-bayd?
death white
'white death'

It indicates that someone died suddenly.

Red:

Red symbolizes blood, danger, anger and hardships.

- `al-maut alḥmar
death red
'the red death'

It is used to describe any extremely hard death.

- wadḡhuhu aḥmar
his face red
'his face is red'

It indicates that someone is embarrassed or shameful.

- el-ʕein el-ḥamra
eye red
'the red eye'

It reflects that someone is very angry.

- laylah ḥamra?
night red
'a red night'

It is associated with a pornographic night.

- ʔamiʕ aḥmar
wax red
'red wax seal'

It is understood as a mark of the closure of law-violating shops.

Yellow:

Yellow is associated with Arab desert, sun, autumn, and gold. It is most likely viewed as a

symbol for negative.

- wadžhuhu ` asfar

face yellow

‘his face is yellow’

It describes someone who is scared or diseased.

- ūyounuh asfar

eye yellow

‘his eyes are yellow’

It symbolizes someone who is envious.

- đgilduh asfar

Skin yellow

‘his skin is yellow’

It symbolizes someone who is sick.

- dhkatuhu safar?

Smile yellow

‘his smile is yellow’

It indicates that someone is mean and cruel.

- radžul safrawi

man yellow

‘the yellow man’

It describes someone who is pessimistic.

- Kutub safra?

Books yellow

‘yellow books’

It indicates that these books are very old and that they represent old traditions.

- al-aqlam al-safr?

Pens yellow

‘The yellow pens’

It refers to writers who achieve their personal benefit at the expense of others.

Black:

Black symbolizes mischievous, soiled, and evil issues. Also, it is associated with death and funeral.

- ṣalamah sawda?

Mark black

‘a black mark’

It is used to describe someone who has done something negative.

- ?swadat `alsama?

Become black sky

‘The sky becomes black’

It indicates that the sky is full clouds.

- ḥaḏḏ aswad

Luck black

‘black luck’

It is associated with bad luck.

- aswad al-galb

Black heart

‘black heart’

It describes a person who is full of hatred.

- yawm aswad

day black

‘a black day’

It indicates that one is having a bad day.

- alqa?imah assawda?

List black

‘the black list’

It symbolizes a list of banned and dangerous issues and people.

- aswad al-kabid

black liver

‘the black-livered’

It is used to describe enemies of strong hostility.

Blue:

Blue is a symbol of the sky and sea. Also, it is associated with positive values such as harmony and calmness. In addition, it is a masculine color.

- dammuh azrag

blood blue

‘his blood is blue’

It symbolizes someone who is noble.

- al-xarazaeh azzarga

bead blue

‘blue beads’

It is used for the prevention of envy.

- ʕuyounuh zarg?

Eyes blue

‘His blue-eyed’

It describes detrimental envious people.

5. Meaning and Connotation of the Selected Colors in English Culture

According to the objectives, this study examines the colors connotation in Arabic and English cultures. Therefore, the researchers study the meanings and the connotations of some selected colors namely white, red, yellow, black, and blue in the English culture.

White

As in the Arab`s culture, white symbolizes purity and innocent, harmless, and evil-free issues. Also, it is associated with clouds, snow and wedding. However, it has negative connotations.

- ‘As white as a ghost/ a sheet’

It describes someone who is very pale because of fear or shock or illness. However, the Arabic culture uses the yellow to describe the same thing.

- ‘Black and white’

Here, white describes the good things, unlike the black which is associated with the bad things. This expression is similar in the two cultures.

- ‘in black and white’

It describes something written officially.

- ‘a white flag’

The same expression exists in the two cultures that indicates a situation of surrendered.

- ‘white elephant’

It describes something which is useless.

- ‘white lie’

In both cultures, it describes a harmless or small lie told to avoid hurting someone's feelings.

- ‘White night’

It describes a sleepless night.

- ‘White mouse’

It is associated with someone who is mean.

- ‘white tie’

It represents a formal evening.

- ‘white wash’

It describes something wrong which is deleted or covered.

- ‘white- hearted’

It refers for someone who is coward.

Red:

Red symbolizes blood, danger, anger and hardships.

- ‘to catch (someone) red-handed’

It describes a situation where someone is caught in the middle of doing something wrong.

- ‘ears are red’

One’s ears are red from embarrassment

- ‘in the red’

It associated with someone who is in debt.

- ‘like waving a red flag in front of a bull’

It describes someone who is doing something which makes others angry or upset.

- ‘out of the red’

Someone is out of debt.

- ‘paint the town red’

It describes someone who wants to go out and party and have a good time.

- ‘red-carpet’

It is associated with VIP people.

- ‘red herring’

It describes an unimportant matter that draws attention away from the main subject.

- ‘red in the face’

It is associated with embarrassment.

- 'red-letter day'

It describes a memorable day.

Yellow:

Yellow is a symbol for gold. However, it is associated with negative.

- 'yellow alert'

It refers to danger.

- 'have a yellow streak'

It describes someone who is coward.

- 'to wear yellow hose'

It is used to refer to someone who is jealous.

- 'yellow-livered'

It associated with someone who is coward.

- 'yellow pages'

It refers to the classified section of or supplement to a telephone directory, listing firms, products, and services.

Black:

Black symbolizes mischievous, soiled, and evil issues.

- 'Black Prince'

It is associated with Satan.

- 'black and blue'

It describes something as being injured.

- 'black market'

It describes the place where goods or money are illegally bought and sold.

- 'black mouth'

It describes someone as a foul-mouthed.

- 'black out'

Someone who lost consciousness

- 'black sheep (of a family)'

It describes a person who is a disgrace to a family or group.

- ‘blackmail (someone)’

It is used when somebody extorts or takes money from someone else by threatening him or her.

- ‘in (someone's) black books’

It is used when somebody is in disgrace or in disfavor with someone else.

- ‘in the black’

It describes something as successful and profitable.

Blue

Blue in English is associated with negatives more than positives.

- ‘true blue’

It describes someone as faithful.

- ‘blue blood’

It describes the blood of a noble or aristocratic family.

- ‘blue in the face’

It describes someone who is very angry.

- ‘the blues’

It describes someone who is sad or depressed.

- ‘out of the blue’

It describes something which is not expected.

- ‘blue snow’

It describes something which is impossible.

6. Methodology

This study is divided into two parts; Jordanian and American. Therefore, two questionnaires (see appendix 2) are distributed; the first one is given to Jordanian students (N:15) who are studying at the University of Jordan for the M.A degree in Linguistics written in the English language. This questionnaire examines the knowledge of these students for the English connotations of the selected colors. However, the second questionnaire is given to American students (N: 6) at the university of Jordan who are studying the Arabic language as a second language. Therefore, the second questionnaire will examine the knowledge of the selected American Students (by using a cloze test- see appendix 1) for the Arabic connotations of the selected colors.

6.1 Subjects

- Jordanian students (N:15) who are studying at the University of Jordan for the M.A degree in Linguistics.
- American students (N: 6) at the university of Jordan who are studying the Arabic language as a second language.

The researchers distributed a cloze test to a number of American students which is eleven. Only six students scored above 60%, therefore, the researchers chosen them, and excluded the other five students.

7. Results and Discussion

The findings of the study will be reported and discussed in two sub-sections; the first questionnaire which is given to Jordanian students (N:15), the second one which is given to American students (N: 6).

7.1 Jordanian Students` Performance:

Table (1) below shows the number and percentage of the responses that are made by the fifteen Jordanian students.

Table 1. Jordanian students` performance

Question Student	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1	C	C	C	Un	C	C	C	Un	C	C	Un	Un	C	C	Un
2	C	Un	C	C	C	Un	C	C	Un	C	Un	Un	C	C	C
3	C	Un	Un	Un	C	C	Un	Un	Un	C	C	C	Un	Un	C
4	C	C	Un	Un	C	C	C	Un	C	Un	Un	Un	C	C	Un
5	C	Un	C	C	Un	C	C	C	Un	C	C	Un	C	Un	C
6	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	Un	C	C	C	Un	C	C	Un
7	C	C	C	Un	Un	C	C	C	Un	C	Un	Un	C	C	Un
8	C	Un	Un	C	Un	C	C	Un	Un	C	C	C	C	C	C
9	C	C	C	C	Un	C	Un	Un	C	C	C	Un	C	Un	C
10	C	Un	Un	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	Un	C	Un	Un
11	C	Un	C	Un	Un	Un	Un	C	Un	C	Un	Un	C	C	Un
12	C	C	C	C	C	C	Un	C	C	C	C	Un	C	C	C
13	C	Un	C	C	Un	C	C	Un	C	C	C	C	Un	Un	Un
14	C	Un	Un	C	C	C	Un	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
15	C	C	C	Un	Un	C	C	Un	Un	C	C	C	C	Un	Un
Percentage%	100%	46%	66%	60%	53%	86%	66%	46%	53%	93%	66%	33%	86%	60%	46%

The entire sample answered the first question correctly which proves Eckman (1985:3) modification that students will lack difficulty if NL and TL are similar; ‘White lie’ as a connotation exists in both languages; Arabic and English. However, the least percentage is

for the connotation ‘white elephant’ (33%)-question 12-. This percentage proves the validity of ‘those areas of the TL that are different from the NL and are relatively more marked than in NL will be difficult’ (Eckman 1985: 4). However, ‘blue blood’ which is 46% exists in both languages so the percentage cannot prove if there are similarities then there are no difficulties. Here, the researchers will refer to Ekman’s Degree of difficulty. ‘Blue blood’ in both languages means the same thing, but do Jordanians know this connotation? From the percentage, one can realize that most of the Jordanian sample is not aware of this connotation. They are not used to use it in their daily communication unlike ‘white lie’; therefore, it can be recognized as marked which modifies the low percentage.

Question number four reflects the student’s knowledge of ‘blue snow’. This connotation exists only in the American culture; therefore, it must be recognized as difficult. However, their percentage (60%) is acceptable. The reader can analyze this percentage for two reasons; the previous knowledge of this connotation specifically, or their knowledge of the associations with the blue color as in ‘once in a blue moon’ so they generalize their knowledge of this idiom to solve the question.

Question number eight reflects that some of the sample tries to infer their first language. The white color in the Arabic culture is associated with beautiful and calm things. Therefore, some of the sample found it difficult to know the correct connotation of the ‘white night’ as ‘sleepless night’.

The association of ‘red’ with going out and having unacceptable fun -according to the Arabic culture- exists in both cultures. Therefore, most of the sample chose the correct answer. However, the incorrect answer can be analyzed into two reasons; their previous knowledge lack this connotation in both languages, or because in the English culture it is used in “paint the town red’ but in Arabic, it is ‘red night’.

7.2 American Students` Performance

American performance is different from the Jordanian`s. table (2) shows the accurate responses made by them.

Table 2. American students` performance

Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Student															
1	C	Un	C	Un	C	Un	C	Un	Un	C	Un	C	Un	C	C
2	C	Un	C	Un	C	C	Un	C	Un	C	C	Un	Un	C	C
3	C	Un	C	C	Un	C	C	Un	C	C	C	Un	C	C	C
4	C	Un	C	Un	C	C	C	Un	Un	Un	Un	C	C	Un	Un
5	C	C	C	Un	Un	C	C	C	Un	Un	C	Un	C	C	Un
6	C	C	C	C	Un	C	Un	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	Un
Percentage%	100%	33%	100%	33%	50%	83%	66%	50%	33%	66%	66%	50%	66%	83%	50%

The first connotation ‘white heart’ does not exist in the American culture; however, the percentage is 100% correct. This percentage reflects the theory that not every different thing between NL and TL is a reason for difficulty. Eckman modifies “those areas of the TL that are different than the NL but are not relatively more marked than in the NL will not be difficult.” (1985:4). Therefore, the percentage is 100%. However, the second question is only 33%. Here, the reader can analyze this percentage as a reason of the associations for the white. In general, White is associated with clearness and purity; therefore, most of the students did not guess the right meaning because it is not only different but also it is marked. On the other hand, the percentage of the third question is 100% because the meaning of the ‘white flag’ is similar in both cultures; this percentage reflects the similarities between the two languages will not cause a problem.

Question number nine is considered difficult because of the low percentage which is 33%. In general, the American culture associates the yellow with cowardice and not with jealousy like the Arabic culture. Consequently, most of the American did not know the right connotation for the ‘yellow eyes’. Therefore, it is considered as a marked difference. On the other hand, red is associated with anger in both cultures; therefore, the percentage of question number six (83%) is acceptable.

Question number five reflects a problem in teaching Arabic as a foreign language. In general, foreign students are taught the standard Arabic and not the spoken language that is used between Arabs themselves. Therefore, most of the foreigners do not understand the colloquial Arabic. Wishing someone a ‘white day’ is used as a colloquial and not as a standard. So, only 33% answered the question correctly. Also, this question can reflect the interference of the first language; in the American culture ‘white night’ is associated with disturbed and sleepless unlike the Arabic culture where ‘white day’ is associated with happiness and pleasure. Accordingly, the difference between the two cultures is marked.

8. Conclusion

The color systems of Arabic and English are not identical. Consequently, this study investigated the similarities and dissimilarities with respect to the connotations of these basic color terms (white, red, yellow, black, and blue) in Arabic and English. For example; the ‘white flag’ exists in both cultures; however the connotation of the yellow is completely different. Also, the study found that only 63% from the selected Jordanian Students who are studying the English language at the University of Jordan interpreted the meanings of the colors that are used in the American Culture correctly. In addition to, only 61% of the selected American Students who are studying the Arabic language at the University of Jordan interpreted the meanings of the colors that are used in the Arabic Culture correctly.

The total percentage of the accurate responses for the two cultures;

	Jordanian	American
Total percentage	63%	61%

The percentages of the two cultures are similar. This shows that Jordanian and American students have almost the same problems. Some of these problems are;

- The interference of the first language.
- The low level of the cultural knowledge for the second language and even sometimes for the first language.
- Teaching depends on standard more than colloquial; therefore students will not be able to understand some colloquial expressions. Accordingly, students must be aware of the differences between standard and colloquial especially the students who are studying Arabic as a second language.
- Some answers reflect the literal meaning of the connotation, for example; some students associated a 'black prince' with an African prince. Therefore, students must be taught the difference between literal meaning and figurative meaning.
- Some curriculums do not cover cultural differences.

Appendix 1:

التالية الكلمات بأحد الفراغات املأ:

فيعرض، المعرض، بلغ، البوادي، بحكمه، الفائزة، شأن، الخاصة، كانت، الأسواق، القرى، مواضع، الوافدون، (سوقا سوق، اللغوي، الجيد،

العرب أسواق

الدائمة _____ أسواقها مدينة لكل وكائنتُ ، الشعوب كل _____ ذلك في شأنهم ، الأسواق العَرَبُ عرفت وَقَدْ معينية أيام وفي مُعينة _____ في تُقام التي الموسمية الأسواق لهم _____ و ، والشراء البيع فيها يجري حيثُ ، _____ إليه يَقْدُ عاماً كانَ ما ومنها _____ من يجاورها ما على يقتصرُ كانَ ما _____ هذه ومن . السنة من كُلها الجزيرة أطراف من .

وَمَجَنَّة، المجاز، وذو ، عُكاظُ :أهمها ، _____ عشرين من أكثر الإسلام قبل الموسمية الأسواق عددُ _____ وقد _____ أعظمها أن إلا . وبُصْرَى ، وأذرعاتُ ، وهجرُ ، ومكةُ ، وصنعاء وحضروموت، وعدنُ، الجنذل، ودومة _____ الأدبي والمجمع ، الإسلام قبل العام العربي _____ كانت إذ والطائف، مكة بين واد في وموقعها . عُكاظُ استجادوهُ فما ، وأدبهم شعرهم عليهم قبيلة كل شعراء _____ ، القباب لهم تُضربُ مُحْكَمُونَ لها ، الرَسَمِي فَنَتَشَر القصيدة الرواة أولئك يتناقل حتى _____ الحكم ينطقُ فما الزائف، فهو بَهْرَجوه وما ، _____ فهو والحواضر _____ في الألسنُ بها وتلهج ، ونجدها الجزيرة أغوار في

Appendix 2:

يلي مما الصحيحة الاجابة اختر:

- القلب: "أبيض ، الرجل قلب" تعني
- العاطفي الفراغ (د) المريض (ج) النقي(ب) الخبيث (أ)
- : التي هي ، "إلينا مدت التي البيضاء الأيدي ننسى لن" قول في "الأيدي"
- معطاء (د) ناعمة (ج) أبيض لونها (ب) عليها شعر لا
- : على ، "البيضاء الراية رفعوا " قول في "البيضاء الراية" دلالة

- المرض (د) الحداد (ج) النصر (ب) اللاستسلام
- :التي الثورة،"بيضاء ثورة ثورتنا" عبارة تعني
- البيضاء الثياب فيها تلبس (د) فيها أسلحة لا (ج) الأسلحة تعتمد (ب) البيضاء الرايات فيها ترفع
- :نهارك،"أبيض نهارك" عبارة تعني
- فيه عمل لا (د) طويلة (ج) سعيد (ب) فيه رزق لا
- :"عينه في الدنيا احمرت" عبارة تعني
- مات (د) غضب (ج) حمراء عدسة لبس (ب) جميله أصبحت
- :أي،"حمراء ليلة امضى" عبارة تعني
- فيها نوم لا (د) مؤلمة (ج) ممتعة (ب) الحر شديد
- ب- المهتمه الصحف صفراء، بالصحافة يراد بالثورات (د) بالفنون (ج) بالفضائح (ب) بالسياسة (أ)
- : لرجل "صفراء عينه" عبارة تقال
- الحقود (د) المتشائم (ج) المريض (ب) اللون أصفر
- :أي،"الحمراء العين له اظهر" جماهله (ج) أحبه (ب) توعدده (أ) دما نذفت (د)
- :للرجل،"أزرق دمه" نقول
- المتشائم (د) الاستقرائي (ج) اللئيم (ب) المريض
- :هو القلب، بأسود نصفه الذي الرجل
- الحزين (د) المدخن (ج) المتشائم (ب) الحقود
- :فيها انتشرت أي،"السماء اسودت" بعبارة يراد
- السوداء الريات (د) العنمة (ج) الاخطار (ب) الغيوم
- :الرجل،"أزرق نابه" بعبارة يراد
- النظيف غير (د) الارستقرائي (ج) المريض (ب) الماكر
- :"الأحمر بالشمع ختم" بعبارة يراد
- للعلاج طريقه (د) جودة علامة(ج) المعتمد التوقيع (ب) مغلق المحل

In each sentence, choose the best word or phrase to complete the gap from the choices below (a, b, c, or d).

1. I don't believe in being untruthful, but sometimes it's good to tell a _____ lie to avoid hurting somebody's feelings.

- a) black b) white c) blue d) yellow

2. Many of the _____ bloods of the town went to the opening of the opera.

- a) black b) white c) blue d) yellow

3. Our company has been in the _____ for two years; it will be closed.

- a) black b) white c) yellow d) red

4. When something is impossible, we can say:

- a) black snow b) white snow c) blue snow d) red snow

5. The man next door seems to have a (black mouth).

- a) foul-mouthed b) dirty mouth c) mouth which lies d) African mouth

6. You look as _____ as a sheet. What's happened?

- a) black b) white c) blue d) yellow

7. The connotation of "black prince" is associated with:

- a) African prince b) Satan c) Zorro d) Batman

8. A 'sleepless night' can be understood as a:

- a) black night b) white night c) blue night d) yellow night

9. I argued with my supervisor until I was (very angry).

- a) black in the face b) white in the face c) blue in the face d) red in the face

10. My boss is not very flexible and he always sees things (as either good or bad).

- a) in the red b) off-color c) with flying colors d) in black and white

11. It was a (memorable) day when the first person walked on the moon.

- a) yellow-streak b) red-elephant c) red-herring d) red-letter

12. The new airport is a (useless) and nobody wants to use it.

- a) red-streak b) white-elephant c) out of the blue d) off-color

13. My friend (celebrated and went out) yesterday.

- a) painted the town red b) painted the town yellow c) went out of the blue d) had red-letter

14. 'Yellow alert' means:
a) dangerous b) not important c) safe d) the first alert
15. The man (is coward) and he will not defend you if you are having a problem.
a) has a yellow streak b) is in blue c) out of the blue d) is a white-mouse

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