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João Paulo Silvestre, Esperança Cardeira & Alina Villalva  
(eds.)

# COLOUR AND COLOUR NAMING: CROSSLINGUISTIC APPROACHES

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Centro de Linguística da Universidade de Lisboa | Universidade de Aveiro

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Colour terms behave quite differently across languages, similar to the way in which our psychological interpretation varies in response to reflected visible light. Indeed, from a linguistic perspective, a definitive explanation of basic colour terms still eludes many researchers of different disciplines, posing both cognitive and lexical issues. The *Colour and Colour Naming* conference, held in 2015 at the University of Lisbon, offered a chance to explore colour naming processes from a cross-linguistic approach. Scholars were invited to present and submit their own research for discussion, covering a wide range of fields, notably that of lexicology, lexicography, comparative linguistics, morphology, historical linguistics and cultural studies.

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João Paulo Silvestre, Esperança Cardeira & Alina Villalva (eds.)

CENTRO DE LINGUÍSTICA DA UNIVERSIDADE DE LISBOA  
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**EUROPEAN**  
**NETWORK OF**  
**e-LEXICOGRAPHY**

# Contents

Presentation .....	3
I. Colour names, pan-European perspective	
A diachronic overview of color terms in the romance languages: the lexical stability of the latin color vocabulary .....	
<i>Steven N. Dworkin</i>	9
Italian colour terms in the BLUE area: synchrony and diachrony.....	
<i>Maria Grossmann &amp; Paolo D’Achille</i>	21
European (dis)union of colours: secondary basic colour terms in Polish, Portuguese and Spanish .....	
<i>Ewa Stala &amp; Przemysław Dębowiak</i>	51
<i>Preto and negro, pardo, mestiço and mulato</i> .....	
<i>Esperança Cardeira</i>	71
II. Categorization and lexicographic description	
Colourful microstructures: how Italian dictionaries see colour terms .....	
<i>Carla Marelllo &amp; Cristina Onesti</i>	91
On the grammatical substance of colour words .....	
<i>Alina Villalva</i>	105
Metaphor and emotion in colour words .....	
<i>Erling Strudsholm, Carla Bazzanella &amp; Irene Ronga</i>	130
Colour verbs in English and Romanian .....	
<i>Adina Camelia Bleotu</i>	145



## Presentation

Colour terms behave quite differently across languages, similar to the way in which our psychological interpretation varies in response to reflected visible light. Indeed, from a linguistic perspective, a definitive explanation of basic colour terms still eludes many researchers of different disciplines, posing both cognitive and lexical issues. The *Colour and Colour Naming* conference, held in 2015 at the University of Lisbon, offered a chance to explore colour naming processes from a cross-linguistic approach. Scholars were invited to present and submit their own research for discussion, covering a wide range of fields, notably that of lexicology, lexicography, comparative linguistics (especially from a Pan-European perspective), morphology, historical linguistics and cultural studies.

The conference was an initiative of the working group *Lexicography And Lexicology from a Pan-European Perspective*, itself part of the *COST action European Network of Lexicography*. The working group investigates the various ways by which vocabularies of European languages can be represented in dictionaries and how existing information from single language dictionaries can be displayed and interlinked to better communicate their common European heritage.

This present volume gathers together a selection of studies originally presented at the conference and is divided in two sections. The first section outlines a Pan-European perspective of colour names. In the opening chapter, STEVEN N. DWORKIN offers a diachronic overview of colour terms in the Romance Languages. Within a comparative framework, he presents the survival of selected elements pertaining to Latin's complex colour vocabulary, addressing both the national standard and regional varieties of Romance languages. The author examines Latin colour terms that have survived on a Pan-Romance scale (e.g. *viridis* 'green' and *niger* 'black') as well as items that have only survived in scattered Romance territories (e.g. *coccinus* 'scarlet red' in Romontsch). The chapter also discusses the rivalry between the colour terms inherited from spoken Latin and those borrowed

from other languages (e.g. the spread of the Germanic root \*blank 'white' at the expense of the Latin *albus* and *candidus* in Romance languages) and cases in which Romance varieties have created innovative colour terms (e.g. Spanish *amarillo*, Portuguese *amarelo* 'yellow' and their genetic relationship to Latin *amarus* 'bitter').

Moving from this general panorama to a more precise analysis of colour terms in particular languages, MARIA GROSSMAN and PAOLO D'ACHILLE propose a case study of terms regarding the colour 'blue' in the Italian language. They focus on the semantic relations between such terms at different stages in the development of the Italian language, right up to its contemporary form. Following the publication of Berlin & Kay's book (*Basic Colour Terms: Their universality and evolution*, 1969), the question as to whether the number of basic terms may exceed eleven, has been a point of contention for colour vocabulary studies in separate languages. In fact, even Berlin and Kay themselves did not rule out the possibility that 12 basic terms could feasibly exist. Indeed, the status of the Russian terms *sinij* 'blue / dark blue' and *goluboj* 'light blue' and the Hungarian *piros* 'red<sub>1</sub>' and *vörös* 'red<sub>2</sub>' was left open: on the one hand, Berlin & Kay hypothesise that all are basic terms (thus raising the number of basic terms in those two languages to twelve). On the other hand, they also consider the possibility that *goluboj* and *vörös* could well be secondary terms that indicate different shades of the basic terms *sinij* and *piros*. The debated status of the Russian terms *sinij* and *goluboj* has ignited an interesting discussion among linguists, psychologists and anthropologists, stimulating a vast number of specific studies focused on the BLUE area also in other languages, amongst which Italian is included. The availability of large and searchable corpora now makes it possible to advance studies which focus on the distribution of *azzurro*, *blu*, *celeste* and *turchino*, both from a diachronic and a synchronic perspective.

EWA STALA and PRZEMYSŁAW DĘBOWIAK propose a cross-cultural and cross-geographical analysis of secondary basic colours, covering the languages of Polish, Portuguese and Spanish. Here, the selected words are violet, orange, pink and grey. However, these words still pertain to the class of Basic Colour Terms (as referred to in Berlin and Kay's hierarchy) as they are usually described as a mixture of two other (basic) colours (i.e. violet = red + blue; orange = yellow + red; pink =

red + white; grey = black + white) – we call them secondary colour terms. Not only are they the least studied (in comparison to white, black and red), but they also seem more likely to highlight the potential differences between the languages in question. The study is essentially synchronic, but also contains information of diachronic nature (the etymology and, possibly, the history of considered terms). Having demonstrated the presence of violet, orange, pink and grey in the language (idioms, phrases, collocations, etc.), the authors go on to discuss the differences and similarities of colour terms geographical and linguistic ends of Europe have different colour visions.

To conclude this section, ESPERANÇA CARDEIRA writes about the evolution of words that designate the darkest colour in the Portuguese language, notably ‘negro’ and ‘preto’; words which have been present in Portuguese since the thirteenth century, and are defined either in terms of the absence of light or the fusion of all colours. Indeed, when we consider the labelling of skin colour, black also presents itself as a contrast to white. However, due to the heterogeneous nature of skin tone, the Portuguese language soon found itself having to search for new lexicon in order to fill the gaps in colour terminology. In her chapter, the author tries to identify the ways by which try these new words have emerged from pre-existing concepts, using online corpora to analyse such meanings and in doing so, outline the semantic history of preto, negro, pardo, mestiço and mulato.

The second section is devoted to the categorisation and lexicographic description of colour terms. CARLA MARELLO & CRISTINA ONESTI analyse the ways in which diverse Italian dictionaries deal with colour-related terms, in particular the attribution of more than one part of speech, usually a noun and an adjective, to the same headword, and whether they supply the necessary morphosyntactic information. They examine how monolingual dictionaries are rather quick in hosting new (sub)entries for new colours, all the more so when the new colour is a semantic neologism. They conclude that dictionaries are slower in registering morphosyntactic features of colour terms coupled with chiaro ‘light shade’ or scuro ‘deep shade’, whereas they do not follow the same microstructure schema in the whole dictionary for all the articles devoted to colour terms.



ALINA VILLALVA's chapter focuses on categorisation issues. The author presents a hypothesis that advocates the lexical distinction of colour nouns and colour adjectives, claiming that colour adjectives are obtained by conversion from colour nouns, although colour adjectives are far more frequent than nouns in contemporary Portuguese. In Portuguese, as in many other languages, colour words are lexically ambiguous with regard to their grammatical category. Syntax may help to disambiguate but it cannot clarify however the relationship that exists between such words. This often explains why Portuguese contemporary dictionaries present colour words quite inconsistently; sometimes as nouns, other times as adjectives. This gives rise to further questions, such as whether, from a lexical point of view, colour nouns and colour adjectives are one sole entity or rather two different items, and if indeed the latter, how do they differ.

Based on recent studies focusing on the metaphorical and metonymical uses of colour words, ERLING STRUDSHOLM, CARLA BAZZANELLA & IRENE RONGA deal with two particular, deeply entrenched elements regarding the use of colour words: their metaphorical meanings and emotional values. More specifically, they present examples of metaphorical meanings, driven by a colour word / collocate in relation to their conventionalisation and their interlinguistic and intralinguistic variations on the one hand, and the emotional, often contrasting values, which are triggered by colour terms, on the other. The principal languages in comparison are Danish and Italian, which share only a partially common linguistic background and European cultural heritage; but the authors also refer to other languages that have been analysed in studies which focus on colour words from applied perspectives and also in relation to metaphors, proverbs, idioms, and emotions.

In the final chapter, CAMELIA BLEOTU uses a comparative analysis to examine verbs denoting change of colour or causation of change of colour in English and Romanian. As well as pointing out the differences between the two languages, she provides a syntactic representation which in turns enables her to elucidate their developmental processes.

*João Paulo Silvestre, Esperança Carneira, Alina Villalva*

I

*Colour names, pan-European perspective*



# A diachronic overview of color terms in the romance languages: the lexical stability of the latin color vocabulary

*Steven N. Dworkin (University of Michigan)*

## **1. Lexical Stability**

For the specialist in Romance historical linguistics, lexical stability can be defined as the rate of survival of inherited spoken Latin lexical items through oral transmission into the Romance languages. The Romanist who has devoted the most attention to this topic was the late Arnulf Stefenelli (see especially Stefenelli 1992, 1996, 2011). Stefenelli distinguishes between orally-transmitted Latin vocabulary that lives on in all Romance languages, in most Romance languages, or in only one or two Romance languages (in Stefenelli's German terminology, 'panromanisch' 'interromanisch', and 'teilromanisch' respectively). He based his survey on the one thousand most frequent Latin lexical items according to two frequency dictionaries (Gardner 1971, Delatte et al., 1981). I am unaware of previous studies on lexical stability in the Romance languages based on a systematic analysis of stability by semantic categories. Dworkin (2016) looks briefly at lexical stability in such fields as basic or lower numerals, kinship terminology, body parts, the calendar and the seasons, and domestic and wild animals. This paper seeks to describe and analyze the lexical stability of orally-transmitted Latin color terms or chromonyms in the Romance languages. In this context, lexical stability refers to the survival as a core

color term through oral transmission into the Romance languages of the Latin lexical item in question, and does not imply lack of further semantic or functional evolution which form part of the word's history in the individual Romance languages. Secondly, as appropriate, it will also make some observations as relevant on the lexical stability within the recorded history of the various Romance languages of selected Romance color terms and of the role of lexical borrowing and internal creations in the history of such lexical items.

This paper will limit its purview to the Romance labels for six -- white, black, red, green, yellow, blue -- of the eleven basic or core color categories identified in Berlin-Kay (1969). It will be concerned principally with the survival or non-survival of the Latin chromatic lexicon signifiers as core Romance color terms, and not with some of the difficult semantic interpretations of some of these terms in the documented medieval stages of the Romance languages. It will not deal with the many Latin color terms that survive only as secondary labels with restricted semantic scopes (the color of skin, hair, animal hides, etc.), nor will it deal with figurative meanings that many of these items developed over time, e.g., the use of labels for 'green' to designate 'unripe, immature, inexperienced'.

Written Latin had a rich color lexicon, with terms making distinctions between bright, dark, and neutral hues. In some instances it is difficult to determine for a given set of Latin chromonyms which one was the core term. The most detailed study of the Latin color lexicon remains André (1949). Only three Latin color terms seems to fall into Stefenelli's pan-Romance category, namely *NIGER* 'black', *VIRIDIS* 'green', and *ALBUS* 'white'. Whereas the Romance descendants of the first two adjectives have lived on until today in most of the Romance languages, reflexes of *ALBUS* have been supplanted as a core color term in many Romance-speaking regions by the introduction of a rival Germanic base.

## **2. Green**

There is little to say regarding the fate of *VIRIDIS* in the Romance languages. As can be seen from the following list of forms the Latin base has survived in all

Romance-speaking regions of the former Empire: Sardinian *birde*, Rumanian, Italian *verde*, Engadine *verd*, Friulian, French, Occitan, Catalan *vert*, Spanish, Portuguese *verde*, Dolomitic Ladin *vërt*, Vegliote *verda*. As Kristol (1978: 271) states: “Le vert est un champ d’une simplicité sans pareil en ce qui concerne la diachronie du vocabulaire ... du champ dans le latin classique et dans toutes les langues romanes”. The Latin adjective has had no serious competitors. The DELL states “La fortune de l’adjectif viridis dans les langues romanes provient de son emploi fréquent dans la langue rustique” (s.v. VIREO). The importance of the color green in early agricultural societies raises the question whether designations for ‘green’ show a high degree of lexical stability in other language families. The data found in Buck (1949) points to such stability in the Germanic and Slavic languages. Nevertheless, the Proto-Indo-European base that has been reconstructed for these items may well have referred to plant and vegetation growth, and, consequently, was not a basic color term (Biggam 2014: 6-9); cf. Lat. *virere* ‘to show green growth, to be green with vegetation’.

### 3. Black

Latin had two terms for ‘black’, NIGER ‘shining black’ and ATER ‘dark black’ (both often employed with metaphorical negative meanings). The latter seems to have survived only in Old Italian *atro* and northern Italian *adro* as a chromonym and, frequently, with secondary figurative meanings (LEI, s.v. ATER, TLIO). Varieties of Gallo-Romance (especially Occitan and Francoprovençal) offer a large number of substantivized orally-transmitted derivatives of ATER used to designate various dark-colored fruits and plants; cf. Fr. *airelle*, ‘huckleberry’, and the many other dialect reflexes recorded in FEW, 25, s.v. ATER. Rare Fr *atre* is a sixteenth-century Latinism, and has retained the pejorative connotations of its Latin source.

Orally-transmitted reflexes of NIGER are found from the time of the earliest texts as the basic term for ‘black’ in all the Romance languages: French *noir*, Spanish, Portuguese *negro*, Italian *nero*, Engadine *nair*, Friulian *neri*, Catalan, Occitan *negre*, Rumanian *negru*. One can also include here Sardinian *nieddu/nigeddu* < NIGELLUS ‘blackish’ (REW<sup>3</sup>, #5917). In Portuguese and Spanish, *negro* faced varying degrees of

competition from *preto* and *prieto*. The origin of these two forms is obscure. Although they differ with regard to the details, Malkiel (1953) and the DCECH derive them from the verb *apretar* ‘to squeeze’. Both these adjectives seem to be synonyms of *negro*. The medieval textual evidence offers more examples of *negro* than of *prieto/preto*; the small number of derivatives produced by these two adjectives (Old Spanish *pretura*, Old Portuguese *pretidão*) may bespeak the relative state of their vitality in medieval Luso- and Hispano-Romance. Whereas Spanish *prieto* was already considered obsolete by the beginning of the seventeenth century (to judge by the statement in Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* [1611]), *preto* gradually came to be the basic designation for ‘black’ in both European and Brazilian Portuguese.

In some varieties of Dolomitic Ladin, *fosc[h]/fosk*, reflexes of lat. FUSCUS ‘dark, swarthy, brown’, are replacing or rivaling *nejger*, the local descendants of NIGER. Given the late date of the first Ladin texts, the analyst cannot determine whether this rivalry goes back to the level of regional spoken Latin or represents a later semantic evolution of the descendants of FUSCUS.

#### 4. White

Latin distinguished two terms for ‘white’, ALBUS, the basic term, and CANDIDUS, ‘brilliant, shining white’. The former left reflexes in (almost) all Romance territories. Although the family of ALBUS has left descendants in Gallo- and Italo-Romance, examples of Old French *albe/aube* and Old Italian *alvo* as an independent adjective are very rare. Schafer (1987: 36) calls into question the authenticity of the few instances of the Old French forms. The Latin adjective has survived in such compounds as *aubifoin*, *aubépine* ‘hawthorn’, and in such toponyms as *Auberive*, *Fiumalbo*. The LEI, (s.v. ALBUS) records medieval examples of *albo* used to describe the fruit of certain plants (*fico albo*), paper, clothing, and textiles. It also claims that the example of *albo* in the so-called *Indovinello Veronese* is probably a Latin form. Although far outnumbered in Spanish and Portuguese by *blanco* and *branco* respectively, *alvo* seems to have enjoyed a high degree of vitality as a color adjective

in medieval Spanish and Portuguese. before falling into disuse in the early modern period (for examples, see DEM, s.v. *albo*). ALBUS has also survived in relic areas: Rumanian *alb*, Vegliote *yualb*, Friulian *stradalbe* ‘Milky Way’, Grigione *alf/alva*, Lower Engadine *alp/alba*, Sardinian *albu, alvu*, archaic *arvu*.

In contrast, CANDIDUS did not fare well in the Romance languages. Some northern varieties of Italo-Romance contain such forms as *cando/canda, cand(e)*; see LEI (s.v. CANDIDUS). Does *candido*, well documented in medieval texts with reference to objects, cloths, textiles, reflect learned or oral transmission of the Latin base (cf. *tiepido* < TEPIDUS) ?; This Latin base also survived in some varieties of southern Gallo-Romance: Occitan *cande* ‘blanc; clair, proper; transparent (de l’eau); Cantal, Limousin. *cande* ‘très blanc’, Gascon *cande* ‘brillant, propre’ pur blanc clair; see FEW (Vol. 2: 281-282).

There is no evidence for the survival of CANDIDUS as an independent adjective in Spanish or Portuguese. The toponym *Rucandio* (province of Burgos) has been explained as a derivative of RIVUS CANDIDUS (García Sánchez 2007: 161, 261); oral transmission of CANDIDUS would have yielded *\*candio* in Hispano-Romance. Do the toponyms *Candemuela, Candepajares* (Menéndez Pidal 1950: par. 39:1), as well as Spanish, Portuguese. *trigo candial*, Old Catalan *forment candel*, Gasc *pan canesal*, referring to a type of wheat that produces a very white bread, bespeak the presence at some point in the spoken Latin of the Iberian Peninsula of the Latin family headed by CANDERE ‘to be shining white’?

In most Romance varieties the reflexes of ALBUS and CANDIDUS gave way before descendants of the Germanic root *\*BLANK* ‘bright, shining white’, which may have been employed at the outset with reference to horses, and only later came to be applied to animals, weapons, and the human face. Reflexes of this Germanic base are widespread in the Romance languages: French *blanc*, Spanish *blanco*, Portuguese *branco*, Italian *bianco*, Catalan *blanc*, Friulian *blanc*, Dolomitic Ladin *blanch*. Specialists have offered two different analyses for the introduction, incorporation, and diffusion of these chromonyms in the Romance languages. One school of thought holds that the Germanic base represents a very early borrowing into the Latin of the Empire in those regions of Latin-Germanic linguistic contact (hence its



absence from Rumanian). I am not aware of any vestiges of a Latinized *\*blankus/blancus* in post-Classical sources (cf. *blavus* ‘blue’, below). More recent thinking has proposed that the Germanic base first entered the spoken language of Gaul, from where it spread elsewhere (with the local phonetic adjustments of the /bl-/ cluster) with the Carolingian Empire (for a summary of the pertinent arguments and relevant bibliography see the entry [authored by M. Barbato] in LEI, *Germanismi*, fascicolo 6: cols. 1053-1057).

## 5. Red

Although RUBER (documented as early as Ennius and traceable to a proto-Indoeuropean base)) may have been the core designation for ‘red’ in written Latin, flanked by RUFUS (whose medial -F- points to its non-Latin Italic origin), the Romance evidence shows that it failed to strike root in the spoken language. Before falling into disuse RUBER acted on dialectal and rural ROBUS/ROBEUS, which originally designated the hides of animals, especially oxen. The result of this lexical blend was RUBEUS, the source of French *rouge*, Occitan *roge*, Catalan *roig*, Spanish *rubio*, Portuguese *ruivo*, Sardinian, *ryyu*, short-lived Old Italian *robbio*, and Rumanian *roib*. Although these Romance forms document the lexical stability of *rubeus* in the transition from Latin to Romance, their semantic ranges show a high degree of variation. Rumanian *roib* designated only the coat of a horse; Spanish *rubio* and Portuguese *ruivo* indicate a reddish or strawberry blonde, especially with regard to hair color, a meaning that is found in medieval sources. (Cunha 2014: 2255). Old Italian *robbio* is found mainly in notarial texts to describe the color of steers, cows, and calves. In a contiguous swath of territory comprising French, Occitan, and Catalan, the reflexes of RUBEUS listed above faced competition as the basic term for ‘red’ from the descendants of VERMICULUS (see below).

Though not frequent in written Latin, RUSS(E)US ‘brownish-red; red-haired’ enjoyed much vitality in the spoken language as illustrated by Old Spanish *roxo* (modern *rojo*), Portuguese *roxoxo*, French *roux*, Catalan *ros*, Italian *rosso*, Friulian *ros*, Vegliote *ruas/raus*. The French and Catalan terms here designate a hair color.

Though not unknown in earlier periods, Old Spanish *roxo* appears infrequently before the fifteenth century. Medieval Spanish preferred *vermejo/bermejo* as the designation for ‘red’, as does Portuguese today with *vermelho*. Portuguese *roxo* now designates a color leaning toward ‘purple’, and is scantily documented with the meaning ‘red’ in medieval sources (Swearingen 2014). Specialists in Rumanian etymology are divided as to whether *roșu* ‘red’ goes back to RUSSEUS or to ROSEUS. Phonetically both bases can account for *roșu*, but favors RUSSEUS on grounds of semantic identity seem to favor RUSSEUS.

As a color term, VERMICULUS, diminutive of VERMIS ‘worm’ originally referred to a bright red or scarlet dye produced by the larva of a certain small worm. It is first attested as a color adjective in the Vulgate (Exodus 35:25), where it designates a bright color, varyingly translated in English bibles as ‘crimson’ or ‘scarlet’. In Isidore of Seville, it seems to be equated with RUBER. In medieval varieties of Romance its descendants (Old French *vermeil*, Old Spanish *vermejo*) often served as the core term for ‘red’, a status that still applies to Portuguese *vermelho* and Catalan *vermell*. Typologically similar is the history of COCCINUS/COCCINEUS ‘scarlet colored’ < COCCUM ‘berry/insect that grows upon the scarlet oak’, attested already as color terms in Latin, whose reflexes have become the core labels for ‘red’ in Romantsch and in Dolomitic Ladin (*tgietschen*, *cotschens*, *cöc* and other formal variants; see Kramer, *EWDS*, Liver 2012: 88). Kramer cites regional Rumanian *coacin* ‘brebis au museau jaune ou rougeâtre’, megelenorumanian *coatsin* ‘red’ as additional reflexes of this base.

## 6. Yellow

No one Latin term that designated shades of ‘yellow’ came to dominate in the Romance languages. Latin labels for shades of the color in question are PALLIDUS, FALVUS, FULVUS, LURIDUS, MELLEUS, CROCEUS, GALBINUS. This last term, which meant ‘greenish-yellow’ is the source of Rumanian *galbàn* and Old French *jalne* (the forerunner of modern *jaune*). The Old French form was borrowed as

Italian *giallo* (> Sardinian *ǵallu/dzallu* [DES: 602]), Sicilian *gálinu*, Friulan *zâl*, Dolomitic Ladin *ghel*, and Old Spanish *jalde*.

Elsewhere, various Latin words became the basic label for ‘yellow’. Among the labels for ‘yellow’ in the Iberian Peninsula, Spanish *amarillo* and Portuguese *amarelo* have a unique history. Amply documented in the medieval language, both continue AMARELLUS, diminutive of AMARUS ‘bitter’ (Pérez González 2010: 40). The semantic history reflects the medieval belief that a yellowish skin color characterized a person suffering from an excess of bile. Catalan *groc* continues Latin CROCUS ‘saffron’, as did Old Occitan *groc* before it ceded to *jauna/jaune*, borrowings from northern Gallo-Romance. Wagner (DES: s.v. *grogó*) and Coromines (DECat, s.v. *groc*) consider Sardinian *grogó/grogu* to be Catalanisms. In Romontsch the basic term for ‘yellow’ is *mellen*, a reflex of Latin MELINUS ‘pertaining to quince’ (Liver 2012: 73). Wagner points out that in Sardinian, *melinu* refers specifically to a color of a horse’s hide. In some varieties of Occitan, *rosset/rossel*, a term referring to red color hair elsewhere, has become the basic word for ‘yellow’.

## 7. Blue

The various Latin adjectives for the different shades of ‘blue’ – CAERULUS ‘sky-blue’, LIVIDUS, GLAUCUS, CAESIUS (used only with reference to the eyes), and VENETUS ‘sea blue’ – did not fare well in the Romance languages. Of these terms, only VENETUS survived through oral transmission into Rumanian as *vînăt*. Nevertheless, the core term in Rumanian for ‘blue’ is *albastru*, a descendant of Latin ALABASTER ‘alabaster, type of whitish marble’, already documented in 1588 (Academia Română 2012:60). The original meaning of *albastru* may have been ‘gray, ash-colored’, as in Arumanian *oaie albastra* ‘gray sheep’ (Mihaescu 1993: 227).

Most Romance languages have turned to borrowings from other languages to designate ‘blue’. The oldest appears to be Germanic \*BLAO, the source of Old French *blo* (modern *bleu*). This base also lives on in Romontsch, Friulian, Dolomitic Ladin, varieties of northern Italian, and Vegliote. Italianists analyze *blu* as an early modern Gallicism. In Dolomitic Ladin one finds *brüm*, glossed in the EWD as ‘dunkelblau’,

but translated in Latin as ‘caerulus color’ in 1763 (Bartolomei). Its source is the Germanic base that gives Fr. *brun* ‘brown’. In Dolomitic Ladin *blé(f)*, used today only in some regions, can mean ‘light blue’ (EWD, 300, 362).

Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian have adapted an Arabic base LĀZAWĀRD as the core term for ‘blue’. Spanish *azul* is rarely documented prior to the mid thirteenth-century, when it is usually found as a noun meaning ‘lapis lazuli’. The Alfonsine corpus provides no examples of adjectival *azul* (Kasten and Nitti 2002). The basic Arabic term for ‘blue’ ZARQA is the source of Spanish, Portuguese *zarco*, with a specialized meaning ‘light blue’. Most of the nine thirteenth century examples of *zarco* found in CORDE are in texts such as *Poridat de las poridades*, *Judizio de las estrellas*, *Bocados de oro*, all based on Arabic originals. Since *azul* entered Spanish as part of a technical jargon, how did speakers of early medieval Hispano-Romance denote the color ‘blue’ (assuming that they had need to do so)? Might a descendant of the Germanic base discussed above have enjoyed some degree of vitality in the spoken Romance varieties of the Iberian Peninsula? A list under the heading “De coloribus versium” in the *Etimologiae* of Isidore of Seville (xix: 28:8) contains a Latinized *blavus* (Sofer 1930: 108-109). Lapesa (2003: 94) records one example of *blavo* in a late eleventh-century document from the eastern part of the Iberian Peninsula. Opinions are divided as to whether Catalan *blau* is a Gallicism or a local descendant of \*BLAO. Although *azzurro* is found in Old Italian texts, there is some question as to its vitality in the spoken language at earlier stages. It does not appear in Italian dialects, where one finds for blue terms cognate to standard *turchino*. Although *blu* is a modern Gallicism, Old Italian texts offer examples of *biada*, *biado*, *blavo*, *blava*, and the Gallicism *bioa*, *biodo*, *bioe*, *bioi*, *bioia*, *bioio*, *bloi*, *bloio*, *broi*, *broia*, *broio* < Old French *blou*.

## 8. A Brief Conclusion

In comparison to the other semantic fields examined in Dworkin 2016, Latin color terms show a relatively low degree of lexical stability in the transition to the Romance languages. It would be worthwhile studying the evolution of basic color

terms in other individual languages or across language families to see if this relative lack of diachronic lexical stability is widespread cross-linguistically. It seems that there is a great degree of variability and instability with regard to how humans physically and cognitively perceive and distinguish the various tones and shades of color. It seems reasonable to conclude that this perceptual and cognitive instability may be linguistically reflected in the historical evolution of the Latin chromatic vocabulary in the Romance languages.

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### Abbreviations

DECAT = Coromines 1980-2002

DCECH = Corominas and Pascual 1980-1991

DÉLL= Eronut-Meillet 1967

DEM = Müller 1987-

DES = Wagner 1960-64

EWD = Kramer 1988-1998

FEW = Wartburg 1922-2002

LEI = Pfister and Schweickard 1979-

TLIO = Beltrami 1998-

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# Italian colour terms in the BLUE area: synchrony and diachrony

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## **1. Brief survey of the literature**

The linguistic encoding of colour – i.e. the existence of a continuum that different languages break into arbitrary discrete segments and the evolution towards ever more complex and differentiated colour-naming systems – is a privileged topic for both ethnolinguistics and psycholinguistics. Semantics also frequently refers to colour terms for illustrating theoretical issues. Colour terms are of course also the subject of specific research.

Colour-naming in its different aspects (linguistic, perceptive, cognitive, cultural) has been a privileged area of research for linguists, psychologists and anthropologists since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Grossmann (1988), a study on the semantics of colour terms in Catalan, Spanish, Italian, Romanian, Latin and Hungarian, includes a history of the literature and an interdisciplinary bibliography of about 1300 studies on the colour-naming systems of different languages published between 1814 and 1987. The number of works published after this date is so high that we shall only be able to mention a few here.

The “space” of colour names, whose referent is the colour space, is made up of the semantic structure of a set of lexemes. The linguistic encoding of the perceptual and physical substance of colours implies a generalization process: each name refers to a group of shades, abstracting away from the differences among them. Different



languages segment the colour space in different ways: the boundaries of individual categories may fall in different places; there may be differences in: the number of available terms, the basis for making distinctions, the weight attributed to the three psycho-sensorial variables of colour, i.e. *hue* (what a layman refers to when talking about colour by classifying his/her perception as 'green', 'red', etc.), *brightness* (the variation in intensity, passing from lighter to darker shades), *saturation* (the percentage of pure hue in a colour; saturation is higher when the colour appears to be less blended with white). The assessment of differences between languages should also take account of other factors such as: in some languages, colour terms can also include information about other factors besides the three aforementioned variables (succulence vs. desiccation, features of surface texture, features of shape and consistency, etc.); often, apart from identifying a given shade, colour names can be used as symbols for representing social, religious and moral concepts of varying complexity. Also, intralinguistic differences can emerge based on variables such as age, gender, education and social status of speaker.

The most recent studies on colour terms can be framed in the more general debate regarding linguistic relativism vs. universalism. The seminal work in this respect is the 1969 book by Brent Berlin and Paul Kay. Their research was aimed at demonstrating both the existence of universals in colour lexicons and the presence of an evolutionary connection between these universals and the historical development of languages. According to these two scholars, there exists a universal inventory of eleven perceptual categories that act as psychophysical referents for basic colour terms (two to eleven) in each language. These terms have a number of characteristic features: from the *morphological point of view* they are not complex; from the *semantic point of view* they are not transparent, they are not hyponyms of other terms and their application is not restricted to specific classes of entities; from the *psychological point of view*, they are salient to speakers. Non-basic colour terms, on the other hand, are morphologically analysable, semantically transparent and generally more recent than basic terms. When a language encodes less than eleven categories, according to Berlin and Kay, restrictions apply to the categories that are actually encoded. As to the historical evolution of the colour lexicon, it is assumed

that the encoding of the eleven universal perceptual categories takes place, as shown in Figure 1, in a partially fixed chronological order of seven evolutionary stages (Berlin / Kay 1969: 4):

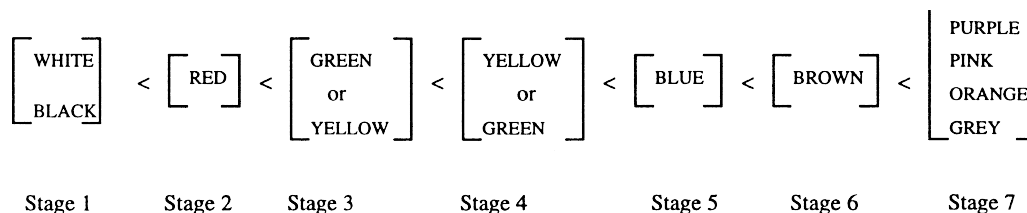


Figure 1

Berlin and Kay's (1969) book was a "revolution" in colour-naming studies. It attracted vast consensus, but also widespread disagreement, and literally boosted research aimed at validating or invalidating the theory of the two scholars. We shall mention but a few of the many partial revisions and successive elaborations of Berlin and Kay's theses. Kay (1975) revisited the temporal order in which focal points are encoded by introducing the GRUE category and established correlations between the evolution of colour term systems and the synchronic heterogeneity of a linguistic community. It was again Kay, this time in collaboration with McDaniel (1978), who introduced: a) the distinction, based on the neurophysiology of colour vision, between "primary", "composite" and "derived" colour categories; b) the reinterpretation of the evolutionary sequence, no longer seen as a successive encoding of new focal points but rather as a differentiation of previously existing primary colour categories. The two scholars maintain that the number of basic terms in a language can be higher than that assumed by Berlin and Kay and that their number can vary even within one and the same linguistic community (Kay / McDaniel 1978: 640-641). Other important studies were authored by Kay et al. (1997), Kay / Maffi (1999, 2013) and other scholars who worked on the data collected for the *World Color Survey* (Kay et al. 2009; <http://www1.icsi.berkeley.edu/wcs/>) and the *Mesoamerican Color Survey* (MacLaury 1997 and other studies in the "Vantage theory" framework). A different interpretation of the evolutionary sequence was proposed by Wierzbicka (1990) who sees the development of new basic colour terms

as a consequence of the differentiation of complex concepts and not as the emergence of new focal points.

After the publication of Berlin and Kay's book, trying to answer the question whether the number of basic terms could be increased past the eleven mark has been a frequent challenge for colour vocabulary studies in individual languages. Actually, the authors themselves did not rule out the possibility that 12 basic terms could exist. The status of the Russian terms *sinij* 'blue / dark blue' and *goluboj* 'light blue' and the Hungarian *piros* 'red' and *vörös* 'red<sup>2</sup>' was in fact left open: on the one hand Berlin and Kay admit the possibility that all could be basic (thus raising to 12 the number of basic terms in those two languages), on the other hand they also consider the possibility that *goluboj* and *vörös* are secondary terms that denote different shades of the basic terms *sinij* and *piros* (Berlin / Kay 1969: 35-36, 95, 99).

The dichotomy between the Hungarian terms *piros* 'red' and *vörös* 'red<sup>2</sup>', pointed out by Berlin and Kay, generated interest in many scholars (cf. Grossmann 2006, Uusküla 2011, Benczes / Tóth-Czifra 2014, and their references). Other analyses in the RED area have been carried out as regards the distribution of *vermell* and *roig* in Catalan (Grossmann 1988), *rojo*, *colorado* and *encarnado* in Spanish (Grossmann 1988), *vermelho*, *encarnado* and *roxo* in European Portuguese (Correia 2006, Schäfer-Priess 2010, Silvestre et al. 2014), *červený* and *rudý* in Czech (Uusküla 2011). In the BROWN area, Forbes (1979, 1986, 2006) studied the dichotomy between *brun* and *marron* in French.

The disputed status of the Russian terms *sinij* 'blue / dark blue' and *goluboj* 'light blue' ignited an interesting debate among linguists, psychologists and anthropologists. There is a vast literature on the subject, including works by a group of researchers at the University of Surrey (Corbett / Morgan 1988, Morgan / Corbett 1989, Moss et al. 1990, Davies / Corbett 1994, 1997, Laws et al. 1995, Davies et al. 1998, etc.) and various Russian scholars (discussed in Paramei 2005, 2007). These studies are based on experiments with informants (work with colour arrays - naming, mapping, identifying focal point; color-eliciting tasks, etc.), occasionally in combination with an analysis of corpus-based frequency, derivational potential and collocational preferences of the terms. While there is agreement upon the fact that

both terms are basic and vary on the brightness axis (*goluboj*, light vs. *sinij*, dark), recent research singled out the existence of differences in their combinatory possibilities and in their figurative, connotative and symbolic meanings. An interesting research angle is provided by Taylor et al. (1997): The authors, who build on MacLaury's "Vantage theory", underline the partial overlapping of the distribution of the two lexemes and assign a "dominant" role proper of a basic term to *sinij* as opposed to a "recessive", non-basic status to *goluboj*.

Berlin and Kay's book and, more specifically, the debate on the status of *sinij* and *goluboj* ignited a vast number of specific studies on the BLUE area also in other languages, such Ukrainian and Bielorrussian (Hippisley 2001, Starko 2013), Polish (Stanulewicz 2010, Skuza 2014), Old English (Biggam 1997), Old French (Schäfer-Priess 2011), Catalan (Davies et al. 1995), Modern Greek (Androulaki et al. 2006, Athanasopoulos 2009), Nepali (Bolton et al. 1980), Turkish (Özgen / Davies 1998, Rätsep 2011), Maltese (Borg 2011), Udmurt (Ryabina 2011), etc.

The literature on colour terms in Italian is rather substantial. Most of the studies, be they on the entire set of colour terms or specifically on the nearest equivalents of *sinij* and *goluboj*, were published after Berlin / Kay (1969). Among studies published before Berlin / Kay (1969), attention should be drawn to two studies moving from a Romance perspective: Martius (1947), a dissertation on the BLUE area, and Giacalone Ramat (1967), a wide-ranging paper on colour terms of Germanic origin. In outlining the history of *blu*, Giacalone Ramat also dwells on the semantic relationships between *azzurro*, *blu*, *celesti* and *turchino* in contemporary Italian and observes that *blu* took over *azzurro* as the term used for all the shades of the BLUE area.

Also the works by Kristol and Grossmann move from a Romance perspective and, from the methodological point of view, are couched in the framework of lexical semantics. In his book, Kristol (1978) analyses Italian colour terms both from the synchronic and the diachronic point of view; in Grossmann's monograph (1988; cf. also Grossmann / Mazzoni 1972, 1976) the typological overview of different naming systems is mainly from a synchronic perspective and the description of the historical evolution of colour terminology is limited to Catalan. With respect to the BLUE

area, Kristol comes to the conclusion that *azzurro*, the dominant term in the area, was historically present only in the written language and absent in the dialects, and entered the spoken language only after the political unification of Italy. Also in written language, *celeste* denotes light shades whereas *turchino* and *blu* denote darker shades of the BLUE area (the *turchino* - *blu* dualism is accounted for by the purist preference in the 19<sup>th</sup> century for *turchino* to the detriment of *blu*, a word of French origin). According to Kristol, both *celeste* and *blu* / *turchino* are common in dialects, with a predominance of *blu*. Grossmann (1988: 170), based on data from lexicographic sources and informant interviews, underlines that in some speakers' opinion *azzurro* denotes a shade in-between *celeste* 'light blue' and *blu* 'dark blue', whereas for others its meaning is similar to *celeste* and both are in opposition to *blu*. Grossmann further underlines that the extension of one of the two terms, *azzurro* or *blu*, or both, as also their degree of usage are subject to diatopic, diastratic and diaphasic variation.

RED, YELLOW and BLUE are the subject of a recent work by Skuza (2014). Building on previous synchronic and diachronic studies on the colour lexicon in Italian and Polish, the author broadens the research field to a number of ethnolinguistic and cultural aspects. Mention should also be given to Ronga (2009) where the author examines from a historical perspective the linguistic and cultural factors that led to the "exception of blue" in Italian, as opposed to other European languages.

Many recent psycholinguistic studies on the BLUE area in Italian adopt methodologies similar to those adopted by the aforementioned studies on Russian and other languages, i.e. they are based on naming experiments and elicitation tasks and, in some cases, on identifying collocational preferences. Among them: Paggetti et al. (2011), Sandford (2012), Valdegamberi et al. (2011), Paggetti / Menegaz (2012, 2013), Paramei / Menegaz (2013), Bimler / Uusküla (2014), Paramei et al. (2014), Uusküla (2014), Paggetti et al. (2015). The overall findings confirm that naming the area in Italian requires at least two basic terms, *blu* plus *azzurro* and/or *celeste*, and show that the prototypes for the latter two and their interrelationship are determined by diatopic factors. It is further shown that *blu*, apart from denoting

dark shades, can also act as hyperonym for the two other terms. Significant in this respect are the answers to a task on hyponymy relations collected by Sandford (2012: 287): “‘Kind of BLUE’ task responses show that 93% of Italian informants responded affirmatively to *azzurro* as a kind of *blu*, and 100% affirmed that *celeste* is a kind of *blu*, but *blu* is not a kind of *azzurro* or *celeste*. Only 10% of informants claimed that *celeste* was a type of *azzurro*.” The author claims that even though both *blu* and *azzurro* maintain their status as basic colour terms in contemporary Italian, *azzurro* is experiencing a gradual recession.

The structure of naming systems that fall within our interest has also been studied in other Romance languages spoken in Italy and Italo-Romance dialects. Kristol (1979, 1980) authored two specific studies on the history and usage of *azzurro*, *blu*, *celeste* and *turchino* in Italo-Romance dialects. Based on data extracted from material collected in the period 1919-1927 for the linguistic and ethnographic atlas of Italy and Southern Switzerland by K. Jaberg and J. Jud (*Sprach- und Sachatlas Italiens und der Südschweiz*, Zofingen, Ringier, 1928-1940), Kristol identifies regression phenomena, i.e. a system that is poorer when compared to Latin, and claims that Italian dialects are basically a “museum” of the different evolutionary stages of the colour lexicon. Data also support Kristol’s (1978) findings on the status of *azzurro*. Vincent (1986, cf. also 1987) points out an interesting coexistence in Naples of three forms, *ble*, *bleu* [blø] and *blu*. These are different and independent adaptations of the French term *bleu*, whose usage is influenced by diastratic and diaphasic factors. Sardinian colour terms have been studied by Giacalone Ramat (1978) and Wolf (1985). Giacalone Ramat (1978) points out a dialectal differentiation as regards central terms in the BLUE area: Southern dialects use an Ispanism, *asúlu* (< Sp. *azul* ‘blue’) as central term, whereas the Italianism *biaíttu* (< It. *biadetto* ‘bluish’ or Medieval Lat. *bladictus*) is widespread in Northern dialects. One should also remember Zörner (2005), a study on the colour lexicon in some Piedmontese and Franco-Provençal dialects spoken in Northern Italy.

Various morphological features of Italian colour terms, i.e. patterns for forming derived and compound words, have been studied in Grossmann / Mazzoni (1972), Grossmann (1988), Elwert (1989), Koura (1992), Timmermann (2002) and

D'Achille / Grossmann (2013).

There are also specific works on the figurative, idiomatic and symbolic meanings of Italian colour terms. Among them, with specific reference to new coinages, the rather substantial study by Fresu (2006) and, in a contrastive perspective, Arcaini (1993, 1996) on Italian and French, Philip (2003, 2006) on Italian and English, Bronowski (1998) and Skuza (2010, 2014) on Italian and Polish, Ross (1989) on Italian and Dutch, Bocz (2012) on Italian and Hungarian. Further research dealt with traductological (Pierini 2000) and acquisitional (Mecacci / Serafini 1987) aspects of the colour lexicon.

## 2. Latin colour terms in the BLUE area

The terms of the BLUE area in Latin were rather limited as opposed to other areas of the colour space, such as RED or YELLOW. The term with the broader meaning in the BLUE area was *caerul(e)us* (cf. André 1949: 162-183, Giacalone Ramat 1967: 184-187, Kristol 1978: 220-228, Grossmann 1988: 111-112). *Caerul(e)us* is derived from *caelu(m)* 'sky', but the relationship between the two terms was most likely no longer transparent to speakers, who primarily used *caerul(e)us* for denoting rather dark shades of blue, which in particular contexts tended to black or green. It was used for describing the colour of the sky, the sea, the blue band in a rainbow and a colouring agent. Also *cyaneus* and *lividus* denoted dark shades: the first term, of Greek origin, described the colour of the sky, of sapphires, birds, etc., whereas the second mainly referred to the purplish blue colour of the skin following a trauma. As for light shades, with particular reference to eyes, *caesius* was used for describing those tending to grey, whereas another Grecism, *glaucus*, referred to greenish shades. The adjective *venetus*, that denoted in particular one of the colours of the auriga in the circus, probably originated from the ethnic noun *Venetus*, name of the inhabitants of the area where a specific corporation of charioteers originally came from. André (1949: 224-229) also points out a number of adjectives derived from these terms: *subcaerul(e)us* and *sublividus*, for shades near to *caerul(e)us* and *lividus*, and *livens*, a deverbal adjective denoting the state of being *lividus*.

The colour lexicon of the BLUE area in Romance languages reflects a thorough renovation when compared to Latin. None of the original Latin terms has a direct Romance continuation, with the sole exception of *venetus*, preserved in Romanian (*vânăt* ‘purplish dark blue, livid’; *vânătă*, an ellipsis of the noun phrase *pătlăgea vânătă*, is also the name for ‘aubergine’) and in a few Southern Italian dialects. The basic terms of the majority of Romance languages either come from Persian through Arabic (Sp. and Port. *azul*, It. *azzurro*) or are of Germanic origin (Fr. *bleu*, Cat. and Occ. *blau*, It. *blu* through French); only Romanian uses a term of Latin origin, *albastru*, whose etymon *\*albaster* derives from *albus* ‘white’. It should be noted that some of the aforementioned Latin terms can be found in Italian, i.e. *ceruleo* or *cerulo* ‘light blue’, *cesio* ‘light blue’, *glauco* ‘greenish blue’, *livido* ‘purplish dark blue, livid’. These terms are learned words borrowed from Latin and, with the exception of *livido*, typical of the literary register. They are attested since the earliest times of the history of Italian and are still in usage.

### 3. Italian colour terms in the BLUE area

The availability of large and searchable corpora makes it now possible to deepen the study of the distribution of the central terms, i.e. *azzurro*, *blu*, *celest* and *turchino*, from both a diachronic and a synchronic perspective. Our research focuses on the semantic relations between these terms at different stages of the development of the Italian language, up to contemporary Italian. The data we will be discussing are taken from the following corpora:

- la Repubblica (newspaper texts dating from 1985 to 2000, roughly 380M tokens), <http://sslmitdevonline.sslmit.unibo.it/corpora/corpus.php?path=&name=Repubblica>
- DiaCORIS (different kinds of prose texts dating from 1861 to 2001, roughly 25M tokens), <http://corpora.ficlit.unibo.it/DiaCORIS/>
- PTLLIN (literary prose texts dating from 1947 to 2006), DVD-ROM
- OVI (Old Italian texts dating before 1375, roughly 23M tokens), <http://gattoweb.oivi.cnr.it/>



- MIDIA (various types of texts dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> century to 1947, roughly 7.5M tokens), <http://www.corpusmidia.unito.it/>
- BIZ (literary texts from early Italian to the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century), DVD-ROM
- BADIP – Corpus LIP (different types of spoken texts recorded in the period 1990-1992 in Milan, Florence, Rome and Naples, roughly 0.5M tokens), <http://badip.uni-graz.at/it/>.

To start with let us briefly recap the history of *azzurro*, *blu*, *celeste* and *turchino*.

*Azzurro*, as we anticipated, is a Persian word (*lāžward*) that entered into Italian through Arabic. It is attested in Latin already in the 9<sup>th</sup> century as *lazurus* and in 13<sup>th</sup> century Old Italian with numerous formal variants (see in TLIO: *aççurro*, *açuro*, *açurro*, *agiur*, *agiurro*, *arzuro*, *azule*, *azur*, *azurlo*, *azuro*, *azzurro*, *azzurro*, *laçur*, *lajiuro*, *lazuro*). Originally, it denoted lapis lazuli. The semantic transformation into a name for colouring agents and into proper colour term had already happened in Old Italian, where *azzurro* was used for indicating the colour of cloths, clothes, heraldry elements and also of the sky (*lo die ... lo cielo azzurro chiaro, e la notte ... quello azzurro più oscuro* ‘during the day ... the light *azzurro* sky, and during the night ... the darker *azzurro* one’, Restoro d’Arezzo, 1282). *Azzurro* also occurs twice in Dante’s *Inferno* and three times in Boccaccio. With respect to Dante, Perrone (2001) points out that the terms of the BLUE area are a mere 2% of the total of Dante’s colour lexicon, as opposed to 31% for WHITE, 26% for BLACK, 19% for RED, 14% for GREEN, 8% for YELLOW. In all diachronic corpora *azzurro* is extremely frequent. It can be found mainly (though not exclusively) in literary texts, where it qualifies the colour of various entities (sky, sea, lakes, mountains, flowers, birds; eyes; gem stones; drapes, cloths, clothes, coats of arms, etc.). The term also frequently occurs as a noun and, especially in treatises on painting, it is a component of phrases that denote colouring agents (*azzurro della Magna / d’Alemagna* ‘*azzurro* from Germany’, *azzurro oltramarino* ‘ultramarine *azzurro*’, etc.). The role of *azzurro* as the basic term for the BLUE area in written Old and Modern Italian appears to be confirmed by the fact that it is the most frequently

used – even in the oldest times – in lists of colours. Examples are: *Che son queste? son elle rosse? son elle azzurre? son elle nere? non son elle bianche?* ‘What are these? Are they red? Are they *azzurro*? Are they black? Or are they maybe white?’ (Franco Sacchetti, end of 14<sup>th</sup> century [referring to bed sheets]); *Altri sono stati di parere che i principali [colori] sieno sette, cioè il bianco, il nero, il giallo, il rosso, il verde, la porpora, e l’azzurro* ‘Others were of the opinion that the main [colours] are seven, that is, white, black, yellow, red, green, purple and *azzurro*’ (Filippo Baldinucci, *Vocabolario toscano dell’arte del disegno*, 1681).

*Blu* is a Germanism that entered Italian at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century under the influence of French *bleu*. Originally it was used to qualify the colour of cloths, uniforms or military standards, also in the variant *blo*, *blé* or the non-adapted form *bleu* (Dardi 1990). In diachronic corpora it occurs with a limited frequency and it is also used as a noun. It denotes darker shades and, for the most part, refers to clothes, occasionally objects, eyes, the sea and the sky. The non-adapted form *bleu* can be widely found in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when, by way of example, it occurs in a vast number of compounds used in the fashion jargon, such as *bleu sultano* ‘sultan *bleu*’ (Sergio 2010). The heyday of *bleu* came to an end in the Forties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the Fascist regime listed it among the foreign terms that needed to be expunged from the Italian language, indicating *blu* as a replacement (Raffaelli 2010). *Blu* in lieu of *bleu* was also championed by the Purist movement in the aftermath of World War II (Messina 1965). Associated with the fortune of *blu* in the fashion jargon is the pseudo-Gallicism *bluette* (the French *bluet* is the common name for ‘bluebottle’) which denotes a lighter shade in clothes.

In Old Italian we can already find colour terms that can be traced back to the Late Latin term *blavus* (documented in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, cf. Pfister 1999) which has the same Germanic etymon as French *bleu* (\**blēwa-*). These are *bioio* (or *biodo*, *bloio*, *broio*) and *biavo* (or *biado*, *blavo*), used almost exclusively for denoting the colour of cloths (cf. TLIO). The same applies to its derivative *biavetto* (or *biaveto*, *blaveto*, *biadetto*, *biadeto*) and other terms associated with *biavo* (*sbiavo*, *sbiavato*, *sbiadato*, *sbiadito*, etc.). In contrast with the modern usage of *blu*, they all seem to denote lighter shades. In the literary, Tuscan-based language, there is a break in continuity

between these terms and *blu*. In texts dating from after the 14<sup>th</sup> century *biavo*, *biado*, *biadetto* are only occasionally found: *azzurro di biadetto* is a colouring agent mentioned in Baldinucci's (1681) *Vocabolario*; in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Pirandello speaks of *occhi biavi* 'biavo eyes' and Montale of *tinte ora scarlatte ora biade* 'hues now scarlet now *biado*'. Many of the modern dialectal forms of *blu* recorded in Pfister (1999) might well be continuators of the Late Latin *blavus*. Others, to the contrary, derive directly from the French *bleu* and entered into the dialects at different times (starting from the Middle Ages), depending on the degree of contact with the French culture.

*Celeste* formally derives from Latin, but the adjective *caelestis* did not carry a colour meaning in Classical Latin. The semantic shift came about already in Old Italian. The first instances of *celeste* carrying a colour value are found in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, at a time when the term basically carried the 'celestial' and 'divine' meanings. In some contexts, the meaning of the adjective can be ambiguous (especially when it qualifies light, lamp, ray, etc.). The term can be found in Old Italian in many other forms (see in TLIO: *çeleste*, *celesto*, *celestro*, *celleste*, *cielesstre*, *cieleste*, *cielesto*, *cielestre*, *cielestro*, *cileste*, *cilesto*, *cilestre*, *cilestro*, *zeleste*, *zelestro*, *zileste*). Among these, *cilestro* (formed by analogy with *terrestre* 'terrestrial') would soon acquire an exclusively colour-related meaning, documented in Dante and Boccaccio, but is no longer in use. On the other hand, *cilestrino* 'somewhat *cilestro*' has not completely disappeared in literary use. In diachronic corpora *celeste* is far less frequent as a noun than *azzurro*. In Old Italian it usually refers to the colour of cloths and clothes, but also of gem stones, and it denotes a shade lighter than *azzurro*. In more recent literary language *celeste* is also used in connection with eyes, water, air, a number of objects and occasionally, by way of metonymical extension, even with people who wear this colour.

*Turchino* derives from *turco* 'Turkish'. It is documented already in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and it was usually used to qualify cloths, clothes, standards: in the beginning it probably referred to the origin of the cloths and only later to their colour. The term was also used to denote the gem stone commonly known as *turchese* 'turquoise'. Albeit to a lesser extent than *azzurro*, *turchino* is also present in

colour lists, particularly when describing rainbows (*si distinguono sette colori, che possono considerarsi come primitivi, e sono il rosso, l'arancio, il giallo, il verde, il turchino, l'indaco e il violetto* 'One can identify seven colours that can be considered as primitive, and these are red, orange, yellow, green, *turchino*, indigo and violet', Leopardi, 1813). Rather common in dialects, as recorded in Schweickard (2013), *turchino* is not exclusive to literary language. In diachronic corpora it is also used as a noun and it qualifies first and foremost cloths, clothes and various objects, but often also eyes, shadows, the sky, the sea, mountains, the air. Between the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> century its usage spreads to denote the darker shades, right at the time when *blu* becomes an important competitor. As of today *turchino* is an obsolete term that occurs almost exclusively in a limited number of idiomatic expressions, as we shall see. Only in Tuscany can we find some evidence of survival, since it is used along with *blu*, *azzurro* and *celestes* for naming the colours of the insignia of the 'contradas' (districts) of Siena.

In order to better understand the usage of *azzurro*, *blu*, *celestes* and *turchino* in texts dating from the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and 20<sup>th</sup> century we mainly searched two corpora: *Diacoris* (different kinds of prose texts dating from 1861 to 2001) and *la Repubblica* (newspaper texts dating from 1985 to 2000). Before delving into the analysis of collocations we shall present a few figures. Table 1 illustrates the number of occurrences of the four terms in the reference corpora:

	AZZURRO	BLU	CELESTE	TURCHINO
Diacoris	1729	446	861	389
la Repubblica	18555	16938	2965	275

Table 1

An analysis of the contexts in which they occur, however, reveals that a part of the collocations can be ascribed to figurative meanings, idiomatic expressions and proper nouns (in the case of *celestes*, mainly to the other meaning of the term, i.e. 'celestial'), with frequent calques from other languages. In order to evaluate the quantitative weight of these contexts, whose variety has significantly increased in

the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century for both *azzurro* and *blu*, we made a rough calculation of the occurrences in the *la Repubblica* corpus, whose texts are more recent and larger in number. The calculations reveal that the percentages of collocations are in the order of approximately 50% for *blu*, 60% for *turchino*, 65% for *azzurro*, and 75% for *celeste*. The frequency of this type of collocations for *azzurro* is ascribable to the fact that it is considered as national colour of the Republic of Italy. The colour was originally used in the standards, flags, military scarves, etc. of the Savoia royal family and became the official colour of the Italian national sports teams. The national jersey is called *maglia azzurra*, even though the actual shade can be darker or lighter, and *azzurro* is used, by virtue of metonymic extension, to qualify or denote the athletes, coaches, sites, abstract concepts and ultimately anything that revolves around the national teams. A similar mechanism applies when one or more colours (the so-called “club colours”) come to identify a sport club. The terms *azzurro*, *blu*, *celeste*, that are used to indicate the jerseys, flags etc., are also used to refer to the athletes, fans, etc. of the respective clubs (cf. also 3.2. below). The absence of *turchino* in this type of contexts is probably due to the association with the ethnic noun and adjective *turco* ‘Turkish’ that makes it ill-fit as “club colour” for Italian and other non-Turkish sport clubs.

As illustrated in Table 2, *Diacoris* provides us with other interesting numbers as regards the trend of occurrences in the 5 chronological sub-periods to which the texts of the corpus belong:

DIACORIS	AZZURRO	BLU	CELESTE	TURCHINO
1861-1900	305	27	314	121
1901-1922	286	10	90	122
1923-1945	464	32	143	74
1946-1967	429	185	145	54
1968-2001	245	192	169	18

Table 2

Data from the two corpora confirm the hypothesis, expressed in previous studies, that in 20<sup>th</sup> century Italian – and in particular in the last decades – there is a restructuring of the BLUE area: *blu* is spreading more and more, even to the detriment of *azzurro*, *celeste* holds, whereas the usage of *turchino* is experiencing a sharp downfall.

The four adjectives qualify nouns that roughly belong to the same semantic areas but occur with different degrees of frequency depending on the area. Let us analyze in greater detail the collocations for the three terms that, at present, are the most common, i.e. *azzurro*, *celeste* and *blu*.

All three, and *blu* in particular, qualify first and foremost nouns that denote cloths, clothes and clothing accessories. *Azzurro* and *celeste* denote the lighter shades, *blu* the darker ones: among the most frequent collocations we find, for example, an *azzurro* or *celeste* shirt with a *blu* jacket, sweater, trousers or tie. Darker and lighter shades can be present in one and the same garment, for example a suit or a shirt with *blu* and *azzurro* pinstripes.

With reference to the human body, eyes are *azzurro* par excellence, much more rarely so *celeste* or *blu*, whereas *blu* is selected for skin spots caused by bruises or cyanosis or to indicate the colour that lips turn to because of the cold. *Azzurro* and *blu* are also used with reference to veins and dyes, as is the case for hair, nails or tattooed skin. *Uomini blu* ‘lit. blue men’ is the common name for the Tuareg people, whose traditional blue veil can occasionally stain the skin.

Both *azzurro* and *blu*, rarely so *celeste*, describe the colour or one of the colours of various birds, butterflies, fish, and occur in names of taxonomic categories (e.g., *sula dai piedi azzurri* / *pie diazzurri* ‘blue-footed booby’, *volpe azzurra* ‘blue fox’, a variety of the Arctic fox, *tonno pinna blu* ‘bluefin tuna’, *orso azzurro* / *blu tibetano* ‘Tibetan blue bear’). It should also be noted that *pesce azzurro* ‘oily fish’ identifies a class of small fish independently of their true colour.

The colour or colours of some flowers, like iris or windflower, is *azzurro* or *blu*; hydrangeas, bluebells and gentians can also be *celeste*. Fruits and plants such as bilberries, plums and aubergines are *blu*, but also other deteriorated or

contaminated fruits and foods can be said to be *blu* (*mozzarella blu* ‘*blu mozzarella*’).

The colour of the sky, and in particular of the day-time bright sky, is mainly *azzurro*, but after sunset it generally becomes *blu*. Both *blu* and *azzurro* denote the colour of the sea, of rivers and lakes, etc. Gem stones like diamonds and sapphires are *azzurro* and *blu* but also *celeste*, which, to the contrary, is only seldom used for the colour of the sky, of the sea, etc.

Artificial light shed by lighting equipment is both *azzurro* and *blu*, but with a sharp preference for *blu* when referring to flashing warning lights.

As for other contexts in which the three adjectives qualify names of inanimate entities, apart from the previously mentioned garments, there are numerous references to the colour of decor, furniture and ornaments, as also of buildings and building materials.

As for the colour of paper and paper products, book covers, graphical signs and instruments for writing and drawing, all three terms are found but with a prevalence of *blu*; the school habit of underlining major mistakes with a *blu* pencil gave rise to the idiom *errore blu* ‘lit. blue error’ (as opposed to *errore rosso* ‘lit. red error’ a minor error). *Blu*, *azzurro* and *celeste* are all used for identifying colouring agents and colours used in paintings.

*Blu* is slightly predominant over *azzurro*, and much more so over *celeste*, in denoting colours present in flags, standards, banners, etc. In particular, *blu* is the international flag awarded to beaches and marinas that comply with sustainable development criteria. *Blu* is the colour of the United Nations flag and of the helmet worn by the UN troops; *casco blu* ‘Blue Helmet’ is used as a metonym for the soldiers of the international peacekeeping forces.

*Blu* is prevalent over *azzurro*, and both over *celeste*, also when denoting the colour of various means of transport, in particular cars, but also airplanes, vessels, etc. Vehicles used by politicians or high public officials or the public administration are called *auto blu* ‘official dedicated car’ and, by way of analogy, we also have *blu* helicopters, bicycles (and *blu* mobiles, i.e. dedicated mobiles).

The lower number of occurrences of *turchino* in the *la Repubblica* and *Diacoris* corpora makes it more difficult to analyze in further detail the collocational preferences of the term. It denotes darker shades and it qualifies first and foremost garments, but also the sky, the sea, eyes, etc.

Metonymic connections and semantic associations derived from symbolic values account for the presence of the four adjectives, and in particular of *azzurro* and *blu*, in many other contexts not yet mentioned. We shall illustrate but a few examples of stable collocations that occur frequently in our corpora.

Both *azzurro* and *blu* are also “political colours”, in the sense that they are symbolically used to represent a political party, its members, constituency, etc. In the past decades, for example, *azzurro* has been associated with the *Forza Italia* party. Further, *azzurro* is associated with newborn males in the expression *fiocco azzurro* ‘blue baby ribbon’ (as opposed to *fiocco rosa* ‘pink baby ribbon’) and in general to child protection in *telefono azzurro* ‘lit. blue phone’, a kind of Childline. *Principe azzurro* ‘lit. blue prince’, the name for Prince Charming, a typical character of likely French origin that appears in various fairy tales (cf. D’Achille 2011), denotes by antonomasia the quintessential romantic ideal for a male partner or husband. The expressions *fata turchina* ‘lit. blue fairy’ or *fata dai capelli turchini* ‘lit. blue-haired fairy’, associated with the character of the novel for children *The Adventures of Pinocchio* by Carlo Collodi, have also become antonomastic and at times are used (also ironically) to refer to a woman who is someone’s benefactor, mentor or counsellor.

Denominations such as *tute blu* ‘lit. blue overalls’ or *colletti blu* ‘blue-collars’ for laborers (as opposed to *colletti bianchi* ‘white-collars’), *cintura blu* ‘blue belt’ for athletes who reached a given level at karate (as opposed to *cintura bianca* ‘white belt’, *cintura gialla* ‘yellow belt’, etc.) are metonymically motivated and they are used with classifying function. *Strisce blu* ‘lit. blue stripes’ and *zona blu* ‘lit. blue zone’ are expressions used in the regulation of car traffic and parking, whereas *bollino blu* ‘lit. blue sticker’ is a certification of proper functioning for cars, devices, etc. Expressions such as *paura blu* ‘lit. ‘blue fear’ or *fifa blu* ‘lit. blue fright’, which refer to a huge fright that turns your face blue, or *sangue blu* ‘blue blood’, used to



indicate aristocratic lineage (apparently, a very light complexion with blue veins clearly visible on one's wrists was considered as a sign of nobility), are also of metonymic origin.

*Azzurro* and *blu*, and to a much lesser extent *celeste* and *turchino*, also occur in different types of proper nouns: of sites (e.g., *Costa Azzurra* 'French Riviera, Fr. *Côte d'Azur*', *Grotta Azzurra* 'Blue Grotto'), persons (as a feminine name: *Azzurra*; as both feminine and masculine: *Celeste*), institutions (*Arma azzurra* is the name of the Italian air force), companies (*Blu* was a telecommunications operator), establishments (e.g., *Bar Trattoria Blu* in Milano, *Hotel Residence Azzurro* in L'Aquila, *Hotel Celeste* in Procida, *Sassi Turchini* – hostel in the Isola d'Elba), products (e.g., *Nastro Azzurro* 'lit. blue ribbon' is a beer, *ACE Denso Blu* is a washing powder, *Blu Diesel* is a type of fuel), means of transport (e.g., *Freccia azzurra* 'lit. blue arrow' trains), literary, musical and art works (e.g., *Celeste*, *azzurro e blu* – an album of songs by Gianni Morandi; *Nel blu dipinto di blu (Volare)* – a song by Domenico Modugno; in some cases, translations present variants with both *azzurro* and *blu*, for example *Bluebird* by Bukowski is rendered as *Uccellino azzurro* or *Uccellino blu*, *Der Blaue Reiter* by Kandinsky is both *Il cavaliere azzurro* and *Il cavaliere blu*), etc.

Other terms of the BLUE area are formed by means of various morphological devices. In 3.1. – 3.3. we shall briefly illustrate the main word-formation patterns without dwelling on the possible differences regarding their combinatory possibilities.

### **3.1. *Azzurro*, *blu*, *celeste* and *turchino* as bases for derivation**

The four terms we analyzed in the previous paragraph can be bases for the derivation of other colour adjectives (Grossmann / Mazzoni 1972, Grossmann 1988, Merlini Barbaresi 2004). The majority of derived adjectives belongs to the first of the following two types:

1) derivatives formed by suffixation that denote an approximation – in terms of hue, brightness and saturation – to the focal point denoted by the base. Lexicographic sources list a number of adjectives that denote shades that are

approximately *azzurro* (*azzurino* and *azzurigno*, already attested in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century respectively, *azzurrognolo*, *azzurraastro*, *azzurretto*, *azzurriccio*), *blu* (*bluastro*), *celeste* (*celestino*) and *turchino* (*turchinetto*, *turchiniccio*, *turchinaccio*, *turchinuccio*, *turchinastro*). These terms with the sole exception of *azzurino* and, to a lesser extent, *azzurrognolo* and *bluastro*, are rare or absent in the *la Repubblica* and *Diacoris* corpora. *Azzurrino* also denotes, by metonymy, young athletes of Italian national teams. One should mention that the selection of a specific approximative and/or evaluative suffix may depend on diatopic and diaphasic factors, as is the case with other types of adjectival bases in Italian;

2) derivatives with the relative suffix *-issimo* that denote the highest degree of brightness and saturation compared to an implicit standard. Featured in the corpora are: *azzurrissimo*, mainly referred to eyes, the sky and the sea, and the rare *celestissimo* and *turchinissimo*. Instances of *bluissimo* can only be found on the Internet (Googled on 10.04.2015). It should be noted that Italian can express intensification of a given quality also by means of the prefix *stra-*, which however is seldom known to modify colour terms. *Straazzurro* can only be found on the Internet, whereas *strablu* is a lexicalized form that denotes a kind of cheese.

*Azzurro*, *blu*, *celeste* and *turchino* can also be bases for the derivation of nouns and verbs. Derived verbs (cf. Timmermann 2002), formed by suffixation, parasynthesis or conversion, are mainly based on *azzurro*. These are *(in)azzurrare* ‘to dye / to colour *azzurro*’, also used in the pronominal form *(in)azzurrarsi* ‘to turn *azzurro*’, and *azzurreggiare* ‘to be somewhat *azzurro*’. Lexicographic sources also list rare verbs such as *inturchinare* ‘to dye / to colour *turchino*’, *inturchinarsi* ‘to turn *turchino*’, *turchineggiare* ‘to be somewhat *turchino*’, while *blueggiare* ‘to be somewhat *blu*’ can only be found on the Internet. Internet also provides us with adjectives derived from the stative verbs in *-eggiare*, such as *azzurreggiante*, *blueggiante*, *turchineggiante*, that denote the state of being *azzurro*, *blu*, *turchino*. As for derived nouns, corpora are replete with quality nouns formed by conversion (*l'azzurro dei suoi occhi* ‘the *azzurro* of his/her eyes’, *il blu del cielo* ‘the *blu* of the sky’, *il turchino del mare* ‘the *turchino* of the sea’, etc.) and, less so, by suffixation (*azzurrità* ‘the quality of being *azzurro*’). Other nouns derive from the

aforementioned verb *azzurrare* ‘to colour *azzurro*’: these are *azzurramento* ‘action/result of *azzurrar(si)*’, *azzurraggio* and *azzurrate* ‘blu(e)ing’, technical terms that apply to colouring agents and related processes.

### 3.2. *Azzurro, blu, celeste and turchino* as constituents of compounds

A commonly used device for enlarging the inventory of colour terms is forming compound words made up of two adjectives or an adjective and a noun. These constructions, frequently nonce-formations in both literary and journalistic texts, confront scholars with the same problems as all other adjectival compounds in Italian, i.e. spelling, allomorphy, inflectional characteristics, etc. (cf. D’Achille / Grossmann 2009, 2010, Grossmann / Rainer 2009, and, with particular reference to colour compounds, Grossmann 1988, D’Achille / Grossmann 2013). When considering the relationship between the constituents, we have two groups: coordinate and subordinate compounds.

Among coordinate compounds we can further identify three subtypes which spread in usage from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards, with some isolated examples in earlier times:

1) constructions that qualify two- or multi-coloured entities such as flags, apparel, etc. (such as *drappi blu bianchi* ‘*blu*-white cloths’, *bandiere blu-bianco-rosse* ‘*blu*-white-red flags’), or denote the colours of a team jersey (the so-called “club colours”), especially in football, and, by metonymy, the players, fans, managers, executives, etc. D’Achille’s (2014) study on this kind of terms, based on CONI (Italian National Olympic Committee) documents dating from the 20<sup>th</sup> century (<http://dlib.coninet.it>) lists the following, among others: *biancazzurri* ‘white *azzurro*’ (later re-denominated *biancocelesti* ‘white *celeste*’) relating to the Lazio football team, *rossoblù* ‘red *blu*’ relating to Genoa, Cagliari and Bologna, *gialloblù* ‘yellow *blu*’ relating to Verona, Chievo and Parma. Notice that *turchino* does not appear in this kind of construction;

2) constructions indicating a hue that is intermediate between the colours denoted by the constituents (such as *occhi azzurro-grigi* ‘*azzurro*-grey eyes’, *capelli blu-neri* ‘*blu*-black hair’);

3) reduplicative constructions (more syntactic in nature) of the type *occhi azzurri azzurri* ‘azzurro azzurro eyes’, used for describing the presence of the colour at the highest degree of brightness and saturation, as is the case with the aforementioned derivatives in *-issimo* (cf. Rainer 1983).

The majority of compounds found in corpora are left-headed subordinate constructions. Most are documented since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with the exception of sub-type 1), already attested in Old Italian. The first constituent is the hyperonym of the construction while the second constituent acts as modifier. These compounds describe a particular shade of the colour denoted by the head. Modifiers can be:

1) adjectives that refer to the degree of brightness and saturation of the colour (such as *azzurro-chiaro* ‘light azzurro’, *blu intenso* ‘intense blu’). These constructions are very frequent in the *la Repubblica* and *Diacoris* corpora and the array of adjectival modifiers is vast. Both *azzurro* and *blu* are found in combination with adjectives such as *acceso* ‘bright’, *brillante* ‘shining’, *chiaro* ‘light’, *cupo* ‘dark’, *elettrico* ‘electric’, *intenso* ‘intense’, *pallido* ‘pale’, *profondo* ‘deep’, *sbiadito* ‘faded’, *scuro* ‘dark’, *vivo* ‘vivid’. Other adjectives such as *forte* ‘strong’, *spento* ‘dull’, *tenu* ‘soft’, modify *azzurro* but not *blu*, whereas *fiammante* ‘flaming’, *opaco* ‘opaque’, *slavato* ‘faded’, *squillante* ‘shrill’, occur with *blu* but not with *azzurro*. Some of these modifiers also occur with *celeste* and *turchino*;

2) a derivative of another colour adjective indicating a hue to which the colour denoted by the head comes close (such as *azzurro grigiastro* ‘grayish azzurro’, *azzurro verdognolo* ‘greenish azzurro’, *azzurro violaceo* ‘purplish azzurro’; *blu verdaastro* ‘greenish blu’, *blu violaceo* ‘purplish blu’; *celeste biancastro* ‘whitish celeste’);

3) a noun (such as *blu notte* ‘night blu’) or a denominal adjective (such as *azzurro-smeraldino* ‘emerald azzurro’) that specifies the shade by virtue of a comparison with the quintessential colour attributed to its referent. Among *azzurro* or *blu* + N compounds in the *la Repubblica* and *Diacoris* corpora there is a vast array of nouns that can act as modifiers of the two adjectives (cf. Kristol 1978, Grossmann 1988: 182-199). There are nouns denoting metals/minerals, stones/jewels, colouring agents, flowers, fruits/vegetables, associated with the animal kingdom and a

number of others still. Nouns such as *acciaio* ‘steel’, *carta da zucchero* ‘sugar paper’, *cielo* ‘sky’, *cobalto* ‘cobalt’, *ghiaccio* ‘ice’, *indaco* ‘indigo’, *mare* ‘sea’, *notte* ‘night’, *pervinca* ‘periwinkle’, *petrolio* ‘petroleum’, occur in compounds with both *azzurro* and *blu* albeit with different frequency. The most frequent modifier for *azzurro* is *cielo* ‘sky’, while *blu* occurs frequently followed by *notte* ‘night’. Other nouns such as *acqua* ‘water’, *fiordaliso* ‘cornflower’, *glicine* ‘wisteria’, *lavanda* ‘lavender’, *polvere* ‘dust’, etc. only occur with *azzurro*, others still, like *asfalto* ‘asphalt’, *inchiestro* ‘ink’, *lavagna* ‘slate’, *melanzana* ‘aubergine’, *mirtillo* ‘bilberry’, *zaffiro* ‘sapphire’, etc. only occur with *blu*. Also the remaining two terms, *celeste* and *turchino*, can be constituents of an A+N compound, but the types are fewer in number and their frequency is lower. Among the modifiers of *celeste* there are, for example, *acqua* ‘water’, *ortensia* ‘hydrangea’, *polvere* ‘dust’. *Turchino*, on the other hand, can only be found in combination with *pavone* ‘peacock’. While these types of compounds denote a shade of *azzurro*, *blu*, *celeste* and *turchino* that is typical for the referent of the noun, in other cases it is a colour of an object that is intimately associated with / typical of the referent (*azzurro* + *forzista* ‘member/supporter of the Forza Italia party’, *blu* + *aviazione* ‘air force’, etc.). The nominal constituent is generally a common noun, however there are also a few instances of names of persons (*azzurro Tiepolo* ‘Tiepolo *azzurro*’, *blu Savoia* ‘Savoia *blu*’, etc.) and institutions (*azzurro Europa* ‘Europe *azzurro*’, *blu Nazioni Unite* ‘United Nations *blu*’, etc.). Similar in nature, from the semantic point of view, are compounds made up of *azzurro* or *blu* and a denominal adjective such as *azzurro ministeriale* ‘ministerial *azzurro*’, *blu berlusconiano* ‘Berlusconian *blu*’. The proliferation of A+N compound colour terms in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is mainly attributable to the fashion industry and to a number of crafts and businesses that kept introducing new hues into the market and giving them coined names that were subsequently disseminated by the mass-media. An interesting case in point is represented by the names coined for car body colours (cf. Caffarelli 2014). The apparently arbitrary selection of nominal modifiers can often be accounted for by the cultural salience of their referents in the Italian linguistic community, and in some cases is influenced by foreign models.

### 3.3. Nouns used as colour terms

The last device for creating colour terms, which we shall only briefly mention here since it is less relevant to our topic, is recourse to names of entities for denoting, by metonymy, a colour (an analysis of the morphological characteristics of this type of lexemes, that can be interpreted as the result of a conversion process, is given in Thornton 2004: 529-530). These are some of the nominal constituents of compounds listed in the previous paragraph, that can be used independently to denote a particular shade (such as *abito acquamarina* ‘aquamarine dress’, *stoffa indaco* ‘indigo cloth’), as also other nouns that are generally used in the absence of *azzurro* or *blu* (such as *lago turchese* ‘turquoise lake’). These terms are probably generated by ellipsis of phrases like: *un brillante colore di acquamarina* ‘lit. a diamond of colour of aquamarine’, *brillante color acquamarina* ‘lit. aquamarine colour diamond’, *brillante azzurro / blu acquamarina* ‘lit. aquamarine azzurro / blu diamond’, *occhi di acquamarina* ‘lit. eyes of aquamarine’.

## 4. Conclusion

The existence of large and searchable corpora, unavailable at the time of Grossmann’s studies on Italian colour terms (Grossmann 1988, Grossmann / Mazzoni 1972, 1976), as also the findings of the many studies published thereafter especially on the area of BLUE, make it now possible to fine-tune the observations outlined over 25 years ago.

Our analysis of the historical evolution and contemporary use of *azzurro*, *celeste*, *blu* and *turchino* in written Italian suggests that:

- *azzurro* and *blu*, the two terms that are now dominant in the area, meet the criteria that are usually required for being considered basic colour terms;
- *celeste*, which is analyzable from a morphological point of view and semantically transparent, cannot be considered as a basic colour term and is peripheral with respect to *azzurro* and *blu*;

- *turchino*, which is also analyzable from the morphological point of view but less transparent from a semantic point of view, was peripheral in previous historical periods and is nowadays in disuse;

- the history of the relationships among the four terms can be grouped in three broad periods: a) a first period (from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> century) during which *azzurro* is the central term and *celeste* denotes light shades and *turchino* denotes dark shades; b) a second period (from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) during which *azzurro* remains the central term, *celeste* denotes light shades and *turchino* and *blu* denote dark shades; c) a third period (second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) during which *azzurro* still denotes a shade in-between *celeste* (light) and *blu* (dark), but gradually hands over the central term role to *blu* and comes closer to *celeste* inasmuch as it indicates only light shades;

- the huge increase in the use of *blu* during the 20<sup>th</sup> century can certainly be ascribed, at least in part, to the high number of calques (such as the aforementioned *caschi blu* ‘Blue Helmet’, *colletti blu* ‘blue-collars’, etc.) and loans (*blue-jeans*, *blue chip*, etc.) by contact with French, German and, above all, English that have a similar central term (Fr. *bleu*, Ger. *blau*, Eng. *blue*);

- the derivational potential of *blu* and *celeste* is more limited than that of *azzurro* and *turchino*; in compounding, the prevalence of *azzurro* and *blu* is very marked;

- the use with figurative meanings and the presence in idiomatic expressions is basically limited to *azzurro* and *blu*; the number of these contexts with *blu* is continually expanding also by virtue of calques from other languages.

Further material for studying the history of the semantic relationship among the four terms could be offered by research on specialized technical texts (such as treatises on painting, minerals, gems, etc.) in different historical periods and on both old and contemporary dialectal texts.

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# 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”<sup>1</sup> (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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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 Kay<sup>2</sup>. 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 effectively<sup>3</sup>. 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”<sup>4</sup> and offers various uses of the Polish adjective *czarny* ‘black’. The same chromatic adjective can

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> Pol. “polisemia w znacznej mierze subiektywna”.

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

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’,

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<sup>5</sup> 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’ (1<sup>st</sup> half of the 17<sup>th</sup> 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.

<b><i>fioletowy</i> ‘purple’</b>	
<b>etymology</b>	< <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>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> att.</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> half of the 17 <sup>th</sup> century
<b>concrete meanings</b>	1. ‘of the colour resulting from mixing red and blue, like the one of heather or crocuses’
<b>figurative meanings &amp; usages</b>	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’ (1<sup>st</sup> attested to at the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> 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.

<b><i>pomarańczowy</i> ‘orange’</b>	
<b>etymology</b>	< <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>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> att.</b>	early 18 <sup>th</sup> century
<b>concrete meanings</b>	1. ‘yellow with red tint, like the colour of a ripe orange’
<b>figurative meanings &amp; usages</b>	-

Table 2

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

<b>różowy 'pink'</b>	
<b>etymology</b>	< <i>róża</i> 'rose' ← OHG <i>rōsa</i> 'id.' ← Lat. <i>rosa</i>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> att.</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> half of the 18 <sup>th</sup> century
<b>concrete meanings</b>	1. 'of red colour mixed with a big quantity of white' 2. 'flushed'
<b>figurative meanings &amp; usages</b>	3. 'prosperous, favourable, satisfying one's expectations, optimistic' - <i>różowy</i> <i>scenariusz</i> 'positive scenario', <i>różowa</i> <i>przyszłość</i> 'great future', etc. - <i>różowy</i> <i>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</i> <i>ateiści</i> , <i>różowi</i> <i>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 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 15<sup>th</sup> 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 collocations<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> 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'	
<b>etymology</b>	← Occid. Proto-Sl. *šarъ 'of the colour of ash, grey'
<b>1<sup>st</sup> att.</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> century
<b>concrete meanings</b>	1. 'of the colour resulting from mixing white and black' 2. 'colourless'
<b>figurative meanings &amp; usages</b>	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' <sup>7</sup> 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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'<sup>8</sup>. *Szary* is also a frequent epithet in names of some species and diseases: *wierzba szara* 'grey willow', *szary niedźwiedź* 'grey bear', *słownik 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

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

<sup>8</sup> However, the expression *szara pycha / szara pyszka* 'grey pride, haughtiness' (16<sup>th</sup> 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 13<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century: CDP, helpful in establishing first attestations and some collocations;
- Machado’s (DELP<sub>1</sub>) and da Cunha’s (DELP<sub>2</sub>) etymological dictionaries, providing the origin and the first attestations of studied terms.

<b>roxo 'purple'</b>	
<b>etymology</b>	← Lat. <i>rūssēu-</i> 'dark red'
<b>1<sup>st</sup> att.</b>	1258
<b>concrete meanings</b>	1. 'which is of the colour of viola or amethyst; purple' 2. (obsolete) 'red'
<b>figurative meanings &amp; usages</b>	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. <sup>9</sup>

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 16<sup>th</sup> 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 unchanged<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> 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*).

<sup>10</sup> 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’	
<b>etymology</b>	< <i>laranja</i> ‘orange (fruit)’ ← Hisp. Ar. <i>naraṅga</i> ← Ar. <i>nāraṅḡ</i> ← Pers. <i>nārang</i> ← Sanskr. <i>nāraṅga</i>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> att.</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> century
<b>concrete meanings</b>	1. ‘which has the colour of the peel of an orange, between intense yellow and a reddish hue’
<b>figurative meanings &amp; usages</b>	-

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 Portuguese<sup>11</sup>.

<i>(cor-de-) rosa</i> ‘pink’	
<b>etymology</b>	< <i>rosa</i> ‘rose’ ← Lat. <i>rosa</i>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> att.</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> century
<b>concrete meanings</b>	1. ‘very light red colour’
<b>figurative meanings &amp; usages</b>	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

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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.

<sup>11</sup> 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)<sup>12</sup>. 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 optimism<sup>13</sup>.

<b><i>cinzento</i> ‘grey’</b>	
<b>etymology</b>	< <i>cinza</i> ‘ash’ ← Lat. * <i>cin̄isia</i> ‘ashes mixed with embers’
<b>1<sup>st</sup> att.</b>	1506–1510
<b>concrete meanings</b>	1. ‘of the colour of ash, an intermediate between black and white; mousy’
<b>figurative meanings &amp; usages</b>	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

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

<sup>13</sup> 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, 22<sup>nd</sup> 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* (6 083<sup>14</sup>) appears together with *morado* (16 726); *rosa* (961) appears more often than *rosado* (11 881).

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

Table 9

<b><i>morado</i> 'purple'</b>	
<b>etymology</b>	< <i>mora</i> 'mulberry' ← Lat. vg. <i>mōra</i> , Lat. <i>mōrum</i>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> att.</b>	1407-1463
<b>concrete meanings</b>	1. 'colour between crimson and blue'
<b>figurative meanings &amp; usages</b>	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'

<sup>14</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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'	
<b>etymology</b>	← Lat. <i>rosātu-</i> 'of roses' < <i>rosa</i> 'rose'
<b>1<sup>st</sup> att.</b>	c. 1250
<b>concrete meanings</b>	1. 'speaking of colours: as that of roses'
<b>figurative meanings &amp; usages</b>	-

Table 11

<i>rosa</i> 'pink'	
<b>etymology</b>	(? < <i>color de rosa</i> , where <i>rosa</i> 'rose') ← Lat. <i>rosa</i>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> att.</b>	1493
<b>concrete meanings</b>	1. 'red mixed with white'
<b>figurative meanings &amp; usages</b>	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 12<sup>th</sup> 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.

<b><i>naranja</i> ‘orange’</b>	
<b>etymology</b>	(? < <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> )
<b>1<sup>st</sup> att.</b>	1622
<b>concrete meanings</b>	1. ‘yellow with a red tint’
<b>figurative meanings &amp; usages</b>	-

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 17<sup>th</sup> century. That is why, perhaps, there are not many special usages in Spanish<sup>15</sup>.

<b><i>gris</i> ‘grey’</b>	
<b>etymology</b>	probably ← Occit. <i>gris</i> ‘id.’ ← Old Low Frankish <i>grīs</i>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> att.</b>	1150
<b>concrete meanings</b>	1. ‘colour that usually results from mixing white and black’
<b>figurative meanings &amp; usages</b>	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

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<sup>15</sup> 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.

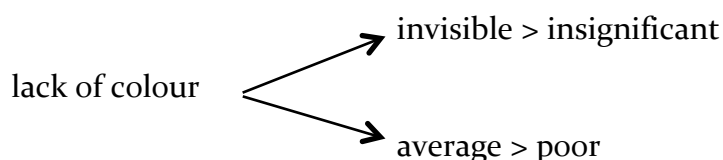
Purple's metaphorical usages in Polish and Portuguese are mainly based on the transposition of meaning from the effective colour of someone's skin to the emotion or state itself. Thus a range of possible usages is obtained, concentrated around bad emotions (anger) and some anomalous physical states (heavy 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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# ***Preto and negro, pardo, mestiço and mulato***

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The words that designate the darkest colour, *negro* and *preto*, which are defined either in terms of the absence of light or the fusion of all colours, have been present in the Portuguese language since the thirteenth century. Indeed, it is easy to understand how a colour that absorbs rather than reflects beams of light has become an obvious metaphor for all that is dark and sad, whereas *branco* (white) has become the symbol of happiness and purity. When we consider the labelling of skin colour, *black* also presents itself as a contrast to *white*. However, due to the heterogeneous nature of skin tone, the Portuguese language soon found itself having to search for new lexicon in order to fill the gaps in colour terminology. In this paper, I will attempt to identify the ways by which try these new words have emerged from pre-existing concepts, using online corpora to analyse such meanings and in doing so, outline the semantic history of *preto*, *negro*, *pardo*, *mestiço* and *mulato*.

## **1. *Negro and preto***

The Latin noun NĪGER has been found documented in all Romance languages, with the exception of Sardinian. As well as designating the colour Black, metaphorical uses of the word also stretch back several centuries, either being

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assigned to ‘sadness, mourning’ or to ‘dark skin’. When referring to ‘dark skin’, *negro* has been found in 15<sup>th</sup> century Spanish texts (Corominas 1991, s.v. *negro*); the French *nègre*<sup>16</sup>, Italian *negro*, English *nigger*, and German *neger* (which have same meaning) are all borrowings from the Spanish.

The etymology of *preto* seems to be more problematic. Corominas (1991, s.v. *apretar*) suggested a first form *\*apetrar*, from late Latin APPĒCTŌRARE (< PĒCTUS). The understanding of ‘brown skin’ (Portuguese *preto*, old Spanish *prieto*<sup>17</sup>) may come from the idea of ‘dense, thick’, as an equivalent to ‘dark’.

*Negro* and *preto* have been present in the Portuguese language since the 13<sup>th</sup> century. As adjectives, both words designate something which is ‘dark coloured’ (either as tangible entities or *irrealia*) and such usage may be observed in the *Historia Troyana* (14<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>18</sup>:

mandou trager dous carneiros negros (*two black sheep*), fl. 14rb  
et os ollos avian grandes e pretos (*black eyes*), fl. 49vb

as well as in medieval songbooks<sup>19</sup>

Per meus negros pecados, tive ùu castelo forte e dei-o a seu don[o] (*black sins*), B 1592  
/ V 1124.

Here, *negro* retains the Latin connotation of ‘gloomy, sinister’; the same goes for *preto* and this is evident in the description of justice in *Boosco Deleitoso* (the late 14<sup>th</sup>, early 15<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>20</sup>. Once again, the black colour is related to pain and the white colour (*alva*) to pleasure:

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<sup>16</sup> *Nègre* is documented on the 16<sup>th</sup> century (*Le Trésor de la Langue Française Informatisé*, s.v. *nègre*).

<sup>17</sup> The Nebrija’ dictionary gives *prieto* as a synonym of *negro*: “*prieto* aquello mesmo es que *negro*” (Corominas (1991, s.v. *apretar*).

<sup>18</sup> Ed. Pichel (2013).

<sup>19</sup> In *Dicionário de dicionários do galego medieval - Corpus lexicográfico medieval da língua galega*.

<sup>20</sup> In *Corpus do Português*.

[a justiça] a sua vistidura he de duas colores ha color preta demonstra a tribulaçõ e ha door que ha justiça faz padecer aos maãos. E a color alua demonstra ho prazer e o gualardõ que ella da aos boõs (*justice' clothing has two colours: the black colour stands for the pain that the wicked will suffer and the white colour represents pleasure, which is the reward for the virtuous*).

Contemporary dictionaries (I will use *Infopedia*, an online dictionary commonly used as a reference dictionary for contemporary European Portuguese) keep both meanings. Here, *negro*, as well as *preto* (adj.), is described as something 1. defined by the absence of colour; 2. dark coloured; 3. dirty; 4. gloomy; 5. sad. 6. mournful. The definition for *preto* is almost exactly the same<sup>21</sup> due to the fact that *negro* and *preto* are seen as synonyms. As a noun, both *negro* and *preto* can refer to an individual who is dark skinned, but in this case, *preto* is considered to be pejorative.

However, a diachronic analysis reveals an important difference: whilst as adjectives, both *negro* and *preto* apply, as early as the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, to 'something dark' or 'sad', as nouns and as a means of labelling skin colour, the dictionaries<sup>22</sup> only record *negro* in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century and *preto* in the 18<sup>th</sup>. Nevertheless, an on-line corpus<sup>23</sup> survey shows that it is possible to find evidence of the adjective *negro* referring to skin colour or race even before the 15<sup>th</sup> century:

Ca sse o senhor a cousa quiser demãdar por sua & for mouil & uiua assy come seruo deue dizer o nome del se o souber & se he barõ. ou molher. ou mãço. ou uelho. ou brãco ou negro (*the master should tell the servant's name and whether he is male or female, young or old, white or black*), *Terceyra Partida de Afonso X*, 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century;

E, em sayndo el rey da claustra, vyo viinr huu clerigo que era muy negro de sua color. El rey, por que o vyo assy negro, preguntoulhe por o nome de seu padre e elle lhe disse que avya nome Çolleyma. (*the king saw a clergyman who was black; his father's name was Çolleima*), *Crónica Geral de Espanha de 1344*.

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<sup>21</sup> In Brazilian portuguese *preto* also means something 'tricky', 'hard' (*Infopedia*).

<sup>22</sup> Machado 1977; Cunha 1986; Houaiss 2001, s.v. *negro*, *preto*.

<sup>23</sup> *Corpus do português*.

Interestingly, in these texts, it is always the adjective *negro* which is used when referring to skin colour, never *preto*. We only find the latter used with this meaning in the 16<sup>th</sup> century:

O pay era preto e gentil-homem de bom corpo, mayor que o do filho. (*the father was black*), *Chronica dos Reis de Bisnaga*.

A survey in the *Corpus do Português* (a database of Portuguese texts stretching from the 1300s to the 1900s) reveals a significant difference between the occurrences of *preto* and *negro* (for the colour of the skin): not only is *preto* a later word, it also appears less frequently than *negro*, particularly after the 18<sup>th</sup> century:

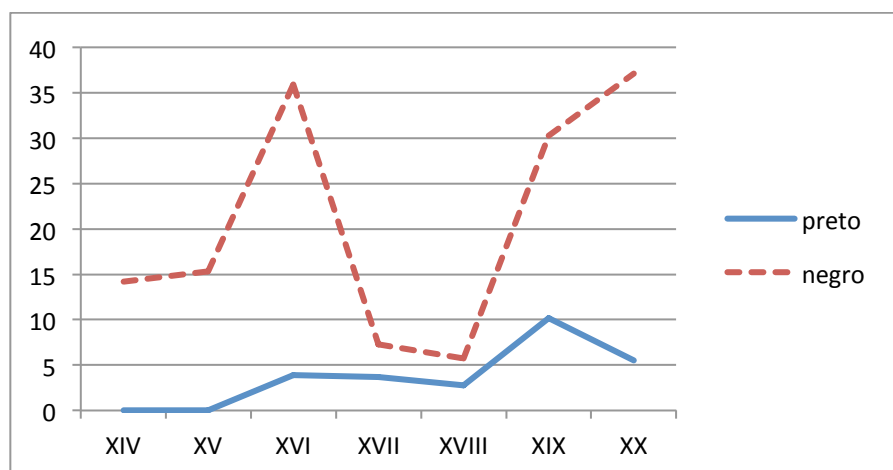


Fig. 1: The frequency of *preto* and *negro* (skin colour) in the total of forms referring to black colour in the *Corpus do Português*<sup>24</sup>.

Rafael Bluteau, one of the first lexicographers of Portuguese, defines both *preto*<sup>25</sup> and *negro* as synonymous in their designation of the colour black (*Vocabulário Portuguez e Latino, 1712-28*)<sup>26</sup>:

<sup>24</sup> In *Corpus do Português* there are references to *preto* and *negro* with other uses (such as toponym or anthroponym) that were not taken into account in this distribution.

<sup>25</sup> *Preto* is also the name of a coin, precisely because of the colour (there were white and black coins): “Preto. Antiga moeda de Portugal. Quando ElRey D. Duarte mandou bater

preto. Negro. Ater, atra, um. ou Niger, gra, grum.

negro. Cor negra, ou tinta negra. He hu dos dous extremos das cores, & he opposto ao branco (*black color or black ink, as opposed to white*).

When referring to clothing, the colour black (*negro* or *preto*) appears in association with penitence and, in general, with sadness and mourning:

A cor negra era antigamente propria das vestes dos Monges (...) que professavão vida penitente (...) A razão foi, porque a cor preta he mais propria da humildade do estado Monastico, & se significa nella a tristeza; pela qual razão se accomoda aos tumulos, exequias, & representações funebres (*in the past the clothing of the monks was black due to it being suitable for humility; black signifies sadness and is suitable for funeral rites*);

Negro. Infausto. Desgarciado. Da cor negra, que he a mais escura de todas, tomamos motivo para chamarmos negro a toda a cousa que nos enfada, molesta, & entristece, como quando dizemos, Negra ventura, negra vida, & c. (*we call everything that makes us sad, black*).

By the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, in Bluteau's dictionary, *negro* and *preto* have already become synonyms when identifying skin colour:

Negro. Homem da terra dos negros, ou filho de pays negros. Preto tambem se chama o escravo Preto. Servus niger. Pretinho. Negrinho. Pretinho, tambem val o mesmo que pequeno escravo. Preto. Servulus niger (*black man, son of black parents, slave*).

It should be noted that the negative connotations that later extended to skin colour, and which were already present in Latin, are regarded as a mischance:

Quem negro nace. nũca sera branco (*those born black will never be white*), Jerónimo Cardoso, *Dictionarium latinolusitanicum & vice versa lusitanicolatinum cum adagiorum*, 1570;

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huma moeda, que chamáraõ Reaes brancos, parece que mandou bater outra moeda, a que chamou Pretos "(Bluteau, *Vocabulário Portuguez e Latino*, 1712-1728).

<sup>26</sup> All quotations of ancient dictionaries are taken from *Corpus Lexicográfico do Português*.

Ainda que negros, gente somos, & alma temos (*we are black but we are people and we have a soul*) Bluteau, *Vocabulário Portuguez e Latino*, 1712-28.

Apparently, the black skin colour was considered a punishment from God, and in this instance, Bluteau offers us some hypotheses (which were circulating at the time) for the origin of black skin:

Attribuem alguns esta cor preta à força do Sol nas terras que estes povos habitão; mas debaixo da Zona Torrida, onde perpendicularmente arde este Planeta, ha homens tão brancos, como na Europa (...) Para evitar os inconvenientes desta controversia, se responde que esta negridão dos corpos foi castigo do Ceo (*some think that the color is caused by the heat of the sun but below the torrid zone there are also white men; some say that this colour is a punishment from heaven*).

As a result of Portuguese expansion overseas, the figure of the African slave became increasingly frequent from the mid-fifteenth century onwards, mainly as a character in theatre. For example, in Garcia de Resende's *Cancioneiro Geral* (1516), and as depicted in Fernão da Silveira's lyrics (44)<sup>27</sup>, we see the figure of an African King who is present in order to celebrate the wedding of Prince Fernando (1490):

A mim rei de negro estar Serra Lioa,  
lonje muito terra onde viver nós,  
lodar caitbela tubao de Lixboa  
falar muao novas casar pera vós.  
Querer a mim logo ver-vos como vai,  
leixar molher meu, partir muito sinha,  
porque sempre nós servir vosso pai,  
folgar muito negro, estar vós rainha.  
Aqueste gente meu taibo, terra nossa  
nunca folgar, andar sempre guerra,  
nam saber qui que balhar terra vossa,  
balhar que saber como nossa terra.

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<sup>27</sup> The numbering of the compositions is the one in the edition of Dias (1990-93).

Se logo vos quer mandar, a mim venha  
fazer que saber, tomar que achar,  
mandar fazer taibo lugar, Des mantenha!  
E logo meu negro, Senhora, balhar.<sup>28</sup>

In *Vida e Feitos d'el-rey Dom João Segundo*, Garcia de Resende describes the dance accompanying the song and from this, we learn that such 'africans' were played by men painted in black ("dozentos homens tintos de negro muito grandes bayladores")<sup>29</sup>. However, in the verses written by Anrique da Mota, which present us with a clergyman who loses a wine barrel only to then accuse his slave (797), the subject has already become a black slave (*negra*):

(Fala com a sua negra).

— Oo perra de Manicongo,  
tu entornaste este vinho!  
Ûa posta de toucinho  
t' hei-de gastar nesse lombo!  
.....  
O siso será calar  
pera nam buscar desculpa.  
Pois a negra nam tem culpa,  
pera que lha quero dar?  
.....  
a negra fica convosco  
com que vos confortareis.

A few years later the theatre texts by Gil Vicente have several black characters:

*(Vem um Negro cantando na língua de sua terra)*

Negro: que inda que negro só

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<sup>28</sup> Teyssier gives a fairly complete analysis of this song (2005:276-8) and describes the 'língua de preto' (2005:275-305).

<sup>29</sup> Ed. Verdelho 1994, p. 334.



.....

Vénus: Cúyo eres negro coitado?

Negro: A mi sá negro de crivão

agora sá vosso cão

vossa cravo murgurado.

Cativo como galinha

quando boso água querê

logo a mi bai trazê

e más o feixe de lenha.

.....

Negro: Faze-me branco rogo-te homem (*Frágua d'amor*, 1524);<sup>30</sup>

(*Vem um Negro de Beni e diz:*)

.....

Negro que faze folia

.....

Frade: Este Negro chilra mais

que salmonete em figueira (*Nao d'amores*, 1527);

.....

Clérigo: Se topares lá em fundo

um negro põe-te a recado

porque é um perro malvado

o maior ladrão do mundo.

.....

Gonçalo: Dize Negro és da corte?

Negro: Já a mi forro nam sá catibo (*Clérigo da Beira*, 1529-30).

Gil Vicente always used the word *negro*, never *preto*. Therefore, it appears that, in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, the former was the only Portuguese word that existed to denote black skin colour. However, Venus, a Spanish-speaking character from *Frágua d'amor*, also used the word *prieto* ("Vénus: Prieto vienes de Castilla?"). Due to the fact that many writers of Portuguese literature were frequently exposed to the

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<sup>30</sup> All quotations of Gil Vicente's plays are taken from *Teatro de Autores Portugueses do século XVI*.

Spanish language, it is plausible that *preto*, with the meaning of 'skin color' was a Spanish loan. In any case, by the 17<sup>th</sup> century, *preto* was already in use with reference to skin colour, as we can see in the following description in *Crónica da Companhia de Jesus* (Simão de Vasconcelos, 1663)<sup>31</sup>. In this text, we also come across another concept, that of 'miscegenation':

... a mulher branca, de branco pare branco, e de negro mulato; seja quente, ou fria a disposição do ventre. Donde se tira manifestamente, que nao está somente no ventre a virtude do grau do frio, ou calor necessário; senao na virtude seminária, que depende de ambos os generantes porque se ambos têm virtude fria, geram branco; se ambos cálida, geram preto; e se um fria, outro cálida, geram mulato de cor entremeia, nem perfeitamente branca, nem preta (*white woman with white man generate white children; with black man mulatto, neither white nor black*).

## 2. *Pardo, mulato and mestiço*

Portuguese has an early word, *pardo*, meaning 'dark', that has been documented since the 12<sup>th</sup> century: "uno poldro colore pardo" (Machado 1977, s.v. *pardo*). *Pardo* was a fairly common form in the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries and designated anything with a dark hue<sup>32</sup> and in particular, a kind of fabric ("hũas opas vermellas dobradas de panno pardo", 1414).<sup>33</sup> As a result, it quickly adopted the new meaning of 'dark skin or of undefined tonality' and later, 'mestizo, mulatto'. In fact, we can find *pardo* used as a reference to skin colour as early as the 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries, such as in *Miragres de Santiago*:<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> In *Corpus do Português*.

<sup>32</sup> *Pardo* was also used as a name for the leopard. According to Corominas (1991, s.v. *pardo*), *leopardus* could have been understood as *leo-pardus*, thus *pardus* would have been seen as an adjective referring to the dark-colored patches that distinguish the leopard from the lion. Then, *pardo* came to designate the color of horses and other animals, and finally any dark object. A resemblance to *pardal* (sparrow, from Greek *párdalos*) may have contributed to this semantic evolution. However, Viaro (2011:186) suggested the evolution PALLIDUM > \*paldo > *pardo*. In the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries *pardo* (and *pardilho*) was also a kind of dark and mixed fabric (Houaiss 2001, s. v. *pardo*).

<sup>33</sup> Maia (1986:104).

<sup>34</sup> In *Corpus do Português*.

Et demais ainda tomou toda a terra [...] que tinã os mouros, a terra dos serranos et dos pardos et dos castelãos.

Although is not exactly clear who these *pardos* were, the diary of Fernão de Magalhães', written in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, presents 'gente parda' as a synonym for 'dark-skinned people':

tendo andado mays de mil leguas achou perto da linha duas ilhas não grandes pouoadas de gente parda de cabelo corredio gêtios, saluagês, nus sem uestido nem pollicia algũa<sup>35</sup>.

Around the same time, João de Barros' *Décadas da Ásia (Década Segunda, Livros I-X, 1553)*<sup>36</sup>, showed that being *pardo* was apparently a reason for contempt:

Dinis Fernandes de Melo, filho bastardo de Gonçalo Vaz de Melo, o qual, posto que naquele tempo era pouco conhecido e estimado, por ser homem pardo nas cores (*Dinis Fernandes de Melo, bastard son of Gonçalo Vaz de Melo, was little valued because of the colour of his skin*)

In Gil Vicente's plays, the character of *Maria Parda* would probably have been dark-skinned, just like the *parda mujer* in *Frágua de Amor*; by that time, in Anrique Lopes' *Cena Policiano/Auto do Estudante*<sup>37</sup>, *pardo* and *mulato* had become synonyms:

Teodósio: Quem canta ao som d'almofaça?

Inofre: É o mulato de Licardo.

Teodósio: Dai a Deos, bem canta o pardo.

*Mulato*, from Latin MŪLUS+ATTUS (the suffix that applies to young animals) is, in both Portuguese and Spanish, the term that initially referred to the offspring

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<sup>35</sup> In *Corpus do Português*.

<sup>36</sup> In *Corpus do Português*.

<sup>37</sup> In *Teatro de Autores Portugueses do século XVI*.

produced through the breeding of a donkey and a horse. Corominas (1991 s.v. *mulo*) claims that the Portuguese word *mulato* is a loan from Spanish, from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. The word travelled, from Spanish or from Portuguese, to Italian (*mulatto*)<sup>38</sup> and then to French (*mulâtre*)<sup>39</sup> and English (*mulatto*). When referring to 'mule', *mulato* occurred in some of Gil Vicente's plays, such as with a Spanish-speaking character Julião (*Tragicomédia de Dom Duardos*):

Julião: ...ha de heredar  
una burra y un pumar  
y un mulato y un molino

and also with Portuguese speaking characters (*Farsa do Clérigo da Beira*)

Filho:...é cousa perigosa  
andardes à caça a pé.  
Clérigo: Se beato immaculato  
m'emprestasse o seu mulato  
mas nam sei se quererá.

Retaining the same meaning, the word *mulato* appears in the first Portuguese lexicography, written by Jerónimo Cardoso, who in the 16<sup>th</sup> century (*Dictionarium latinolusitanicum*, 1570), translates *mulato* with the word *burdo*: "mulato filho de asno e de egoa. Burdo, onis" (*cub of a donkey and a mare*). In the following century, Barbosa (*Dictionarium lusitanico latinum*, 1611) still defines *mulato* in terms of the animal ("Mulato filho de cavalo, e asna. Burdo, onis"), as does Bento Pereira in his *Thesouro da lingua portugueza*, 1697 ("Mulato, besta. Buido, onis").

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<sup>38</sup> *Mulatto* occurred in Italian in a translation by Ramusio of a Portuguese document dated 1525; latter, in 1580, Pigafetta also used this word (Corominas 1991 s.v. *mulo*).

<sup>39</sup> *Mulâtre* (*mullatre, mulastre, mulate, mulat*) is documented in French since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, meaning a 'person born from the union of a white with a black'. It is a loan from Portuguese (*Le Trésor de la Langue Française Informatisé*, s.v. *mulâtre*).

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Bluteau's *Vocabulário* also retains the same meaning: "Mulato é a besta, o macho asneiro, filho de cavallo, & burra". Bluteau even highlights some popular proverbs concerning this animal:

Caminho largo, ou mula, ou mulato (*long walk, mule or mulatto*);

O mulato sempre parece asno; quer na Cabeça, quer no rabo (*the mulato always appears to be a donkey, be it with his head or with his tail*).

Nevertheless, in the writings of Cardoso, Bento Pereira, and Bluteau, the word *mulato* can also be found applied to a human being:

Hybrida(ae). Ho homem mulato (*mullatto man*), Cardoso, *Dictionarium latinolusitanicum*, 1570;

o mulato, ou filho de natural, & estrangeiro (*son of a native and a foreigner*), Bento Pereira, *Prosodia in vocabularium bilingue, Latinum, et Lusitanum digesta*, 1697;

O filho de pay Europeo, & mãy negra, chama-se Mulato (*a child of a European father and black mother is a mulatto*)<sup>40</sup>, Bluteau, *Vocabulário Portuguez e Latino*, 1712-28.

Bluteau demonstrates quite clearly the metaphorical twist on the original meaning:

Este nome Mulato vem de Mú, ou mulo, animal gèrado de dous outros de diferente especie (the word 'mulato' comes from 'mulo', an animal generated from two animals of different species).

Therefore, ever since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, *mulato* has not simply been restricted to animals, but has also referred to an individual born from two different species, thus combining the notion of mixing both species and colours.

As for the word *mestiço*, traditionally it was employed in the Spanish and Portuguese overseas dominions to indicate crossbreeding. From the late Latin MĪXTĪCIUS, 'born of a mixed breed' (< MIXTUS, p.p. MISCĒRE, 'to mix, to merge'),

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<sup>40</sup> According to Corominas (1991 s.v. *mulo*), in the 16th century *mulato* meant 'son of European and Moorish' or 'black and Indian'; it was only in the 17th century that this word was applied to 'black and white'.

documented in Saint Jerome (c. 347-420) and Saint Isidore of Seville (c. 560-636)<sup>41</sup>, *mestiço* has occurred in Portuguese texts since the 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>42</sup> Jerónimo Cardoso (1570) and Agostinho Barbosa (1611) translated *mestiço* with the words *Hybris, idis, Ibrida, ae*; the original meaning of 'mixed' was initially a reference to the result of crossing species<sup>43</sup> as observed in Bento Pereira' *Prosódia*, 1697:

Lycopantheros, Animal mestiço de lobo, & onça (*crossbred of wolf and jaguar*);  
Leopardus, Leopardo, animal mistiço de pardo, & leoa (*crossbred of leopard and lion*).

Corominas observed that the meaning of 'dark skin' was a loan from Spanish *mestizo*, first documented in 1600. Yet, Machado (1977, s.v. *mestiço*) claimed that this word had already been in use in a 16<sup>th</sup> Century Portuguese text:

Habitã mais naquella prouincia do Malabar dous generos de mouros, huus naturaes da terra a que elles chamã Nayteas que sam mestiços (*Moors who are mestizos*), João de Barros, *Décadas da Ásia: Década Primeira*, Livro IX, 1552.

Either way, Bluteau, in his *Vocabulário* (1712-28), already identifies *mestiço* as a reference to any type of animal (rational or irrational) that results from the crossing of species:

mestiço. Diz-se dos animaes racionaes, & irracionaes. Animal mestiço. Nascido de pay, & mãy de diferentes especies, como mú, leopardo, & c.

Homem mestiço. Nascido de pays de diferentes nações. V. g. Filho de Portuguez, & de India, ou de pay Indio, & de mãy Portugueza (*rational or irrational animals born from parents of different species; child of Portuguese and Indian*).

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<sup>41</sup> Corominas 1991 s.v. *mecer*.

<sup>42</sup> Machado 1977; Cunha 1986; Houaiss 2001, s.v. *mestiço*.

<sup>43</sup> The French *métis* (adj.) is documented in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, in the sense of 'mixed', 'of low birth', and in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, meaning 'animal generated from two different species' (*chien mestis*); in the 17<sup>th</sup> *metice* (adj. and n.) already means 'person born of a white man with an Indian'. *Metice, mestice* were common in the 17-18<sup>th</sup> centuries and are, probably, an adaptation of the Portuguese or the Spanish word. Ancient Provençal had *mestiz* (adj. 'of low birth', 'mixed blood', 'bad', 'vile' and n., 'bastard of low birth'), from the early 12<sup>th</sup> century (*Le Trésor de la Langue Française Informatisé*, s.v. *métis*).

Bluteau's *Vocabulário de sinonimos e phrases portuguezas* (1728) adds a pejorative dimension to this word, associating it with the concept of 'fake, adulterated': "Mistiço, ou Mestiço. Bastardo. Adulterino. Illegitimo. Não castiço (*bastard, illegitimate*).

### 3. Closing remarks

Although *negro* has always been the word of preference to designate non-white skin (probably because it can encompass any skin which is dark), by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century the Portuguese felt the need to introduce new lexicon. As shown in figure 2, the only word in the 14<sup>th</sup> century that was used to designate a non-white skin colour was *negro*; in the following century, *pardo* became an available option for dark skin colour; in the 16<sup>th</sup>, *preto* emerges (as an alternative to *negro*) but also the mixed skin colours, *mestiço* and *mulato*.<sup>44</sup>

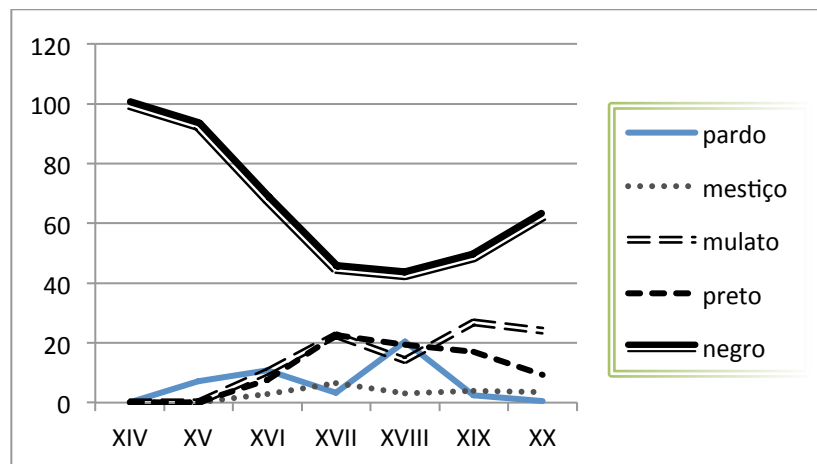


Fig. 2: The frequency of *preto*, *negro*, *pardo*, *mestiço* and *mulato* (referring skin color) in *Corpus do Português*.

The variety of cultures with which the Portuguese came into contact in the 16<sup>th</sup> century must have stimulated this need to specify colors and backgrounds. Hence, aside from the terms *preto/negro*, *branco*, *pardo*, *mulato* and *mestiço*, there were

<sup>44</sup> All these words are still in use, for skin color (*Infopedia*).

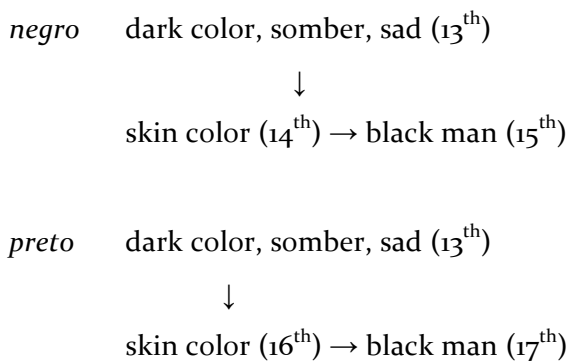
other newer words, such as *crioulo* and *caboclo*, which also found themselves listed in Bluteau, 1712-28:

O filho de pay Europeo, & mãy negra, chama-se Mulato (*European father and black mother*);

O filho de pay do Brasil, & mãy negra, chama-se Curiboca, ou Cabocles (*Brazilian father and black mother*);

O filho de pay, & mãy, negros, chama-se Crioulo (*black father and mother*).

It was no longer sufficient to simply refer to a 'mixture of species'; rather, it had become necessary to specify the exact type of mixture. This desire for specification was possibly due to the fact that *negro* was perceived as an excessively broad term. The Portuguese already knew the colour black (*negro*) and could use it to qualify Africans with whom they had had contact ever since the early period of the Christian 'Reconquista'. But from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards, when the expansionist overseas movement resulted in new intercultural contacts, skin colour could no longer be reduced to a binary colour system: black and white. Therefore, the need to give names to different skin tones, in particular the 'mixed' skin, led to a common strategy for extending the lexicon: using words that already existed and to which known realities have been assigned, and give them new meanings, adapted to new realities. This is what seems to have occurred in this particular semantic field: the particular adjective that qualified a color started being applied to the skin color of an individual and, later, named the individual itself.





*pardo* dark color, (12<sup>th</sup>)



mixed fabric, mixed skin color (15<sup>th</sup>) → person of mixed race, n. (16<sup>th</sup>)

*mestiço* mongrel animal (14<sup>th</sup>) → person of mixed race, adj., n. (16<sup>th</sup>)

*mulato* mule (16<sup>th</sup>) → person of mixed race, adj., n. (16<sup>th</sup>)

The element which supports this extension of the meaning for *negro* and *preto*, is indeed colour. On the other hand, the new meaning for *pardo*, *mestiço* and *mulato* was not only based on colour but also on the very concept of intersection; mixing materials, cross-breeding, and also the crossing of colours.

With regard to the naming of skin colour, *negro* and *preto* are clearly opposed to *branco*; but, as the world is not simply 'black and white', the colour of the skin cannot be exclusively reduced to these two colours, especially with the new intercultural contacts brought about with beginning of Portuguese overseas expansion. Hence the need for more specific words such as *pardo*, *mestiço* and *mulato*; words that already existed but which had previously designated other realities. New experiences arise from already existing concepts, and indeed, the same applies to lexicon. In essence, if we go back to the roots of words and study their etymological chain, we may reach simpler forms and more 'primitive' concepts.

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## II

### *Categorization and lexicographic description*



# Colourful microstructures: How Italian dictionaries see colour terms

*Carla Marelllo & Cristina Onesti (University of Turin)*

*A Color stands abroad  
On Solitary Fields  
That Science cannot overtake  
But Human Nature feels.  
(Emily Dickinson)*

## **1. Introduction**

This paper aims to analyze how different Italian dictionaries (mainly digital monolingual dictionaries) deal with colour-related terms, in particular as concerns:

- the attribution of parts of speech;
- the treatment of new chromonyms and compound colours.

The association of colour with fonts and microstructure design has massively entered the world of digital dictionaries. As Dziemianko (2015) demonstrated in a recent publication, this kind of information in every microstructure significantly increases the speed and effectiveness of online dictionary searches.

Though this is an important aspect of colour use in lexicography, it is not the primary topic of our research. Our main aim is to analyse how different dictionaries deal with the attribution of more than one part of speech, usually a noun and an adjective, to the same headword, and whether they supply the necessary morphosyntactic information.

At a methodological level, we worked with full text queries in digital dictionaries and with queries exploiting part of speech (POS) labels in annotated corpora (see § 3).

## 2. Colours in Italian dictionaries

A complete analysis of dictionary definitions of colour terms is discussed in Casati (1990), who defends an Aristotelian paradigm of definition (colour names are introduced by pointing to objects of a specific colour) against the scientific paradigm used by most Italian dictionaries. In his opinion, the state of conceptual confusion in Italian lexicography derived from a tendency which first appeared in Tommaseo–Bellini (1861-1879) and, due to its authoritative influence, was passed on in many subsequent works, whereas correct reference to a prototype was characteristic of our early lexicographic tradition (see *Vocabolario della Crusca*). The lack of homogeneous criteria is documented by the range of possible definitions, as outlined in the following scheme:

- a definition starting from typical substance<sup>45</sup>, which refers to a prototype, as for example *viola* = *il colore della viola mammola* (Palazzi 1986), ‘the colour of wood violet’

- a definition starting from thesaural association with idiomatic expressions (like *rosso come il fuoco* ‘red as fire’) which are vague and not always true or sufficient;

- a definition starting from the spectrum position in terms of wavelength (i.e.: “radiazioni di lunghezza d’onda comprese tra 7500 e 6540 Å” / “che sta tra il giallo e il blu”).

Consider that in our digital era such variety is decreasing because series of headwords sharing the same features are dealt with using the same microstructure model.

Looking at Italian paper dictionaries, Marconi (1997: 300-301) observed that illustrations could be added to colour definitions to clarify fine shade distinctions; otherwise, in some cases they become almost unintelligible. For example, users’ referential competence is not really supported by definitions like:

*magenta* = [...] color porpora carico venuto di moda dopo la battaglia di Magenta (1859), con riferimento al colore dei pantaloni degli zuavi francesi [Treccani 1989] ‘intense purple colour, which became fashionable after the Battle of Magenta (1859), referring to the colour of French Zouave trousers’

We can find the same definition in Zingarelli 1970 (*magenta* = [...] colore cremisi carico, Eng. ‘intense crimson’): a comparison with the most recent edition (Zingarelli 2016) shows a revision, in an attempt to refer only to basic colours, like *rosso* ‘red’ and *violetto* ‘violet’:

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<sup>45</sup> Some attention should also be devoted to websites where people post images they associate with feelings and colours, because nowadays defining colours according to the “typical substance” of that colour, as Casati (1990) suggests, might reserve some surprises and reveal shifts in typicality.

magènta / ma'dʒɛnta/

[da Magenta, luogo della sanguinosa battaglia (1859), con allusione al sangue che vi fu sparso ☀ 1872]

agg.; anche s. m. inv.

- di colore rosso molto intenso, tendente al violetto

In Zingarelli 2008 in the internal part of the cover the publisher provided an atlas of colours and indicated the name of each colour and the percentage of the four-colour process for each hue.

In the Merriam Webster online Learner's Dictionary we find (see <http://www.learnersdictionary.com/definition/magenta>):

**magenta** /mə'dʒɛntə/ noun

plural magentas

Learner's definition of MAGENTA [count, noncount] : a bright, deep purplish-red color — see color picture on [this page](#)

**magenta** adjective

Clicking on the link “*this page*” we can see a table of colours where magenta is placed near fuchsia: an undeniable advantage of e-lexicography on line.

### 3. Searching for colour terms (without getting lost somewhere over the rainbow...)

Initially, our methodology worked with full text queries within digital dictionaries, running the risk of also obtaining articles which contained examples where a colour adjective is mentioned as any other adjective might be. Overall the method worked well and offered more results than a search for the word *colour* in the field “definition” of the advanced search mode. Then we used annotated corpora of Italian in order to verify the frequency and use of some particular cases: *ItTenTen*<sup>46</sup> and *NUNC-It*<sup>47</sup> corpora were the main sources.

Grossmann (1988) already dealt with most topics we are interested in because her research was (also) based on paper dictionaries. We will deal with these points mainly through digital online dictionaries since they allow the abovementioned “full text” search mode which helps to discover unexpected occurrences of colour terms in microstructures as well. In any case, we noticed that colour term microstructures

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<sup>46</sup> The Italian *TenTen* corpus (v. 1.0, 2010) is available in Sketch Engine (<https://www.sketchengine.co.uk/>) with 3.1 billion tokens. It is tagged with TreeTagger using Marco Baroni's parameter file.

<sup>47</sup> The NUNC suite of multilingual corpora (*Newsgroups UseNet Corpora*) is based on newsgroups' language: it was implemented at Turin University by the research group led by Carla Marello and Manuel Barbera and is freely searchable at [www.corpora.unito.it](http://www.corpora.unito.it). The Italian subset of data NUNC-It has 237.401.299 tokens.



have not undergone major restyling since Grossmann's study, so it can be said that most of what she observed remains true.

A preliminary note is related to what we cannot find when searching *colore*: in some cases, dictionary glosses have the plural form *colori* or words like *riflesso* (= glare, reflection); for example, the entry **posterizzare** 'to posterize' whose definition contains *colori* in the plural in Zingarelli 2016.

We examined whether Italian dictionaries always treat every colour or colour category the same way.

Basically we face different levels of lexicalisation of colour terms, as outlined in the following exemplifications:

- (1) *verde* 'green'
- (2) *verde scuro* 'dark green': the term is followed by a characterization given by another adjective; *verdolino-verdino* 'light green', allowed by the rich palette of Italian suffixes of endearment
- (3) *verde smeraldo* / *verde bottiglia* 'emerald green' / 'bottle green': the term is followed by a characterization given by an invariable noun<sup>48</sup>
- (4) *verdeoro* 'green and gold' (in particular when referring to Brazilian sport teams): the term is composed by two juxtaposed colour terms whose meanings remain distinct<sup>49</sup>
- (5) *verd(e)azzurro* 'bluish green': the term is composed of two colour terms, indicating a new colour between the two
- (6) *smeraldo* / *sabbia* 'emerald' / 'sand'

In the following discussion we will analyse some aspects of their linguistic (and lexicographic) behaviour.

Predictably, moving towards the last classes, which represent the less lexicalised types, the likelihood of finding definitions and examples such as "(di) color(e) + X" 'of colour X, X-coloured' before the colour term itself (a situation potentially occurring also for type (1)) grows: e.g. *una maglietta color albicocca* 'an apricot-coloured t-shirt' is more common than *una maglietta albicocca* 'an apricot t-shirt' both in corpora and in dictionaries.

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<sup>48</sup> Colour terms are sometimes hapax, intended to create a brilliant style and therefore they are not recorded in dictionaries (Sergio 2010: 248); type (3) terms in particular are more likely to be occasional neologisms. An Italian research paper focusing on children's categorization of colours has shown that colour vocabulary enrichment in early childhood is mainly due to compound expressions made up of a basic colour + a noun which is generally related to real objects, e.g.: *giallo formaggio* 'yellow [like] cheese'; *rosso guancia* 'red [like a] cheek'; *blu grembiule* 'blue [like a] smock' (Mecacci/Serafini 1987: 82).

<sup>49</sup> The difference between type (4) and type (5) is clearly illustrated by D'Achille/Grossmann (2013), distinguishing respectively *additive* and *intersective* relations.

#### 4. Part of speech attribution

As concerns the categorization of word classes, we are mainly dealing with adjectives. Grossmann already argued (1988: 35) that these terms express qualities or features of people, objects, and ideas which can also be named by nouns (*color sabbia*), compounds (*verde bottiglia / fumo di Londra*), elements derived from verbs (*verdeggiante* it. adj coming from present participle of verb *verdeggiare* ‘to be verdant’), acting as an ADJ from a syntactic and semantic perspective.

However, we can note that some forms are more or less adjectival. A prototypical ADJ is formally defined by a series of properties; for example, +/-agreement with its head is an interesting aspect to be considered in our analysis. The terms here considered can be variable or invariable lexemes.

Given the normal number and gender agreement of colour terms of what we called type (1) (*pantaloni bianchi* ‘white trousers’; *penne rosse* ‘red pens’), let us consider type (2):

- (1) la gonna gialla chiara / le gonne gialle chiare / gli abiti gialli chiari
- (2) \*la gonna gialla chiaro / le gonne gialle chiaro / gli abiti gialli chiaro
- (3) la gonna giallo chiaro / le gonne giallo chiaro / gli abiti giallo chiaro

- ad (1) la [[gonna] [[giallo] & [chiaro]]. Both *chiaro* ‘light’ and *giallo* ‘yellow’ are adjectives and modify *gonna* ‘skirt’.
- ad (3) la [[gonna] [[giallo] chiaro]], i.e. *chiaro* (adjective) modifies *giallo* (noun) and *giallo chiaro* modifies *gonna*. *Giallo* is meant as *colore giallo* and *giallo chiaro* is invariable, being an attribute of *colore* (though *colore* is not expressed).

Italian behaves differently from Russian, another language rich in morphological agreement markers, where we have to deal with compound adjectives:

- светло-желтая юбка - светло-желтая ← composed by светл(ая) (light) + желтая (yellow) ; linking morpheme 'o'; светло-желтая (It. *giallo chiaro*) agrees in number gender and case with the noun head of the nominal phrase.

Moving towards the less lexicalised cases, we can observe different behaviours for types (3), (4), (5) and (6):

- (4) *Le calze verde bottiglia* / \**verdi bottiglia* / \**verde bottiglie* / \**verdi bottiglie* ‘bottle green socks’
- (5) *Le calze verdeoro* / ?*verdioro* / \**verdeori* / \**verdiori* ‘green and gold socks’
- (6) *Le calze verdeazzurro* / ?*verdiazzurro* / ?*verdeazzurre* / ?*verdiazzurre*<sup>50</sup> ‘bluish green socks’
- (7) *Le calze smeraldo* / \**smeralde* ‘emerald socks’

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<sup>50</sup> This last form (*verdiazzurre*) would be easily accepted in the case of, e.g., socks with stripes of both green and blue, which is a case belonging to type (4) with an additive relation.

Generally dictionaries do not devote enough attention to these cases of agreement.

### 5. Nouns turning into colour attributes

Let us now consider those colour terms which come from natural elements (e.g. *avorio*, the Italian correspondent of ivory), or particular stones (e.g. coral, jade, ruby), minerals and metals (e.g. bronze, copper), fruit and vegetables (e.g. apricot, eggplant), food (e.g. cream, mustard), fauna (e.g. lobster, salmon) or flowers (e.g. cyclamen, lilac), and are used for denominating their typical colour.

Thornton (2004) considers such colour terms, which are very frequent in the field of textiles and fashion, under the process of NOUN → ADJ conversion. However, she remarked that they do not behave like adjectives in traditional tests (number/gender agreement, comparative, superlative, adverbial use, anteposition in front of N), unlike most basic colours:

- (a) i. una maglia rosa / fucsia / salmone / albicocca / panna  
 due maglie rosa / fucsia / salmone / albicocca / panna  
 due maglie \*rose / \*fucsie / \*salmoni / \*albicocche / \*panne  
 vs una maglia rossa / nera, due maglie rosse / nere
- ii. un maglione rosa / fucsia / albicocca / panna,  
 una maglia salmone  
 un maglione \*roso / \*fucsio / \*albicocco / \*panno  
 una maglia \*salmona  
 vs un maglione rosso / nero, una maglia rossa / nera
- (b) i. la mia maglia è più rosa / <sup>?</sup>salmone / <sup>?</sup>albicocca / <sup>?</sup>panna della tua  
 ii. la mia maglia è \*rosissima / \*salmonissima / \*albicocchissima /  
 \*pannissima  
 vs la mia maglia è nerissima / rossissima
- (c) \*rosamente / \*albicoccamente vestito  
 but also: \*rossamente / \*neramente vestito
- (d) la <sup>?</sup>rosa / \*fucsia / \*salmone / \*panna maglia  
 vs le nere chiome, le bianche vesti, i verdi pascoli

Thornton (2004: 530)

Consequently, this category of modifiers seems to have, on the whole, a “null grade of adjectivality” and it should be classified as nouns modifying nouns, according to Thornton.

This leads to the problematic decisions lexicographers need to take: how should the attribution of more than one part of speech to the same headword to be managed and how should the necessary morphosyntactic information be provided.

We can take into consideration those nouns entered as recent chromonyms in our dictionaries, beginning with the term *sabbia* ‘sand’, used in expressions like “un golfino color sabbia”.

Most cases in the *ItTenTen* corpus present the form *color sabbia* (with some variants but the same structure: *tonalità sabbia*):

- (8) Tre rustici di tufo dal **colore sabbia chiaro** che ricorda la terra dei deserti  
 ‘Three **sand coloured** tuff cottages’

- (9) I frutti sono acheni **color sabbia**, e spesso vengono scambiati per semi.  
‘The fruit are **sand coloured** achene, and often are mistaken for seeds’
- (10) giocano sull'accostamento della **tonalità sabbia** e del beige  
‘they play with the combination of **shades of sand** and beige’

However, some examples are documented where *sabbia* is not preceded by “colour”:

- (11) moquette **sabbia** e selleria in pelle beige con copricapote  
‘**sand** carpeting and beige leather upholstering with slipcovers’
- (12) Questa farina si ottiene in primo luogo essiccando le castagne, [...] macinandole [...] così da ridurle in farina finissima. Questa si presenta con un caratteristico color avorio dalle possibili sfumature **sabbia**.  
‘The flour is obtained by drying the chestnuts first, [...] grinding them [...] into a very fine flour. This should be ivory colour and may be tinted with various shades of **sand**.’

This kind of information is actually included in Zingarelli 2016 (B refers to the possible role of invariable adjective), but it is provided with a bad example:

◆ sàbbia /  'sabbja/

[lat. s̄abula, nt. pl. di s̄abulum ‘sabbia’, prob. di orig. indeur. ☀ 1440]

A s. f.

[...]

B in funzione di agg. inv.

- (posposto a un sost.) che ha il colore tra il beige e il grigio chiaro caratteristico della sostanza omonima: *un golfino color sabbia*

The singular form *un golfino color sabbia* cannot really illustrate the invariability of the form – whereas corpora data clearly show that also plural words (like *cappotti* in 13.) are followed by the singular *sabbia*:

- (13) cappotti **sabbia** da imprenditore con sani principi. (La Stampa Moda)  
‘Sand coloured coats typical of businessmen with sound principles’

See also the case of *ardesia*, ‘slate’. Under the headword **ardesia** in Zingarelli 2016 we find the following definitions and examples:

ardèšia /  ar'dɛzja/

[fr. ardoise, di etim. incerta ☀ 1741]

A s. f.

1 roccia scistosa argillosa facilmente divisibile in lastre sottili di colore grigio o verdastro; è usata per la copertura di tetti, per lavagne ecc.

2 colore grigio bluastro caratteristico della sostanza omonima: cielo d'ardesia

B in funzione di agg. inv.

- (posposto al sost.) nella loc. *grigio ardesia*, detto delle tonalità di grigio tendente al blu, tipica dell'omonimo minerale: *abito, tessuto grigio ardesia*

The examples given in B. do not belong to the use of the adj. *ardesia* but to the multiword *grigio ardesia*. This is not surprising because even in large modern digital corpora of Italian we cannot find many examples where *ardesia* is alone, as a totally lexicalised colour term:

- (14) la cupola delle **nuvole di ardesia** (NUNC-It)  
'the dome of **slate** (grey) clouds'
- (15) cieli temporaleschi **di ardesia** in un miscuglio di sguardi impigliati e brividi dell'aria (NUNC-It)  
'stormy skies of slate in a mix of entwined expressions and shivers of air'
- (16) Il cielo prendeva una **tinta di ardesia** (ItTenTen)  
'The sky became **the colour of slate**'

Contexts (14-16) show the prepositional phrase *di ardesia*; we found only one context in a scientific description where the colour term alone is an adjective:

- (17) nel Canarino bianco o **ardesia** il dato ha una utilità ben maggiore (ItTenTen)
- (18) 'for white or **slate-grey** canary the datum is much more useful'

Most terms of this type are classified as invariable adjectives; for instance, *cachi* or *kaki* 'khaki' and *albicocca* 'apricot' in Zingarelli 2016, but no examples are provided.

This is not valid for *melanzana* 'eggplant' (which is a colour term in Grossmann's list), described as a NOUN (s.f.) with the meaning of plant/vegetable/etc., but with no mention of the corresponding colour in Zingarelli, Nuovo De Mauro or Sabatini-Coletti. Devoto-Oli 2011 registers the adjectival use in fashion jargon but gives the example: *accessori color melanzana*, 'eggplant-coloured accessories' where *melanzana* actually is used as an apposition of *color*.

Under the definition of *prugna* 'plum' the Nuovo De Mauro online distinguishes both the noun and the invariable adjective:

prù|gna s.f., s.m.inv., agg.inv.av. 1320; lat. tardo prūnīa(m), der. di prunus  
"susino".

#### AD

1. s.f., susina: *marmellata di prugne*
2. s.m.inv., colore rosso violaceo simile a quello di tale frutto | agg.inv., di tale colore: *cappotto prugna*


Zingarelli 2016 gives two examples: *una borsa color prugna* 'a plum-coloured bag'; *un vestito prugna* 'a plum dress'. Only the second one is a true example of the adjectival use.

As concerns type (3) of our classification, it needs to be determined whether cases like *giallo zafferano* 'saffron yellow' are independent lexicographical entries or whether these shades are specified among the co-occurrence strings of a lemma, and in particular, of a basic colour.

In GRADIT we find the phraseology within the microstructure instead of an independent headword - see e.g. under *giallo*:


4. s.m., il colore del limone o dell'oro: *un maglione di un bel giallo, quest'anno va di moda il giallo* | seguito da un sostantivo che indica una cosa o un animale di tale colore che individua la tonalità: *giallo limone, giallo oro, giallo canarino, giallo zafferano*; anche seguito da un aggettivo o da un altro colore: *giallo carico, vivace, intenso, allegro, tenue, delicato; giallo arancio, giallo verde* | **TS** fis. colore primario compreso nell'iride tra l'aranciato e il verde

In Zingarelli 2016, on the other hand, the independent colour term *zafferano* 'saffron' is lemmatized without any reference to *giallo* 'yellow' (with no recording under the headword *giallo*):

zafferàno /  \*dzaffe' rano/  
[dall'arabo za'farān 'croco' ☀ 1303]  
A s. m.  
[...]  
B in funzione di agg. inv.  
• (posto a un sost.) detto di colore giallo intenso: *vestito zafferano* | *gabbiano zafferano*, piccolo gabbiano dal vivace e intenso colore giallo che vive a gruppi sulle coste nord-europee (*Larus fuscus*)

Studies such as Fresu (2006) and D'Achille (2014) might help Italian lexicographers to revise and enlarge the phraseological part of the microstructure. Fresu (2006)<sup>51</sup> in particular tries to verify how new chromonyms relate to existing terms of colours.

Note that looking for *colore* in e-dictionaries using the full text search mode produces a list of lemmas with the word in the etymology, but with very specific meanings:

enrosadira /  enroza'dira/  
[ladino dolomitico enrosadōra e rosadūra, propr. 'il farsi di colore rosa', da rōsa '(color di) rosa' ☀ 1924]  
s. f.  
• la graduale colorazione rosa che sfuma verso il viola, che le pareti dolomitiche assumono al tramonto

Full text queries for *colore* identify verbs related to colours as well, such as the rare *arrubinarè* 'to become ruby-coloured', the still used *azzurreggiare* 'to become, to be blue-coloured', *imporporare* 'to become purple-coloured'.

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<sup>51</sup> Fresu (2006) remarks that in Italian *nero*, *bianco*, *rosso* are very "productive" and stable. More recent colours like *arancione* or *viola* have not (yet) developed their metaphorical domain.

The dictionary definition of *imporporare* does not contain the figurative meaning which is attested in some corpus data, connected to high church positions: Fresu (2006: 78) considers it a “high grade of semantic specialization” (*il porporato* = cardinal), actually recorded under the lemma *porpora* ‘purple’, for example in Zingarelli 2016:

pórpōra / ◀ 'porpora/  
 [vc. Dotta, lat. Pūrpura(m), dal gr. Porphýra, di etim. Incerta ☀ av. 1250]  
 s. f.  
 1 sostanza colorante rossa usata dagli antichi, secreta da ghiandole del tegumento di gasteropodi marini del genere *Purpura* e *Murex*  
 2 colore vermiglio: *cielo di porpora* | *essere, diventare, farsi di porpora*, (fig.) arrossire violentemente  
 3 drappo, tessuto tinto con la porpora | (est.) veste realizzata con tale tessuto: *la porpora regia, prelatizia* | (est.) la dignità e il titolo di cardinale: *aspirare alla porpora; essere innalzato alla porpora* | *indossare la porpora*, essere eletto cardinale  
 4 (med.) macula rosso-violacea della pelle dovuta a una piccola emorragia: *porpora emorragica* | *porpora retinica*, rodopsina

In ItTenTen we find only 5 cases out of 206 occurrences (+ 1 case in NUNC) in which the word *imporporato* refers to cardinals as, for instance, in:

- (19) *farcita dalla presenza di autorità graduate e **imporporate***  
 ‘filled by the presence of military [lit. graduated] and ecclesiastic [lit. cardinal red] authorities’

## 5. Compound terms

Special attention is devoted in Italian to compound colour terms related to the field of sport, football in particular.

Teams, players, supporters and related lemmas are frequently denominated with terms designating colours of team kits<sup>52</sup>: a simple word like *granata* or *viola*; more often compounds, like *bianconero*, *rossonero*, *nerazzurro*, *biancoceleste*, *rosanero*, *giallorosso*,<sup>53</sup> etc.

Similar Italian adjectives agree in number and gender with nouns (*la squadra nerazzurra*; *i campioni bianconeri/rossoneri*; *l'allenatore bianconero*), whereas, for example, Catalan *blaugrana* (= of/or relating to the football team FC Barcelona) is invariable.

A special case mentioned by D'Achille (2014) is represented by *rosanero* (referred to Palermo's players), recorded also - and mostly - as invariable: *i rosanero*.

<sup>52</sup> See the very detailed analysis proposed by D'Achille (2014) and his bibliographical references.

<sup>53</sup> The mentioned examples refer respectively to the football teams Torino, Fiorentina, Juventus, Milan, Inter, Lazio, Palermo and Roma.

Among the examples presented by D’Achille such colour terms have a nominal value. However, their use as adjectives is highly frequent: actually, they probably emerged as adjectives - see the ellipsis process suggested by Nascimbeni<sup>54</sup> and mentioned in D’Achille (2014: 117, footnote 38): *i giocatori in maglia viola* → *i viola* ‘the players with violet t-shirt → the violets’, which lets us presume an intermediate step: *i giocatori viola* ‘the violet players’.

GRADIT has considered *viola* as a noun, with the meaning of ‘supporter of the Fiorentina team’, also used as an invariable adjective. On the other hand, it recorded the compound *giallorosso* as an adjective also used as a noun.

In Zingarelli 2016 we find both categorizations: an invariable adjective (‘that is playing on the football team Fiorentina or is a supporter of the team’) and an invariable noun (‘person playing on the football team Fiorentina or a supporter of the team’):

◆viòla (1) / ▼ vi'òla/

[...]

B in funzione di agg. inv.

[...]

2 che gioca nella squadra di calcio della Fiorentina o ne è sostenitore

C s. m. inv. (anche f. nel sign. 2)

[...]

2 chi gioca nella squadra di calcio della Fiorentina o ne è sostenitore

## 6. Closing remarks: colourful microstructures might be better

Colour terms are presently studied by linguists because they are deeply tied to emotions and visual experiences. In the past century they were mainly investigated because they showed a high degree of language (and culture) specificity, in spite of the fact that human beings share the same organ of sight.

Italian linguists have written many interesting papers and books about colour terms, both from a diachronic perspective and from a morphosyntactic point of view.

The knowledge gathered about the first written occurrence of a colour term is now fairly represented in dictionaries because almost all monolingual Italian dictionaries give the date of the first appearance of a word. Lexicological studies on “new” colours are facilitated by large corpora, including newspapers and fashion magazines. We mentioned specialised studies such as the one by D’Achille 2014 about bicolor compounds in football press reports.

From our survey, it appears that monolingual dictionaries are rather quick in hosting new (sub)entries for new colours, all the more so when the new colour is a semantic neologism, like *apricot*, meaning ‘apricot-coloured’ added as an adjective

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<sup>54</sup> Nascimbeni, G. (1992-1993). “La lingua del calcio”. In *Ludus. Sport & Loisir*. I, 3-4. 26-31.



to *apricot* fruit noun. They often do not give examples for such adjectival use without the company of the word *color*. It should be important to stress that *apricot* can be an ADJ of colour in its own right, without *color* in front of *apricot*.

Dictionaries are slower in registering morphosyntactic features of colour terms coupled with *chiaro* ‘light shade’ or *scuro* ‘dark, deep shade’; yet, we know that languages vary in the way they show agreement between the adjective shade and the colour noun/adj with the head of the noun phrase.

If dictionaries register many shades of basic colours, they do not follow the same microstructure schema in the whole dictionary for all the articles devoted to colour terms. The Zingarelli dictionary (2016) is probably the only Italian desk dictionary which has massively applied the following formula to colour adjectives deriving from a noun:

In funzione di agg. inv (posto al sost)  
(‘Used as an adj. it is invariable and follows the noun’)

In the Zingarelli dictionary 2016 out of 395 entries containing this formula, 83 are colour terms. A query on the web shows that the invariability of these adjective + noun couplets, as for instance *giallo ocra*, *verde bottiglia*, *rosso fuoco*, is not always observed in the use of the native speaking/writing community. If dictionaries play a key role in defining the morphology of difficult verbs and unusual plural, in the same way, they should note that not only the second member is invariable but that also the colour adjective “becomes” invariable because it is meant as an attribute of elliptical *colore* : *occhi verdi* (literally eyes plural green plural) but *occhi verde bottiglia* (literally ‘eyes plural green singular bottle singular) and not \**occhi verdi bottiglia* (literally ‘eyes plural green plural bottle singular).

In the French monolingual lexicographic landscape, we find that Le Petit Robert 2013 more accurately registers the difference between what is called APPOS. INV. i.e. apposition invariable, in cases such as *bleu*, *gris ardoise* ‘slate blue, grey’ or *vert bouteille* and what is labelled ADJT INV. “adjectivement invariable” i.e. invariable adjectival use of a word which usually is not an adjective in cases such as *abricot*, *aubergine*, *ivoire*, *prune*, *sable* (‘apricot, eggplant, ivory, plum, sand’) and registers the distinction when both behaviours are possible, as for *safran*: APPOS. INV. *Jaune safran* ‘saffron yellow’- ADJT INV. “*Le soir safran qui sur les quais déteint*” Aragon ‘The saffron evening which discolours on the riverwalks’.

In the Spanish monolingual lexicography, the authoritative Diccionario de la Real Academia Española registers two adjectival uses of *azafrán*: no. 4 is the apposition; no. 5. is the invariable adjectival use, but its being invariable is signalled only through the example, where *túnicas* is plural<sup>55</sup>. *Albaricoque* ‘apricot’ and *marfil* ‘ivory’ are dealt in the same way: the invariable use of the adjectives is conveyed

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<sup>55</sup> DRAE online <http://dle.rae.es> sub voce **azafrán** [...] 4. adj. Dicho de un color: Rojo anaranjado semejante al que se saca del estigma del azafrán. U. t. c. s. m. 5. adj. De color azafrán. *Túnicas azafrán*. U. t. c. s. m. is the shortening of *usado también como sustantivo masculino* and means that *azafrán* can also be used alone as a noun meaning ‘saffron colour’ without being accompanied by the word *color*.

through plural nouns *sedas albaricoque* ‘apricot silks’, *sábanas marfil* ‘ivory savannahs’<sup>56</sup>.

This small sample of comparison with dictionaries of two other Romance languages shows that there is not just one way to deal with this type of morphological behaviour, though the French Le Robert approach appears more consistent. The English language, with its invariable adjectives and with the prenominal position of nouns used as adjectives, handles this lexicographic issue more easily.

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<sup>56</sup> Berenjena ‘eggplant’, *ciruela* ‘plum’, *pizarra* ‘slate’ do not register a color meaning in DRAE.

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# On the grammatical substance of colour words

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Portuguese colour words - those that refer a colour and those that refer the colour of something or someone - surface either as nouns or as adjectives. These colour words are lexically ambiguous with regard to their grammatical category. Syntax may disambiguate them (and it often does), but that disambiguation doesn't provide enough information to understand the relationship that holds between colour nouns and colour adjectives.

In this paper, I will explore different avenues (i.e. etymology, semantics, grammatical properties and contemporary usage) to discuss the following issues:

- From a lexical point of view, are colour nouns and colour adjectives one sole entity or two different items?
- If colour nouns and colour adjectives differ, how do they differ? Which of them comes first? How is the other one obtained?
- If they are one only lexical item, how can its different outputs be generated?
- Do diachronic and synchronic analyses converge or diverge?

The words under consideration will be *amarelo* 'yellow', *azul* 'blue', *laranja* 'orange', *verde* 'green' and *vermelho* 'red'. I will present a brief description on colour words gender and number variation, within the general picture for gender and number variation in Portuguese. This description will justify why I will just consider non-feminine singular colour nouns. In the second section, I will show the results of a colour word query on two Portuguese textual databases. They indicate that colour adjectives are more salient than colour nouns, but nor the statistics nor the record of early usage make significant contributions to the discussion of the above-

mentioned questions. The following section offers a survey of colour words in a contemporary and some early dictionaries, that, again, is unable to provide more definitive hints.

Given the accumulation of inconclusive observations, I decided to take a look at compound colour words. These compounds have a hybrid nature due to the fact that they are words built upon a phrasal sequence. Colour adjective compounds are particularly interesting. In fact, they originate in a noun phrase, which means that they are obtained by conversion. But not straightforward - the scrutiny of usage data will allow us to conclude that, irrespective of the gender and number values of their syntactic antecedent, most of these colour compound adjectives will be masculine and singular, just like simple colour nouns. Based on this, I will claim that these compound adjectives are generated by conversion of a compound colour noun, which is produced by conversion of a noun phrase headed by a simple colour noun.

The same kind of reasoning will then be applied to simple colour words.

### 1. Gender and number variation

Portuguese adjectives and nouns have a quite similar morphological behaviour as far as gender and number variation are concerned; yet they are not exactly identical (see Villalva 2008 for details).

Portuguese nouns must have a gender value (either masculine, feminine or underspecified). When they refer animate entities, the gender value largely corresponds to the male/female distinction (cf. 1a), but there are some mismatches, such as underspecified nouns (cf. 1b), masculine nouns that refer female beings (cf. 1c) and feminine nouns that refer both genders, as well as the opposite (cf. 1d). As to the gender of inanimate nouns, it is fully unmotivated (cf. 1e):

- |     |    |   |   |
|-----|----|---|---|
| (1) | a. | <i>aluno</i> <sub>masc</sub>                  | ‘male pupil’  |
|     |    | <i>aluna</i> <sub>fem</sub>                   | ‘female pupil’                                      |
|     | b. | <i>(um/uma) estudante</i> <sub>masc/fem</sub> | ‘(a <sub>male</sub> /a <sub>female</sub> ) student’ |
|     | c. | <i>mulherão</i> <sub>masc</sub>               | ‘kind of woman’                                     |
|     | d. | <i>testemunha</i> <sub>fem</sub>              | ‘(male/female) witness’                             |
|     |    | <i>cônjuge</i> <sub>masc</sub>                | ‘(male/female) spouse’                              |
|     | e. | <i>sofá</i> <sub>masc</sub>                   | ‘couch’   |
|     |    | <i>poltrona</i> <sub>fem</sub>                | ‘armchair’  |

All nouns do require a gender value, but only a subset is prone to gender variation. In fact, variation is restricted to animate nouns, although it admits many different realizations (cf. 2a). Furthermore, it is not compulsory, not even within this subgroup of nouns, so a large number of animate nouns are invariable (cf. 2b):

- |     |    |  |                                  |
|-----|----|--|----------------------------------|
| (2) | a. | <i>aluno</i> <sub>masc</sub> / <i>aluna</i> <sub>fem</sub>                         | ‘male pupil’/‘female pupil’      |
|     |    | <i>doutor</i> <sub>masc</sub> / <i>doutora</i> <sub>fem</sub>                      | ‘male doctor’/ ‘female doctor’   |
|     |    | <i>estudante</i> <sub>masc</sub> / <i>estudante</i> <sub>fem</sub>                 | ‘male student’/ ‘female student’ |
|     |    | <i>galo</i> <sub>masc</sub> / <i>galinha</i> <sub>fem</sub>                        | ‘rooster’/‘hen’                  |
|     |    | <i>profeta</i> <sub>masc</sub> / <i>profetisa</i> <sub>fem</sub>                   | ‘male prophet’/‘female prophet’  |
|     |    | [ <i>águia</i> <sub>fem</sub> - <i>macho</i> <sub>masc</sub> ] <sub>fem</sub>      | ‘male eagle’                     |
|     |    | [ <i>crocodilo</i> <sub>masc</sub> - <i>fêmea</i> <sub>fem</sub> ] <sub>masc</sub> | ‘female crocodile’               |
|     |    | <i>homem</i> <sub>masc</sub> / <i>mulher</i> <sub>fem</sub>                        | ‘man’/‘woman’                    |
|     |    | <i>soldado</i> <sub>masc / fem</sub>   | ‘(male / female) soldier’        |
|     | b. | <i>criança</i> <sub>fem</sub>  | ‘child’                          |
|     |    | <i>indivíduo</i> <sub>masc</sub>   | ‘individual’                     |

Colour nouns, which are inanimate nouns, are quite systematic wrt to gender. In fact, although they spread for different thematic classes, their value is systematically masculine<sup>57</sup>:

- |     |    |                                 |
|-----|----|---------------------------------|
| (3) | -o | <i>amarelo</i> <sub>masc</sub>  |
|     |    | <i>vermelho</i> <sub>masc</sub> |
|     | -a | <i>laranja</i> <sub>masc</sub>  |
|     | -e | <i>verde</i> <sub>masc</sub>    |
|     | -∅ | <i>azul</i> <sub>masc</sub>     |

As to adjectives, generally speaking, they may either be variable or invariable for gender, a capacity that is lexically determined, usually for diachronic reasons, and it is also related to their thematic affiliation:

- |     |    |                                 |  |
|-----|----|---------------------------------|--|
| (4) | a. | <i>seco</i> <sub>masc</sub>     | ‘X <sub>masc</sub> dry’                      |
|     |    | <i>seca</i> <sub>fem</sub>      | ‘X <sub>fem</sub> dry’                       |
|     | b. | <i>leve</i> <sub>masc/fem</sub> | ‘X <sub>masc</sub> / X <sub>fem</sub> light’ |

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<sup>57</sup> The case of *laranja* is particularly revealing, since it corresponds to a conversion of the name of a fruit, which is feminine (i.e. *a laranja* ‘the orange’).

Colour adjectives accommodate quite easily to this state of affairs, which means that the set corresponding (3) gets a bit more crowded, once we add those forms that can only be adjectives (which are marked in grey):

- (5)
- |    |                 |
|----|-----------------|
| -o | <i>amarelo</i>  |
|    | <i>vermelho</i> |
| -a | <i>amarela</i>  |
|    | <i>vermelha</i> |
|    | <i>laranja</i>  |
| -e | <i>verde</i>    |
| -Ø | <i>azul</i>     |

Number variation is customary for both nouns and adjectives, and it is systematically obtained by adding the suffix *-s*. There are some morphophonological processes operating on *-Ø* stems, especially when they have a final lateral consonant. They are triggered by the need to fulfil the thematic index position for phonetic reasons, related to the resulting sequence of consonants:

- (6)
- |    |   |  |
|----|---|--|
| a. | <i>mar</i> ‘sea’                          | <i>mar+s</i> → <i>mares</i> ‘seas’                         |
|    | <i>anel</i> ‘ring’                        | <i>anel+s</i> → <i>anéis</i> ‘rings’                       |
| b. | <i>capaz</i> ‘capable X <sub>sing</sub> ’ | <i>capaz+s</i> → <i>capazes</i> ‘capable X <sub>pl</sub> ’ |
|    | <i>normal</i> ‘normal X <sub>sing</sub> ’ | <i>normal+s</i> → <i>normais</i> ‘normal X <sub>pl</sub> ’ |

Some nouns (e.g. *lápiz* ‘pencil’, in (7a)) and some adjectives (e.g. *simples* ‘simple’, in (7b)) are ambiguous regarding to number, due to the fact that their root ends with a fricative consonant. Consequently, in these cases, the adjunction of the plural suffix, although occurring, yields no visible result:

- (7)
- |    |   |
|----|---|
| a. | <i>tenho aqui um lápiz bem afiado</i> ‘I have a well sharpened pencil here’ |
|    | <i>tenho aqui uns lápiz bem afiados</i> - cf. <i>lápiz+s=lápiz</i>          |
| b. | <i>este motor é muito simples</i> ‘this engine is very simple’              |
|    | <i>estes motores são muito simples</i> - cf. <i>simples+s=simples</i>       |

A major restriction for number inflection concerns mass nouns such as *água* ‘water’. Usually, this kind of nouns can only occur in the singular form, even though a plural form is fully available (cf. 8a). Arguably, mass nouns that may occur in the plural form (cf. *águas*) are no longer mass nouns (cf. 8b):

- (8) a. *velhice* ‘old age’ vs. *velhices*  
 b. *Traga-me duas águas com gás* ‘bring me two (bottles of) sparkling waters’  
*As águas sulfurosas são terapêuticas* ‘sulphur waters are therapeutic’

Being intrinsically mass nouns, colour nouns resist pluralisation, and when they allow it, plural forms refer to different sorts of the colour that the noun refers, usually hues or shades of that colour:

- (9) *O vermelho é uma cor quente* ‘red is a hot colour’  
*Neste quadro, os vermelhos (=tons de vermelho) predominam* ‘in this painting, reds (=hues of red) are predominant’

Thus, Portuguese colour words can either be inanimate masculine mass nouns, if singular, or count nouns if plural, or adjectives that can be gender variable or invariable. They have a quite straightforward lexical behaviour, since they split over all thematic classes and they inflect for number as all other nouns and adjectives:

(10)

	MASCULINE NOUNS		ADJECTIVES	
	SINGULAR (MASS NOUNS)	PLURAL (COUNT NOUNS)	SINGULAR	PLURAL
-o	<i>amarelo</i> <i>vermelho</i>	<i>amarelos</i> <i>vermelhos</i>	<i>amarelo</i> <sub>m</sub> <i>vermelho</i> <sub>m</sub>	<i>amarelos</i> <sub>m</sub> <i>vermelhos</i> <sub>m</sub>
-a	<i>laranja</i>	<i>laranjas</i>	<i>amarela</i> <sub>f</sub> <i>vermelha</i> <sub>f</sub> <i>laranja</i> <sub>m/f</sub>	<i>amarelas</i> <sub>f</sub> <i>vermelhas</i> <sub>f</sub> <i>laranjas</i> <sub>m/f</sub>
-e	<i>verde</i>	<i>verdes</i>	<i>verde</i> <sub>m/f</sub>	<i>verdes</i> <sub>m/f</sub>
-Ø	<i>azul</i>	<i>azuis</i>	<i>azul</i> <sub>m/f</sub>	<i>azuis</i> <sub>m/f</sub>

Apart from the feminine form of gender variable adjectives (i.e. *amarela(s)*, *vermelha(s)*), all colour words are lexically ambiguous wrt to syntactic category. This is why we need to take a look at colour words in context.

## 2. Colour words in Portuguese contemporary and in early usage

In this section I will consider the real usage of Portuguese colour words. A search of colour nouns (tagged CN) on the *Corpus de Referência do Português Contemporâneo* (=CRPC) yields a set of hits similar to the following:

- (11) *azul\_CN, vermelho\_CN e amarelo\_CN vão dominar sinalética da Expo-98*  
 ‘blue, red and yellow will dominate Expo-98’s labelling’



This set of results had to be manually filtered, since they included a large number of cases that can't be treated as colour nouns. Feminine and plural forms, for instance, were systematically excluded, since, as it has been established in the previous section, they are not colour names. This is clearly the case in the following circumstance: politics and sports make a very extensive usage of colour words to identify organizations and their members. These hits (often used in the plural) were excluded because they don't refer to a colour:

- (12) *Verdes* - Denominação de um curioso partido político que tem por hábito [...] aliar-se aos *vermelhos*  
 'Greens - Name of a curious political party that usually makes alliances with the reds'

Secondly, the query line 'colour name\_CN' (e.g. *verde\_CN*) brought hits that should have been tagged as adjectives. They occur as nouns merely superficially, due to an ellipsis of the antecedent:

- (13) *foi uma chuva de [...] cartões: ao todo, nove [cartões] amarelos\_CN e um [cartão] vermelho\_CN* 'it was a rain shower of [...] cards: nine yellow [cards] and a red [card], in total'  
*uma outra [cerâmica] vermelha\_CN e grosseira* 'another red and rough [china]'  
*devia estar a pensar nos [sacos] vermelhos\_CN* '[he] was probably thinking of red [bags]'

A particular case of wrong tagging involves the sequence *bué*, which is a loan of African origin, nowadays often used by younger speakers. In *Infopedia* it is listed as an adverb; in CRPC it is often tagged as a noun, but it also gets an adjective tag and even other, more exotic, options do show up. In Portuguese, *bué* is mostly used as an adverb (a proxy of *muito* 'very') and it is often accompanied by *de* or *da*, which, at first sight, look like prepositions (with the contraction of a definite article in the second case). Eventually, *bué de* or *bué da* may be analysed as adjectival quantifiers, which means that *vermelhos*, in the following example, is wrongly tagged as a noun:

- (14) *o gajo está sempre janado, meu, os olhos bué da vermelhos\_CN*  
 'the guy is always high, dude, his eyes are very red'

Thus, after filtering, the number of singular colour nouns is roughly as in (15). Notice that, apart from *laranja* - which clearly seems to be far less frequent, these figures look quite balanced:

(15)

NOUNS	<i>amarelo</i>	<i>azul</i>	<i>laranja</i>	<i>verde</i>	<i>vermelho</i>	TOTAL
SINGULAR	1.031	1.584	3	1.426	1.534	5.578

As for adjectives<sup>58</sup>, no filtering was applied, although they were not all tested for their semantics. Figures in (16) show that they largely outnumber their nominal counterparts, and that singular forms are always more frequent, as well as masculine, if both gender forms are available. *Laranja* is again the least frequent case, but the distance to the other is less impressive:

(16)

ADJECTIVES		<i>amarelo</i>	<i>azul</i>	<i>laranja</i>	<i>verde</i>	<i>vermelho</i>	TOTAL
SINGULAR	MASCULINE	2.156	4.271	3.486	7.339	2.932	24.147
	FEMININE	2.018				1.945	
PLURAL	MASCULINE	1.172	2.113	2	4.407	1.507	10.431
	FEMININE	409				824	
TOTAL		5.755	6.384	3.488	11.746	7.208	34.581

So, apparently, colour adjectives are far more salient for speakers than colour nouns, but does this salience have any bearing in the questions that were initially raised? It doesn't seem to be the case. The meaning of this numbers, if any, remains unclear and the observation of colour words in syntactic contexts surely helps to disambiguate their specific uses, but it doesn't make any significant contribution to the discussion of the issues initially stated.

Regarding early usage, the output of a search on the *Corpus do Português* (=CdP) produces a set of quite similar results: *amarelo*, *azul*, *verde* and *vermelho*<sup>59</sup> are well documented since the late 14<sup>th</sup> century or the early 15<sup>th</sup>. Apparently,

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<sup>58</sup> In Portuguese, all colour adjectives occur in a post-nominal position. Prenominal position is clearly unacceptable (cf. *saia azul* vs \**azul saia*).

<sup>59</sup> *Laranja* was not scrutinized, since most hits concern the fruit, not the colour. Probably, the early colour name had a derivative form, *laranjado* (cf. *cama tambem de verde e ouro muito rica e de boa emuenção forrada de laranjado* – CdP: *Mosteiro de Guadalupe e Portugal*, 16<sup>th</sup> century); or *alaranjado* (cf. *capa lombarda de cetim alaranjado* – CdP: João de Barros (1553) *Décadas da Ásia. Década segunda*. As a colour name, *laranja* is probably the outcome of an ellipsis from the expression *cor (de) laranja* and a subsequent conversion that entails a gender change. *Laranja*, the fruit, is a feminine noun; *laranja*, the colour name, is a masculine noun.

adjectives are again more commonly used than nouns, but it is impossible to draw any conclusion from that fact.

NOUNS	ADJECTIVES
<i>as penas rosadas cõ collar <b>amarelo</b> esplandecente</i> CdP: <i>Orto do Esposo</i> (<1438)	<i>caeu en terra <b>amarelo</b> et todo banado en sange</i> CdP: <i>Cronica Troyana</i> (1388)
<i>tabernaculo muy nobremëte obrado a ouro e <b>azul</b></i> CdP: <i>Crónica Geral de Espanha de 1344</i>	<i>seis Capaz de veludo <b>azul</b></i> CdP: <i>Crónica de D. Fernando</i> (1431-1443)
<i>Donde lhe vem o <b>verde</b> na folha de fora e o branco de dentro</i> CdP: João de Lucena (1600) <i>Historia da vida do Padre S. Francisco Xavier</i>	<i>deitarõno en hûa herva <b>verde</b></i> CdP: <i>Crónica de D. Fernando</i> (1431-1443)
<i>no peyto trazia hum synal de <b>vermelho</b> mais luzente que as estrelas</i> CdP: <i>Cronica de Portugal</i> (1419)	<i>hûu boy branco e outro <b>vermelho</b></i> CdP: <i>Crónica Geral de Espanha de 1344</i>

### 3. Colour words in Portuguese dictionaries

The salience of colour adjectives found in CRPC parallels what can be found in Portuguese contemporary dictionaries, although this is not explicitly stated. *Infopedia*, an online reference dictionary for contemporary Portuguese, for instance, treats *azul*, *laranja*, *verde* and *vermelho*, firstly, as adjectives, and then as nouns (cf. 17); *amarelo* is presented the other way round (cf. 18). No clarification is offered wrt the relationship between adjective and noun in each case:

<p>(17) <b>azul</b> <b>adjetivo de 2 géneros</b> 1. da cor do céu sem nuvens; cerúleo <b>nome masculino</b> 1. cor do arco-íris semelhante à do céu sem nuvens 2. qualquer gradação desta cor</p>	<p><b>vermelho</b> <b>adjetivo</b> 1. da cor do sangue <b>nome masculino</b> 1. cor do sangue</p>
<p><b>laranja</b> <b>adjetivo invariável</b> que é da cor característica deste fruto <b>nome masculino</b> cor resultante da adição de vermelho e amarelo</p>	<p><b>verde</b> <b>adjetivo de 2 géneros</b> 1. da cor da erva; da cor resultante da mistura do azul com o amarelo <b>nome masculino</b> 1. uma das cores do arco-íris, situada entre o amarelo e o azul</p>

(18) **amarelo**

**nome masculino**

1. cor que, no espetro solar, se situa entre o verde e o laranja, semelhante à cor do limão maduro, da gema do ovo ou do ouro

**adjetivo**

1. que tem a cor do limão, da gema do ovo ou do ouro

Is there any grounded reason to present these words differently? Under the influence of the haphazard semantic description of these entries (which either make reference to the ‘solar spectrum’ or to the ‘rainbow’, or to metaphors such as ‘lemon’, ‘yolk’, ‘gold’, ‘cloudless sky’, ‘grass’ and ‘blood’ and obviously ‘orange’, and even to processes, like the ‘mix of blue and yellow’ or the ‘sum of red and yellow’), we might conclude that word class is presented randomly. Although no justification is given, we might presume that the order of presentation is related to the ancestry of the colour words in the Portuguese lexicon. However, etymology doesn’t seem to be of much help either. According to Coromines, *amarillo* (an obvious cognate of *amarelo*) has probably originated in the Hispanic Latin adjective *AMARELLUS*, a diminutive of the adjective *AMARUS*; and *bermejo* (the Spanish cognate of *vermelho*) originated in the Latin diminutive noun *VERMICULUS*. So, an etymological approach would justify exactly the opposite result - not the output that is in fact presented by *Infopedia*.

A look up of a selection of early dictionaries may help to shed some light. In Cardoso (1559), *amarelo* is clearly registered as an adjective (cf. *amarela cousa*), but the other three (i.e. *azul*, *verde*, *vermelho*) are not, although they are translated into Latin adjectives. There is no mention to *laranja* as a colour word in this dictionary. Barbosa (1611) has a more systematic approach: all these colour words are presented as colour names, although they are adjectives trapped inside the expression *cor X* ‘colour X’ (cf. *cor amarela*, *cor azul*, *cor laranjada*, *cor verde*, *cor vermelha*); but, in this dictionary, each entry, except for *laranja*, is dominated by the adjectival item (cf. *amarela cousa*, *azul cousa*, *verde cousa*, *vermelha cousa*), again as translations of Latin colour adjectives. Pereira (1647) resumes Cardoso’s lesson, but he adds some more Latin equivalents. Bluteau (1712-28), who first presents colours as nouns,

supplies a considerable amount of information on how they may be obtained, and used (*laranja* is again differently treated, appearing as a ‘caste’ of ‘red’, but still a colour name, i.e. *cor de [...] laranja*). Then, in some cases, Bluteau also makes a register of colour adjectives, but this is quite non-systematically achieved. Folqman (1755) resumes the pre-Bluteau tradition that favours colour adjectives, either by showing that they are gender variable forms (cf. *amarello, a; vermelho, a*) or by explicitly stating the word class, for the first time in this set of early dictionaries (cf. *azul, adj; verde, adj*). There is no room for *laranja* in this dictionary.

Moraes (1789) tries a different solution, since he conveys two separate entries for some of these colour words: a noun entry and an adjective entry are available for *azul* and *verde*, but *amarelo* and *vermelho* are just entitled to the adjective entry. *Laranja*, as usual, is not a colour word, but the derived adjective *laranjado* re-entries in the word list. Finally, Figueiredo (1899) concentrates all the information in a single entry: *azul, verde* and *vermelho* are presented as adjectives and then, as nouns; *amarelo* is merely considered as an adjective and *laranja* is absent.

Despite the interest that a thorough analysis of all this lexicographic information<sup>60</sup> may have for the study of colour words, the fact is that they don’t add much in terms of categorization. No systematic and coherent picture emerges from the survey of early or contemporary dictionaries.

<b>Cardoso</b> 1559	<b>Amarela</b> <b>cousa.</b> Pallidus (a. um).	<b>Azul.</b> Caeruleus(a. um).		<b>Verde.</b> viridis(e).	<b>Vermelho.</b> Ruber(a. ũ). rubicūsus.
<b>Barbosa</b> 1611	<b>Amarela</b> <b>cousa.</b> Pallidus, a, um s.v. cor <b>Cor amarela.</b> Color pallidus.	<b>Azul</b> <b>cousa.</b> Caeruleus, a, eum. s.v. cor <b>Cor azul.</b> Caeruleus color. [...] aliàs cor do ceo, ou cor celestes.	s.v. cor <b>Cor</b> <b>laranjada.</b> <i>Luteus color.</i>	<b>Verde</b> <b>cousa.</b> Viridis s.v. cor <b>Cor verde.</b> Color viridis, color herbeus	<b>Vermelha</b> <b>cousa.</b> Ruber, rubra, rubrum. s.v cor <b>Cor</b> <b>vermelha.</b> Color ruber

<sup>60</sup> Early dictionary considered in this paper are available at CLP.

Pereira 1647	<b>Amarella cousa.</b> Pallidus, a, um. Luteus, a, um	<b>Azul.</b> Caeruleus, a, um. Thalastinus, a, ü.		<b>Verde cousa.</b> Viridis, & de. Glaucus, a, um.	<b>Vermelha cousa.</b> Ruber, bra, brum. Rubiumdus, a, um.
Bluteau 1712-28	<b>amarello.</b> Cor entre branco, & vermelho	<b>azúl.</b> Derivase do Arabico Zul, que segundo algüs, val o mesmo, que em Latim Caeruleus. [...] <b>Cousa azul.</b> Caeruleus, a, um.	s.v. <i>vermelho</i> [...] tres castas de vermelho [...] A segunda, que tem sua parte de amarello, como a <b>cor de</b> fogo, & a de <b>Laranja</b> s.v. Pintarroxo a cor da garganta [...] não he vermelha, mas <b>alaranjada</b>	<b>verde.</b> A cor, que a natureza dà às hervas, arvores, & c.	<b>vermelho.</b> Cor. <b>Vermelho.</b> <b>Cousa de cor</b> <b>vermelha.</b> Ruber, bra, brum
Folqman 1755	<b>amarello, a,</b> Flavus, a, um. [...]	<b>azul,</b> adj. Coeruleus		<b>verde,</b> adj. Viridis	<b>vermelho, a,</b> Ruber, bra, brum.
Moraes 1789	<b>amaréllo,</b> adj. Da còr da gemma de ovo, do ouro [...]	<b>azúl,</b> s. m. Tinta azul <b>azúl,</b> adj. Còr da massa extrahida do anil	<b>laranjádo,</b> adj. De còr de laranja.	<b>vèrde,</b> s.m. Huma das cores principaes <b>vèrde,</b> adj. Da còr do verde	<b>vermêlho,</b> adj. Còr do rosto corado com vergonha
Figueiredo 1899	<b>amarelo</b> adj. Que tem a cor do oiro, da gema de ovo, [...]	<b>azul</b> adj. Que tem uma das cores do espectro solar M. A cor azul.		<b>verde</b> adj. Que é da cor ordinária da erva e das fóhas das árvores. M. A cor verde.	<b>vermelho</b> adj. Muito encarnado; rubro. M. A cor vermelha.

#### 4. Compound colour words

Since focusing on colour words by themselves seems to reach no satisfactory answers, the focus will now be put on compound colour words, since they provide interesting insights to the understanding of the word class of their colour constituents.

The following lists include all the compounds (formed upon the five colour words initially established) that occur in Bluteau (cf. 19), in *Infopedia* (cf. 20) and in CRPC (cf. 21).

(19)

<i>amarelo gualde</i>	<i>azul ultramarino</i>	<i>verde lirio</i>
<i>amarelo tostado</i>	<i>verde azulado</i>	<i>verde mar</i>
<i>azul celeste</i>	<i>verde bexiga</i>	<i>verde montanha</i>
<i>azul ferrete</i>	<i>verde crè</i>	<i>verde negro</i>
<i>azul turqui</i>	<i>verde desmayado</i>	<i>verde terra</i>

(20)

<i>amarelo-claro</i>	<i>azul-cobalto</i>	<i>verde-água</i>	<i>verde-mar</i>
<i>amarelo-canário</i>	<i>azul-escuro</i>	<i>verde-amarelado</i>	<i>verde-musgo</i>
<i>amarelo-escuro</i>	<i>azul-ferrete</i>	<i>verde-azeitona</i>	<i>verde-negro</i>
<i>amarelo-pálido</i>	<i>azul-marinho</i>	<i>verde-claro</i>	<i>verde-velho</i>
<i>amarelo-topázio</i>	<i>azul-pavão</i>	<i>verde-escuro</i>	<i>vermelho escuro</i>
<i>amarelo-torrado</i>	<i>azul-turquesa</i>	<i>verde-esmeralda</i>	<i>vermelho-</i>
<i>azul celeste</i>	<i>azul-violeta</i>	<i>verde-gaio</i>	<i>amarelado</i>
<i>azul-bebé</i>	<i>verde alface</i>	<i>verde-garrafa</i>	<i>vermelho-púrpura</i>
<i>azul-claro</i>	<i>verde crè</i>	<i>verde-limão</i>	<i>vermelho-tijolo</i>
			<i>vermelho-vivo</i>

(21)

<i>amarelo-açafrão</i>	<i>azul-céu</i>	<i>verde-arbóreo</i>	<i>verde-salva</i>
<i>amarelo-</i>	<i>azul-cinza</i>	<i>verde-azebre</i>	<i>verde-seco</i>
<i>acastanhado</i>	<i>azul-cinzento</i>	<i>verde-azeitona</i>	<i>verde-seda</i>
<i>amarelo-água</i>	<i>azul-clarinho</i>	<i>verde-azul</i>	<i>verde-sujo</i>
<i>amarelo-alaranjado</i>	<i>azul-claro</i>	<i>verde-azul-claro</i>	<i>verde-tília</i>
<i>amarelo-avermelhado</i>	<i>azul-cobalto</i>	<i>verde-azulado</i>	<i>verdes-Tirol</i>
<i>amarelo-baço</i>	<i>azul-cobre</i>	<i>verde-azulada-</i>	<i>verde-transparente</i>
<i>amarelo-banana</i>	<i>azul-de-metileno</i>	<i>escura</i>	<i>verde-tropa</i>
<i>amarelo-canário</i>	<i>azul-do-céu</i>	<i>verde-bandeira</i>	<i>verde-turquesa</i>
<i>amarelo-castanho</i>	<i>azul-eléctrico</i>	<i>verde-bosque</i>	<i>verde-verde</i>
<i>amarelo-cera</i>	<i>azul-esbranquiçado</i>	<i>verde-branco</i>	<i>verde-verde-verde</i>
<i>amarelo-chá</i>	<i>azul-escuro</i>	<i>verde-bronze</i>	<i>verde-vivo</i>
<i>amarelo-claro</i>	<i>azul-esverdeado</i>	<i>verde-cadáver</i>	<i>vermelho-abrunho</i>
<i>amarelo-de-ovo</i>	<i>azul-faísca</i>	<i>verde-caqui</i>	<i>vermelho-</i>
<i>amarelo-desbotado</i>	<i>azul-ferrete</i>	<i>verde-castanho</i>	<i>acastanhado</i>
<i>amarelo-doce</i>	<i>azul-forte</i>	<i>verde-castanho-triste</i>	<i>vermelho-</i>
<i>amarelo-dourado</i>	<i>azul-gelo</i>	<i>verde-cinza</i>	<i>acinzentada</i>
<i>amarelo-encarniçado</i>	<i>azul-ganga</i>	<i>verde-cinzento</i>	<i>vermelho-alaranjado</i>
<i>amarelo-escuro</i>	<i>azul-glauco</i>	<i>verde-claro</i>	<i>vermelho-alizarina</i>
<i>amarelo-esverdeado</i>	<i>azul-índigo</i>	<i>verde-cobre</i>	<i>vermelho-amarelado</i>
<i>amarelo-ferrugem</i>	<i>azul-liso</i>	<i>verde-couve</i>	<i>vermelho-amarelo</i>
<i>amarelo-forte</i>	<i>azul-marinheiro</i>	<i>verde-de-prata</i>	<i>vermelho-arroxado</i>
<i>amarelo-</i>	<i>azul-marinho</i>	<i>verde-dourado</i>	<i>vermelho-arroxeadado</i>
<i>fosforescente</i>	<i>azul-metálico</i>	<i>verde-ecologista</i>	<i>vermelho-azul</i>
<i>amarelo-gema</i>	<i>azul-miosótis</i>	<i>verde-erva</i>	<i>vermelho-azulado</i>
<i>amarelo-império</i>	<i>azul-negro</i>	<i>verde-esbatido</i>	<i>vermelho-baço</i>
<i>amarelo-</i>	<i>azul-negrusco</i>	<i>verde-escarlata</i>	<i>vermelho-barro</i>
<i>incandescente</i>	<i>azul nocturno</i>	<i>verde-escuro</i>	<i>vermelho-bordeaux</i>

<i>amarelo-junquilha</i>	<i>azul-noite</i>	<i>verde-esmeralda</i>	<i>vermelho-branco</i>
<i>amarelo-laranja</i>	<i>azul-oceano</i>	<i>verde-esperança</i>	<i>vermelho-brilhante</i>
<i>amarelo-limão</i>	<i>azul-pálido</i>	<i>verde-florescente</i>	<i>vermelho-cádmio</i>
<i>amarelo-manteiga</i>	<i>azul-pardo</i>	<i>verde-fosco</i>	<i>vermelho-carmim</i>
<i>amarelo-metalizado</i>	<i>azul-pavão</i>	<i>verde-franco</i>	<i>vermelho-castanho</i>
<i>amarelo-ministério</i>	<i>azul-pervinca</i>	<i>verde-fresca</i>	<i>vermelho-cereja</i>
<i>amarelo-mostarda</i>	<i>azul-petróleo</i>	<i>verde-gaio</i>	<i>vermelho-chama</i>
<i>amarelo-negro</i>	<i>azul-piscina</i>	<i>verde-garrafa</i>	<i>vermelho-claro</i>
<i>amarelo-ocre</i>	<i>azul-prata</i>	<i>verde-gótico</i>	<i>vermelho-coca-cola</i>
<i>amarelo-ouro</i>	<i>azul-prateado</i>	<i>verde-grande</i>	<i>vermelho-desbotado</i>
<i>amarelo-palha</i>	<i>azul-profundo</i>	<i>verde-Guiné</i>	<i>vermelho-distância</i>
<i>amarelo-pálido</i>	<i>azul-prussiano</i>	<i>verde-lagarta</i>	<i>vermelho-dourado</i>
<i>amarelo-pardo</i>	<i>azul-roxa</i>	<i>verde-lama</i>	<i>vermelho-escarlata</i>
<i>amarelo-primavera</i>	<i>azul-safira</i>	<i>verde-lima</i>	<i>vermelho-escuro</i>
<i>amarelo-púrpura</i>	<i>azul-sulfato</i>	<i>verde-limoso</i>	<i>vermelho-esverdeado</i>
<i>amarelo-queimado</i>	<i>azul-tinta</i>	<i>verde-maçã</i>	<i>vermelho-força</i>
<i>amarelo-saramago</i>	<i>azul-transparente</i>	<i>verde-malva</i>	<i>vermelho-forte</i>
<i>amarelo-semáforo</i>	<i>azul-turquesa</i>	<i>verde-mar</i>	<i>vermelho-granada</i>
<i>amarelos-sépia</i>	<i>azul-ultramarino</i>	<i>verde-marinho</i>	<i>vermelho-intensivo</i>
<i>amarelo-sujo</i>	<i>azul-verde</i>	<i>verde-mate</i>	<i>vermelho-laranja</i>
<i>amarelo-terrosa</i>	<i>azul-vermelho</i>	<i>verde-musgo</i>	<i>vermelho-mínio</i>
<i>amarelo-torrado</i>	<i>azul-violácea</i>	<i>verde-negro</i>	<i>vermelho-negro</i>
<i>amarelo-tostado</i>	<i>azul-violeta</i>	<i>verde-noite</i>	<i>vermelho-ocre</i>
<i>amarelo-união</i>	<i>azul-vivo</i>	<i>verde-ocre</i>	<i>vermelho-pálido</i>
<i>amarelo-vivo</i>	<i>verde-acastanhado</i>	<i>verde-oliva</i>	<i>vermelho-púrpura</i>
<i>azul da Prússia</i>	<i>verde-ácido</i>	<i>verde-palha</i>	<i>vermelho-rosa</i>
<i>azul-acinzentado</i>	<i>verde-acinzentado</i>	<i>verde-pálido</i>	<i>vermelho-rosado</i>
<i>azul-água</i>	<i>verde-aço</i>	<i>verde-papagaio</i>	<i>vermelho-rubro</i>
<i>azul-aguado</i>	<i>verde-água</i>	<i>verde-pastel</i>	<i>vermelho-ruço</i>
<i>azul-amarelo</i>	<i>verde-alface</i>	<i>verde-pinheiro</i>	<i>vermelho-sangue</i>
<i>azul-anil</i>	<i>verde-alfazema</i>	<i>verde-pinho</i>	<i>vermelho-sanguíneo</i>
<i>azul-arroxeadado</i>	<i>verde-alga</i>	<i>verde-rã</i>	<i>vermelho-terracto</i>
<i>azul-bebé</i>	<i>verde-alvo</i>	<i>verde-relva</i>	<i>vermelho-tijolo</i>
<i>azul-berrante</i>	<i>verde-amarelado</i>	<i>verde-rosa</i>	<i>vermelho-tomate</i>
<i>azul-brilhante</i>	<i>verde-amêndoa</i>	<i>verde-rubro</i>	<i>vermelho-verde</i>
<i>azul-celeste</i>	<i>verde-anil</i>	<i>verde-salsa</i>	<i>vermelho-violáceo</i>
<i>azul celeste claro</i>			<i>vermelho-vivo</i>
<i>azul-celestial</i>			
<i>azul-cerâmica</i>			

Notice that from Bluteau's fifteen dictionary registers, ten fail to be acknowledged by *Infopedia* (cf. 22a) and eight have no register in CRPC (cf. 22b). Also notice that very few of the compounds that are listed in *Infopedia* fail to occur in CRPC. Exceptions are those in (22c).



- (22) a. *amarelo gualde*  
*amarelo tostado*  
*azul turqui*  
*azul ultramarino*  
*verde azulado*  
*verde bexiga*  
 -----  
*verde desmayado*  
*verde lírio*  
*verde montanha*  
*verde terra*
- b. *amarelo gualde*  
 -----  
*azul turqui*  
 -----  
 -----  
*verde bexiga*  
*verde-cré*  
*verde-desmayado*  
*verde-lírio*  
*verde montanha*  
*verde terra*
- c. *amarelo-topázio* ‘topaze yellow’  
*verde-cré* ‘golden green’  
*verde-limão* ‘lemon green’  
*verde-velho* ‘old green’  
*vermelho-púrpura* ‘purple red’

The number of compounds found in CRPC (i.e. 254) shows that reality goes indeed much beyond imagination, but this is a very promising result, since their morphosyntactic behaviour will probably reveal the grammatical nature of their constituents, unbiased as far as grammatical prescriptions are concerned. Most of the compounds actually used by speakers (maybe only once or twice) are not in the dictionary – they show up if they are needed and no dictionary register is felt to be required.

The categorization of these compounds is certainly one of their most interesting aspects. In *Infopedia*, different possibilities are offered: they can be listed as nouns and then as adjectives, as in (23a), (23b) and (23c); or as adjectives first and nouns afterwards, as in (23d), (23e) and (23f); or as adjectives and nouns, at the same time (cf. 23g) and (23h) and, finally, just as nouns (23i). This classification looks as arbitrary as the classification of simple colour words (cf. (17) and (18)). The largest group favours the precedence of adjectives (cf. 23d-h), but the percentage of the opposite group (cf. 23a-c) is not low.

(23) a.	<b>amarelo-canário</b> <b>nome masculino.</b> tom amarelo-claro ligeiramente esverdeado, como o de certos canários <b>adjetivo.</b> que apresenta esse tom	<i>amarelo-claro</i> <i>amarelo-escuro</i> <i>amarelo-pálido</i> <i>amarelo-torrado</i>	39,0%
b.	<b>azul-claro</b> <b>nome masculino.</b> tom claro do azul <b>adjetivo.</b> que apresenta esse tom	<i>azul-escuro</i> <i>azul-marinho</i> <i>azul-cobalto</i> <i>azul-ferrete</i>	
c.	<b>azul-bebé</b> <b>nome masculino.</b> tom de azul que tende para o branco; azul-claro <b>adjetivo invariável.</b> que apresenta esse tom	<i>azul-pavão</i> <i>azul-turquesa</i> <i>azul-violeta</i>	
d.	<b>amarelo-topázio</b> <b>adjetivo.</b> da cor do topázio <b>nome masculino.</b> 1. uma das cores do espectro solar. 2. cor do topázio	<i>verde-água</i> <i>verde-amarelado</i> <i>verde-azeitona</i>	58,3%
e.	<b>verde-claro</b> <b>adjetivo.</b> que apresenta uma tonalidade clara de verde <b>nome masculino.</b> essa tonalidade	<i>verde-escuro</i> <i>verde-esmeralda</i> <i>verde-gaio</i> <i>verde-garrafa</i>	
f.	<b>vermelho escuro</b> <b>adjetivo invariável.</b> que apresenta uma tonalidade escura de vermelho <b>nome masculino.</b> essa tonalidade	<i>verde-limão</i> <i>verde-negro</i> <i>verde-mar</i> <i>verde-musgo</i>	
g.	<b>verde alface</b> <b>adjetivo invariável, nome masculino.</b> que ou tom que é verde-claro vivo característico da alface	<i>verde -velho</i> <i>vermelho-</i> <i>amarelado</i> <i>vermelho-púrpura</i>	
h.	<b>azul celeste</b> <b>adjetivo de 2 géneros, nome masculino.</b> azul da cor do céu	<i>vermelho-tijolo</i> <i>vermelho-vivo</i>	
i.	<b>verde cré</b> <b>nome masculino.</b> verde tirante a ouro		2,7%

Furthermore, regarding, it is worth mentioning that the order of the listing of major categories for these colour compounds in *Infopedia* is quite inconsistent with the order followed for simple colour nouns:

(24)

N, ADJ	ADJ, N	
<b>amarelo</b> <i>amarelo-canário</i> <i>amarelo-claro</i> <i>amarelo-escuro</i> <i>amarelo-pálido</i> <i>amarelo-torrado</i>  <i>azul cobalto</i> <i>azul ferrete</i> <i>azul pavão</i> <i>azul turquesa</i> <i>azul violeta</i>	<i>amarelo-topázio</i>  <b>azul</b> <i>azul-celeste</i>  <b>verde</b> <i>verde-água</i> <i>verde-alface</i> <i>verde amarelado</i> <i>verde escuro</i> <i>verde esmeralda</i> <i>verde gaio</i> <i>verde garrafa</i> <i>verde negro</i>	<i>verde velho</i> <i>verde azeitona</i> <i>verde limao</i> <i>verde mar</i> <i>verde musgo</i>  <b>vermelho</b> <i>vermelho amarelado</i> <i>vermelho-escuro</i> <i>vermelho-púrpura</i> <i>vermelho-tijolo</i> <i>vermelho vivo</i>

Gender variation for compound colour adjectives is also problematic. Apparently, if the compound includes one variable constituent, it will be presented as a variable adjective (cf. (23a), (23b), (23d) and (23e)), but the classification of *vermelho-escuro* (cf. (23f)) as an invariable adjective is absolutely puzzling, since its two constituents are variable and also because *amarelo-escuro*, which is structurally identical, is classified as a variable adjective. Eventually, this is a mistake since, for instance, *castanho-escuro* and *cinzento-escuro* follow the model of *amarelo-escuro*. The distinction between ‘adjetivo invariável’ (in (23c) and (23g)) and ‘adjetivo de 2 géneros’ (in 23h) is equally an undesirable background noise, since they mean the same.

### 5. Variation in compounds – the results

The following data was extracted from CRPC, on the basis of a query line formed by one of the above colour words followed by a dash<sup>61</sup> (-) and any other word (e.g. ‘*amarelo-\**’). The search yielded more than one thousand hits, but, once again, some of the results had to be excluded, either for structural or for semantic reasons. In the first case, I have eliminated all coordinated structures (cf. 25), mainly

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<sup>61</sup> The orthography of this type of word compounds requires the use of a dash to connect both words (cf. VOP).

formed by two colour words, since these compounds are exocentric and the identification of the compound was needed for the upcoming discussion.

- (25) *cubinhos com duas cores: um vermelho-amarelo, outro azul-amarelo e um terceiro azul-vermelho*  
'two-coloured little cubes: the first is red-yellow, the other is blue-yellow and a third one is blue-red'

Hits that were excluded for semantic reasons include, like for simple colour words, colour compounds that are not used to refer a colour, such as the following:

- (26) *coligação vermelha-verde* 'red-green coalition'  
*clube vermelho-branco* 'red-white team'

The subcorpus thus obtained is formed by 875 different compounds. Their frequency will not be taken into account, since, generally, it is individually always very low.

Before looking at the results, some remarks on tagging are advisable. Tagging of a corpus such as CRPC is largely obtained automatically, which is a risky but inevitable operation. In the case of colour words, this automatic tagging is even more risky, since, as we have seen before (cf. (10)), the form of adjectives and nouns is virtually the same. Wrong tagging was identified above, in the case of simple colour words (cf. (12) and (13)), but it seriously increases when we consider compound colour words.

The first problem concerns the appearance of bizarre categories, given their syntactic context. In fact, some colour compounds are tagged as verb forms other than past participle, infinitive and gerund forms (cf. 27a), but these can also be found (cf. (27b), (27c), (27d) and (27e)). Some other colour compounds are tagged as proper names (cf. (27f)), and even as cardinals (cf. (27g)) and roman numerals (cf. 27h), although the last two are quite scarcely found.

- (27) a. **V = Verb**  
*barra [vermelha-escura]<sub>V</sub>*  
b. **PPT = Past Participle (in compound tenses)**  
*O Rabisgato [...] tem os bagos dum [verde-claro]<sub>PPT</sub> de certos licores*

- c. **PPA = Past Participle (not in compound tenses)**  
*o cloro é um gás [amarelo-esverdeado]<sub>PPA</sub>  
de aspecto límpido e cor [amarelo-pálido]<sub>PPA</sub>*
- d. **INF = Infinitive**  
*tons intensos de [verde-mar]<sub>INF</sub>*
- e. **GER = Gerunds**  
*viu -lhe no olho [amarelo-castanho]<sub>GER</sub> o círculo vermelho da orla contrair -se*
- f. **PNM = Part of Name**  
*entrecortada [...] pelo [verde-escuro]<sub>PNM</sub> dos montados*
- g. **CARD = Cardinals**  
*os tons «camel», [verde-bronze]<sub>CARD</sub> e preto predominam*
- h. **DTGR = Roman Numerals**  
*dez classificadores de um horrível [verde-caqui]<sub>DTGR</sub>*

These hits (94 in total) could be disregarded, and the search would still be representative, but hits tagged as nouns or adjectives are also problematic, which means that the results are very unreliable:

- (28) a. **Nouns wrongly tagged as adjectives**  
*os tons característicos são o verde e o azul-acinzentado, [...] o [vermelho-tijolo]<sub>ADJ</sub>*
- b. **Adjectives wrongly tagged as nouns**  
*grãos cor [vermelho-alaranjada]<sub>N</sub>*

Another frequently mistaken tagging concerns sequences that involve two potential colour words, as in (29), for very understandable reasons: if one colour word is difficult to tag, a sequence of two has to be even harder to classify. But, in this case, the first word is not a colour word, hence the sequence is not a compound colour word:

- (29) *Só alguns espíritos mais observadores se aperceberam de um pormenor poético: **uma rosa\_ADJ vermelha\_CN** também lançada pelo tratador*  
‘only a few attentive spirits realized the poetic detail: a red rose also thrown by the keeper’  
*um sumo de **laranja\_ADJ vermelho\_CN** ‘a red orange juice’*

Mentioning this kind of mistaken tagging has a purpose, which is not to evaluate negatively the CRPC’s tagger. In fact, colour compounds are difficult to tag because they have to be morpho-syntactically analysed and that functionality is probably not there. Hence, CRPC’s POS results will be disregarded.

Thus, search results that I will now present have been manually tagged, both globally and internally. Morphosyntactic compounds, such as these colour

compounds are lexical items with a phrasal basis. So, I have pinpointed the word class of each constituent and the word class of the compound, according to its syntactic context. I have also annotated gender and number values for the antecedents of compound adjectives and gender and number values for each compound constituent. In total, this subcorpus includes 316 nouns and 559 adjectives. Unexpectedly, the asymmetry between nouns and adjectives is much more discrete now than what it was with simple colour words (cf. (15) and (16)):

(30)

nouns	singular	300
	plural	16
adjectives		559

This complex morphosyntactic tagging allows to set different configurations and it also allows to detect predominant grammatical behaviours. This is a summary of the survey of noun colour compounds:

- (31)
- a.  $[[X]_{\text{singular colour word}} [Y]_{\text{singular adjective}} ]_{\text{singular masculine noun}}$  (144/300)  
 e.g. *amarelo-claro* ‘light yellow’, *azul-celeste* ‘sky blue’, *laranja-escuro* ‘dark orange’, *verde-pálido* ‘pale green’, *vermelho-vivo* ‘vivid red’
- b.  $[[X]_{\text{singular colour word}} [Y]_{\text{singular noun}} ]_{\text{singular masculine noun}}$  (127/300)  
 e.g. *abrunho* ‘apricot’, *açafrão* ‘saffron’, *limão* ‘lemon’, *miosótis* ‘myositis’, *musgo* ‘moss’, *saramago* ‘wild radish’  
*alfaca* ‘lettuce’, *alfazema* ‘lavender’, *amêndoa* ‘almond’, *banana* ‘banana’, *cereja* ‘cherry’, *coca-cola* ‘Coca-Cola’, *couve* ‘kale’, *lima* ‘lime’, *maçã* ‘apple’, *salva* ‘sage’, *violeta* ‘violet’  
*bronze* ‘bronze’, *cádmio* ‘cadmium’, *cobalto* ‘cobalt’, *cobre* ‘copper’, *indigo* ‘indigo’, *mínio* ‘minium’, *ocre* ‘ochre’, *ouro* ‘gold’, *petróleo* ‘petrol’, *sulfato* ‘sulphate’  
*água* ‘water’, *alizarina* ‘alizarin’, *ardósia* ‘slate’, *esmeralda* ‘emerald’, *ferrugem* ‘rust’, *safira* ‘sapphire’
- c.  $[[X]_{\text{singular colour word}} [Y]_{\text{singular colour word}} ]_{\text{singular masculine noun}}$  (33/300)  
 e.g. *azul-turquesa* ‘turquoise blue’, *verde-negro* ‘black green’, *vermelho-escarlate* ‘scarlet red’
- d.  $[[X]_{\text{singular colour word}} [Y]_{\text{plural adjective}} ]_{\text{plural masculine noun}}$  (1/16)  
 e.g. *amarelo-acastanhados* ‘brown yellow’
- e.  $[[X]_{\text{plural colour word}} [Y]_{\text{plural adjective}} ]_{\text{plural masculine noun}}$  (7/16)  
 e.g. *amarelos-doces* ‘sweet yellow’, *azuis-berrantes* ‘shouting blue’, *azuis-celestiais* ‘sky blue’
- f.  $[[X]_{\text{plural colour word}} [Y]_{\text{singular noun}} ]_{\text{plural masculine noun}}$  (7/16)  
 e.g. *amarelos-ouro* ‘gold yellow’, *azuis-turquesa* ‘turquoise blue’, *verdes-cinza* ‘ash green’, *vermelhos-rosa* ‘rose red’
- g.  $[[X]_{\text{plural colour word}} [Y]_{\text{plural noun}} ]_{\text{plural masculine noun}}$  (1/16)  
 e.g. *verdes-algas* ‘algae green’

The analysis of singular nouns must focus on the second constituent, which can either be an adjective (cf. (31a)) or a noun, referring to a fruit, a vegetable, a mineral, or anything else, in fact (cf. 31b). The third type (cf. (31c)), with a colour word as its second constituent is not a real type – I’ve isolated them because their analysis as those in (31a) or as those in (31b) is equally available. From a semantic point of view, all these compounds are hyponyms of the first constituent: *amarelo-claro* is a kind of *amarelo*; *vermelho-coca-cola* is a kind of *vermelho*. So, if these nouns are headed by a colour word that is modified either by an adjective or by a noun, the colour word has to be a noun - if in *vermelho-coca-cola*, *vermelho* was to be an adjective, then it would be a kind of *coca-cola*, which is semantically inadequate, if not for other reasons, merely because the feminine noun *coca-cola* would require the feminine adjective *vermelha*, but also because colour adjectives can not precede nouns in Portuguese (see footnote 2). Compounds in (31c) also have a colour head noun and their modifier can either be an adjective (e.g. *verde-negro* ‘black green’), similarly to those in (31a), or a noun (e.g. *vermelho-escarlata*), like those in (31b).

Plural nouns are obviously of secondary importance, simply because there are only a few of them.

Adjectives offer much more interesting information. In this case, I will set three different subtypes: agreement configurations, ‘disagreement’ configurations and irrelevant context. In the first subtype (cf. 32), one of the compound constituents (the first, the second or both) explicitly agrees with its antecedent:

- |         |  |   |
|---------|--|---|
| (32) a. | MASCULINE SINGULAR ANTECEDENT<br>e.g. <i>açúcar amarelo</i> <sub>MASC SING</sub> - <i>escuro</i> <sub>MASC SING</sub><br><i>cabelo amarelo</i> <sub>MASC SING</sub> - <i>manteiga</i> <sub>NOUN SING</sub><br><i>vestido azul</i> <sub>INV SING</sub> - <i>claro</i> <sub>MASC SING</sub>    | (144/225)<br>‘dark yellow sugar’<br>‘butter yellow hair’<br>‘light blue dress’          |
| b.      | FEMININE SINGULAR ANTECEDENT<br>e.g. <i>camisa de popelina amarela</i> <sub>FEM SING</sub> - <i>chá</i> <sub>NOUN</sub><br><i>coloração amarela</i> <sub>FEM SING</sub> - <i>esverdeada</i> <sub>FEM SING</sub><br><i>camisa azul</i> <sub>INV SING</sub> - <i>clara</i> <sub>FEM SING</sub> | (69/201)<br>‘tea yellow poplin shirt’<br>‘greenish yellow colour’<br>‘light blue shirt’ |
| c.      | FEMININE PLURAL ANTECEDENT<br>e.g. <i>ondas azuis</i> <sub>INV PLU</sub> - <i>escuras</i> <sub>FEM PLU</sub><br><i>t-shirts azuis</i> <sub>INV PLU</sub> - <i>ganga</i> <sub>NOUN</sub>  | (13/79)<br>‘dark blue waves’<br>‘denim blue t-shirts’                                   |
| d.      | MASCULINE PLURAL ANTECEDENT<br>e.g. <i>olhos azuis</i> <sub>INV PLU</sub> - <i>claros</i> <sub>MASC PLU</sub>  | (8/53)<br>‘light blue eyes’   |

In the second subtype (cf. 33), there is no agreement between one or both of the compound constituents and its antecedent. There are no cases of ‘disagreement’ with masculine singular antecedents, which will be a relevant issue for the analysis below:

- (33) a. FEMININE SINGULAR ANTECEDENT (76/201)  
 e.g. *auréola amarelo* MASC SING -*dourada* FEM SING ‘golden yellow halo’  
*cabeleira amarelo* MASC SING -*fosforescente* INV SING ‘phosphorescent yellow hair’  
*camisola verde* INV SING -*claro* MASC SING ‘light green sweater’  
*casaca vermelho* MASC SING -*escuro* MASC SING ‘dark red coat’  
*tonalidade vermelho* MASC SING -*sangue* NOUN ‘blood red hue’
- b. FEMININE PLURAL ANTECEDENT (66/79)  
 e.g. *flores amarelo* MASC SING -*esverdeadas* FEM PLU ‘greenish yellow flowers’  
*letras azul* INV SING -*celestes* INV PLU ‘sky blue letters’  
*manchas azul* INV SING -*celeste* INV SING ‘sky blue spots’  
*calças azul* INV SING -*escuro* MASC SING ‘dark blue trousers’  
*folhas verde* INV SING -*escuras* FEM PLU ‘dark green leaves’  
*boinas vermelho* MASC SING -*escuro* MASC SING ‘dark red berets’  
*unhas vermelho* MASC SING -*sangue* NOUN ‘blood red nails’
- c. MASCULINE PLURAL ANTECEDENT (45/53)  
 e.g. *tons amarelo* MASC SING -*escuros* MASC PLU ‘dar yellow hues’  
*panos amarelo* MASC SING -*torrado* MASC SING ‘toasted yellow clths’  
*livrinhos azul* INV SING -*bebé* NOUN ‘baby blue booklets’  
*poentes laranja* MASC SING -*púrpura* NOUN ‘purple orange sunsets’  
*uniformes verde* INV SING -*escuros* MASC PLU ‘dark green uniform’  
*paralelepípedos verde* INV SING -*seco* MASC SING ‘dry green parallelepiped’  
*tufos verde* INV SING -*mate* INV SING ‘mate green wisp’  
*óculos vermelho* MASC SING -*azul* INV SING ‘blue red glasses’  
*rolos vermelho* MASC SING -*rosa* NOUN ‘rose red hair pin’
- d. MASCULINE SINGULAR ANTECEDENT (0/225)

Finally, the third subtype comprises all the cases that involve singular antecedents and gender invariable colour names, invariable modifier adjectives or modifier nouns that do not agree with the colour head (cf. 34). If there is any kind of agreement, in these cases, it is not visible:

- (34) a. MASCULINE SINGULAR ANTECEDENT (81/225)  
 e.g. *véu azul* INV SING -*água* NOUN ‘water blue veil’  
*céu azul* INV SING -*celeste* INV SING ‘sky blue sky’
- b. FEMININE SINGULAR ANTECEDENT (57/201)  
 e.g. *malinha azul* INV SING -*bebé* NOUN ‘baby blue bag’  
*cúpula azul* INV SING -*celeste* INV SING ‘sky blue dome’



In sum, most of these colour compounds show agreement features (circa 41,9%), but the antecedent is predominantly a masculine singular noun (circa 61,5%). This observation must be related to the fact that there are no masculine singular antecedents when agreement fails to occur and it is still relevant to note that the ‘disagreeing’ forms within the compound are masculine and singular (cf. *boinas vermelho-escuro* ‘dark-red berets’). A similar observation is offered by the fact that compounds that have invariable forms (cf. *véu azul-água* ‘water blue veil’, *malinha azul-bebé* ‘baby blue little bag’) always have singular antecedents. This is a summary of the counting:

(35)

	ANTECEDENT				TOTAL
	SINGULAR		PLURAL		
	MASC	FEM	MASC	FEM	
AGREEMENT STRUCTURES	144	69	8	13	234
‘DISAGREEMENT’ STRUCTURES	-----	76	45	66	187
IRRELEVANT CONTEXT	81	57	-----	-----	138
	225	202	53	79	559

The corollary of all these observations seems to be that there is a tendency to assign unmarked gender and number values to these compounds. In other words, most of these compounds will have a masculine singular form, irrespective of the gender and number values of the antecedent. Notice that only 90 colour compounds exhibit full agreement with non-masculine singular antecedents (circa 16%) and probably, native speakers would accept their non-agreeing counterparts:

(36) *coloração amarela-esverdeada* vs. *coloração amarelo-esverdeado*  
*olhos azuis-claros* vs. *olhos azul-claro*

We will now leave this line of reasoning in stand-by, to find out what is going on inside colour compounds that surface as adjectives. All the cases under consideration here are formed by a colour word plus a modifier that can be either an adjective or a noun. Apparently, the structure of these compounds is similar to the noun compounds described above (cf. 31). So, if a modifier follows the colour word, then the colour word must be a noun, but if this is so (i.e. if the colour word, which is the head of the compound, is a noun), how does the compound come to be an adjective? The hypothesis that seems more plausible is that these compound

adjectives are initially generated as nouns and then they are re-categorised as adjectives.

(37)  $[[\text{amarelo}]_{\text{NOUN}} [\text{escuro}]_{\text{ADJ}}]_{\text{NOUN}} \rightarrow [[[\text{amarelo}]_{\text{NOUN}} [\text{escuro}]_{\text{ADJ}}]_{\text{NOUN}}]_{\text{ADJ}}$

Conversion processes often have a ‘freezing’ effect wrt to morpho-syntactic variation. This may be the reason why adjectival colour compounds tend to occur in the masculine-singular form (which is the form of the base noun) and tend to elope agreement with its antecedent. These adjectives are gender and number invariable forms:

(38)  $[\text{casaca}]_{\text{FEM SING}} [\text{vermelho}_{\text{MASC SING}} -\text{escuro}_{\text{MASC SING}}]_{\text{INV ADJ}}$   
 $[\text{boinas}]_{\text{FEM PLU}} [\text{vermelho}_{\text{MASC SING}} -\text{escuro}_{\text{MASC SING}}]_{\text{INV ADJ}}$   
 $[\text{panos}]_{\text{MASC PLU}} [\text{amarelo}_{\text{MASC SING}} -\text{torrado}_{\text{MASC SING}}]_{\text{INV ADJ}}$

Finally, we need to account for the cases of compound colour adjectives that do not behave as invariable adjectives, since they exhibit partial (cf. 39a) or full (cf. 39b) agreement features.

(39) a.  $[\text{auréola}]_{\text{FEM SING}} [\text{amarelo-dourad}]_{\text{FEM SING}} a_{\text{FEM SING}}$   
 $[\text{flores}]_{\text{FEM PLU}} [\text{amarelo-esverdead}]_{\text{FEM PLU}} as_{\text{FEM PLU}}$   
 $[\text{tons}]_{\text{MASC PLU}} [\text{amarelo-escur}]_{\text{MASC PLU}} os_{\text{FEM PLU}}$   
 b.  $[\text{coloração}]_{\text{FEM SING}} [\text{amarela}]_{\text{FEM SING}} [\text{esverdeada}]_{\text{FEM SING}}$   
 $[\text{ondas}]_{\text{FEM PLU}} [\text{azuis}]_{\text{INV PLU}} [\text{escuras}]_{\text{FEM PLU}}$   
 $[\text{olhos}]_{\text{MASC PLU}} [\text{azuis}]_{\text{INV PLU}} [\text{claros}]_{\text{MASC PLU}}$

Certainly, partial and full ‘agreement’ cases have different implications. Partial agreement, which affects the last constituent, is probably due to a more consolidated stage of lexicalization. Frozen forms, such as those in (38) are the direct output of conversion; adjectives that show gender and number agreement at the right-hand periphery are lexicalised forms that have ‘lost’ their original internal structure. Full agreement, on the other hand, seems to reveal a completely different word-formation strategy. In this case, we may consider that the compound is formed upon a simple colour adjective by coordination, which is a plausible explanation for cases such as *coloração amarela esverdeada* ‘greenish yellow colouring’.

Notice that a few cases of partial agreement come from compounds that have a modifier noun (e.g. *camisa amarela-chá*, *t-shirts azuis-ganga*). The coordination hypothesis to explain these cases is simply inadequate: sequences of nouns and adjectives can't be coordinated, nor can sequences of adjectives, unless they have cumulative reading, which is not the case. No other good explanation seems to be available, which may suggest that these cases are occasional deviations.

## 6. Closing remarks

Portuguese colour words, such as *amarelo*, *azul*, *laranja*, *verde* and *vermelho*, are more frequently used as adjectives, although they may also occur as nouns. Lexicographic descriptions, from early to contemporary dictionaries also tend to privilege the description of these words as adjectives, although descriptions are quite inconsistent. Etymology can't be of much help either, since some colour words originate in nouns (e.g. *azul*) and other originate in adjectives (e.g. *amarelo*). Thus, the analysis of colour words doesn't provide enough information to decide about their word class status.

Compound colour words present a quite interesting set of properties that may help to better understand the former. Compound colour nouns are formed by a simple colour noun and a modifier (an adjective or a noun). Like simple colour nouns, they are typically masculine nouns. Compound colour adjectives provide some more interesting information. In general, these adjectives take the masculine singular form even when they have other kinds of antecedents, which may be explained as an outcome of conversion, the word formation process used to produce them. If this is the case, compound colour adjectives are obtained from compound colour nouns, which are also obtained by conversion of a noun phrase headed by a colour noun.

So, those questions that were initially put can now be replied. The observation of the grammatical behaviour of simple and compound colour words supports the hypothesis that colour nouns and colour adjectives are different lexical items, and also that adjectives are obtained by conversion of colour nouns.

The small set of compound colour adjectives that exhibits agreement on the rightmost constituent may suggest that other colour word formation strategies may apply, although marginally for the time being.

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# Metaphor and emotion in colour words

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## 1. Introduction

Within the rich and fruitful, research on colour words, starting from Berlin and Kay 1969 (more recently cf. Grossmann 1988; Lyons 2003; Biggam 2011 et al.; Rossi 2012, 2013, 2014; Anderson 2014 et al.), a significant and complex intertwining of language/culture/context has been highlighted, together with psychological and cognitive processes, such as perception and categorization.

A general, still recurring question is the following: *When studying colour words, do we find universal pairings or cultural and linguistic specificities?* With regard to our issue, are the metaphorical<sup>62</sup> meaning and the emotional value of a colour word in a given language completely dependent on culture, context, and language? Or is there a convergent tendency among languages (possibly grounded in *embodiment and intersubjectivity*, cf. Gibbs 2005, Fusaroli et al. 2012), in associating metaphorical meanings and values to colour words?

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<sup>62</sup> The differences between metaphor and metonymy (see, e.g., Koch 2001; Niemeier 1998; Barcelona 2003, Sandford 2014a), will not be taken into account here. Both of them are considered as part of the *figurative language* that is a wider, powerful umbrella referring to non-literal meaning (see Gibbs 1994; Dobrovolski and Piirainen 2005; Bazzanella 2014).

The integrative answer provided by an increasing amount of recent, cross-linguistic studies consists in maintaining the significance of both cultural and universal facets of their use, by attenuating the strong, initial opposition between nurture and nature (cf., among others, Regier and Kay, 2009; Cruz and Plebe, 2013; Ronga, et al. 2014; Ronga and Bazzanella 2015; Strudsholm et al. submitted).

In this perspective, we will deal here with two particular, strictly entrenched, aspects of the use of colour words, that is: their metaphorical meanings and emotional values. More specifically, we will present some examples of metaphorical meanings, driven by a colour word/collocate in relation with their embodiment/conventionalization and their interlinguistic and intralinguistic variations, on the one hand (§ 2), and the emotional, often contrasting values, which are triggered by colour terms, on the other hand (§ 3).

We will mainly compare Danish and Italian, which share only a partially common linguistic belonging and European cultural heritage; but refer also to other languages that have been analysed in studies discussing colour words in applied perspectives (McCarthy and O' Dell 2002, Diadori 2012) and in relation with metaphors, proverbs, idioms, and emotions (Niemeier 1998, 2007; Kövecses 2010; Albertazzi 2009, 2010; Bazzanella et al. 2012; Dobрева 2014; Ronga et al. 2014; Sandford 2011, 2014a, 2014b).

## **2. Colour words and metaphorical meaning**

### **2.1 Embodiment and conventionalization**

Colour words are often used not as a simple reference to a perceptual portion of the colour spectrum, that is, not literally: they often assume a metaphoric meaning, which is grounded in the correspondence between perceptual and semantic processes (Albertazzi 2010) and varies according to its context and collocation, as in the following Danish example:

- 1) Da. *Grøn koncert er hverken rød eller blå* (lit.<sup>63</sup> ‘Green concert is neither red nor blue’; met. ‘*Grøn koncert* is politically independent’).

The three metaphorical values, here associated to *green*, *red*, and *blue*, need explication:

- Since 1983, the *Grøn koncert*, which has become an institution in Danish music and cultural life, refers to an open-air rock concert and takes place every year;
- The colour *green* is generally<sup>64</sup> associated to nature in general and to the ecological movement (Niemeier 1998: 131): see, e.g., the *green petrol*, the UK *Green Party* (formerly the *ecological* one), the corresponding *green* parties in Europe (such as in France *Les Verts*, in Germany *Die Grünen*, in Italy *I Verdi*), and The *European Green Party* founded in 2004. In fragment 1), the use of *green* is also related to the main sponsor, namely: the Danish brewery *Tuborg* (<http://www.groenkoncert.dk/>; stand November 2015);
- *Red* and *blue* are meant here to represent, symbolically, opposite political parties, that is, left- and right-wing ideologies in Denmark, respectively.

Colours associated to the political parties are mostly conventionally and arbitrarily established; e.g., the United States color symbolism is opposite to the Danish one: the more conservative Republican Party is symbolized by *red* and the Democratic Party is symbolized by *blue*, the color symbolism is the opposite to the Danish one. However, since 1854 *red* in political ideology “[...] is widely used to refer to left-wing politics (communism, Marxism, socialism.)” (Niemeier 1998: 129).

Also the colour of the road signs are highly conventional, so much so that a Vienna Conventions on Road Signs and Signals has been established for the European countries in 1968, but in a flexible way, given that the road markings

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<sup>63</sup> The metaphorical meaning follows the English literal translation that is marked by ‘lit.’ and ‘met’, respectively.

<sup>64</sup> See already in the Latin language: “The adjectives *uiridis* and *uirens* (‘green’) most commonly described the healthy crops and shrubs of Roman agriculture and horticulture, or the rich verdure of the Italian countryside” (Bradley 2009: 7).

partly vary among countries; e.g.: although yellow is commonly used to mark the forbidden parking, in Norway yellow markings separate the traffic directions.

Furthermore, there are colours, or coloured objects, which have been conventionally selected in many societies/languages as a symbol, such as *white* for truce/peace, or *yellow* in:

- the *yellow ribbon*, which is used in the United States, Denmark, Italy etc. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yellow\\_ribbon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yellow_ribbon); stand December 2015), for supporting the war prisoners and soldiers, and
- the *yellow t-shirt* used in Thailand as a sign of protest ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yellow\\_Shirts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yellow_Shirts); stand December 2015).

In general, the metaphorical, conventional uses of colour words are more or less shared among English, Danish, and Italian, as in the following idioms:

- 2) En. *green fingers/thumb*, Da. *grønne fingre* (lit. 'green fingers'), It. *pollice verde* (lit. 'green thumb').
- 3) En. *out of the blue*, Da. *ud af det blå* (lit. 'out of the blue'); it does not exist in Italian.
- 4) En. *yellow-belly* does not exist neither in Danish nor in Italian.

According to Ronga et al. 2014, common tendencies in the metaphorical uses of colour are more frequently related to embodied experience and natural objects. Perceptual properties (Albertazzi 2009, 2010), experience, cognitive processes, and cultural motivation affect together the creation and conventionalization of colour metaphors. The variable interlacement between *embodied* (or *iconic*, such as in the *Grøn koncert* above), and the *conventional* (or *arbitrary*, such as in the *red* and *blue* above) associations pertains to metaphor in general (cf., among many others, Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Kittay 1987; Kövecses 2010; Lakoff 1987; Bazzanella 2009, 2014), and, by extension, to the metaphorical uses of colour words, especially in collocations, idiomatic expressions, or proverbs (Bazzanella et al. 2012, Ronga et al. 2014, Strudsholm et al. submitted). To quote an example, the meaning of the English idiom *out of the blue* is related to a blue and clear sky, from which nothing unusual is expected; but, nowadays, it is highly conventionalized.



Embodied metaphors, initially grounded in nature and experience, when conventionalized become “stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use” (Wray 2002: 9), by referring to a general exemplar of an object, as in the English phrase *white as a sheet*: the original colour of sheets metaphorically invokes the paleness of a visage, even today when sheets are, usually, variously coloured. Not surprisingly, Danish and Italian people resort to the same, literally and metaphorically corresponding idioms:

- 5) Da. hvid som et lagen,
- 6) It. bianco come un lenzuolo.

Interestingly, the English idiom *white noise* and the corresponding Italian and Spanish ones (that is, *rumor bianco*, *ruido blanco*), the colour *white* - that is, an ‘achromatic’ colour - matches the word *noise*, and metaphorically suggests a light, background noise (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=islibiZhbxc>; stand December 2015).

The association appears arbitrary or partly motivated also in the Italian idiomatic expression *vedova nera*, which in other languages, like Danish, only refers to the very poisonous spider:

- 7) It. *vedova nera*, (lit. ‘black widow’; met. ‘a widow who killed her husband or made him been killed’; but also a category of serial killers (men included!), who mainly act within the family).

The Italian metaphorical meaning of:

- 8) It. *Principe azzurro* (lit. ‘light blue prince’; met., *Prince Charming*, that is ‘a man who fulfills a woman’s romantic expectations’),

is shared by: *Principe azul* in Spanish, *Principe azul* in Portuguese, *Prinzep blau* in Catalan (lit. ‘blue prince’ for all three languages); but not in German, where *der blaue Prinz* would mean ‘the drunk prince’.

## 2.2 Inter-/intralinguistic variations and multiple metaphorical meanings

With regard to the translation of colour terms, which is a delicate task, given their possible different connotations and values, Sutrop (2011: 44) pointed out: “If we look at colour terms only in one language, or especially the BCTs in that language, our observations remain static but, if we try to look at differences in one language or between languages, we run into problems of intra- and interlinguistic translation.”

We will touch upon these two kinds of variation in the use of metaphorical colour words<sup>65</sup>:

- on the one hand, the *interlinguistic* variety consists either in the absence of correspondences in other languages of specific metaphorical uses (such as English *yellow-belly*, which is neither used in Danish nor in Italian), or in different associations, which the metaphorical use of the same colour word can trigger among languages (see 2.2.1),
- on the other hand, the *intralinguistic* variety, which is more surprising, consists in the different associations, which can be attributed by the metaphorical use of the same colour word within one single language (see 2.2.2).

**2.2.1.** The *interlinguistic* variety has been widely discussed in a contrastive perspective, and the contextual, cultural, historical, and social parameters (which play a crucial role in characterizing the selection, establishment and conventionalization of the metaphorical uses of colour words in a specific language and society, in comparison to other languages and societies) have been recently highlighted (see § 1).

To quote an example taken from our corpus<sup>66</sup>: Danish *ved det grønne bord* (lit. ‘at the green table’) denotes ‘in the examination room’, while Italian *al tavolo verde*

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<sup>65</sup> We will not deal here with ‘creative’ and ‘polyphonic’ uses, which are common in Danish newspaper titles, such as: *Københavns unge har stemt og maler hele byen i rødt* (lit. ‘The youth of Copenhagen has voted and paints the whole town red’, i.e. young people has preferentially voted for the left wing/red parties).

‘(lit. ‘at the green table’), means ‘at the card table’ (Strudsholm et al. submitted). Another example is the use of *blue-eyed*: interlinguistically, it has the same literal meaning, that is, ‘with blue eyes’; but, while the English *a blue-eyed boy* has the figurative meaning of ‘a darling’ or ‘a favoured person’, the correspondences in Danish *blåøjet* and in German *blauäugig* mean ‘naïve’ or ‘ingenuous’.

2.2.2. In general, metaphorical meaning is ambiguous<sup>67</sup>. Therefore, not surprisingly, when the metaphorical meaning is driven by an expression grounded on a colour word/collocate in a specific context, it may vary not only between two (or among more) languages, but also within a single language. In other words, the *intralinguistic* variation consists in different associations and values constrained by perception, culture, history, and linguistic context, which that can be metaphorically attributed to the same colour word within one single language: e.g., in Italian we use *bianco come la neve* (‘white as snow’), which contrasts with *bianco come un morto* (‘white as a dead man’).

The English *green* can refer to freshness, vitality, but also to immaturity, such as in En. *green years* (‘a person’s developing years’), and *green ideas* (‘unripe ideas’). Similarly in Danish and Italian, where the idioms *i min grønne ungdom* (lit. ‘in my green youth’) and *essere nel verde degli anni* (lit. ‘to be in the green of the years’; met. to be in the early youth) are commonly used (Strudsholm et al. submitted). Recently, a new “serie verde” (‘green series’), specifically addressed to A1 learners, started within a TV quiz program (see ALMA.tv; <http://www.almaedizioni.it/italmatv/lingua-quiz/>; stand December 2015).

With regard to English *red*, it assumes both a positive value, such as in examples 9) and 10), and a negative one, e.g., in *red-eye* (met. ‘slave whisky’) and *red tape* (met. ‘bureaucratic delays’).

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<sup>66</sup> See Ronga et al. 2014 for details on our corpus, grounded both in questionnaires and corpora.

<sup>67</sup> “Vagueness, ambiguity, and polysemy are typical features of the metaphorical language” (Radman 1995: 228).

- 9) red carpet, Da. rød løber, It. tappeto rosso.
- 10) *paint the town red*, Da. *male byen rød* ('to celebrate boisterously').

On the contrary, the *black* colour expresses only few positive – or neutral – associations (see examples 11-12). Negative associations prevail, by referring to unofficial, illegal uses (see examples 13-16), bad reputations (see examples 17-18), sadness or dysphoric feelings related to emotion, etc. (see § 3). These uses are more or less shared among English, Danish, and Italian:

- 11) *black tie*; Da. *den lille sorte* ('the little black'); It. *abito nero* ('black dress').
- 12) Da. *en lille sort* ('a little black', i.e. coffee laced with brandy; It. *caffè corretto*)<sup>68</sup>.
- 13) black market, Da. *sort marked/sort børs*, It. *mercato nero/borsa nera*.
- 14) Da. *sort arbejde*, It. *lavoro nero* ('illegal work', moonlight??).
- 15) Da. *sorte penge* (lit. 'black money'), It. *denaro sporco* (lit. 'dirty money'); Da. *vaske sorte penge hvide* (lit. 'wash black money white'; met. 'launder black money').
- 16) black economy, It. *economia near*.
- 17) *to blacklist*, Da. *at sortliste*; Da. *at komme på den sorte liste* (lit. 'to come on the black list', i.e. 'to be blacklisted').
- 18) black sheep, Da. *sort får*, It. *pecora*.

In some cases, as in the following Danish example, positive or negative interpretations depend on the context:

- 19) *sort af mennesker* (lit. 'black with people', met. very crowded).

Let us briefly discuss here the 'mixed case' of *black Friday*, in their partially convergent and divergent uses, which encompass both a positive meaning related to shopping (which is commonly used by English and Danish; <http://blackfriday-guide.dk>; stand December 2015), and a negative one, related to several sad events ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black\\_Friday](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Friday); stand December 2015), which is also shared by Italian. Recently, also the shopping meaning is becoming common in the Italian advertisements, e.g. in EATALY's *Speciale Black Friday* ([http://www.eataly.net/it\\_it/black-friday](http://www.eataly.net/it_it/black-friday); stand December 2015). A recent Danish

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<sup>68</sup> In Triestine dialect *un nero* (lit. 'a black') is a cup of espresso coffee.

expression with reference to *Black Friday* (example 20) plays on the Danish word for *black* in the idiom *at gå i sort* (lit. ‘to go in black’, met. ‘to go phut’):

20) *Byen går i sort til “Black Friday”* (lit. ‘The town goes in black for Black Friday’).

With regard to *blue*, considered by Romans as a *black* hue (Pastoureau, 2000, Garcea 2003), the Italian *blu* (which alternates also with *azzurro* ‘azure-medium blue’ and the less common *celeste* ‘light blue’<sup>69</sup>) refers both to positive (example 21) and negative (example 22) meanings:

21) *Telefono Azzurro* (lit. ‘the Blue Phone’, that is, an institution set up to safeguard children’s rights).

22) *Avere una fifa blu* (lit. ‘having a blue fear’; met. experiencing an intense fear, thus causing a face so pale that is almost looks bluish, as if it is exposed to a great chill; see Biasi et al. 2013: 158).

The multiplicity of metaphorical meanings, which can be attributed to a colour word/expression in different languages and within the same language, increases when emotional features are involved, as we will see in the following section.

### **3. Emotional values and double polarity in the metaphorical uses of colour words**

Recent studies have developed a wide conception of emotion, in its relationship not only with reason and mind, but also with history, culture, and language (see, e.g., Bodei 1991, Damasio 1994, Bazzanella and Kobau 2002, Weigand 2004).

Colour words can be used for referring to emotion on the basis of diverse forms of embodiment (see. 2.1). To quote an example related to the externally

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<sup>69</sup> Interestingly, also in other languages, such as Modern Greek, Maltese, Polish, Russian, and Turkish, the English BLUE category is often split into two or three colour words (see Ronga 2009, Sandford 2012b, Paramei and Menegaz 2013, Bimler and Uusküla 2014, Uusküla 2014, Ronga and Bazzanella 2015).

observable, facial reactions, *anger* is associated with *red* in several languages, such as English, Danish (*at blive rød i hovedet af raseri*, lit. ‘to become red in the head with anger’), Italian (*rosso di rabbia*), Bulgarian (*Почервенявам от гняв* ‘go red with anger’; Dobрева 2014: 196), Chinese (*mian-hong er-chi*; lit. face-red ears-red) ‘become red in the face; flush with anger, shame or shyness’; Ning Yu 2002: 343), Czech, and Hungarian:

“the Czech *rudá* as well as the Hungarian *vörös* are connected with a state of being angry at someone (in Czech *být rudý vztekem* ‘to be red with anger’, *zroudnot jako krocan* ‘to become red as turkey’, meaning ‘to become red with anger’, in Hungarian *elvörösödik* ‘to become red (with anger)’.” (Uusküla 2008: 24).

Emotional associations and values attributed to colour words either can be shared by many languages or can vary, according to language, culture, and linguistic context, in a complex intertwinement of factors. Unavoidably, when one speaks about emotion, the complex balance between nature and nurture and the cross-linguistic variability come to foreground (see § 1). According to Soriano and Valenzuela (2009: 441), who applied Adams and Osgood (1973)’s semantic dimensions: “[...] colour Potency and Activity semantic ratings are likely to be more stable across languages because of their important relation to physical properties of colour, like brightness or saturation. Evaluation, on the other hand, is influenced by saturation, but seems nevertheless more sensitive to context, more dependent on external associations and a framework of reference, and therefore more prone to cross-linguistic variability.”

As Da Pos and Green-Armytage (2007: 12) write: “There can be no single ‘correct’ colour for each emotion; emotions themselves are not one-dimensional.” For example, in Italian we not only use *rosso di rabbia* (‘red with anger’), but also *verde di rabbia* (‘green with anger’), similarly to Bulgarian: *Позеленявам от яд* ‘go green with anger’ (Dobрева 2014: 196).

Within the same language, a colour word may be related with contrasting emotional values – let us label it *double polarity* – similarly to the metaphorical, multiple meanings of the colour words that we highlighted above (see § 2.2). In

Italian, the colour *green* expresses both positive (in: *verde speranza* lit. ‘green hope’<sup>70</sup>), and negative, emotional values, such as anger (see above), and envy in *verde di invidia*, which corresponds to the following idioms English and Danish idioms: *green with envy*, *grøn af misundelse*.

In English, *to see red* is an expression of anger, but *red-letter day* is an expression of joy. In general, the *red* colour term is most commonly associated with joy (example 23), love (see the red rose as a symbol of love), and passion:

- 23) *red passion*, It. *passione rossa* (which is the name of the Ferrari Owners Club; <http://www.ferrariclubtorino.it/new/images/Documenti/schedaeventoChivasso.pdf>; Stand December 2015).

On the negative side, *red* is related to anger (see above), urgency, warning, fear, and danger (example 24):

- 24) *red alert*, Da. *rød allarm*, It. *allarme rosso*.

By contrast, *black* generally represents negative emotions, such as fear, depression, bad luck, hopeless, and gloomy:

- 25) Da. *en sort dag*, It. *una giornata nera* (lit. ‘a black day’, met. off-day, bad day)  
26) Da. *at se sort på tingene* (lit. ‘to see black on the things’, met. ‘to look on the dark side of things’), It. *vedere tutto nero* (lit. to see everything black’, met. ‘to be a pessimist’)  
27) *black humour*, Da. *sort humor*, It. *humor nero*  
28) *black mood*, da *sort humør*, It. *nero*  
29) *black dog* – depression  
30) *black and blue* – battered; Da. *gul og grøn* (‘yellow and green’)  
31) Da. *den sorte bog* (lit. ‘the black book’, i.e. a (black) notebook where an authoritarian person (such as a teacher) registers his subordinates’ (his pupils’) errors)

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<sup>70</sup> The ‘hope’ value, which is attributed to the *green* colour in Italian, can be related to the Danish and Italian uses of Danish *ved det grønne bord* (lit. ‘at the green table’; met.. ‘in the examination room’; <https://www.youtube.com/user/veddetgronnebord>; stand December 2015), while Italian *al tavolo verde* (lit. ‘at the green table’; see § 2.2.1), respectively.

- 32) Da. *den sorte skole* (lit. 'the black school', i.e. an old-fashioned, reactionary teaching system building on rote learning and teachers' authority)
- 33) Da. *sort snak* (lit. 'black talk', i.e. nonsense)
- 34) Da. *at snakke sort* (lit. 'to talk black', met. 'to talk nonsense')
- 35) It. *cronaca nera* (lit. 'black news', i.e. crime news, crime pages)

With regard to *blue* (see note 10), the two Russian corresponding terms, namely *sinij* and *goluboj*, show distinct emotional connotations and interesting diachronic changes, as reported by Paramei (2005: 14):

In semantics of *sinij*, realization of extreme degrees of hue intensity (bright, saturated versus dim) is conceived to call for positive as well as negative emotional associations (Alimpieva, 1983). By comparison, *goluboj* conveys positive emotional expressive features and is commonly associated with tender, affectionate, soft (Alimpieva, 1980, 1982b, 1983). The nuance of cloudless and serene has adhered to *goluboj* under the influence of German and French 19th-century romanticism. It thence has transferred to its abstract (poetic) connotations implying cloudless insouciance, unrealistically sanguine (Wade, 1985), or at the beginning of the 20th century, the unearthly or innocent (Grebenščikova, 2002).

#### 4. Conclusion

As expected in an integrative perspective, on the one hand, metaphorical uses of colour terms share common tendencies (which are based on embodied features or conventionally established ones), and show significant variations, on the other hand.

Furthermore, colour terms in context assume a multiplicity of metaphoric meanings, by showing both inter- and intralinguistic variations, which characterize also the positive or negative values associated to the metaphorical use of a colour word.

The *cognitive* force, vagueness, and ambiguity of the metaphorical processes combine with the richness of the chromatic spectrum and its multifarious hues, to



represent the complexity and variety of emotion in their common and diverse forms.

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# Colour Verbs in English and Romanian

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## 1. Aim

The aim of this paper is to take a comparative look at verbs derived from colour names in two languages: English (a Germanic language) and Romanian (a Romance language), pointing out the differences between them. In addition, the paper provides a syntactic representation of colour verbs in the spanning framework, a refined Distributed Morphology framework which assumes that a word is a span, i.e. a sequence of complement heads in an extended projection (Svenonius 2012, 2014), along with Brody's idea that there are no intermediary heads (no X-bar). This makes the analysis both economical and elegant. I will try to show that the spanning framework manages to account quite well, even better than incorporation (Hale & Keyser 2002), for the differences between colour verbs in the two languages, for instance, the difference between the English verb *to blacken*, where *-en* is a suffix, being positioned at the end of the word, and the Romanian *a înnegri* (lit. *to in-black-verbal suffix*), where there is a prefix *în-* preceding the colour name.

## 2. Remarks on Colour Verbs

Colour verbs have not received much focused attention in the generative grammar literature. They have been listed under the label *deadjectival verbs* and *change of state* verbs (Hale & Keyser 2002), and treated accordingly; however, no GG study has explicitly dealt with them in an extensive and specific way.

In fact, even the labels that they have been put under are problematic. First of all, it is not that clear that colour verbs are derived from adjectives. Is a verb such as *to yellow* derived from an adjective or from a noun: the noun *yellow*<sup>71</sup>, or the silent noun COLOUR followed by the adjective *yellow*, in a silent item theory à la Kayne (Kayne 2003)? Moreover, if one looks more in depth, one realizes that even this question starts from the assumption that colour verbs should be derived from

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<sup>71</sup> In a sentence such as *I like yellow*, *yellow* may be taken to be a noun, so one might assume the verb *yellow* is derived from the noun *yellow* rather than from the adjective. Moreover, if considered a noun, *yellow* could even be argued to have the thematic role Goal or Endpoint in a sentence such as *The wall turned yellow*.



From an aspectual point of view, verbs denoting colour processes are telic. However, the change of state they express is often gradual. They display both telic and atelic properties, combining with *for*-phrases and *in*-phrases alike (4).

- (4) a. I reddened the wall in 5 minutes.  
b. I reddened the wall for an hour.

For this reason, rather than arguing that colour verbs are change of state verbs, one might assume they are *degree achievements* (Dowty 1979, Hay, Kennedy & Levin 1999).

### 3. Colour Verbs in English versus Colour Verbs in Romanian

English makes use of three types of verbs/ verbal constructions to denote processes related to colour: (i) verbs whose form is identical to that of the adjective/ noun they are derived from (such as *to blue, to gray, to yellow, to brown, to green*), (ii) verbs created with the suffix *-en* (such as *to whiten, to blacken, to redden*), (iii) verbal paraphrases (such as *to turn pink/ orange, or to make something pink/ orange*). Most English colour verbs have the same form as the noun/ adjective they derive from, which is in line with the general observation that English tends to use identical denominal/ deadjectival verbs (Hale & Keyser 2002).

In Romanian, this is not the case; one can note that the verb and the N/ A never have identical forms, as there is always a verbal suffix at the end of the word, indicating the verbal declension (i) *a albi* lit. 'to white-verbal suffix', *a (se) roși* 'to red-verbal suffix', *a gălbeni* 'to yellow-verbal suffix', *a albăstri* 'to blue-verbal suffix'. One also uses (ii) verbal paraphrases such as *a face ca ceva să fie roz/ gri/ maro/ portocaliu* 'to cause that something should be pink/ gray/ brown/ orange', and (iii) verbs created with the prefix *în-* (*a în-ălb-i* 'to prefix-white-verbal suffix'- *to whiten*, *a în-negr-i* 'to prefix-black-verbal suffix'- *to blacken*, *a în-roș-i* 'to prefix-red-verbal suffix'- *to redden*, *a în-gălben-i* 'to prefix-yellow-verbal suffix', *a în-verz-i* 'to prefix-green-verbal suffix') (5b, 6b).

- (5) (a)

Colour	Verb(s) in English ( <a href="http://www.oxforddictionaries.com">http://www.oxforddictionaries.com</a> )
white	to whiten - to become white or whiter: <i>She gripped the handle until her knuckles <b>whitened</b>.</i> - to make smth white or whiter: <i>Snow <b>whitened</b> the mountain tops.</i>
grey	to grey - (of hair) to become grey: <i>Her hair <b>greyed</b>.</i>
pink	to pink - (of a car engine) to make knocking sounds because the fuel is not burning correctly (it does not come from the colour <i>pink</i> )
red	to redden - to become red: <i>The sky is <b>reddening</b>.</i> - to make smth red: <i>bare arms <b>reddened</b> by sun and wind</i> - to blush: <i>Lyn <b>reddened</b> at the description of herself.</i>

	- (of the eyes) become pink as the rims as a result of crying: <i>The <b>reddened</b> eyes filled <u>afresh</u>.</i>
brown	to brown - to become brown: <i>Grill the pizza until the cheese has <b>browned</b>.</i> - to make smth brown: <i>a <u>skillet</u> in which food has been <b>browned</b>.</i>
orange	missing
yellow	to yellow - to become yellow, especially with age: <i>The <u>cream</u> paint was beginning to yellow.</i>
green	to green - to become green: <i>The roof was <b>greening</b> with lichen.</i> - to <u>make</u> (an urban or desert area) more verdant by planting trees or other vegetation: <i>They will continue <b>greening</b> the many treeless and dusty suburbs.</i> - to <u>make</u> less harmful to the environment: <i>tips on how to <b>green</b> your home</i>
blue	to blue - to turn blue: <i>The day would haze, the air <b>bluing</b> with afternoon.</i> - to make smth blue: <i>The light dims, <b>bluing</b> the retina.</i> - to heat metal so as to give it a greyish-blue finish (as adjective <i>blued</i> ): <i>nickel-plated or <b>blued</b> hooks</i> - <b>historical</b> wash (white clothes) with bluing: <i>They <b>blued</b> the shirts and starched the uniforms.</i>
black	to blacken - to turn black, especially as a result of <u>burning</u> , <u>decay</u> , or <u>bruising</u> : <i>Stone blackened by the <u>soot</u> of ages.</i> - to make smth black: <i>He set light to the paper, <u>watching</u> the end <b>blacken</b> as it <u>burned</u>.</i> - to dye or colour (the face or hair) black for camouflage or cosmetic effect: <i>Paras in full combat gear with <b>blackened</b> faces.</i> - to <u>damage</u> or destroy (someone's reputation) by speaking badly of them: <i>She won't <u>thank you</u> for <b>blackening</b> her husband's name.</i>
violet	missing

(b)

verbs identical to nouns	-en verbs	verbal expressions/ constructions required
to grey, to brown, to yellow, to green, to blue	to whiten, to redden, to blacken	to make smth pink/ orange/ violet

(6) (a)

Colour	Verb(s) in Romanian ( <a href="http://dexonline.ro">http://dexonline.ro</a> )
alb (white)	a albi 'to white-suffix' - (refl, intrans) to become white - (trans) to make smth white (of hair) - to turn white a înălbi 'to prefix-white-suffix' - the same as 'a albi'
gri (grey)	missing
roz (pink)	missing
roșu (red)	a (se) roși 'to (reflexive clitic 3rd p) red-suffix' - (intrans, reflexive) to become red - (trans) to make smth red a (se) înroși 'to (reflexive clitic 3rd p) prefix-red-suffix'

	- (refl) to become red - (trans) to make smth red; to paint smth (eggs)
maro (brown)	missing
oranj (orange)	missing
galben (yellow)	a (se) îngălbeni 'to (reflexive clitic 3rd p) prefix-yellow-suffix' - to become yellow - to make smth yellow a gălbeni 'to (reflexive clitic 3rd p) yellow-suffix' - to become yellow - to make smth yellow
verde (green)	a îsverzi 'to green-suffix' - (trans) to paint green, to stain with green - (intrans, reflexive) to become green - (intrans) to turn green, to sprout
albastru (blue)	a albăstri 'to blue-suffix'- same as <i>a înbăstri</i> , also to rinse clothes a înbăstri 'to prefix-blue-suffix' -(intrans, reflexive) to turn blue; (about people) to turn blue out of anger -(trans)to make smth blue
negru (black)	a înnegri 'to prefix- black-suffix' - to turn black - to make smth black
violet (violet)	missing

(b)

verbs derived from nouns + the verbal suffix for the conjugation	În- verbs	verbal expressions/ constructions required
a albi, a (se) roși, a gălbeni, a albăstri	a înbăbi, a îvroși, a îngălbeni, a îsverzi, a înbăstri, a înnegri	a face ca ceva să fie oranj/ roz/ violet ('to cause that smth conj BE orange/ pink/ violet')

Apart from the inchoative meaning and the causative meaning, some colour verbs have acquired specialized meanings such as the verb *to green* (which may refer to creating parks and other areas with trees and plants in a city or to making somebody more aware of issues related to the environment) or the verb *to blue*, as well as the corresponding Romanian verb *a albăstri*, for instance (which may refer to rinsing clothes) (as can be seen in (5a), (6a)). Also, some Romanian verbs have both a prefixed variant and a non-prefixed one (*a înbăbi, a albi; a albăstri, a înbăstri; a gălbeni, a îngălbeni; a roși, a îvroși*). Out of these, only the verbs in the pair *a roși, a îvroși* differ: the first verb *a roși* can be used intransitively with the meaning 'to blush', while the second verb cannot.

By looking at the tables in (5) and (6), one can note that the suffix *-en* in English is used with fundamental colours (red, white, black), while, for the other colours, no suffix is used. A possible explanation for this could be related to the conclusion reached by Berlin & Kay (1969, 1973) on the basis of a study with



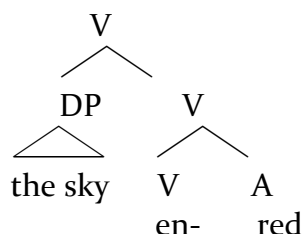
speakers of twenty different languages that there are eleven fundamental colours (white, black, red, green, yellow, blue, brown, purple, pink, orange, and gray) and there is a hierarchy of colour words. According to this hierarchy, all languages contain terms for black and white, and if a language contains three terms, then it contains a term for red<sup>73</sup>. Another explanation could be related to how old the words are in the history of language- *white*, *black*, *red* entered the language quite early in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, earlier than *green* in the 15<sup>th</sup> century or *yellow* or *pink* in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, or *blue* in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, according to The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology (1991).

In contrast, Romanian uses the prefix *în-* in almost all cases (although it allows the unprefix variant as well e.g. *a roși* ‘to blush’). Just like English, it also uses paraphrases with more recent words denoting colours (*roz* ‘pink’, *maro* ‘brown’, *portocaliu* ‘orange’).

#### 4. The Incorporation Analysis

The traditional analysis of denominal and deadjectival verbs is the incorporation analysis of Hale & Keyser (2002), assuming that the noun/ adjective incorporates into the verb. A verb such as *redden* is considered a change of state verb derived from an adjectival root (7).

(7) English inchoative *redden* (as in *The sky reddened*) (Hale & Keyser 2002: 48)

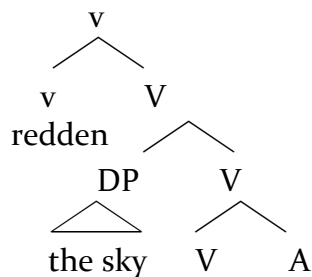


The causative is derived from the inchoative by combination with a phonologically null causativizing functional head into which the verb moves after picking up the inchoative morpheme *en-*.

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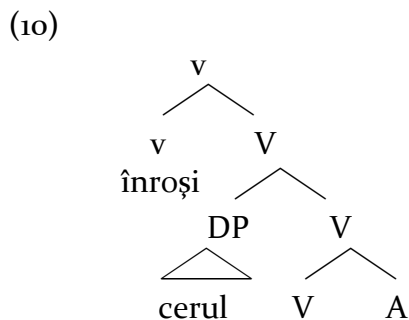
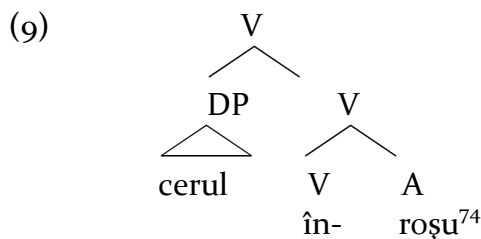
<sup>73</sup> In addition, Berlin and Kay (1969) further establish that, if a language contains four terms, then it contains a term for either green or yellow (but not both); if a language contains five terms, then it contains terms for both green and yellow; if a language contains six terms, then it contains a term for blue; if a language contains seven terms, then it contains a term for brown; if a language contains eight or more terms, then it contains terms for purple, pink, orange, and/or gray.

- (8) English causative *red*den (as in *The sunset reddened the sky*) (Hale & Keyser 2002: 48)



While there may be differences in morphology across languages, the derivational relations stay the same (Koontz-Garboden 2014). In contrast to English, for instance, where the inchoativizing functional head (*en-*) is considered overt, and the causativizing head is null, the reverse is assumed for Navajo: the inchoativizing functional head is assumed to be null, while the causativizing functional head is assumed to be overt.

In order to capture the difference between English *red*den and Romanian *a înroși*, one has to stipulate that *-en* is a suffix and *în-* is a prefix (9, 10).



If such information is not retained in the lexicon, then one does not get the appropriate affix-root ordering. The adjective will move into the verb and incorporate, combining with the affix in accordance with its prefix/ suffix status.

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<sup>74</sup> While there is no verb *a înroși* with an inchoative meaning, there is a verb *a roși* with an inchoative meaning. Also, there is a verb *a îngălbeni* (lit. 'to in-yellow-verbal suffix', *to yellow*), as well as a verb *a înverzi* (lit. 'to in-green-verbal suffix', *to green*) or a *înălbi* (lit. 'to in-white-verbal suffix', *to whiten*), hence, it is not the case that there are no prefixed colour verbs with an inchoative meaning in Romanian.

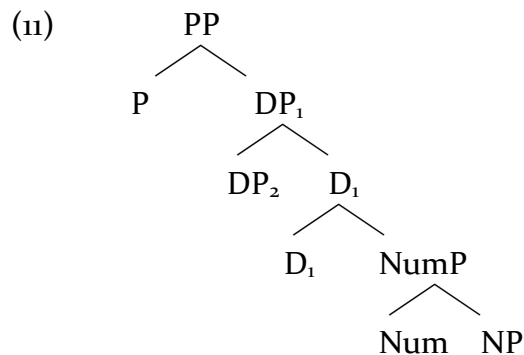
## 5. A Spanning Account of Colour Verbs

In what follows, I provide a different account of colour verbs in the spanning framework, which eliminates movement and generates the colour words by means of spelling out a sequence of complement heads. Adopting such a framework manages to account for the data in a much more economical and elegant way than incorporation, as no movement is required, and no prefix/ suffix information needs to be retained in the lexicon.

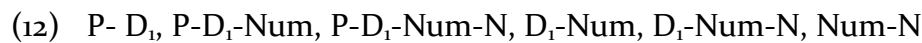
### 5.1. A General Presentation of Spanning as a Framework

Spanning is a version of Distributed Morphology where Spell-Out recognizes *spans* rather than terminal nodes like DM does or phrasal nodes like nanosyntax does. Following Svenonius (2012), I will assume a *span* can be defined as a complement sequence of heads in a single extended projection, where an extended projection (Grimshaw 2005) is made of a lexical head and its associated functional projections (D for N, T for V).

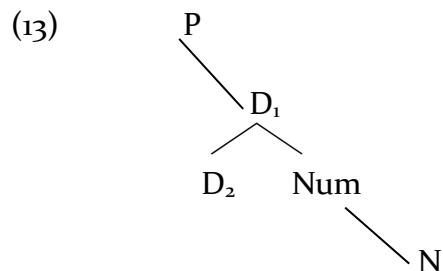
If, for instance, one takes a PP which contains a noun phrase DP<sub>1</sub> with a prenominal possessor DP<sub>2</sub>:



the spans in the main projection line would be:



This becomes very clear if one adopts the telescope perspective assumed in Brody's (2000) mirror theory representation, considering phrase labels redundant:



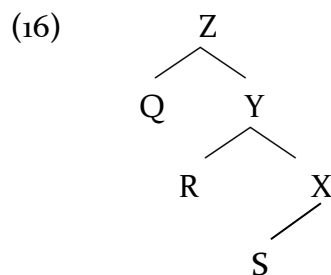
A morpheme can spell out one head (which is a trivial span), two heads or even more, on condition that the heads be in a complement relation with each other. Head-movement thus becomes a matter of where in a span the word linearizes (Brody 2000), and there is a direct linearization mechanism in Brody's Mirror Theory (2000) through which word order is read directly off the structure:

- (14) *Word Mirror*: The syntactic relation 'X complement of Y' is identical to an inverse-order morphological relation 'X specifier of Y' (where the latter gives rise to the morphological structure [X [Y] linearized from left to right)

There are no intermediate projections, and unnecessary labels should be eliminated. Given that it is always the head of a projection that selects another projection, it seems legitimate to argue that heads select heads, hence, there is no need to resort to redundant labelling X/ XP if one can make use of one label only, X (*Telescope*). In this way, by means of *Telescope*, a structure such as (15):

- (15)  $[_{ZP} Q Z [_{YP} R Y [_{XP} S X...]]]$

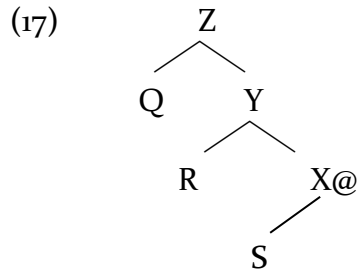
becomes



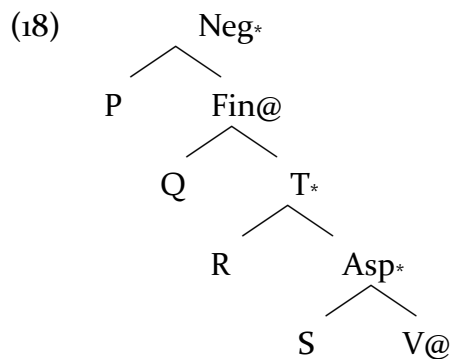
where Q, R, S are the specifiers of Z, Y, X respectively. Specifiers are linearized to the left of their heads, while heads are linearized to the left of their complements. The Brodyan approach is a direct linearization theory (DLT) where linearization is read off the structure<sup>75</sup>. It is thus highly innovative as it allows one to state a language specific parameter concerning where a morpheme spells out rather than resort to syntactic movement. The location is indicated by Brody by means of the diacritic @. For instance, in the example in (17):

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<sup>75</sup> As shown by Ramchand (2014), this has a serious advantage over the Linear Correspondence Axiom (LCA) tradition (Kayne 1994 a.o). In the antisymmetrical approach, it is assumed that asymmetric c-commands means precedence. The problem is that, in a language which looks head-final on the surface, one needs to first create the appropriate c-command structures before letting the LCA linearize it, and this is done by resorting to various movement operations, many of which are unmotivated. Hence, a desirable alternative to word order movements would be DLA (direct linearization algorithm).



the diacritic @ indicates that the morphological word [X [Y [Z]]] spells out in the X position of the tree, and the linearization would be Q R S [X-Y-Z]. In addition, Ramchand makes use of a \* diacritic to indicate certain language specific facts related to linearization, in particular, the fact that the head thus notated forms a word in the Brody-an sense with the head immediately below it. In Bangla, for instance, one would have something like (18).

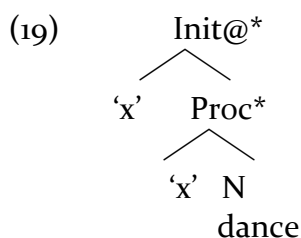


*Linearized as: P Q [Fin-Neg] R S [V-Asp-T]*

In the example above, Fin forms a mirror theoretic word with Neg, Asp forms a mirror theoretic word with T, and V forms a mirror theoretic word with Asp. These are language specific facts about morphological composition, and they need to be learned as such.

## 5.2. Spanning Applied to Colour Verbs

I propose that spanning can account for denominal and deadjectival verbs as well: a single item ('dance', 'shelve', 'hammer') spells out a span, a complement sequence involving N, V and v (<N, V, v>) in the simplest case. Starting from Ramchand's analysis of verbs (2008), in the case of the denominal verb *dance*, one can construct the following representation:

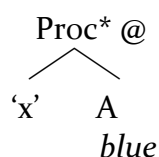


*Linearized as x [N Proc Init]*

At L-Match (Lexical Match)<sup>76</sup>, this structure will give rise to the item <dance - Ø-Ø>. For a verb like *corral*, an <init, Proc, Goal, Place, N> (using Pantcheva's analysis of prepositions (2011)), one can assume that the structure is linearized as x [Proc-Init-Place-Goal-N] y.

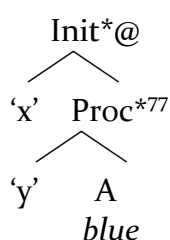
I argue that the spanning framework can account for colour verbs as well. As it does not resort to head-movement, it is more economical than incorporation and, hence, preferable. A verb like *to blue* receives the following representations:

(20) (a) inchoative



*Linearized as x [A Proc]*

(b) causative



*Linearized as x [A Proc Init] y*

According to Hale & Keyser (2002), *-en* is always inchoative, and the causative meaning is a result of combining with a *v* (cause). Such a perspective assumes that there would be a single lexical entry for the suffix *-en* in English. This would, of

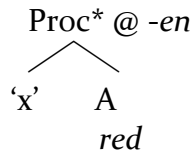
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<sup>76</sup> Lexical Match is the first step of Spell Out in spanning, involving syntactic categories; the second is Insert and it involves phonological information.

<sup>77</sup> One could very well place the @ diacritic at the Init level. The result would be the same.

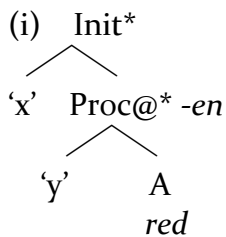
course, be an option (20a, b). An alternative to this would be to assume that *-en* has an inchoative meaning in an inchoative sentence and a causative one in a causative meaning in a causative sentence, which would lead to having two lexical entries for *-en*:

(21) (a) inchoative

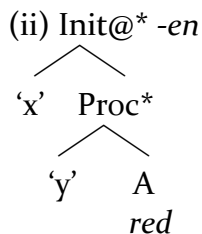


*Linearized as x [A Proc]*

(b) causative



*Linearized as x [ A Proc Init] y*

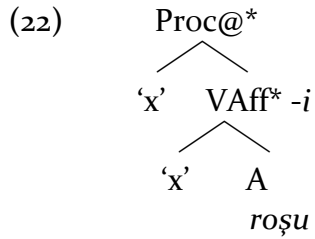


*Linearized as x [A Proc Init] y*

English represents a particular case among languages as there is no verbal ending suffix in the bare infinitive. This is not the case in Romanian, where verbs present a suffix indicating the verbal declension (*-a, -ea, -e, i/i*). The question would be where to place this suffix, whether it should be placed under Proc or under Init. Given its lack of meaning, placing it under Proc would be a bit misleading perhaps and projecting a VAff immediately above A might be a better option<sup>78</sup>. The inchoative *a roși* (lit. 'to red-verbal suffix') would receive this representation:

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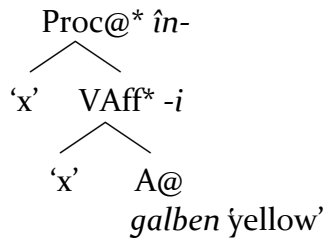
<sup>78</sup> Such a projection can be represented for English as well, with the only difference that the affix is a null morpheme.



*Linearized as x [A VAff Proc]*

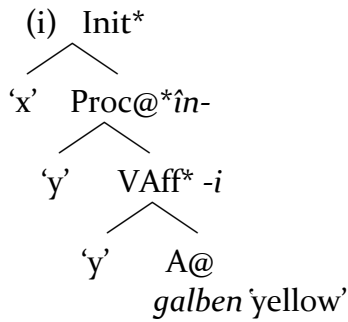
A verb such as *a îngălbeni* (lit. 'to en-yellow-verbal suffix') would be represented as:

(23) (a) inchoative

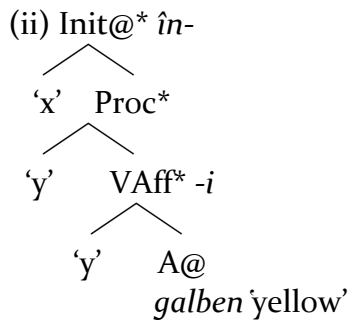


*Linearized as x [ [Proc] [A Vaff]]*

(b) causative



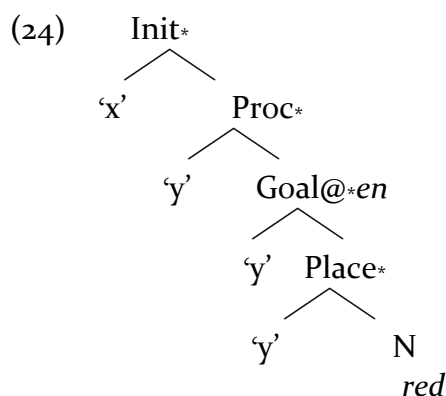
*Linearized as x [ [Proc Init] [A Vaff]] y*



*Linearized as x [[Proc Init] [A Vaff]] y*

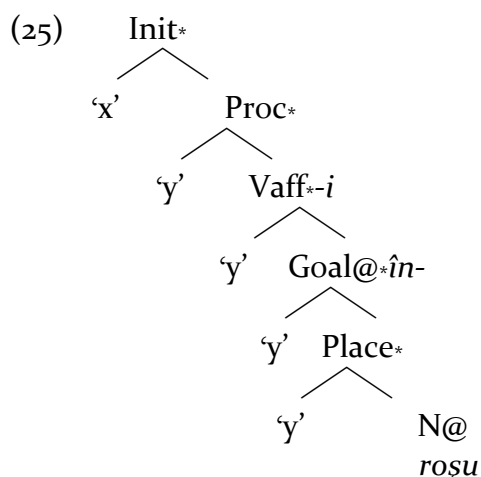


Just as in English, one can either consider *în-* as an inchoative marker both in the inchoative structure and in the causative one, or one can opt for two different lexical entries. Another variant of analysis would be to ascribe *-en* a spatial meaning. A reason for this is the fact that there are verbs which do not need this affix to express inchoative meaning or causative meaning for that matter (like *to blue* or *to green*). Another reason would be the similarity between the affix *en* and the preposition *in* (in Romanian the affix has an identical form to the preposition *în*). In this way, one would treat the verb *to redden* as a special case of change of location/state (*to redden* as 'to pass into a state of red' or 'to cause smth to pass into a state of red' (in such an analysis, the colour name is treated as a noun):



*Linearized as x [ [N-Place-Goal] [Init-Proc]] y*

A similar analysis can be provided for Romanian (@ would also appear next to the N to get the [Goal Place N] ordering):



*Linearized as x [ [Goal-Place]-[N ]-Vaff-Init-Proc]] y*

Such a representation would be very much in line with theories of localism which consider that spatial movement operates not only in the field of (physical)

location, but also in a more metaphorical way (Gruber 1965), change of state verbs being in a sense change of location verbs.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, in the spanning account, the lexicon does not need to store whether the affix is a prefix or a suffix. Spanning simply derives the right order of the morphemes by linearizing the structure according to a direct linearization (DL) mechanism. By giving up head movement, one can very elegantly account for the ordering of morphemes in colour verbs. English and Romanian provide interesting examples where the affix-root ordering is the other way round, and spanning can capture this contrast in a sensible way. As for the exact reason why certain colour verbs have affixes and others do not, I believe this can be explained by a theory of colour hierarchy (Berlin & Kay (1969, 1973), arguing that certain colours/ colour names are more fundamental than others, and/ or by the history of language(s), registering older and newer colour terms. It seems to be that, in the case of the affixed colour verbs, the affixes have combined with the names of more fundamental colours, which also entered the languages earlier.

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