

European (dis)union of colours: secondary basic colour terms in Polish, Portuguese and Spanish

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1. Subject, object and purpose

Although the physiological perception of colours by the human species has not changed, the cultural filter creates differences between their connotations across populations. This is reflected in the language that functions as a linguistic prism.

The present study is cross-cultural and cross-geographical, covering languages of the Eastern and Western end of the European Union: Polish on the one hand, Portuguese and Spanish on the other hand. It aims to compare the use of secondary colour names: purple, pink, orange and grey at both ends of Europe. It is undisputed that “the analysis of the colours petrified in phraseological units can be an inexhaustible source of information of the process of semantic encoding, carried out within a given linguistic system”¹ (Szalek 2005: 88). By showing the presence of selected colour names in the language (idioms, phrases, collocations, etc.), we hope to discover if both geographical and linguistic ends of Europe have different or rather common colour visions.

¹ Our translation of the original text: “el análisis de los colores fijados en unidades fraseológicas puede ser una fuente inagotable de información sobre los procesos de codificación semántica llevados a cabo dentro de un sistema lingüístico dado”.

The colours that we have chosen to analyse occupy the last place among the so-called basic terms of colours in the hierarchy of Berlin and Kay². Even though they still pertain to the class of Basic Colour Terms, they are usually described as a mixture of two other (basic) colours (i.e. purple = red + blue; orange = yellow + red; pink = red + white; grey = black + white). Consequently, we call them *secondary colour terms*.

Let us remember that Berlin and Kay suggest the existence of a universal lexical category: the names of basic colours terms. Based on the hypothesis of a neuro-physiological nature, according to which the ocular apparatus of all human beings focuses as central to a finite number of parts of the spectrum, the lexical items that are beyond this share certain characteristics which identify them as basic names effectively³. A notable contribution is the work of Kay and McDaniel (1978) which emphasises that the lexical organisation of the spectrum has characteristics of a continuum, so no discreet segmentation is possible: “the development of basic colours-term lexicon (is) not the successive encoding of foci but the successive differentiation of previously existing coloured basic categories” (*ibidem*: 640). Thus colours exemplify the theory of “fuzzy sets”.

What is more, in the latest research the adjectives of colour appear as polysemic entities (cf. Leduc-Adine 1980: 69). This ability to attribute multiple meanings to one signifier plays an important role in the “linguistic economy”. In fact, Leduc-Adine in his article lists the so called “pseudo-adjectives of colour” (e.g. Sp. *turismo verde* ‘green tourism’, *eminencia gris* ‘grey eminence’) and presents their features. The polysemy of the adjectives of colour makes that they may appear in different contexts and be subject to very different meanings. Tokarski (1963: 142) calls this phenomenon “subjective polysemy in the highest degree”⁴ and offers various uses of the Polish adjective *czarny* ‘black’. The same chromatic adjective can

² In this text we have opted for the Berlin and Kay optics (1969), although there are more classifications: van Wijk 1959, Bidu Vranceanu 1976, Kristol 1978a, Grossmann 1988, Espejo Muriel 1987, 1990 or Martinell 1979.

³ There are exceptions, e.g. Russian with two equivalents of blue: *golubóy* ‘light blue’ and *síniy* ‘dark blue’ (Kay & McDaniel 1978: 640). See also Kristol 1978b.

⁴ Pol. “polisemia w znacznej mierze subiektywna”.

mean ‘dangerous, grim’ (black character, black future) as well as ‘dark’ (black night, black clouds)⁵.

Going back to the reasons for our choice, we would like to emphasise that purple, orange, pink and grey are not only the least studied (versus white, black and red), but, at the same time, one could expect that they seem more likely to show potential differences between the three languages in question.

2. Analysis

Our study is basically synchronic, but it also contains information of a diachronic nature (etymology and, possibly, the history of considered terms). The sources are mainly lexicographic: dictionaries, lexicons or corpora, yet it would be of great interest to show the occurrences of mentioned colours in literature as it can open different research pathways. Such a study, however, would overlook the dimensions of the present contribution and we leave this question for the consideration of other interested researchers.

As Bochnakowa (1990: 7) remarked, the degree of lexicalisation of nominal syntagmas containing the names of colours, as well as their classification in *clichés*, phrases, idiomatic expressions, phraseological units, etc. is a complicated question for such sciences as lexicology, lexicography and didactics of language. We will not discuss this problem here as it is not relevant for the purposes of our study. We take into consideration every kind of expression that contains the name of one of the four colours we are interested in.

Some examples have become entrenched in language because they name a specific historical event, situation or person, largely commented on and generally known in a given cultural milieu, such as e.g.:

- Pol. *pomarańczowa rewolucja* / Port. *Revolução Laranja* / Sp. *Revolución naranja* ‘Orange Revolution, i.e. a series of protests that took place in Ukraine in 2004–2005’,

⁵ Of course, all this refers to some Polish expressions.

- Port. *mapa cor-de-rosa* / Sp. *mapa rosado* / Pol. *różowa mapa* ‘pink map / rose-coloured map, i.e. a document prepared in 1885 to represent Portugal’s claim of sovereignty over a land corridor connecting the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique’,

- Pol. *szara eminencja* / Port. *eminência cinzenta* / Sp. *eminencia gris* ‘counsellor who inspires unostensibly the decisions of another person, corporation or a party’, but they are direct translations of the French *Éminence grise* ‘grey eminence’ (1st half of the 17th century, with reference to François Leclerc du Tremblay or Father Joseph (1577–1638), confidant and private advisor of Cardinal Richelieu).

Nevertheless, the names of colours used in these expressions do not achieve new meanings. Beyond these expressions, they cannot be applied elsewhere, so they are to be omitted in our analysis.

Let us add that we do not take into account this part of semantics of analysed units that refers to objects and not colours (e.g. ‘orange – fruit’, ‘rose – flower’).

2.1. Polish

Colours are an enormously popular topic among Slavic linguists. There are works that analyse the socio-cultural connotations of colours (cf. Tokarski 1995), semantic-cultural approaches (cf. Wierzbicka 2006) or monographic works (Zaręba 1954, Komorowska & Stanulewicz 2010). There are numerous articles that deal with colours in Polish literature; for a more complete bibliography, we refer those interested to the monograph by Komorowska (2010).

In order to analyse Polish colour names, the following sources have been used:

- dictionaries of Contemporary Polish: WSJP (on-line), SJP PWN (on-line too) and ISJP, bringing definitions and some fixed usages;
- corpus of Contemporary Polish: NKJP, providing more collocations;
- Boryś’ (SEJP) and Bańkowski’s (ESJP, ESMP) etymological dictionaries, indicating the origin and the first attestations of analysed terms.

<i>fioletowy</i> ‘purple’	
etymology	< <i>fiolet</i> ‘purple colour’ ← Germ. <i>Violett</i> ‘purple; purple colour’ ← Fr. <i>violette</i> ‘viola’ < OFr. <i>virole</i> ‘id.’ ← Lat. <i>viola</i>
1st att.	2 nd half of the 17 th century
concrete meanings	1. ‘of the colour resulting from mixing red and blue, like the one of heather or crocuses’
figurative meanings & usages	2. ‘under the influence of different physical factors or strong emotions’ - <i>fioletowy</i> z zimna ‘frozen’, <i>fioletowy</i> z przepicia ‘beery’, etc. - <i>fioletowy</i> ze wściekłości, <i>fioletowy</i> z gniewu ‘furious, angry’

Table 1

Fioletowy (formerly also *fioletowy*) replaced the primitive Polish name of this colour, i.e. *fiołkowy* ‘of the colour of the viola’ (1st attested to at the beginning of the 15th century) < *fiołek* ‘viola’ (< MHG *vīol(e)* ‘id.’ < Lat. *viola*). Even if the motivation of this more ancient word was more explicit for Polish speakers, the final source of both remains identical. *Fioletowy* is used only in a few expressions related to the physical aspect of someone whose body is reacting to external (cold) or internal (alcohol consumption) stimuli or who is experiencing an intense emotion (anger). These usages have a clear concrete basis and refer to the colour of body or face resulting from concentration of blood under the skin. Albeit, the adjective can denote described states even if the physical aspect of the person in question remains unchanged.

<i>pomarańczowy</i> ‘orange’	
etymology	< <i>pomarańcza</i> ‘orange’ ← It. <i>pomo d’arancia</i> , where <i>arancia</i> ‘orange’ ← Ar. <i>nāranġ</i> ← Pers. <i>nārang</i> ← Sanskr. <i>nāraṅga</i>
1st att.	early 18 th century
concrete meanings	1. ‘yellow with red tint, like the colour of a ripe orange’
figurative meanings & usages	-

Table 2

No metaphorical usages of *pomarańczowy* in phraseology or collocations have been found. It is used exclusively in its concrete meaning.

różowy 'pink'	
etymology	< <i>róża</i> 'rose' ← OHG <i>rōsa</i> 'id.' ← Lat. <i>rosa</i>
1st att.	2 nd half of the 18 th century
concrete meanings	1. 'of red colour mixed with a big quantity of white' 2. 'flushed'
figurative meanings & usages	3. 'prosperous, favourable, satisfying one's expectations, optimistic' - <i>różowy scenariusz</i> 'positive scenario', <i>różowa przyszłość</i> 'great future', etc. - <i>różowy humor</i> 'very good, cheerful mood' - <i>widzieć coś w różowych barwach</i> 'to see something optimistically' - <i>malować się w różowych barwach</i> 'to be expected to be good, prosperous' - <i>oglądać / patrzeć na świat przez różowe okulary</i> 'to be an optimist, to see only the positive aspects' 4. 'sympathising with the left, socialism or communism' - <i>różowi ateści, różowi demokraci</i> , etc. 'atheists, democrats, etc. sympathising with the far-left' 5. 'erotic, related to sex' - <i>Różowa landrynka</i> 'title of an erotic TV programme presenting nude women' - <i>różowe balety</i> 'big party of an expressly sexual nature'

Table 3

Różowy replaced the former adjective naming this colour – *różany* (also derived from *róża* 'rose', but was first attested to already in the 1st half of the 15th century) that in contemporary language refers predominantly to the smell of rose or to the flower in general (e.g. *woda różana* 'rose water').

Różowy has mainly positive connotations in Polish, denoting either an optimistic attitude or mood of a person or favourable circumstances and situations. However, it can also suggest somebody's political affiliation, namely the far-left, but in a "light" version if compared to *czerwony* 'red' (the intensity of colour is directly proportionate to the intensity of political convictions). Polish dictionaries do not note a separate meaning referring to eroticism or sex, but one must recognise that *różowy* sometimes has this kind of association too, which is proved by the cited collocations⁶.

⁶ Cf. this fragment from a poem by Maria Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska (1923): "Zalotność jest pachnąca i różowa, / a mądrość żółta i sucha. / Wolałabym, by mnie Mickiewicz chciał całować, / niż by mnie chciał słuchać [...]", which could be translated as: "Coquetry is fragrant and pink / and wisdom is yellow and dry. / I would prefer Mickiewicz to kiss me / rather than listen to me [...]".

<i>szary</i> 'grey'	
etymology	← Occid. Proto-Sl. *šarъ 'of the colour of ash, grey'
1st att.	15 th century
concrete meanings	1. 'of the colour resulting from mixing white and black' 2. 'colourless'
figurative meanings & usages	3. 'average, mediocre' - <i>szary człowiek</i> (> <i>szarak, szaraczek</i>), <i>szara mysz / myszka</i> 'average person' 4. 'monotonous, boring' - <i>szara rzeczywistość</i> 'monotonous reality', <i>szara codzienność</i> 'boring everyday' 5. 'cloudy, gloomy' - <i>szary dzień</i> 'gloomy day' - <i>szara godzina</i> (> <i>szarówka</i>) 'crepuscule' ⁷ 6. 'showing signs of fatigue, lack of sleep or a disease' - <i>szara twarz</i> 'sickly face', <i>szara skóra</i> 'unhealthy pallor of skin' 7. 'bad, poor, difficult' - <i>być na szarym końcu</i> 'to be at the very end, in the worst position' - <i>zrobić kogoś na szaro</i> 'to cheat somebody, putting him intentionally in a difficult situation' 8. 'undetermined, vague, indistinct, invisible' - <i>szara strefa</i> 'part of economy which is out of the control of the state'

Table 4

The history of the term *szary* in Polish has already been detailed by Bochnakowa (2010: 33) who gives its first attestations in different collocations found in texts and dictionaries, starting from the 16th century. These are mainly concrete usages, related to the effective colour of referents, still present in today's language, e.g.: *szary papier* 'grey paper', *szary sos* 'grey sauce', *szare mydło* 'grey soap', *istota szara* 'grey matter'⁸. *Szary* is also a frequent epithet in names of some species and diseases: *wierzba szara* 'grey willow', *szary niedźwiedź* 'grey bear', *słowik szary* 'thrush nightingale', *szara pleśń* 'noble rot', etc.

As it has been shown, when it comes to figurative meanings, *szary* refers rather to negative qualities: mediocrity, monotony, lack of health and vagueness. They are certainly due to an undefined character of this colour. Some of them even

⁷ The collocation *szara godzina* pertains rather to literary or formal register, whereas the derivative *szarówka* is used in the casual one.

⁸ However, the expression *szara pycha / szara pyszka* 'grey pride, haughtiness' (16th century), that is no more in use in Contemporary Polish, deserves to be mentioned here as a counterpart.

constituted the basis for further derivatives, such as *szarak / szaraczek* ‘average person’, *szarówka* ‘crepuscule’, where the chromatic term is emphasised.

As a curiosity, let us mention an example which is contrary to the last one. The expression *rządzić się jak szara gęś* ‘to impose one’s will, to abuse one’s power’ (literally ‘to boss like a grey goose’) has also created a derivative, the verb *szarogęsić się* with the same meaning. However, in this case it is not the grey colour that is stressed, but the goose which is accidentally grey. That is why this picturesque expression has not entered into our corpus.

2.2. Portuguese

There have not been many studies about Portuguese colour names. Said Ali (1975) offers a brief and general overview of the subject. Schmitz (1983), Jensen (1992) and Kobędza (2014) study them in a comparative and / or historical perspective. Zavaglia (2006) and Moreira Brangel (2011) discuss problems related to colour terms from the point of view of lexicographic description. Moreover, there are works on colours in the toponymy of Portugal: Roca Garriga (1958), Dębowiak (2010).

With the purpose of analysing Portuguese colour names, the following sources have been used:

- dictionaries of Contemporary Portuguese: DPLP (on-line) and DLP that offer definitions and a part of their usages;
- corpus of Portuguese from the 13th to the 20th century: CDP, helpful in establishing first attestations and some collocations;
- Machado’s (DELP₁) and da Cunha’s (DELP₂) etymological dictionaries, providing the origin and the first attestations of studied terms.

roxo 'purple'	
etymology	← Lat. <i>rūssēu-</i> 'dark red'
1st att.	1258
concrete meanings	1. 'which is of the colour of viola or amethyst; purple' 2. (obsolete) 'red'
figurative meanings & usages	3. 'under the influence of different physical factors; exaggerated, excessive' - <i>ter os lábios roxos de frio</i> 'to have frozen lips', <i>chorar até ficar roxo</i> 'to cry intensively', etc. ⁹

Table 5

The history of the adjective *roxo* in Portuguese merits further commentary. It first meant 'red', a fact which brings this word closer to its Spanish correspondent *rojo* 'red' and to the Latin etymon of both. By way of example, the Red Sea was called *Mar Roxo* (or *Roixo*) in Portuguese still in the 16th century (cf. DELP1 s.v. *Roxo*). The adjective was eventually replaced by *vermelho* (← Lat. *vermīcūlu-* 'small worm (producing scarlet dye)') and *encarnado* (< *carne* 'flesh, meat'), whereas its semantic extent has moved towards 'purple, violet'.

When it comes to figurative meanings, *roxo* denotes different states related to intense physical factors experienced by somebody: cold, weep etc. As we have already explained it for Polish, these usages come from referring to the colour of body or face resulting from the concentration of blood under the skin. It seems that *roxo* can describe the aforementioned states even if the physical aspect of the person in question remains unchanged¹⁰.

⁹ Let us note that in Brazilian Portuguese there are expressions that could pertain to the same group: *roxo de raiva* 'furious, angry' and *roxo de ciúmes / inveja* 'extremely jealous' (it is more frequent for the last one to occur with the adjective meaning 'green': *verde de ciúmes / inveja*).

¹⁰ Let us note that the Portuguese contemporary writer Fernando Campos writes as follows: "Oh eternal and absolute colour! Vague and undecided and mysterious as a god who is hiding behind your veils full of secrets! You do not express the end nor the fall, like black which represents the night and sin, and **purple** that symbolises the crepuscule and death. You do not express the beginning nor faith, like pink or yellow, that denounce the aurora, and red, that stands for passion. You do not express naivety nor candidness, like blue, nor contingency, like green and brown, with which nature colours many of its mortal forms." (fragment of narrative *Flor de estufa*, 1999).

(Original text: "Ô cor eterna e absoluta! Vaga e indecisa e misteriosa como o deus que se esconde para lá dos teus véus cheios de segredo! Tu não exprimes o fim nem a queda, como o negro, que representa a noite e o pecado, e o **roxo**, que simboliza o crepúsculo e

<i>(cor-de-) laranja</i> ‘orange’	
etymology	< <i>laranja</i> ‘orange (fruit)’ ← Hisp. Ar. <i>naranġa</i> ← Ar. <i>nārangġ</i> ← Pers. <i>nārang</i> ← Sanskr. <i>nāraᅇga</i>
1st att.	16 th century
concrete meanings	1. ‘which has the colour of the peel of an orange, between intense yellow and a reddish hue’
figurative meanings & usages	-

Table 6

Formally, two adjectives for ‘orange’ are used in Portuguese. The first one is descriptive: *cor-de-laranja*, literally ‘colour of orange (fruit)’; the second one, simply *laranja*, results from an ellipsis of the previous term. Both are invariable.

There are no figurative meanings of ‘orange’ in Portuguese¹¹.

<i>(cor-de-) rosa</i> ‘pink’	
etymology	< <i>rosa</i> ‘rose’ ← Lat. <i>rosa</i>
1st att.	16 th century
concrete meanings	1. ‘very light red colour’
figurative meanings & usages	2. ‘happy, positive, optimistic’ - <i>sonhos cor-de-rosa</i> ‘happy dreams’ - <i>ver tudo cor-de-rosa</i> ‘to be an optimist’

Table 7

a morte. Tu não exprimes o começo nem a fé, como o rosa e o amarelo, que denunciam a aurora, e o vermelho, que figura a paixão. Tu não exprimes a ingenuidade nem a candura, como o azul, nem a contingência, como o verde e o castanho, com que a natureza colore muitas das suas formas mortais.”).

This symbolic meaning attributed to *roxo* seems to be exclusively literary and is probably related to Christian commemorations of funerals, Advent and Lent, during which purple attire is donned.

Let us add that in Brazilian Portuguese *roxo* can also mean ‘desirous, anxious’, referring informally to someone’s lack of patience or even greed.

¹¹ In fact, we have managed to find the term *laranja* used as a noun in Brazilian Portuguese with two metaphorical meanings: 1. ‘simple or naïve person’, 2. ‘person used as an intermediary in fraud and suspicious business’. We suppose the second one is derived from the first meaning, which is probably related to *orange* as a fruit, not a colour.

As in the case of orange, two adjectives for ‘pink’ are in use in Portuguese: a descriptive one, *cor-de-rosa*, literally ‘colour of a rose’, and a shortened one, resulting from ellipsis, *rosa*. Both terms are invariable.

The adjective in question can appear in names of some species, e.g. *boto cor-de-rosa* / *boto rosa* ‘pink river dolphin’ (known in Brazil)¹². It is to be noted that its concrete meaning produced a derivative verb with a figurative meaning: *rosar* (‘to blush because of being ashamed’ >) ‘to be ashamed’.

Metaphorical usages of (*cor-de-*) *rosa* show its extremely positive connotations, related to happiness and optimism¹³.

<i>cinzento</i> ‘grey’	
etymology	< <i>cinza</i> ‘ash’ ← Lat. * <i>cin̄isia</i> ‘ashes mixed with embers’
1st att.	1506–1510
concrete meanings	1. ‘of the colour of ash, an intermediate between black and white; mousy’
figurative meanings & usages	2. ‘which does not have enough luminosity’ - <i>manhã cinzenta</i> ‘gloomy morning’, <i>dia cinzento</i> ‘cloudy day’ 3. ‘which does not have brightness, vivacity or interest’ - <i>vida cinzenta</i> ‘boring, monotonous life’, <i>atmosfera cinzenta</i> ‘uninteresting ambience’, <i>cidade cinzenta</i> ‘dreary city’, etc.

Table 8

At first referring to the colour of ashes, this adjective has a clear relational origin. As it has been demonstrated, its figurative meanings are rather negative ones, denoting lack of luminosity, character and interest.

2.3. Spanish

In fact, the works devoted to the chromatic problems in Spanish cover a very broad spectrum, including: the work of rather general or theoretical nature (cf. Michelena 1972, Cabo Villaverde 2001), colour in place names (cf. Roca Garriga 1954, Dębowiak 2013), colour in a certain period (Stala 2011), chromatic denominations of

¹² But also: *boto vermelho* or *boto branco*, literally ‘red’ or ‘white river dolphin’.

¹³ There are also metaphorical expressions with the word *rosa* in the quality of the noun: *de rosas* ‘overjoyed’; *mar de rosas* ‘occasion on which everything goes well’; *maré de rosas* ‘period in which everything happens just as we wish’. They have similar, very positive connotations.

human races (cf. Stephens 1989). Finally, a number of works dedicated to colour in literary work, to cite a few examples: Spanish ballads (Kenyon 1915), Spanish poetry (Rogers 1964) or the Bible (Alegre Heitzman 1979).

In the analysis of Spanish the following have been taken into account:

- dictionaries of Contemporary Spanish: DRAE, 22nd edition on-line, that provides the actual meaning, *Diccionario de uso del español* (Moliner 1991) and a phraseological dictionary (Varela & Kubarth 1994);
- *Corpus Diacrónico del Español* (CORDE) that gives first attestations;
- *Corpus de referencia del español actual* (CREA) that offers frequency of lexical items;
- BDELIC that gives the etymology.

Spanish presents curiosities also at a formal level: there is more than one denomination of some of the secondary colours. That is, in addition to the monolexematic *gris* 'grey', *violeta* (6 083¹⁴) appears together with *morado* (16 726); *rosa* (961) appears more often than *rosado* (11 881).

<i>violeta</i> 'purple'	
etymology	← Fr. <i>violette</i> 'viola' < OFr. <i>viole</i> 'id.' ← Lat. <i>viola</i>
1st att.	1477-1491
concrete meanings	1. 'light violet colour, like violet'
figurative meanings & usages	2. 'superficial, ignorant' - <i>erudito a la violeta</i> 'man who only has a superficial knowledge of sciences and arts'

Table 9

<i>morado</i> 'purple'	
etymology	< <i>mora</i> 'mulberry' ← Lat. vg. <i>mōra</i> , Lat. <i>mōrum</i>
1st att.	1407-1463
concrete meanings	1. 'colour between crimson and blue'
figurative meanings & usages	2. 'unfortunate' - <i>pasarlas moradas</i> 'to be in a difficult or painful situation' 3. 'excessive, intense' - <i>ponerse morado</i> 'to gorge on food; to enjoy food, sex or some other'

¹⁴ This is the number of the place which occupies a certain word on the frequency list by CREA (*Listado de frecuencias*), although it can be due to a coincidence of meaning: both 'colour' and 'flower'.

	pleasure fully'
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Table 10

First of all, the predominance of *violeta* as a chromatic term is clearly seen although *violeta*'s first meaning is that of a flower and not a colour. While *violeta* originally comes from French, *morado* is a derivative of the name of the mulberry. They have almost simultaneous attestations as a colour name: the 15th century. Neither *violeta* nor *morado* has a wide usage except for the name of a plant or a colour. If any, they are rather negative: they refer to something superficial, difficult or excessive. *Morado* is also used to name some vegetal species: *berenjena morada* 'sort of eggplant', *cambur morado* 'musa paradisiaca, sort of fruit' or a certain cloth: *grana morada* 'a sort of cloth of that colour which makes it inferior to other kinds of cloth'.

<i>rosado</i> 'pink'	
etymology	← Lat. <i>rosātu-</i> 'of roses' < <i>rosa</i> 'rose'
1st att.	c. 1250
concrete meanings	1. 'speaking of colours: as that of roses'
figurative meanings & usages	-

Table 11

<i>rosa</i> 'pink'	
etymology	(? < <i>color de rosa</i> , where <i>rosa</i> 'rose') ← Lat. <i>rosa</i>
1st att.	1493
concrete meanings	1. 'red mixed with white'
figurative meanings & usages	2. 'romantic and banal at the same time' - <i>novela rosa</i> 'variety of novelistic narrative, the action of which appears in modern times and presents very conventional characters and environments in which the vicissitudes of two lovers are narrated, whose love triumphs against all odds' 3. 'optimistic, good, cheerful' - <i>pasar del rosa al amarillo</i> 'to change one's mood suddenly or unexpectedly' - <i>verlo todo de color de rosa</i> 'to be an optimist'

Table 12

Perhaps a process of ellipsis was possible in the case of *rosa*, yet according to dictionaries both *rosado* and *rosa* derive directly or indirectly from Latin, although the main meaning of the last one is that of flower: DRAE documents the chromatic meaning in its 12th position. Yet, only *rosa* has created some lateral meanings in

association with the colour and is wide spread in Spanish as a colour name. Except for some neutral extension (due to the real colour) like *salsa rosa* ‘sauce made with mayonnaise and ketchup’), the main connotation is very positive: health, comfort, optimism, romanticism. The visible contrast with yellow (*pasar del rosa al amarillo*) only underlines the positive aspect of this chromatic term.

<i>naranja</i> ‘orange’	
etymology	(? < <i>color de naranja</i> , where <i>naranja</i> ‘orange (fruit)’ ← Hisp. Ar. <i>naraṅga</i> ← Ar. <i>nāraṅḡ</i> ← Pers. <i>nāraṅ</i> ← Sanskr. <i>nāraṅga</i>)
1st att.	1622
concrete meanings	1. ‘yellow with a red tint’
figurative meanings & usages	-

Table 13

Although orange in Spanish has at least two denominations: *naranja* and *anaranjado*, the second one clearly refers to the colour as such, which is scarcely used, compared to *naranja*. At the same time, it is mainly the name of a fruit and that is why its chromatic meaning is not the first one.

As the colour term, *naranja* appears relatively late: in the 17th century. That is why, perhaps, there are not many special usages in Spanish¹⁵.

<i>gris</i> ‘grey’	
etymology	probably ← Occit. <i>gris</i> ‘id.’ ← Old Low Frankish <i>grīs</i>
1st att.	1150
concrete meanings	1. ‘colour that usually results from mixing white and black’
figurative meanings & usages	2. ‘unattractive, mediocre’ - <i>persona gris</i> ‘a mediocre person’ 3. ‘overcast’ - <i>día gris</i> ‘grey, cloudy day’ 4. ‘cold’ - <i>hace un gris</i> ‘it is cold’

Table 14

¹⁵ In fact, there are some expressions like *piel de naranja* ‘orange peel’, *naranjas chinas* (interjection) or *media naranja* ‘somebody’s life partner’ (lit. ‘half orange’), yet none of them refer to the colour.

Gris has an early attestation and a discussed origin. The contemporary analysis of phrases in Spanish formed with colour adjective leads to the conclusion that grey is commonly associated with sadness and melancholy, intellectual or emotional mediocrity, dull objects, worthless, without particular qualities. These meanings confirm the connotative approach to black rather than a mixture of black and white.

3. Observations and conclusions

From an etymological point of view, the names of the four analysed colours can be classified in the following groups:

1) with an ancient origin from protolanguage, today opaque (Pol. *szary* ← Occid. Proto-Sl. **šarъ*; Port. *roxo* ← Lat. *rūssēu-*);

2) with a concrete, relational origin, the motivation of which is still visible (Pol. *różowy*, *pomarańczowy*, Port. (*cor-de-*) *laranja*, (*cor-de-*) *rosa*, Sp. *naranja*, *rosa*, to a lesser extent also Port. *cinzento* and Sp. *morado*); in Portuguese and Spanish it has morphological consequences: (*cor-de-*) *laranja*, (*cor-de-*) *rosa*, *naranja* and *rosa* are invariable adjectives;

3) of a foreign origin (Pol. *fioletowy* < *fiolet* [← Germ. *Violett*] ← Fr. *violette*; Sp. *violeta* of the same origin; Sp. *gris* ← Occit. *gris*).

One could then expect that various connotations have developed mostly around the names of colours from the first group, as they have existed in the language for a long time and they are morphologically unanalysable. Consequently, the connotations should be less represented around the terms which are most recent. Albeit, our study reveals that the age and the origin (native / borrowed) of chromatic terms do not condition their cultural meaning and frequency. Of all the four colours considered, pink and grey are the ones that have developed the most figurative meanings, even if the names of grey have completely distinct origins and the names of pink appeared later on (if compared to the other adjectives) in all languages analysed.

Besides the concrete values of the adjectives analysed, when they denote a real colour of something, we observe a greater or lesser disappearance of the primitive meaning of colour in some metaphorical usages: then the adjective does not evoke a real colour, but is mentioned with extra-chromatic associations.

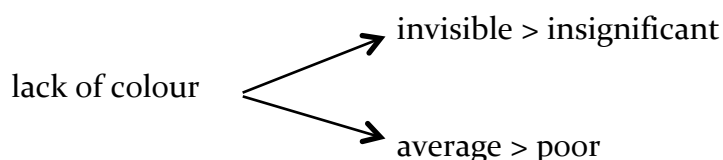
Purple's metaphorical usages in Polish and Portuguese are mainly based on the transposition of meaning from the effective colour of someone's skin to the emotion or state itself. Thus a range of possible usages is obtained, concentrated around bad emotions (anger) and some anomalous physical states (heavy cold, drunkenness). Spanish seems not to associate purple with these situations, maybe with the exception of excessive gluttony. However, it rather links it to superficial wisdom and difficulties. These are still not very positive connotations.

Strangely enough, orange has practically not developed any figurative meanings in any of the languages considered.

Pink is generally related to strong positive emotions in all these languages: happiness, optimism, hope for prosperity. This is indisputably the colour with the best associations from our group. Nevertheless, there are also some connotations of pink that our languages do not share: the communist one – only in Polish, being a trace of the recent history of Poland; the erotic one – in Polish too, probably because of the symbolism of red and pink as colours of passion and love; the romantic one – in Spanish, in relation to the same symbolism, but evoking banality too.

An undefined character of grey (somewhere between black and white, but also between red and green) makes its linguistic image dubious, polyvalent (cf. Bochnakowa 2010). It is frequently an indeterminate colour, which is reflected in Polish and Spanish. Mediocrity, average character, nothing special – these are the connotations of grey.

In fact, there are two possible lines of interpretation:



The first one is more literal and is referred mainly to objects like day, person, character and the fossilised syntagma in Polish *szara mysz* 'grey mouse, someone

shy and self-effacing'. The second one is more metaphorical with reference to a situation, person and, again, reflected in Polish as *szary koniec* 'grey end, the very end' with a rather pejorative connotation. Finally, Polish sources also document a negative extension 'to cheat someone'.

All these observations support the hypothesis that, in Spanish, only two colours are true metaphorical bases: black and green (Tatoj 2006). In addition, so-called cold colours connote negative phenomena, while the warm or neutral ones are positive (Szałek 2005). Generally, "the perception of colours by native speakers of Spanish is not necessarily the same as the experience of other European peoples, although usually not so dissimilar from European cultural paradigm" (Szałek 2005: 89; Arcaini 1993). Such a hypothesis seems to be valid for Polish and Portuguese as well.

The presence of the names of colours in language shows us the importance of the visual side of our perception of the world. We associate colours with emotions, characteristic features, ideas, notions and petrify them in some expressions that are sometimes identic and sometimes divergent in a given cultural-geographical area. Still, Europe, at least seen through the prism of secondary colour terms, seems rather homogenous and there is more union than disunion in their perception.

Symbols and abbreviations

< is a derivative form of	OFr. = Old French
← comes from	OHG = Old High German
Ar. = Arabic	Pers. = Persian
Fr. = French	Pol. = Polish
Germ. = German	Port. = Portuguese
Hisp. = Hispanic	Proto-Sl. = Proto-Slavic
It. = Italian	Sanskrit. = Sanskrit
Lat. = Latin	Sp. = Spanish
MHG = Middle High German	
Occid. = Occidental	
Occit. = Occitan	

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