

COLOURS IN POLITICS IN SPANISH SPEAKING COUNTRIES

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Abstract: The paper focuses on means of the expression containing a chromatic element in their structure. These kinds of expressions are both figurative and denominative names (including occasional names) occurring in the language of politicians themselves or, in general, in the language related to politics in any political context. The aim is to find out, which colours are the most used in political discourse in Spain and Spanish-speaking countries, and how they are used; what the individual colours express and in what connections they occur (collocations, comparisons, metaphorical constructions, terms, etc.). The naming units are excerpted from the web corpora Araneum and CREA so that in the research sample, only one meaning from each usage is included. The lexical units with a chromatic element are analysed throughout lexical-semantic analysis – their use in context, their meanings, and connotations are studied. The study reveals the most and the least used colours in the political context, as well as the most frequent types of naming units in which they appear.

Keywords: chromatisms, language, politics, professional Spanish, intercultural

Introduction

We know, language, culture, humans, society are factors inextricably linked, in constant interaction, and are inseparable. Without language, there would be no culture, thus language develops in society and is represented by humans. The emergence of language would not be possible without the cultural potency of humans, i. e. their ability to physically transform and mentally process nature around them. On the other hand, further development of civilization and culture would not be possible without adequate means of communication. The development of language under the influence of various socio-cultural factors lead to the differentiation of linguistic and cultural communities

(Vodáková 2000)¹. Idiomatic expressions, therefore, create a different map of colour meanings in each language, modifying our perception (de Bortoli and Maroto 2008).

Colour is the fundamental building block of visual symbols and serves as a method of communication for humans. However, they can generate another level of meaning in the mind. The symbolism of colours stems from cultural, mythical, historical, religious, political and linguistic associations. The symbolic meanings of words with a chromatic element reveal far-reaching connotations across cultures, including positive and negative meanings. Particular colours have been found to be highly preferred regardless of age, racial group or culture. Moreover, colours affect us before we realize it and deliver important messages (Chathurika 2019).

Every situation in our life is characterized by a certain chromatic symbol. Colours are the essence of life and evoke different connotations and are associated with a wide range of emotions. Their perception reflects the mentality of individual nations revealing their history, culture and philosophy. Therefore, nations, cultures and languages differ from each other depending on several factors causing that different cultural communities perceive the same phenomena in a different way. The same can be said also about the perception of colours. This means that the same colours may not be perceived by different cultures in the same way and may not stand as a symbol for expressing the same facts. The fact that our perception of colours is biologically determined is generally accepted, but more important seems the fact that colour perception is also culturally determined (Démuth 2005). Colours are often related to culture; so green is related to Islam (the Prophet wore a green robe), but also to money (the American bill is often called greenback/green) or political movements and parties in the Western world (Greenpeace) (Vukićević Đorđević 2009). For example, while in European and Western cultures black is the color of sorrow, in Eastern countries such as India, China and Japan, sorrow is symbolised with white. On the contrary, in Europe, black evokes negative associations and is a symbol of sadness, pessimism or impurity, but in Asia it symbolises wisdom. Innocence is expressed with red in India, while in European culture red is a symbol of passion or struggle, and the symbol of innocence is white. Green is the colour of

¹ In the context of the Spanish language, it is possible to speak about one language community (using a common language – Spanish), but culturally different, because different socio-cultural events had influenced the communities in Spain, Mexico, Peru, Argentina, etc.

nature and in most cultural communities it expresses hope, encouragement, youth. Blue represents security, which is why it is often the colour of police officers, firefighters or international organizations (UNESCO, ONU), but in Iran it symbolises sadness. In a similar way, we could name more cases like these depending on the specific cultural communities of the users of a particular language. The different perceptions and attitudes of the different language communities to individual colours naturally have an impact on the lexical fund of their languages.

Already in the 17th century, the English physicist and mathematician Issac Newton proved, through an experiment with a glass prism, that light that appears white is in fact a synthesis of several colours. His research showed that an object that reflects all colour waves is white. On the contrary, a black object will absorb most of the light (Skuza 2018). The foundations of modern research in chromatic terminology were laid by Berlin and Kay, who developed a scheme of eleven basic colours that are present in the languages of all nations. The chromatic counterparts of white and black have a special position because they are contained in every language. Their specific nature was often the subject of controversy on the part of experts. Both colours are considered achromatic and according to several sources they are the so-called no-colours (Petrilli 2007). Due to their special nature, they become part of a large group of lexicalized connections, idioms, comparisons, or proverbs and sayings, and their number is constantly growing along with the emergence of new phenomena and facts.

Aim and hypothesis

The paper aims to find out, based on lexical-semantic analysis, which colours are most used in political discourse in Spain and in Spanish-speaking countries, what these colours express, and in what connections they occur (collocations, comparisons, metaphorical constructions, terms, etc.). At the same time, we would like to demonstrate how the results of our research can be applied in the process of teaching the Spanish language to professional-level university students of international relations, diplomacy, and intercultural communication. Based on the set goal and the chosen methodology, we assume the following hypothesis:

1. By previous research in this area, we suppose white and black will be the most common colours, as they are the most frequent ones in constructions with a chromatic element in general (Spišiaková 2016) and (Mocková 2017). We do not assume the occurrence of pink and purple.

2. Of the naming constructions, collocations with “adjective + noun” structure will be the most represented, based on Štefančík’s statement: “From the linguistic point of view, “adjective + noun” constructions and metaphors are characteristic for persuasion” (2016:40).
3. From a semantic point of view, there will be more figurative constructions than denominative ones, since political language is a language that appeals to the broad masses, it must be an intelligible language and at the same time expressive. Emotions are best expressed through figurative constructions, which is confirmed by Ološtiak’s statement about phraseological units: “The connotative and pragmatic component of the phrase saturates categories such as evaluation, emotionality, fragrance, juiciness, earthiness, liveliness, imagination, hyperbolism, etc. That means such categories through which a human being is inserted into a phraseological sign” (2015:732).

Methodology

We analysed naming units from our corpus, which we created by excerption from the electronic corpus Araneum and the corpus CREA (Corpus de referencia del español actual²). Araneum is an electronic corpus that was created in Slovakia, specifically at the Slovak Academy of Sciences and, in addition to Slovak, currently contains another 31 languages, including their geographical variants. CREA is a corpus of the Real Academia Española³ (RAE), containing texts of various origins of a written or colloquial nature from all Spanish-speaking countries. Written texts come from books, newspapers, magazines of various kinds. The spoken language is transcribed, and the texts come mostly from radio or television. The annotated version of CREA was published in 2015 and can be searched in it according to criteria such as topic, geographical area, written or spoken text, and one-word or multi-word expressions can be searched.

We analysed a corpus consisting of 222 naming units with a chromatic element in their structure. Using the selection method and text analysis, we searched for all expressions with a chromatic element employed in political contexts. We included only one meaning from each usage in our research sample, we studied the lexical units in context, analysed them, looked for their meanings, uses and connotations, and drew conclusions from the processed analysis.

² the Refferential Corpus of Current Spanish language

³ the Spanish Royal Academy

Colours and politics

Colours also have an important place in politics. Political actors identify themselves with different colours according to their characteristic universal symbolism. A good example common to several cultures is e. g. red as a symbol of revolution (bloodshed), communism, as a left-wing political ideology. In the national flags of many states, there is a red color interpreted as a symbol of shed blood in the fight for the freedom of the nation. In this sense, even the the most important current political parties in Spain are identified by their colours: PP (*Partido Popular* – People's Party), the right-wing party, is presented in blue, the PSOE (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español* – Spanish Socialist Workers' Party) is red, *Ciudadanos* (Citizens) center-right orientated party is orange and *Podemos* (We can), a strongly left-leaning side, has adopted a purple colour. Even in Hispanic America, many political parties identify themselves by the color they have adopted. We can mention, for instance, PN (*Partido Nacional* – National party) in Uruguay identifies itself with white, PM (*Partido Morado* – Violet Party) in Peru is violet, PANAHA (*Partido Naranja de Honduras* – Honduras Orange Party) adopted the orange colour and, for example, in Chile PC (*Partido Comunista* – Communist party) or PDC (*Partido Demócrata Cristiano* – Democratic Christian Party) are characterized by the red colour.

Political language is a term by which, according to Štefančík (2008), we understand not only the language of political actors but also the language of legal regulations, communication of state and other institutions. Its main goal is to convince and manipulate the broad masses. For this purpose, it uses all available means of expressions, such as expressive nominative and expressive means of professional, journalistic, and colloquial style (Dulebová 2016). It uses professional terminology typical of the field of politics, but also means of journalistic and colloquial style, to approach the broad masses and impress an unprofessional audience (numerous figurative expressions, metaphorical collocations, expressive and emotional vocabulary, etc.) (Spišiaková 2019). Thus, we can say that political language is at the interface of these three styles. Related to this intention is the function of such a language, which is, chiefly, communicative, as it is used by politicians to speak to the public. But, at the same time, it pursues the achievement of its own goals. In addition to its primary communicative function, it also fulfills an appellative-agitational function to influence or manipulate the wide audience (Seresová 2017). In connection with the linguistic expression of political actors, colours are one of the lexical elements that often take part of various figurative constructions,

forming collocations, which make that such expressions also get into the rhetoric of politicians themselves.

Analysis

For colours occurring frequently, as white, black, green or red, we have not listed all their uses in the text. We have selected only the most interesting ones from a linguistic or translation point of view. Of course, in the statistics we included them all.

WHITE

(36 lexemes, 15 of them as political names, terms or uses)

Political terms/names:

- *votar en blanco* (to throw an unfilled ballot into the ballot box, neither of the options is suitable)
- *papeletas en blanco* (unfilled ballots)
- *Libro Blanco* (*White Book*, a document published by the government in certain cases to inform the legislature or the public)
- *Ejército Blanco* (*White Army*, in Russia)
- *el Régimen blanco* (*White regime*, in Rhodesia⁴)
- *Partido Blanco* (*White party*, in Uruguay)
- *cascos blancos* (*white helmets*): 1. Civil defense in Syria, made up of volunteers from Europe, NGOs, etc., 2. The Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs, whose role is to offer international humanitarian aid

Political denominations:

- *terror/terrorismo blanco* (*white terror/terrorism*, repression by the monarchy or conservatives as part of a counter-revolution)
- *gobierno blanco* (*white government*, in a country where the black population predominates, e.g. Jamaica)
- *línea blanca* (*white line*, in Catalonia, the successors of the white group, representatives of the right-wing faction of the PSUC⁵, existed until 1987)
- *militantes blancos* (*white party liners*, party members of the white line)
- *líder blanco* (*white leader*)

Symbols:

- *paloma blanca* (*white dove*)

⁴ Rhodesia existed until 1895, consisting of the states of Zimbabwe, Zambia and part of Malawi.

⁵ Partido Socialista Unificado de Cataluña (United Socialist Party of Catalonia)

- *bandera blanca* (white flag)
- *humo blanco* (white smoke)

Symbols in figurative sense:

- *bandera blanca*: “Viendo a Mariano rajoy agitar la bandera blanca...” (“Seeing Mariano Rajoy waving a white flag...”)
- *humo blanco*: “La declaración conjunta no dio el humo blanco...” (The collectively signed declaration did not reach an agreement)

Economics terms:

- *elefante blanco* (white elephant, assets that have higher maintenance costs than revenues from them): “El elefante blanco más grande de la historia es de Ecopetrol y está en el Meta.” (The biggest white elephant in the history is that one of Ecopetrol and it is in the Meta.)

Other terms:

- *trata de blancas* (peddling)
- *arma blanca* (white weapon, stabbing weapon)

General names/denominations:

- *raza blanca/ sociedad blanca* (white race/white society)

Figurative expressions:

- *mirlo blanco* (white crow, an extraordinary person): “Nos ha salido un mirlo blanco.” (A white crow was found.)
- *dar carta blanca/pedir la carta blanca* (give/ask (for) white card, to give somebody free choice of something): “...además daba carta blanca a los alcaldes para...” (...he gave as well mayors free choice to decide...)
- *delito/ladrón de guante blanco* (offence/thief in white gloves, a smart thief who does not use violence): “Estamos rodeados de ladrones de guante blanco.” (We are surrounded by thieves in white gloves – about politicians).

General terms used in figurative sense:

- *dejar (espacios) en blanco* (to leave white, to leave empty columns in a printed form) “Han dejado en blanco un municipio importante.” (one village was left without solution.)
- *cheque en blanco/ firmar en blanco* (to sign a blank bill): “Preguntó por qué tendría que firmar su país un cheque en blanco.” (He asked why his country should sign a blank bill.)
- *hormigas blancas* (white ants – termites): “Son ellos, hormigas blancas que causan graves daños a la patria.” (They are the white ants harming their own country.)

BLACK

(28 lexemes, 3 of them as political names, terms or uses)

Political terms/names:

- *el poder negro* (black power, in the USA)
- *Monje negro* (Black monk, Fujimori)

Political denominations:

- *terrorismo negro* (black terrorism, acts of the extreme right)

Economics terms:

- *oro negro* (black gold)
- *economía negra* (black economy)
- *mercado negro* (black market)
- *trabajo en negro* (black work/illegal work)
- *números negros* (black numbers)

Other terms:

- *lista negra* (black list)

General names/denominations:

- *continente negro* (čierny kontinent)
- *raza negra* (black race)

Figurative expressions:

- *oveja negra/garbanzo negro* (black sheep/black chickpeas): "Chile aparece hoy día como la oveja negra." (Chile appears today as a black sheep.)
- *dinero negro* (black money): "Los cobros en dinero negro de Rajoy." (Rajoy's illegal incomes.)
- *la merienda de negros* (snack of the black): „...en el que PSOE y PP son los que agitan cubilete y dado y mandamás en la merienda de negros." (...in which PSOE and PP are the ones who roll the dice and command and everything is one big mess.)
- *ver blanco lo que es negro* (to see white what is black, deceive, persuade otherwise): "Intenta hacernos ver blanco lo que es negro." (He tries to persuade otherwise.)
- *negro como el carbón asturiano* (black as Asturian coal – cultureme)

General denominations/terms used in figurative sense:

- *magia negra* (black magic): "Si los senadores no ensayan otro paso de magia negra." (Unless senators practice the next step in black magic.)
- *caja negra* (black box): "El presupuesto municipal era como la caja negra de un avión, nadie sabía cómo se ejecutaba y de qué manera." (The city budget was like a black box of an airplane, no one knew how it was applied.)
- *agujero negro* (black hole): "Sigue creando agujeros negros como en sus tiempos de Ministro de Economía." (He creates black holes as he did when he was Minister of Economy.)

Collocations:

- *fuentes negras* (black sources), *bilancias negras* (black balance), *perspectivas negras* (black prospects), *la más negra de las imputaciones* (the blackest accusation)

RED

(44 lexemes, 27 of them as political names, terms or uses)

Political terms/names:

- *teléfono rojo* (red telephone)
- *Halcones rojos* (Red Falcons): a group of young socialists during the 70. in Spain
- *Kmer rojo* (Red Khmer)
- *el Ejército rojo* (Red Army)
- *el Libro rojo* (Red Book of Mao Ce-tung)
- *Gorila rojo* (Red gorilla, Hugo Chávez)
- *Monstruo rojo* (Red monster, Russia)

Political denominations:

- *los rojos* (the red ones)
- *los rojillos* (the very red ones)
- *terror rojo* (red terror)
- *marea roja* (red torrential wave)
- *brigadas rojas* (red brigades)

Symbols:

- *bandera roja* (red flag)
- *claveles rojos* (red French marigolds, flowers for people/heroes who died in the struggle for freedom, justice, by demonstrations, etc.)
- *faja roja/fajín rojo* (red belt of generals)
- *casacas rojas* (red jerkin, honour guard of the royal police)
- *flecha roja* (red arrow, a symbol of the Democratic Christian party in Chile)
- *estrella roja* (red star referring to the Russian star and the star of Che Guevara)

Economics terms:

- *números rojos* (red numbers)

General names/denominations:

- *raya/línea roja* (red line, limit)
- *lápiz rojo* (red pencil, in contrast with the blue one)
- *botón rojo* (red button)
- *piel roja* (red skin)

Figurative expressions:

- *al rojo vivo* (*red-hot*): “Encuentra ahora al rojo vivo un nuevo tema...” (Finds now red-hot a new topic...)
- *rojo como* (*red as*): como las banderas sindicalistas (as trade union flags)/más rojo que Lenin (more red than Lenin)
- *antes muertos que rojos* (*better dead than red*, modification of the phrase *antes muerta que sencilla* – better dead than simple)

General denominations/terms used in figurative sense:

- *alerta roja* (*red alert*): “Entonces se encendería la alerta roja de los partidos.” (Then the red alert of the parties was activated.)
- *tarjeta roja* (*red card*, in sport): “La tarjeta roja que la superestructura del oficialismo le sacó el viernes al gobernador...” (The red card that the superstructure of the officialism drew on Friday to the chairman...)
- *alfombra roja* (*red carpet*): “...para mantenerle a usted y al resto de burócratas en la alfombra roja.” (...to maintain you and the other bureaucrats at the red carpet.)
- *poner luz roja* (*to give red light*, stop): “...puso luz roja a Manuel Sanhueza.” (...gave stop to Manuel Sanhueza.)

Collocations:

- *el concilio rojo* (*red council*), *Robin Hood rojo* (*red Robin Hood*), *política roja* (*red politics*), *sindical roja* (*red trade union*), *pancartas rojas* (*red catchwords*), *pañuelo rojo* (*red scarf*), *Navidad roja* (*red Christmas*), *camisas rojas* (*red shirts*), *ponchos rojos* (*red ponchos*), *obispo rojo* (*red bishop*), *príncipe rojo* (*red prince*), *millonarios rojos* (*red millionaires*)

GREEN

(29 lexemes, 7 of them as political names, terms or uses)

Political terms/names:

- *boinas verdes* (*green berets*, special military units)
- *la Marcha Verde* (*Green march*, Moroccan invasy into the Spanish Sahara in 1975)
- *línea verde* (*green line*, a line dividing the Christian and the Muslim sector within the Arab-Israeli truce in 1949)
- *agujero verde* (*green hole*, in Hungary in 1989, transition of the Oriental Germans to the West.): “A partir de hoy comenzará un éxodo masivo de refugiados de Alemania oriental que han aprovechado el agujero verde de Hungría para fugarse a Occidente.” (From today, a massive outflow of East German refugees who have used a green hole in Hungary to flee west will begin.)

Political denominations:

- *voto verde* (green vote)
- *diputado verde* (green deputy)

Symbols:

- *bandera verde* (islamic) (green flag of the islamists)

Economics terms:

- *Libro Verde* (Green Book, published in 2001, about social responsibility of companies in EU)
- *oro verde* (green gold, olives)

Other terms:

- *cinturón/anillo verde* (green belt/ring, green circuit in a city)
- *reforma fiscal verde* (green tax reform)
- *tarjeta verde* (green card)

Figurative expressions:

- *estar verde* (to be green/immature): “El Til no está maduro, sigue estando verde.” (Til is not yet mature, he is still immature.)
- *dar luz verde* (to give green light): “Dar luz verde para que los tribunales condenen a Pinochet.” (To give permission to the tribunals to condemn Pinochet.)
- *viejo verde* (green old man, pervert): “Me toca defender a Berlusconi. Y todo, porque esa mezcla de Mussolini de góndola, Alvaro Vitalli y viejo verde....” (I have to defend Berlusconi. That's because the mixture of the gondola Mussolini with Alvaro Vitalli and the old pervert.)
- *tapete verde* (green/player's table): “...sobre el tapete verde de la mesa del Gobierno.” (...on the player's table of the government.)
- *el dólar/billete verde* (green dollar)

Collocations:

- *ola verde* (green wave), *movimiento verde* (green movement), *pulmón verde* (green lungs), *zona/espacio verde* (green zone/space), *revolución verde* (green revolution), *impuesto verde* (green tax), *turismo verde* (green tourism)

BLUE

(19 lexemes, 14 of them as political names, terms or uses)

Political terms/names:

- *banco azul* (blue chair, in the Spanish Parliament seats for ministers)
- *División Azul* (Blue Division, Franco's volunteers, in the 2nd World War they battled together with Germans)
- *gorra azul* (blue cap, member of the royal army)

- *Libro azul* (*Blue Book*, document written by the political party Forza Italiana, offering solutions for actual problems in Italy)
- *tarjeta azul* (*blue card*, work permit in the EU)
- *cascos azules* (*blue helmets*, OSN)

Political denominations:

- *azules* (*the blue ones*, soldiers in opposition to the red ones)
- *azul* (*blue*, Franco's adherent)

Symbols:

- *lazo azul* (*blue ribbon*, symbol of rejection and protest against the ETA kidnapping, a symbol of solidarity with the families of the victims)
- *bandera azul de la UE* (*blue flag of the EU*)
- *azul* (*blue*, symbol of the EU)

General names/denominations:

- *Libro azul* (*Blue Book*, an ecological document about protection of seas and oceans)

Figurative constructions:

- *sangre azul* (*blue blood*): "...para que al menos en eso todos seamos iguales ante la ley y no haya un honor de primera para la sangre azul y un honor de segunda." (...that we may all be the same in front of the law, and that we may not have a special status just because of blue blood...)

Collocations:

- *candidatos azulísimos* (*the very blue candidates*), *hombre azul* (*blue man*), *familia azul* (*blue family*), *carrera azul* (*blue career*), *biografía azul* (*blue biography*), *origen azul* (*blue origin*)

YELLOW

(26 lexemes, 20 of them as political names, terms or uses)

Political terms/denominations:

- *sindicato amarillo* (*yellow trade union*)
- *Gigante amarillo* (*Yellow giant*, China)
- *Emperador Amarillo* (*Yellow Emperor*, mythic founder of China)
- *invasión amarilla* (*yellow invasion*, chinese)
- *La Casa Amarilla de Caracas* (*Yellow house*, in Caracas, Government Palace)

Political denominations:

- *amarillos* (*the yellow ones*, trade union/liberal members)
- *uniformes amarillos* (*yellow uniforms*, of the Guantánamo prisoners)
- *voto amarillo* (*yellow vote*, for liberals)

- *chalecos amarillos* (yellow waistcoats)⁶

Symbols:

- *estrella amarilla* (yellow star, Vietnam)
- *cinta amarilla* (yellow ribbon, a ribbon of hope for families whose relatives went to war, e.g. to Vietnam, or currently in school shootings in the USA.)

Figurative expressions:

- *ungüento amarillo* (yellow/magic salve): “Venga, venga el ungüento amarillo de la INEPE que lo arregla todo.” (Let’s go, the yellow salve of INEPE⁷ solves it all.)

General denominations/terms used in figurative sense:

- *amenaza amarilla* (yellow threat, increased danger). “...la amenaza amarilla del sector industrial.” (...increased danger of the industry sector.)
- *tarjeta amarilla* (yellow card): “Si la persona sorprendida con drogas no es definida por la autoridad médica como adicta, sólo se llevará la tarjeta amarilla.” (If a person who is caught with drugs and is not defined by a medical authority as an addict, he/she will only take a yellow card.)
- *túnica amarilla* (yellow tunic, symbol of regret and returning to the Christian faith): “...o que le deformen las posiciones para conseguir con facilidad que le cuelguen la túnica amarilla y la cruz roja de San Benito. ¿Estamos o no estamos en un sistema democrático?” (...or to deform positions and easily reach someone into a yellow tunic or hang him the cross of St. Benedict. Are we in a democracy or not?)

Collocations:

- *fiesta amarilla* (yellow celebration), *opción amarilla* (yellow option), *peligro amarillo* (yellow danger), *huelga amarilla* (yellow strike), *sector amarillo* (yellow sector), *televisión amarilla* (yellow television), *basura amarilla* (yellow trash), *poder amarillo* (yellow power), *socialismo amarillo* (yellow socialism)

BROWN

(6 lexemes, 2 of them as political names, terms or uses)

Political denominations:

⁶ A social movement in France against Macron’s reforms in October 2018, spread also to neighbouring countries, mainly Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy and Spain.

⁷ Research Educational and Support Institute in Ecuador

- *camisas pardas* (brown shirts)
- *la bestia parda* (brown beast): "Rutskoi es hoy por hoy la bestia parda de Boris Yeltsin." (Ruckoi is today the brown beast of Yeltzin.)

General names/denominations:

- *los pardos* (the brown ones, people of mixed race in colonies)

Figurative expressions:

- *tener un marrón* (to have brown, big problem): "La responsabilidad es un fardo, un marrón, una molestia." (Responsibility is difficult, it is a big problem.)
- *cargar con el marrón* (carry with brown, everything bad/fault): "Son aguas internacionales, y por supuesto nadie quiere cargar con el marrón." (Those are international waters and, of course, nobody wants to carry the can.)
- *comerse el marrón* (to eat brown, carry the can): "...y su afán por que otros se coman el marrón del caso." (...and it is his desire to let the others carry the can.)

PINK

(3 lexemes, 1 of them as political name, term or use)

Political denominations:

- *el socialismo rosa* (pink socialism): "La salida del PCF terminó, según algunos observadores, con el socialismo rojo de Mauroy e inauguró un tipo de "socialismo rosa". (According to some observers, with the departure of PCF⁸, Mauroy's red socialism ended and a kind of pink socialism began.)

Figurative expressions:

- *camino de rosas* (walk in the park): "Pero todo lo anterior no significa que nos hallemos ante un camino de rosas." (But all that has happened does not mean that now it will be a walk in the park.)
- *ver la vida de color rosa* (look at the world through rose-coloured glasses): "Cuando el gobernante Carlos Salinas estuvo en el poder, todo fue visto color de rosa." (When Carlos Salinas was in power, everything was looked through through pink glasses.)

GREY

(23 lexemes, 14 of them as political names, terms or uses)

Political terms/denominations:

⁸ Communist party in Chile

- *Lobos grises* (Grey wolves, paramilitarist group of the extreme right in Turkey)
- *los grises* (the grey ones, former state police in Spain)
- *Zorros grises* (Grey foxes, former city traffic police in Argentina)

Political denominations:

- *los grises descendientes* de los enterradores de la revolución (*grey descendants* of buried revolutionaries)
- *la carrera militar gris* (*grey military career*): “La carrera militar de Haig había sido más bien gris.” (Haig’s military career was more or less nothing.)
- *zonas grises* (*grey zones*, in war, in conflict situations zones without boundaries, zones of nobody, unclear situation)
- *banda gris* (*grey band*, on no one’s side): “...haberme mantenido en la banda gris.” (I should have stayed in grey band.)

Economics terms:

- *mercado gris* (*grey market*, a market where the distribution of goods takes place through informal channels but not illegal ones): “En efecto, toda Checoslovaquia es un solo mercado gris.” (Indeed, the whole of Czechoslovakia is one grey market.)

Figurative expressions:

- *eminencia gris* (*grey eminence*)
- *persona gris* (*grey person*, indistinctive, insignificant): “...ha convertido en un héroe a una persona gris e inculta como es Bush.” (...made a hero out of such an insignificant and uneducated man as Bush.)
- *materia gris* (*grey matter*, brain, clever person): “La materia gris española está trabajando en empresas extranjeras.” (Spanish brains are working in foreign companies.)

Collocations:

- *perfil gris* (*grey profile*), *opositor gris* (*grey rival*), *documento gris* (*grey document*), *político gris* (*grey politician*), *carrera política gris* (*grey political career*), *puritanos grises* (*grey puritans*), *gobierno gris* (*grey government*) *desempeño gris* (*grey effort*), *la historia gris* (*grey history*), *ideas grises* (*grey ideas*)

VIOLET

(5 lexemes, 5 of them as political names, terms or uses)

Political terms/denominations:

- *Partido Morado* (*Violet Party*, political party Peru)
- *Coalición violeta* (*Violet coalition*, government coalition in the Netherlands in 1994)

Political denominations:

- *voto morado* (violet vote)
- *filas moradas* (violet queue)

Symbols:

- *bandera violeta* (violet flag of the islamists): “Los islamistas se presentan como independientes y bajo banderas de color violeta.” (The islamists present themselves as independent and under a violet flag.)

ORANGE

(4 lexemes, 3 of them as political names, terms or uses)

Political terms/denominations:

- *Reforma naranja* (Orange reform, constitutional reform in Uruguay)
- *partido naranja* (orange party, civic movement in Mexico)
- *formación naranja* (orange formation, political party Ciudadanos in Spain)
- *revolución naranja* (orange revolution, protests in Ukraine in 2004-2005)

Results

According to previous studies published by Mocková (2017) and Spišiaková (2016), as we can see in diagram 1, white and black are the most common colours in the Spanish language in this corpus, whereas purple and orange are the less common colours.

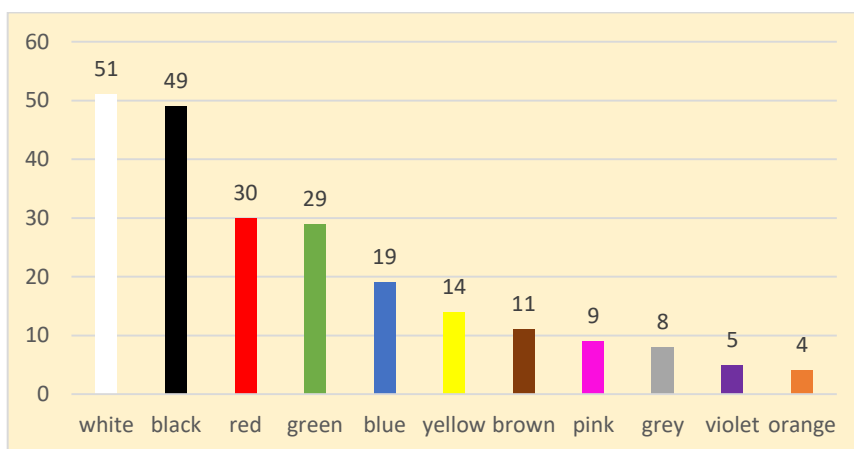


Diagram 1. Distribution of the chromatic lexical units according to colours

The corpus showed us that all the phrases are repeated in the same contexts. To the best of our knowledge, the topic of colours in politics in

the Spanish language has yet not been investigated, so we divided these expressions from the corpus according to the criterion we defined: used in a certain context (politics, economy, etc.) and with a certain purpose (symbol, term, etc.). Based on this, we classified them into:

1. political terms and names (terms used only in politics and names of political events, parties, movements, etc., e. g. *votar en blanco* – vote for nobody, *cascos blancos* – white helmets, *Halcones rojos* – Red Falcons, *Kmer rojo* – Khmer Rouge),
2. political denominations (various names in politics that can be occasional or used in a certain period, e. g. *banco azul* – blue bench, *diputado verde* – green deputy, *los rojos* – the red ones),
3. political symbols (mostly international, but can also be a symbol of only one nation, party, movement (*paloma blanca* – white dove, *estrella roja* – red star, *claveles rojos* – red clove pink plants, *lazo azul* – blue ribbon),
4. economic terms often appearing in political speeches (*números rojos* – red numbers, *oro verde* – green gold),
5. other terms, e. g. ecological, technical, sociological, legal (*lista negra* – blacklist, *cinturón/anillo verde* – green zone in the city),
6. commonly used lexicalized units (*continente negro* – black continent, *raza blanca/negra* – white/black race),
7. lexicalized figurative constructions (*poner luz roja/verde* – stop/approve somebody or something),
8. technical terms and general names used figuratively (*Sigue creando agujeros negros como en sus tiempos de Ministro de Economía* – He continues creating black holes, as in his times as Minister of Economy),
9. not lexicalized collocations (*Robin Hood rojo* – the red Robin Hood, *candidatos azulísimos* – the bluest candidates).

By the analysis, we found out that the most used colour in Spanish politics is red. It appeared in the corpus 44 times and was used 27 times explicitly as a political name or a political symbol (categories 1, 2, 3). This frequent use of red is the result of the fact that it is the colour of revolution, socialism, communism. Red was followed by white, which was used 36 times in all 9 categories and as a political name 15 times. The third is green with 29 occurrences, as a political lexeme was used 7 times. This high incidence of green is since it is the colour of ecology and seems to be the most productive one in forming new expressions. Black occurred 28 times but was used only 3 times as a political lexeme. In all other cases, other colours have appeared either as part of other technical terms used by politicians in their speeches or as part of lexicalized figurative expressions used as a stylistic means of expression.

Regarding their appearance in political contexts, yellow is the fifth colour with 26 occurrences, but up to 20 times it was used as a political lexeme. In this category, yellow ranks second, just behind the red. The surprising result is the frequency of the use of gray, which occurred in our corpus up to 23 times, resulting in sixth place, but up to 14 times was used as a political name, so in this case, it is in fourth place. It is also surprising that blue, despite being the colour of the United Nations and the European Union, appeared only 19 times and as a political name 14 times, as well as gray. Of the less frequent colours, brown occurred 6 times, but only twice as a political lexeme. The purple colour was found in five connections and all five were political, corresponding to the categories 1, 2, and 3. This fact is due to the existence of the Purple Party in Uruguay. The pink colour occurred 3 times and once as the political name "*pink socialism*". The orange colour was mentioned 3 times and in all three cases as a political name. It is also related to the existence of those parties which chose it as their symbol.

The results of our analysis show that the first hypothesis, where we assumed the highest occurrence of white and black and no occurrence of pink and purple, was not confirmed. The complete results are shown in diagrams 2 and 3.

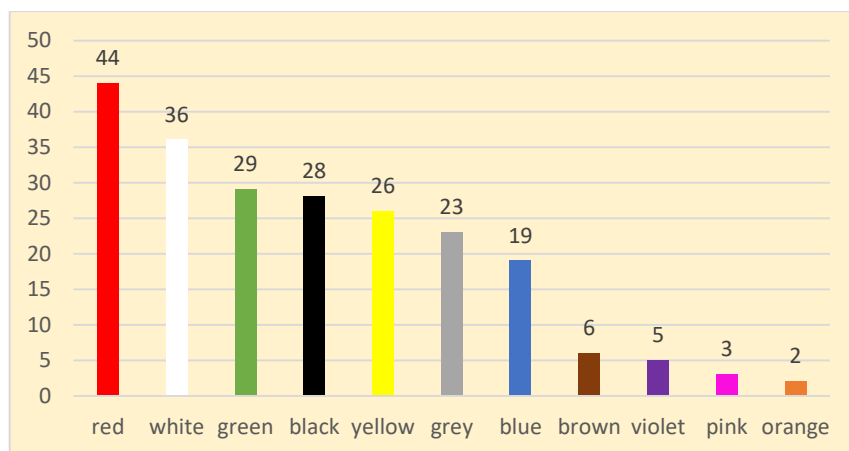


Diagram 2. The occurrence of colours in the political context

The biggest difference compared to the results reached in the previous studies carried out by Mocková (2017) and Spišiaková (2016) can be seen in gray and black. In political language, gray is used much more (4th place) than in everyday language (9th place). Black, on the contrary, one of the most widely used colours in general, in political names appeared only 3 times.

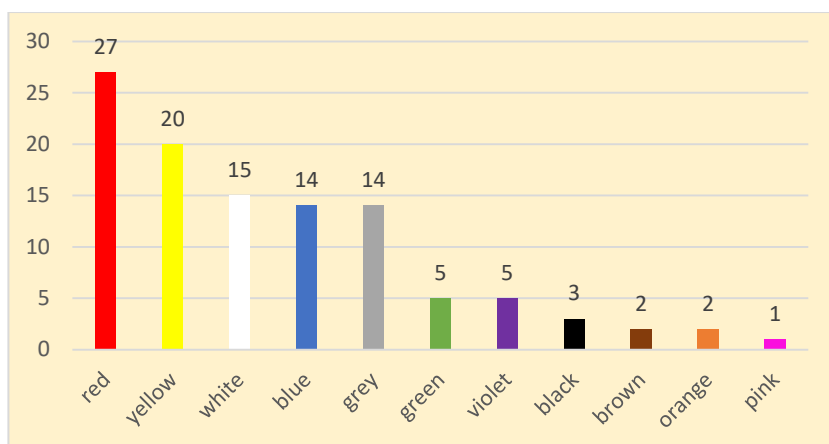


Diagram 3. The occurrence of colours in political denominations

According to Štefančík (2016) and similarly Spišiaková (2019), political language is also characterised by the use of metaphors and other figurative linguistic means of expression and it was also proved by our analysis. From figurative constructions and rhetorical figures appeared in our corpus, for instance: oxymoron (*millonarios rojos* – red millionaires, *príncipe rojo* – red prince, *obispo rojo* – red bishop), synekdoche (*cascos blancos/azules* – white/blue helmets, *boinas verdes* – green berets, *La materia gris española está trabajando en empresas extranjeras* – The Spanish grey matter is working in foreign companies), hyperbole achieved by using diminutives (*rojillos* – diminutive of red) or superlatives (*azulísimos* – the very blue/the bluest, *la más negra de las imputaciones* – the blackest of the accusations), metaphors (*Al ver a Mariano Rajoy agitando la bandera blanca* – Seeing Mariano Rajoy agitating the white flag, *Estamos rodeados de ladrones de guante blanco* – We are surrounded by intelligent thieves), comparisons (*negro como el carbón asturiano* – blacker than Asturian coal; a cultureme, *El presupuesto municipal era como la caja negra de un avión, nadie sabía cómo se ejecutaba y de qué manera* – The municipal budget was as the black box of a plane, nobody knew neither its handling neither the way how it was used, *más rojo que Lenin* – redder than Lenin, *rojo como las banderas sindicalistas* – red as the syndicalist flags, *antes muertos que rojos* – better dead than red). In all four cases, these are occasionalisms and are not lexicalized.

Similarly, interesting are also the oppositions of the individual colours. Red stands in opposition with blue in cases like *red/blue blood*, *red/blue pen*, *Red Army/Blue Division*. But it also contrasts with the black: *red/black numbers*, although this is an explicitly economic term

and in contrast to the white: *White Army/Red Army*. No economic term was found to be used figuratively, so they were used only in their naming function. Other interesting facts that arose during the analysis were nicknames or names of politicians or countries containing a chromatic element: *red gorilla* – Hugo Chávez, *brown beast* – Alexander Rutskoy, *black monk* – Fujimori, *yellow ruler* – the mythical founder of China, *red monster* – Russia, *yellow giant* – China. Also, sports terminology appears in political language: to give a *yellow/red card*, an *orange formation*. We found two cultures: *black as Asturian coal* and *red ponchos*. Currently, the most productive colour shows up to be green in terms of ecology, as almost anything can be green.

The first hypothesis, where we assumed the highest occurrence of white and black and no occurrence of pink and purple, was not confirmed.

The second hypothesis was confirmed, as out of the total number of 222 analysed units, up to 171 lexemes had an adjective-nominal structure.

The third hypothesis was confirmed as well, although with a small difference. 115 analysed units were used figuratively in order to emphasize, to say something ironically, with ridicule, to be expressive and 107 lexemes were used only in a denominative function.

Conclusions

By analysing the corpus, we verified that the most used colour in the Spanish political context is red. Red was followed by white, then green and black appeared only 3 times in a political context. In other cases, these colours were mentioned either as part of other technical terms used by politicians in their speeches or as part of figurative lexicalized expressions used as a stylistic tool. When used in a political context, the next colour is yellow. The surprising result is the frequent occurrence of gray and, on the contrary, a lower occurrence of blue. Less frequent colours are brown, purple, pink, and orange.

Finally, as we have been able to demonstrate, the analysed lexical units with a chromatic element in their structure can be a good material in teaching Spanish as a foreign language, in particular, in teaching professional Spanish at universities. The proposed activities are arranged and planned in the didactic process proceeding from the more general to the specific ones, from the simpler to the more complex ones, and following the fulfillment of a wider range of didactic goals (oral and written expression, communicative skill, and intercultural aspect). Thanks to work with theoretical and practical material (a series of proposed activities), the student acquires a new professional vocabulary

in Spanish, learns to perceive and apply it in specific contexts, and, at the same time, acquires deeper knowledge of the current realities of Spain or countries of Hispanic America.

The results we reached in the analysis of the presented study have their justified significance not only in the framework of linguistic research, but we can see the influence of the social, political, and cultural situation on language. Ignorance of these conditions can lead to misunderstanding of a particular language, which will not be understood. This confirms the fact that nowadays it is not enough to know only the language, but it is important to study and know all the contexts of a given country, to gain intercultural competence. It is, therefore, necessary to apply our research results to the didactic process –in our specific context– to teach professional Spanish.

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LOS COLORES EN LA POLÍTICA DE LOS PAÍSES DE HABLA HISPANA

El artículo se centra en los medios de expresión que contienen un elemento cromático en su estructura. Estas expresiones son tanto denominaciones figurativas como denominativas (incluyendo los ocasionalismos) que se dan en el lenguaje de los políticos o, en general, en el lenguaje relacionado con la política en cualquier contexto político. El objetivo es averiguar qué colores son los más utilizados en el discurso político en España y en los países de habla hispana y cómo se emplean; qué expresan cada uno de los colores y en qué tipo de expresiones se emplean (colocaciones, comparaciones, construcciones metafóricas, términos, etc.). Las unidades léxicas se extraen de los corpus web Araneum y CREA, de modo que en la muestra de la investigación sólo se incluye una acepción de cada uso. Las unidades léxicas con un elemento cromático se analizan a través del análisis léxico-semántico: se estudia su uso en contexto, sus significados y sus connotaciones. El estudio revela los colores más y menos utilizados en el contexto político, así como los tipos de unidades de denominación más frecuentes en los que aparecen.

Palabras clave: cromatismos, lenguaje, política, español para fines específicos, intercultural