Research Article

Luis Guerra Salas* and María Elena Gómez Sánchez

Migratory movements in the press of Spanish-speaking countries (2017)

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Abstract: The aim of this article is to analyze journalistic texts on migratory movements appeared on the main newspapers of Spanish-speaking countries along 2017. The focus is put on the subjects that the newspapers highlight, the regions selected and the linguistics elections being made. The research has a multidisciplinary approach that uses the concept of representation, as being used in linguistics pragmatics and cultural anthropology. We use the database Factiva® as the starting point to collect the journalistic pieces that we use for our analysis. The search has been refined using linguistic, contextual, geographic and chronological criteria. Two sub-corpora have been built with the texts obtained through the search. One focuses strictly on Spanish press and the second one is related to the Hispanic area (seven newspapers have been chosen to build this corpus, and each one of them represents one of the seven ample dialectal areas of Spanish language). The qualitative analysis is based on the key words of each of these sub-corpora; such key words are established from a text-mining technique that offers the most relevant words and sentences of the first 100 texts obtained through every specific search.

Keywords: migratory movements, Spanish-speaking newspapers, representation

1 Introduction

1. As it has happened in past times, migratory human movements are currently a complex and unavoidable reality. Mass media cover this topic and, by doing so in a given manner, they contribute to facilitate or to hinder the integration of different migrants' collectives in the host societies.
2. In this context, it becomes relevant to point out questions as the following (related, in the specific scope of this research, to journalistic texts published along 2017):

What migratory movements are interesting for the newspapers of the Hispanic world? Which elements are reflected by the press when informing about migration – security, employment, politics, elections, etc.? Do the media usually employ specific linguistic expressions when writing about migrations? How does the geographic location of media influence in the selection and treatment of the content related to migrations?

3. To answer properly to these questions (and similar ones), journalistic texts published along 2017 in a sample of newspapers written in Spanish and representative of the dialectal areas of the Spanish-speaking world have been analyzed, both quantitatively and qualitatively. At this point, it should be said that this piece of research is the most recent one of a series of papers that, since 2014 and with a common methodology, have been collecting and studying pieces of news and opinions on migratory movements appeared on Hispanic press (Guerra 2016, Guerra and Gómez 2017).

* **Corresponding author: Luis Guerra Salas**, Departamento de Comunicación, Universidad Europea de Madrid, Villaviciosa de Odón, 28670, Madrid, España, e-mail: Luis.guerra@universidadeuropea.es

María Elena Gómez Sánchez: Departamento de Comunicación, Universidad Europea de Madrid, Villaviciosa de Odón, 28670, Madrid, España

4. Mass media transfer to their audiences the situations they reflect. By doing so, they inevitably focus on some aspects instead of others; they represent them with specific words and images that, simply by its election, imply a reconstruction of those situations. When being verbalized, situations are framed by the lexical impositions that languages imply; they are placed in a logic that explains them better, and they are illustrated with images that necessarily select (and at the same time exclude) given aspects of reality.
5. Linguistic pragmatics, as the other cognitive sciences, work with a concept of “representation” which is not just a theoretical construction with explaining abilities, but a level that individuals actually employ to understand realities (see López García 1988, 142–43).

At the same time, from the cultural anthropology field, Sperber refers to representations as if they were living organisms, viruses that are disseminated among individuals and which are able to build, in the most effective cases, views of reality that are shared by hundreds of thousands or by millions of people. Mass media, both classic and “new” ones, permit that what once were individual mental representations become public and, therefore, to share with a big audience specific views of the situations (see Sperber 2005, 62–4).

6. How do we work with this concept of representation? First, the (public) representations appearing in the newspapers included in the analysis have been identified, comparing them with the situations they refer to and with the verbal language through which they are constructed. Second, a cross comparison of the representations of the media has been conducted to find out whether there are differences that could be associated with the most relevant issues in each geographic area or with the editorial approach of each newspaper. A third aspect of our study focuses on representations which could show an especially wide dissemination (in other words, if there are some ways to consider facts that are usually accepted by the different newspapers, so they become a preferred way to consider such facts). For this specific aspect, the concept of *frame* becomes especially relevant for our study adopted with several approaches by different social and humanistic disciplines. In this sense, our studies owe recognition of the concept of frame used by Lakoff in the field of cognitive sciences (Lakoff 2007, 2008). We also keep in mind the values of this concept in the theory of communication (Sádaba 2001), where it constitutes a real “fractured paradigm” (Entman 1993); furthermore, we also use the lexical frames as described by Ch. Fillmore (1985), within the scope of cognitive linguistics (Ibarretxe-Antuñano and Valenzuela 2012). Finally, our longitudinal study offers us the right distance to verify, year after year, which are the facts to which the news dealing with migration relate to in the newspapers of the considered countries, which are the topics (economics, elections, security, national or international issues) that appeared linked to these news, those problems that are not problems anymore, the emerging questions, the new worries and, to summarize, the importance that news on migrations has in the agenda of media.
7. To conclude this introduction, we would like to remark that our approach to the characterization of migratory movements in the press is an interdisciplinary one. Linguistic pragmatics, communication theory, corpus linguistics and cultural anthropology are the academic disciplines from which we borrow the concepts and methods needed to describe and explain the journalistic texts on migrations (about communication and interdisciplinarity, Guerra 2018, 31–53).

2 Methods

1. Our research starts by collecting the journalistic texts (news and opinion pieces) to be analyzed. This corpus is built through the database Factiva®, a multilingual information service that allows searching for news in more than 7,500 newspapers and periodicals, among which the most relevant newspapers of the Spanish-speaking countries can be found.
2. The criteria used to search in the database are the following:
 - (a) Linguistic. Looking for texts containing one of the following words: *inmigración*, *migración*, *migrante* or *migratorio*.

- (b) Contextual. Searches have been limited to headlines and the first paragraph of the texts (also known as *lead*), excluding the presence of the search terms in other contexts, such as other paragraphs, headlines of photographs, etc.
- (c) Geographic. Our research interests have taken us to study two spatial areas: the Hispanic one, allowing us to understand the characteristics of the journalistic texts on migratory movements in the Spanish-speaking world. And the Spanish one, exclusively limited to Spain, which allows us to connect (as much as possible) this study with the ones carried out between 2008 and 2010, in the framework of the project INMIGRA-S2007.

To explore the Hispanic area, we selected a newspaper representing each one of the big dialectal areas of Spanish language. *El Mercurio* (Chile area), *La Nación* de Argentina (Río de la Plata area), *El Comercio* de Perú (Andes area), *El Tiempo* from Colombia (Continental Caribbean area), *Reforma* from México (México and Central America area), *El Nuevo Día* in Puerto Rico (Antillean area), *La Opinión* in Los Angeles (US area) and *El País* (Spain area).

For the analysis of the texts of the Spanish press, we selected two newspapers considered prestigious press, *El País* and *Abc*, and the free paper *20 Minutos*.

- (d) Chronological. The study includes all the journalistic pieces published between January 1 and December 31, 2017.

1. Once all the texts were obtained, they were checked with a twofold purpose:

- (a) Avoid double pieces (sometimes the same piece of news appears in two different issues of the same newspaper, and one of them needs to be disregarded in order to avoid a data distortion).
- (b) Avoid the texts that are not related to the search topic (e.g., those focusing on migrations of other animal species).

After this individual checking, the final collection of news pieces and opinion pieces that will serve as the basis for our quantitative and qualitative analyses was reached.

3 Results

3.1 Quantitative analysis

3.1.1 The Hispanic corpus

The search in the database, according to the methodological criteria mentioned above, gives us a total number of 3,469 pieces (after deleting 619 duplicated pieces). With respect to the origin of these texts, 1,115 come from *El País* (after deleting 488 duplicated), 931 from *Reforma* (98 duplicated), 556 from *El Mercurio* (26 duplicated), 396 from *La Opinión*, 158 from *El Comercio* (4 duplicated), 122 from *El Tiempo* (2 duplicated), 107 from *La Nación* (1 duplicated) and 84 from *El Nuevo Día* (Figure 1).

The most mentioned topics in these texts are human migrations, followed by national and international politics issues, illegal immigration and criminal acts, elections processes, etc. In other words, the pieces that include our key words (*inmigración*, *migración*, *migrante* or *migratorio*) are divided in smaller thematic areas (although one piece can sometimes be considered in two or more thematic areas) (Figure 2).

When looking at the geographical areas mentioned in these journalistic texts (this is to say, the geographic areas to which these pieces about migrations refer to), it should be noted that a big number of information and opinion pieces refer to migratory issues related to the United States, Mexico and Spain (Figure 3).

Figure 1: Number of pieces of each of the newspapers forming the Hispanic corpus.

Figure 2: Most mentioned topics in the Hispanic corpus.

Figure 3: Most mentioned geographic areas in the Hispanic corpus.

3.1.2 The Spanish corpus

The search in the corpus of Spanish media (*El País*, *Abc* y *20 Minutos*) offers a total number of 1,840 of journalistic pieces; and after deleting the duplicated ones, it had the following: 1,115 come from *El País* (488 duplicated), 679 from *Abc* (243 duplicated) and 46 from *20 Minutos* (8 duplicated) (Figure 4).

These journalistic pieces dealing with human migrations can be sub-classified in the following topics (Figure 5).

Figure 4: Number of pieces of each of the newspapers forming the Spanish corpus.

Figure 5: Most mentioned topics in the Spanish corpus.

The fact that 112 pieces (both informative and opinion ones) link migrations with terrorism becomes especially relevant. This association appeared for the first time in our analysis of journalistic text related to migratory movements dating from 2016.

With regard to the geographical areas mentioned in the texts, the Spanish newspapers focus specially on contents related to Spain and the United States, as shown in Figure 6.

To summarize, quantitative analysis offers an answer to the question placed in the second paragraph of Section 1, regarding how the geographical localization of the media has an influence in the selection of the news pieces.

Figure 6: Most mentioned geographical areas in the Spanish corpus.

3.2 Qualitative analysis

A functionality from Factiva[®] called *Key Words* has been applied to the pieces obtained through the search criteria used to obtain our corpus of analysis. This functionality allows us to obtain the most frequent words and sentences from the documents that have been recovered through the search, thanks to a text-mining technique that analyzes the first 100 texts obtained from any given search. The next paragraphs focus on the existing associations among these key words and the migratory realities to which the texts refer.

3.2.1 The Hispanic corpus

Key words of the pieces in the Hispanic corpus are *alivio migratorio*, *crisis migratoria*, *jóvenes indocumentados* and *política migratoria*. Two of them, *alivio migratorio* and *jóvenes indocumentados*, refer to the same reality: the program of migratory relief for youngsters without an ID card (program known as DACA, *Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals*, “Acción Diferida para los Llegados en la Infancia”). This program started in June 2012 under the Presidency of B. Obama and serves to the benefit of more than 750,000 youngsters. It is a political measure protecting from deportation to those immigrants without an ID card, known as *dreamers*, who arrived illegally to the United States as children and who were raised and educated in the country. DACA program offers them temporary working documents, a driving license and a social security number. Such *jóvenes indocumentados* are precisely the beneficiaries of this DACA program and that is the reason why the referents of these two syntagmas are closely connected in reality. The high number of pieces in the corpus associated with these key words is due to President D. Trump’s announcement, in September 2017 that this program would be finished 6 months later.

The syntagma *crisis migratoria* refers to the management of asylum in the European Union (EU), the mechanism designed by Brussels in 2015 regarding the number of refugees to be taken by each country in the EU (in order to help Italy and Greece with regard to the high pressure of arrivals they were experiencing). This distribution scheme has become a challenge for the internal cohesion of EU, due to the negative answer of some countries (Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic) to take part in the distribution. There are also many pieces referring to the migratory pressure put on Italy (prior to the arrival to the Government of the current coalition, in June 2018, with the Lega and Movimento 5 Stelle as the main parties).

Finally, the key word *política migratoria* refers to the politics of D. Trump and those of several countries (France, Austria, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and the Netherlands) as well as to the politics of EU itself. A lower number of pieces refer to the migratory politics tightening in Argentina, with the arrival of Mauricio Macri to the government.

3.3 The Spanish corpus

The key words associated with the journalistic pieces of the Spanish corpus are *crisis migratoria*, *derecha francesa*, *fase más aguda*, *inmigrantes subsaharianos*, *movimientos migratorios* and *nacionalistas flamencos*.

As it happens in the Hispanic corpus, the syntagma *crisis migratoria* refers to the asylum politics conceived by the EU and their impact in the different countries of the EU. News and opinion pieces including the key word *derecha francesa* refer to the French presidential elections campaign and the references to immigration coming from the Front National.

The syntagma *fase más aguda* refers to the fact that in 2017 the most acute phase of the migratory crisis had been already overcome (a million people arrived to Europe in 2015 crossing the Mediterranean sea). It also refers to how the management of the immigration reopened wounds among the EU partners.

Therefore, there are pieces that point out a reality which is similar to the ones linked to the key word *crisis migratoria*.

The key word *inmigrantes subsaharianos* has two specific referents: the immigrants coming from that region and arriving to the Spanish shores, and the fact of sub-Saharan immigrants being sold as slaves in Libia, something that was known through some footage broadcasted by CNN (and that was coincident in time with the European Union-African Union Summit that took place in Côte d'Ivoire in November 2017). It should be noted that these pieces constitute almost the only mention in our corpus to facts happening in African countries.

The journalistic texts on migrations linked to the key word *movimientos migratorios* refer to several realities: first, to the incidence of migrations in Spain and the countries of the EU (*El País*, “La población inmigrante en las grandes economías de la UE se doblará”, December 6, 2017); second, to the fact of the US leaving the United Nations migration pact (*El País*, December 4, 2017).

The syntagma *movimientos migratorios* shows the different opinions held in the media about this topic. While “La inmigración en Europa, el equilibrio imposible” (*Abc*, May 21, 2017) talks about an immigration that “desequilibra, empobrece” and considers cultural and religious conciliation as a far possibility, “Derecho a migrar” (*El País*, 25/02/17) claims for “medidas que equilibren la distribución de la riqueza y garanticen la participación equitativa en los beneficios de la globalización”.

Finally, the key word *nacionalistas flamencos* refers to the Secretary of State of Belgium, the Flemish nationalist Theo Francken, who declared that he would not exclude the possibility of offering political asylum to the ex-president of the autonomous government of Cataluña, C. Puigdemont (therefore, the connections of the Catalanian political problem with the migratory topic).

3.4 The association migrations – terrorism

The analysis of the texts offers an especially relevant information: the link between the migratory movements and the topic of terrorism. This link (that explicitly appears in the texts through the co-occurrence of the searching terms – *(in)migración*, *migrante* and *migratorio* – with the words *terror*, *terrorismo* and *terrorista-s*) appears, in the corpus of Spanish newspapers, in 89 pieces (45 from *El País*, 37 from *Abc* and 7 from *20 Minutos*). These pieces refer to different facts:

1. When referring to the US, they point to the interest of President D. Trump in pushing forward his proposals for the restriction of immigration (the so-called *migratory veto*). With this aim, he does not hesitate to relate migration and terrorists attacks, such as the ones from London in June and September (which led him to an open dispute on social media with the London Mayor, Sadiq Khan) and also the ones that took place in New York in November and December: “Trump dice que reforzará el veto migratorio tras el atentado de Nueva York” (*20 Minutos*, November 1, 2017); “Trump responde al atentado con promesas de recortes migratorios” (*El País*, November 2, 2017); “Trump usa el atentado en Nueva York para lanzar un ataque político a los migrantes” (*El País*, December 13, 2017).
2. In the European area, the two concepts of migrations and terrorism appeared also closely linked in the political debate (let's remember that elections took place along 2017 in France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom). In these countries, some parties took advantage of the perception of future as a threaten and a feeling of insecurity of the European citizens (“El miedo atenaza a la Europa rica; ahora que las ondas de la crisis financiera se disipan, otros temores se anticipan” *Abc*, January 1, 2017). Such parties, opposite to the advocates of traditional liberal politics (Social Democrats, Christian Democrats and Liberals), were claiming, to different extents, for the closing of borders, both to commerce and to immigration.

The terrorist attacks that Germany suffered along 2016 changed the perception of the citizens of this country (which had opened its doors to Syrians in 2015, receiving more than a million refugees) and explain the raise of the national-populist party Alternative für Deutschland. In the Netherlands, the

elections that took place in March 2017 placed immigration at the very center of the political debate: even if statistics showed that delinquency had diminished in all the nationalities living in that country and had been reduced to half since 2005, and the groups of self-defense against crime raised from 124 in 2012 to 700 in 2016, reflecting a perception of insecurity and a sense of danger that did not correspond to reality. Similarly, there was a drop in the applications for asylum, but the objective data did not have an incidence in the citizens' perception. In France, where elections were held in May 2017, The Front National redirected the fear caused by the terrible jihadists' attacks that the country had been suffering since 2015, to the fear for the integration problems of the Muslim minority. The terrorist attack hours before the day of the Presidential election reinforced the message of the Front National connecting terrorism and Islam and Islam and migration ("El escenario más temido por los candidatos presidenciales", *El País*, April 24, 2017). In Spain, the conceptual connections between migrations and terrorism appeared in the reflections that followed the terrorist attacks in Barcelona and Cambrils ("Integración y terrorismo", *El País*, 27/08/17). In an interview with *Abc* (April 2, 2017), the Czech General Petr Pavel, President of the Military Committee of North Atlantic Treaty Organization, explicitly mentioned, when being asked about the security changes that face the countries in the south of Europe, "terrorismo extremista y migración incontrolada".

The analysis of these pieces allows us to conclude that the conceptual relation between terrorism and migrations starts from a conscious interest to link these two concepts, with the aim of the negative elements of the first one to be transferred to the second one, in such a way that the identification between immigration and terrorism seems unavoidable. The discourses to which these journalistic texts refer to (from the Front National and D. Trump in our specific examples) create metonymic connections (Lakoff and Johnson 1986, 73) – sometimes in a very rough manner – between the two concepts, with the purpose of associating or transferring the negative elements that terrorist attacks imply (violence, death, pain, insecurity, fear and rejection) to the migrants' collectives established in a given country or region.

4 Conclusions

To answer the questions presented in the second paragraph of Section 1 of this article, the analysis of our corpus of journalistic texts related to migratory movements published in 2017 offers the following conclusions:

1. With regard to the question "What migratory movements are interesting for the newspapers of the Hispanic world?" it should be said that from a geographical point of view, the journalistic pieces focus on facts happening, mostly, in Europe and America (North and Central). Just a small group of texts in the Hispanic corpus makes reference to other countries (Colombia and Chile). At the same time, information about migratory movements in other areas of the world (Asia, Africa) is irrelevant: mention to *inmigrantes subsaharianos* (one of the key words in the Spanish corpus) is due only to the pieces referring to vessels arriving from Africa to the Spanish shores.
2. With regard to the question "Which elements are reflected by the press when informing about migration?", it should be noted that the classification in sub-topics of the informative and opinion texts of the corpus shows that the migratory movements are considered, mainly, as a political issue. Opposite to the analysis of previous periods, when pieces about migrations appeared linked to demographic, cultural or economic (crisis, employment) aspects, the 2017 corpus highlights that migrations are a key topic in political agendas, being present in the election processes of the EU itself and the European countries as well as a relevant issue for the US politics (with President Trump's initiatives to abolish the DACA program and impulse his program for the restriction of immigration known as *migratory veto*).
3. The presence, in the Spanish corpus, of a group of texts linking migrations to terrorism is especially relevant. The analysis of these 86 pieces shows the interest of several leaders and political parties to disseminate and consolidate among citizens a representation that strongly links terrorism and immigration, representation based on the transfer of the negative elements of the first term to the second one. This association appeared for the first time in our analysis of the 2016 corpus (Guerra and

Gómez 2017) and connects the terrorist attacks that West countries have suffered in the last few years with the migrants established in those countries as well as with the debate about the politics that have allowed the establishment of migrants in them.

4. When comparing this particular study with those of previous years (2014–2016), several trends arise, and they become clearer when put into perspective as the time frame distance grows. To start with, we can confirm a steady displacement of pieces of local interest in favor of pieces with a global scope. Second, while in the first years analyzed in our studies (especially 2014), the migratory aspects were basically related to economy (the consequences of the 2008 crisis were still present), and pieces of later years mainly focus on the connection of migrations with other issues, such as political and social ones. Finally, the interest on migratory topics related to America (specially the Center and North of the continent) and Europe, in detriment of other regions of the world, is a common mark in the texts of all the periods studied.

Abbreviations

DACA Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals
EU European Union

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