

Analysis of the discursive framing strategies used in Spanish press headlines regarding the electoral coverage of Vox¹

Análisis de las estrategias de encuadre discursivo en la cobertura electoral sobre Vox en los titulares de la prensa española



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Abstract:

This research study is based on the analysis of a corpus of 413 news headlines of eight Spanish newspapers during the election coverage of *Vox* in the Spanish general elections held in April of 2019. By following the model developed by Gallardo Paúls (2014; 2021 in press), which examines pragmatic categories according to their textual, interactive and enunciative levels, we have identified discursive framing strategies that cognitively guide the headlines of all the newspapers in our corpus. Even though representative illocutivity, was the most frequently used in the texts compiled, a detailed analysis reveals that some of the media (e.g. *ABC*, *La Vanguardia*, *El País* and *El Diario*) used a conspicuous lexical strategy (by utilising, for example, metaphors, metonyms, nominalisations with ironic value, etc.), which was able to cause pre-activations contrary to this political party.

Keywords:

Framing; discursive strategies; political journalism; Spanish press: headlines.

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Resumen:

La presente investigación se basa en el análisis de un corpus de 413 titulares que encabezaron los textos informativos de ocho diarios españoles, durante la cobertura electoral sobre Vox, en el transcurso de los comicios generales celebrados en España en abril de 2019. Siguiendo el modelo desarrollado por Gallardo Paúls (2014; 2021 en prensa), que estudia las categorías pragmáticas de acuerdo con el nivel textual, el interactivo y el enunciativo, hemos podido identificar determinadas estrategias de encuadre discursivo que contribuyen a orientar cognitivamente los titulares de todos los periódicos que conforman nuestro corpus. Si bien la ilocutividad representativa fue la mayoritaria en los textos recopilados, un análisis pormenorizado revela el empleo por parte de algunos de estos medios -como ABC y La Vanguardia o El País y El Diario- de una estrategia léxica marcada (a través del empleo de metáforas, metonimias, nominalizaciones con valor irónico, etc.), capaz de suscitar preactivaciones contrarias a dicha formación política.

Palabras clave:

Encuadre; estrategias discursivas; periodismo político; prensa española; titular.

1. Introduction

Since the 1980s, right-wing populism has experienced steady growth in votes in Europe (González Calleja, 2001; Bale, 2003; Mudde, 2007; Alonso and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2015), both in the European Parliament elections as well as the national elections of its member states (*Redacción*, 2019; TIMBRO, 2019).

This trend is not only European, but appears to be part of a global trend².

Until 2019 Spain appeared to be an exception to this trend (González Enríquez, 2017), but it would cease to be so in the general elections of April 2019, when the far-right political party Vox won 24 seats in parliament, a result that was consolidated in the elections held a few months later in November of 2019, when it secured 52 seats, thus becoming Spain's third largest political force.

Since the end of the dictatorship, the extreme right has had its own political platform in parties such as the *Falange Española de las JONS, Falange Española* (the original *Falange*), *Falange Española Independiente*, the *Círculo Español de Amigos de Europa* (CEDADE), the *Frente Nacional, the Juntas Españolas* and the coalition of *Fuerza Nueva*, which won a seat in the 1979 general elections. However, with the exception of those elections and a certain degree of electoral success of the party known as Plataforma per Catalunya (PxC) in municipal and regional elections at the beginning of the 21st

² As demonstrated by the governments of Donald Trump in the United States, Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines, Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey, and Narendra Modi in India.

century (2002, 2007 and 2011), its voter support had only a slight impact until 2019. As pointed out by Ferreira (2019: 74), this ultra-right-wing political grouping in Spain was very much divided and "has usually shown a clear anti-democratic bias".

In 2019, the arrival of *Vox* in parliamentary institutions changed this trend. However, *Vox* had already made its presence felt in national politics several years earlier, as it was founded in 2013 by several members of the *Partido Popular (PP)* (Popular Party) who were critical of Mariano Rajoy's management in economic matters and in relation to peripheral nationalist groups, as well as the alleged cases of corruption within this political party. Among its founders was Santiago Abascal, elected president of the party in 2014. *Vox* is considered to be another representative of the European radical right, a defender of nationalism, nativism, authoritarianism, populism, traditional values, and neo-liberalism. As demonstrated by Acha (2019) and Oñate (2021), within a timeframe of just seven years, *Vox* has introduced into the Spanish political discourse an agenda of issues and communication strategies that were scarcely present in the national media context when it began.

However, the presence of *Vox* in the media has not been continuous. According to the Factiva database, in 2014 (the year after its founding), the terms *Vox* or Abascal appeared only 180 times in the newspapers analysed in this work, a figure that varied slightly until 2018, when it appeared in 2,819 news articles. In this sense, Olalla, Chueca Montuenga, and Moreno Torres (14/01/2019) point out that during the campaign of the Andalusian regional elections in December of 2018, in which *Vox* achieved representation in a regional parliament for the first time, "it received more attention in Spain than parties with similar voting objectives (e.g. PACMA), and also obtained a considerable level of coverage compared to the main political parties". Referring to this same media coverage, Enguix Oliver and Gallardo Paúls (2020, in press) have described it as "excessive for a party without any presence in the institutions". This has led us to question whether this same trend was maintained during the April 2019 election campaign.

The role played by the media in the rise of right-wing populism in Europe has been the subject of analysis in recent years (Walgrave and De Swert, 2004; Esser, Stepinska and Hopmann, 2016; Ekström and Morton, 2017; Doroshenko, 2018), However, according to Esser et al. (2016), there is still a lot of work to be done. Various studies point to the influence that the media have had on the growth of these parties (Wodak, 2015; Doroshenko, 2018; Murphy and Devine, 2018). For example, the increased coverage of certain issues such as immigration or nationalism, as well as the framework within which they are addressed and their traditional association with certain parties, was the subject analysed in the work of Walgrave and De Swert (2004) on the rise of the Dutch party known as the Vlaams Blok. According to Esser et al. (2016), the traditional media system follows three patterns in relation to populist movements: (1) Some countries have chosen to provide only slight coverage as long as these parties only had scarce parliamentary representation and the buffer line of the rest of the parties toward these groupings has allowed this to occur; (2) Others have opted for clearly negative coverage, which has not prevented the rise of these political groups; and (3) a choice has been made to offer critical coverage without ever losing sight of the damage that such populist discourse might inflict on national democratic health. With regard to the case of Spain, in their analysis of the media coverage of *Vox* during the 2018 Andalusian elections, Enguix Oliver and Gallardo Paúls (2020, in press) identified a predominance of patterns (2) and (3).

2. Corpus and methodology

The aim of our research is to determine how the Spanish generalist press at the national level framed the information it published about *Vox* during the campaign of the general elections of 28 April 2019, an election in which this party obtained representation in the Spanish Parliament for the first time ever.

The methodology we have used is a pragmatically-based discourse analysis. The analysis model used is the one developed by Gallardo Paúls (2014; 2021 in press), which links the three linguistic levels described by Morris (1985) with the assumptions of cognitive linguistics (Fillmore, 1976; Langacker, 1987; Lakoff, 1990). To the modalities of discursive framing presented by Gallardo Paúls (2014; 2021 in press), or in other words, to the enunciative, textual and interactive, we incorporate the analysis of some formal aspects of journalistic works, which represent what we call "formal or external" framing (Villar Hernández, 2015) [Table 2].

The media under study were selected based on ComScore audience data from March of 2019. According to these data, *El País, La Vanguardia, El Mundo* and *ABC* were the leading media in digital format, in that same order, followed by *20 Minutos, El Confidencial, El Español, El Diario* and *OK Diario*. All of these media were selected for our research, with the exception of *20 Minutos*. The sample was made up of eight newspapers, including four that are long-standing (*ABC, La Vanguardia, El País* and *El Mundo*), as well as four that are digital (*El Confidencial, El Español, El Diario* and *OK Diario*). The news articles were downloaded in November of 2019 from the digital editions of the media indexed in the Factiva database (Dow Jones). The terms *Vox* and Abascal, linked by the Boolean search operator "and", were used as search criteria during the campaign period from 12 to 26 April of 2019. As Factiva does not compile the news published in *OK Diario*, the search for these was carried out in Google using the same criteria and limiting the search to this newspaper's website. After a review and screening process, the corpus consisted of 413 pieces of information, according to the following frequencies and percentages [Table 1]:

Table 1. Presence of the terms *Vox* and Abascal in the press during the 28 April election campaign.

Newspapers	Frequency	%
ABC	29	7.0
EL CONFIDENCIAL	25	6.1
EL DIARIO	44	10.7
EL ESPAÑOL	74	17.9
EL MUNDO	42	10.2
EL PAÍS	60	14.5
LA VANGUARDIA	33	8.0
OK DIARIO	106	25.7
Total	413	100.0

Source: prepared by the authors

The analysis was carried out exclusively in relation to the headline of these news articles, an element which, in the words of van Dijk (1990: 83), represents "the key piece of news insofar as it embodies its macro-structure, or in other words, the space in which the most relevant aspects of the news must be summarised". The journalistic headline is not only an essential element in catching the reader's attention but, as Mancera Rueda (2014) points out, in addition to this conative function, it has an identifying and hyper textual purpose as well, because in digital newspapers the headline is often the only way to access a news story. This situation further accentuates its relevance for the journalist, who knows that his or her ability to attract the reader and bolster the audience depends on this creative task. In order to analyse the data, a spreadsheet was created in Microsoft Excel that included the following categories of analysis [Table 2]:

Table 2. Categories of analysis used in the research

-		
EXTERNAL OR FORMAL FRAMEWORK		
Newspaper	ABC	
	El Confidencial	
	El Diario	
	El Español	
	El Mundo	
	El País	
	La Vanguardia	
	OK Diario	
Headline		
TEXTUAL FRAMEWORK		
News strategy: issue management		
Issues	Policy issues	
	Political issues	
	Campaign issues	
	Personal issues	
INTERACTIVE FRAMEWORK		
Intertextual strategy: dialogism		
Intertextuality	Yes	
	No	
ENUNCIATIVE FRAMEWORK		
Lexical strategy: designation		

"Conspicuous" lexical strategy	Yes
	No
Features of special importance	Lexical relationships
	Inferences
Lexicon type	Evaluative
	Non-evaluative
Predictive strategy: actantiality	
Actantiality	Vox
	Abascal
	Members, voters, or <i>Vox</i> candidates
	Others
Intentional strategy: illocutivity	
Illocutivity	Representative
	Expressive positive
	Expressive negative
	Commissive
	Declarative
	Directive

Source: prepared by the authors

The analysis of the data was carried out using coding specialist. The results were studied with the IBM SPSS version 21 statistical analysis package and supplemented with qualitative analysis.

Firstly, different framing strategies used by each of the headlines were analysed at the textual level and in relation to the issues that were the subject of attention by the different newspapers; secondly, the framing strategies limited to the interactive level were identified in order to elucidate the linguistic mechanisms through which the transmission of other people's assertions by the reproducing topic takes place; lastly, the strategies used at the enunciative level with regard to the communicative intention of the issuer (illocution), the agent of the action, and the location of lexical elements that may influence the interpretation by the readers.

3. Analysis and results

3.1. Framework strategy at the textual level

To identify the textual framework, or in other words, to delve into the issues addressed by the media under study in relation to this party we will focus our analysis on identifying the main issues addressed by the headlines of the corpus based on Patterson's classification (1980) as stated by Mazzoleni (2010), which distinguishes between issues related to policy, politics, campaigns, and personal matters. With regard to the typology labelled policy issues, the programmes of the parties are included, referring to each of the areas of politics: education, the economy, health, immigration, justice, domestic issues, etcetera; political issues refer to party ideology, electoral alliances, pacts made before or after the elections, changes in party structure, etc. In general, these issues concern the relationship between different parties and within the party itself; campaign issues have to do with everything related to the pre-election period, from the organisation of candidacies to the planning and participation in debates, rallies, or any other event, as well as election forecasts. Finally, personal issues refer to the intimate and personal sphere of the leader and other candidates, in addition to their professional and political qualifications, or to the candidate's relationship with his or her party.

As can be seen in the following graph [Image 1], campaign issues are the most prevalent in the headlines analysed (over 70%), due to the context in which they were published:

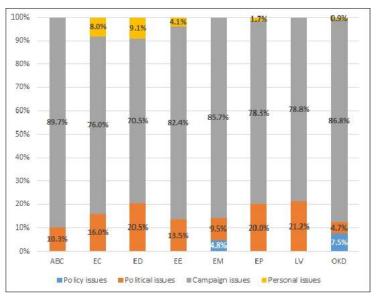


Image 1. Subject classification of headlines according to each publication.

Source: prepared by the authors

For example, newspapers report on events that took place during the election campaign;

- [Ex. 1.] Radical groups disrupt Vox rallies in the Basque Country (El Pais, 13/04/2019)
- [Ex. 2.] Early morning attack on the national headquarters of Vox (La Vanguardia, 25/04/2019)

The decisions of the Central Electoral Board (Junta Electoral Central),

[Ex. 3.] The Election Board Headquarters vetoes Vox for the debate, but allows Junqueras to campaign (ABC, 17/04/2019)

The participants on the election lists;

[Ex. 4.] Henríquez de Luna, former PP city councillor with Esperanza Aguirre, moves to Vox (El Confidencial, 21/04/2019)

Or the voting forecasts based on the polls;

[Ex. 5.] Vox surpasses Cs (Ciudadanos) and PSOE on Madrid City Council (El Mundo, 15/04/2019

They even publicise the prices at which support is given to the main political parties in betting shops, to help "spot trends", as stated in the following news item:

[Ex. 6.] The bets give the same options to Sánchez and Casado... and Abascal is third (El Confidencial, 24/04/2019)

In second place are headlines that deal with political issues, which is a term that refers to texts related to the ideology of political parties in Patterson's classification (1980):

[Ex. 7.] Boycotts of PP, Cs and Vox events unite right-wingers against Sánchez (El País, 15/04/2019)

alliances and similarities between different parties,

- [Ex. 8.] Vox joins Podemos to reject an initiative of the PP in favour of bullfighting (ABC, 12/04/2019)
- [Ex. 9.] Marine Le Pen: "We have very friendly relations with Vox. This political party is inevitable" (El Español) 20/04/2019)

or their relations with civil society. Numerous headlines reported *Vox*'s decision to ban access to its rallies by journalists working for certain media, but it should be noted that each newspaper chooses a different lexical selection to report on this issue:

- [Ex. 10.] Vox continues with the expulsion of journalists after the veto of El Español (El Español, 18/04/2019)
- [Ex. 11.] Vox purges journalists from the only channel that provides information on the party (El Diario, 18/04/2019)
- [Ex. 12.] Reporting on *Vox* amid insults, bans and threats: "You are a disgrace. We will always be in confrontation with you" (*El Diario*, 25/04/2019)
- [Ex. 13.] Elections 2019: Santiago Abascal is not aware of the ban on journalists at *Vox* events but supports his communication team (*OK Diario*, 24/04/2019)

Thus, in [Ex. 10], *El Español* opts for a durative verb and a self-reference in order to present the media itself as a victim of *Vox*'s actions, but at the same time they make it clear that they were not the only journalists affected by the decision of this political party to deny their coverage of the party's campaign events; In the headline shown in [Ex. 11], the subject

is also *Vox*, but *El Diario* chooses a verbal locution, "incite a purge", which has a more negative axiological value. On the other hand, in [Ex. 12], an infinitive is chosen and the focus is no longer on the ban instituted by the party, but rather on the difficulty experienced by journalists in carrying out their work. However, in this case, reference to the newspaper itself is avoided, despite the fact that the "insults, bans and threats" to which it refers (an example of which is presented in the statement made in direct speech have also been targeted at *El Diario*; *The* headline of *El País* shown in [Ex. 13] also uses a verbal locution with a negative axiological value, as it uses a metaphor with belligerent features; However, unlike the other headlines, the *OK Diario* avoids any criticism of *Vox*.

As can be seen in the graph above [Image 1], *La Vanguardia* and *El Diario* are the newspapers with the most political issues, which account for 21.2% and 20.5% of their headlines, respectively. By contrast, political issues in *OK Diario* represent only 4.7 %.

On the other hand, some media report on personal issues, as can be noted in the following text, which refers exclusively to a person's religious practices:

[Ex. 14.] *Vox*'s second in command in Barcelona attended a mass in Franco's honour, which ended with singing the *Falange*-inspired hymn, *'Cara al sol'* (*El Diario*, 17-04-2019)

The omission of temporary deictic references could lead the reader to believe that this is current information, when in fact the Eucharist in question took place in 2016, three years before publication of the news. Perhaps the intention of publishing this non-current news item is to give greater force to the editorial policy of *El Diario*, which is very critical of this party's ideology, by highlighting the affiliations of Vox's candidates with the Franco regime. As shown in [Image 1], this newspaper has the most headlines related to personal issues (9.1%), followed by *El Confidencial* (8.0%), where we find news that reports expressions of affection toward Vox's leader published on Instagram by his wife, using various adjectives, such as the following:

[Ex. 15.] A most affectionate personal greeting to Santi Abascal on his 43rd birthday (El Confidencial, 15/04/2019)

The relevance of this type of news in the course of an election campaign may be considered dubious, and consequently, other media such as *ABC*, *El Mundo* or *La Vanguardia* might possibly have chosen not to include content related to the private lives of this political party's representatives.

Finally, under the heading of policy issues, Patterson (1980) includes references to specific policy measures linked, for example, to the economic, social or territorial realms. The headlines of *OK Diario* and *El Mundo* stand out with regard to these issues, although with very low overall numbers (7.5% and 4.8%, respectively), perhaps due to the specialised nature of this type of news. These newspapers address issues related to the economy and taxation from a perspective that benefits *Vox*, yet sometimes collides with good journalistic practice, as shown by the following examples:

[Ex. 16]. Vox: The Spanish tax system wastes up to 1.15 euros for every one invested (OK Diario, 14/04/2019)

[Ex. 17]. Economic policies in the first 100 days with Vox in the Andalusian Regional Government (OK Diario, 26/04/2019)

What is striking about the first of the two headlines above is how the newspaper seems to echo one of *Vox*'s proposals, but without specifically identifying it as an indirect style statement. On the other hand, the second headline has a nominal

structure and presents an analysis carried out by the newspaper itself on the economic policy developed by the Andalusian Regional Government, which oversees a region where the *Partido Popular* governs in coalition with *Ciudadanos*, and with the external support of *Vox*. However, the reader is urged to observe how the headline only mentions the latter party, even though *Vox* does not manage any of the regional Andalusian government ministries, and deceptively omits reference to the other two parties.

3.2. Framing strategy at the interactive level

Analysis of the interactive level aims to discover the formulas for incorporating the receiver into the discourse. In this section we will first study those linguistic mechanisms that are determined by the consideration of the receiver to whom the message is addressed, and then focus on the study of the dialogic process and the different ways of reproducing the discourse of other people.

As an example, some of the headlines in our corpus are direct appeals to the reader:

[Ex. 18]. VOX: See Eduardo Inda's full interview with Santiago Abascal (OK Diario, 15/04/2019)

According to Hernando Cuadrado (1988: 87), the imperative of the sense verbs or verbs of sensory perception often involves a stimulus for the listener in order "to integrate it fully into the dialogue", something that has already been made clear by Narbona Jiménez, who is of the following opinion:

Certain appellative verb forms (above all verbs referring to the senses) are not only phatic elements, but also play a key role as a sign in delimiting the beginning of a structure (1986 [1989: 187]).

This function could also be attributed to the present tense of the subjunctive "see", as in [Ex. 18], in which *OK Diario* expresses a kind of initiative to encourage Internet users to access the interview published by the media itself. By contrast, in other press headlines the interrogative approach is adopted, perhaps in an attempt to represent the issues that citizens³ may raise/ may have:

[Ex. 19]. Can Vox legally participate in an election debate? Will there be a debate in Atresmedia? (El País, 17/04/2019)

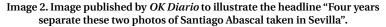
According to Charaudeau (2012: 31), the journalistic discourse "introduces an information request, a public request (this also constitutes its own instance of mediation), and has the discursive aim of making world events known to all". As a result, the headlines published in digital editions of newspapers increasingly show examples of the use of the modal adverb *así* in Spanish, which acquires a deixis-textual relationship with the body of the news, and which is considered to be an invitation to the reader for "him or her to become informed" by accessing the hyperlink that will direct them to the information published in the newspaper:

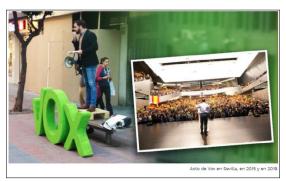
As Garrido Medina (1999: 3904) has pointed out: "By employing the types of interrogative and imperative sentence, there is a mandatory distribution of information, always being explicit the one the speaker presents as a desirable action, or as unknown information. ...] Interrogative sentences require taking into account the speaker's and listener's knowledge of the subject, as calculated by the speaker".

[Ex. 20]. This is how Rubén Pulido, the second in command at *Vox* in Sevilla, closed his controversial numismatic company (*El Español*, 11/04/2019)

Sometimes there is a relationship of contiguity or enlargement between the headline and its accompanying photograph (Mancera Rueda, 2019). As pointed out by Duque Gómez (2016: 23), this type of discourse relationship "presents its members as being connected in the natural order of things. There is no discontinuity between them and the perceptive operation they propose is a spatial or temporal progression". For example, notice the exophoric *ad oculos* (obvious on sight) reference (Bühler, 1934 [1979]) to the demonstrative pronoun in the following headline:

[Ex. 21]. Four years separate these two photographs of Santiago Abascal taken in Seville (OK Diario, 25/04/2019).





Source: OK Diario.

Image available at: https://okdiario.com/espana/cuatro-anos-separan-estas-dos-fotos-abascal-sevilla-4034877 (Last search: 14/06/2020)

Or there is also nominal syntagma of [Ex. 22], to which the qualifying adjective gives it an assessment features, and it could be said that the headline fulfils a descriptive purpose⁴

[Ex. 22]. Abascal's amusing tweet summary of the TVE debate (OK Diario, 22/04/2019)

⁴ Not surprisingly, according to Duque Gómez (2016: 23), "relationships of spatial contiguity are typical of description when dealing with specific entities".



[Image 3]. Photograph of a tweet by Santiago Abascal published by OK Diario.

Source: OK Diario.

Image available at: https://okdiario.com/espana/divertido-tuit-resumen-abascal-sobre-debate-tve-4018915. (Last search: 14/06/2020)

According to Gallardo Paúls (2021 in press), the principle of predictability also underlies the design of some of the interactive framing strategies. However, in the texts of our corpus, a breach with the expectations of the reader is often pursued in order to dramatically grab the lector's attention:

[Ex. 23]. As stated by Errejón, the Game of Thrones critic for *El Español: "Vox* would bring Daenerys back to the house to scrub the floors" (*El Español,* 23/04/2019)

Likewise, by observing the discontinuous statements of these headlines, one can see how *El Confidencial* seems to give news prominence to some information that might surprise its audience:

[Ex. 24]. The bets give the same options to Sánchez and Casado... and Abascal is third (El Confidencial, 24/04/2019)

[Ex. 25]. The business world believes the *PSOE* will win the elections... and *Vox* surpasses *Ciudadanos* (*El Confidencial*, 22/04/2019).

The information in parentheses also contributes to this effect, as in the following headlines:

[Ex. 26]. The Moors who 'liberated' Covadonga in 1937 (which Vox and Abascal prefer to ignore) (El Confidencial, 21/04/2019)

[Ex. 27]. Vox is the party that generates the most enthusiasm on social networks (and without advertising) (El País, 25/04/2019)

In the first of these, *El Confidencial* uses parentheses to show its dissociative attitude toward the ideological position of *Vox. El País* also uses parentheses to introduce an explanatory statement, but one should consider whether its purpose is merely to assess this particular achievement by Santiago Abascal's party or whether such headlines could be seen as a strategy by this media to warn readers of the rising tides of votes for the extreme right, something to which the other texts that resort to dialogism might also contribute, as in the following examples:

[Ex. 28]. The international press warns of the possible rise of Vox and political instability after 28 April (El País, 25/04/2019)

[Ex. 29]. Sánchez warns of Vox's influence and rejects concessions to secessionism (El País, 23/04/2019)

Dialogism is another of the strategies that Gallardo Paúls (2021, in press) identifies within the interactive framework. The journalistic discourse constitutes an *obliqua allocutio*, or an indirect speech, which is "a textual genre basically consisting of different ways of reproducing or referring to the discourse of others" (Méndez García de Paredes, 1999: 101). According to this author, the function of the journalist as narrator and text creator is not only to provide information about a new event, but also to evoke the communicative situation in which the broadcaster transmits the news. By incorporating the discourse of others into his or her own discourse, the narrator accepts it syntactically but attributes it explicitly to the person who made the utterance.

However, as can be seen in the following graph [Image 4], most of the headlines in our corpus do not contain any reported speech:

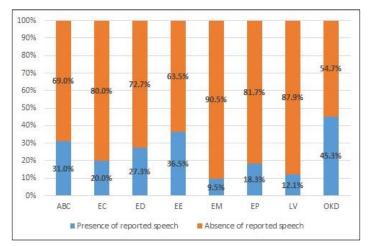


Image 4. Representativeness of the reported speech in the headlines of each newspaper

Source: prepared by the authors

OK Diario, *El Español* and *ABC* use of this type of statement most often, though not with the largest numbers, as they account for 45.3%, 36.5% and 31.0%, respectively.

In the case of *OK Diario*, the high number of declarative headlines in which the statements of the *Vox* leader are disseminated is striking; below the reader will find a sample that is small, so as not to make this work excessively long:

[Ex. 30]. Santiago Abascal: "On 28 April we risk the unity of Spain and the freedom of the Spanish people" (OK Diario, 15/04/2019)

[Ex. 31]. Santiago Abascal: "I vow to investigate the purchase of Pablo Iglesias' detached house" (OK Diario, 15/04/2019)

[Ex. 32]. Santiago Abascal: "The King is fed up with the political class" (OK Diario, 15/04/2019)

This newspaper even seems to act as a spokesperson for Santiago Abascal's tastes and opinions on issues unrelated to politics:

[Ex. 33]. Santiago Abascal explains why he feels no sympathy for the Athletic Football Club of Bilbao, and criticises their "ethnic policy" with regard to signing players (*OK Diario*, 13/04/2019)

As pointed out by Reyes (1984: 206), the use of direct discourse in journalistic texts "constitutes an epistemological safeguard resulting from the impersonal character with which other people's discourses are transmitted in news genres". Thus, in some of the headlines we have analysed, the journalist simply identifies the subject as the source of the statements he or she is reproducing:

[Ex. 34]. Santiago Abascal: "But how many polling firms are going to close on 29 April" (El Confidencial, 22/04/2019)

Just like the "the professional who quotes social issues", the journalist is "responsible for the reformulation of other people's discourse, but not for the veracity of the statements made in the quote" (Mancera Rueda, 2009: 40). However, in several of the reproduced paragraphs (Girón Alconchel, 1985) included in our corpus, it is possible to identify direct-style statements that do not seem to have undergone any reformulation⁵, as they contain dysphemisms and terms characteristic of colloquial language, possibly in order to "portray" *Vox* candidates by displaying their particular idiolect:

[Ex. 35]. Vox and La Reconquista (The Reconquest) in the elections: "Don Pelayo was a guy with two balls" (El Confidencial, 12/04/2019)

[Ex. 36]. Abascal requests that police be allowed to evict squatters by "kicking them in the ass" without legal proceedings (*El Español*, 25/04/2019)

Of the demarcative signals in the quotation (Girón, 1985), the communicative verb is the one that best reflects the discursive framework that the journalist gives to the speech they reproduce. According to Maldonado González (1999: 3559), many *verba dicendi* (words of the speech) "include information that directly affects the way in which the receiver will interpret the quoted discourse. Therefore, a certain interpretation of the information is imposed on the receiver". For example, in the following headline, the act of speaking uses a direct style and is given the illocutionary force of a warning, although it is striking that these statements are attributed to the party without identifying the speaker of the enunciation reproduced⁶:

[Ex. 37]. Vox warns Juanma Moreno: "From now on, there are no more deadline extensions" (OK Diario, 24/04/2019)

The verb *warn* can have an illocutionary meaning similar to the verb *to threaten*, "when the newspaper reader places the speeches cited by the journalist in relation to supposedly conflicting contexts, so that the consequences of what is said are assessed negatively by the recipient" (Méndez García de Paredes, 2001: 365). And in the following example, what is striking

⁵ Contrary to what is usually done in statements published in the press for the purpose of conforming to the prevailing correction criteria in most of the media, as we have already demonstrated in Mancera Rueda (2009).

⁶ In order to know who the speaker is, the reader must access the hyperlink containing the complete news item, which reports that the words were uttered by Alejandro Hernández, the spokesperson for *Vox* in the Andalusian Parliament, during a press conference on the measures agreed upon with the *PP* for the governance of this autonomous region.

is the use of a negative verb of judgement (Maldonado González, 1999: 3562) together with the qualifying adjective traitor, which is placed before the acronym of the party that is heading the Basque Government:

[Ex. 38]. Abascal accuses the "traitorous" *PNV* (Basque Nationalist Party) of violence against *Vox.* "They have left us at the mercy of enraged dogs" (*El Español*, 14/04/2019)

Such an adjective, when appearing in quotation marks, can be easily understood by the reader as a sign of discursive heterogeneity, although it is not until the penultimate paragraph of the news⁷ that this is specifically credited to the *Vox* leader:

[Ex. 39]. The leader of the green party... defended Spain as being "much more alive than its enemies think". Among them was Abascal, who once again quoted the *PNV* and Pedro Sánchez, whom he accused of relying on the Basque Nationalists, who make up "the most treacherous party" of all, in his opinion (*El Español*, 14/04/2019)

Similarly, another of the procedures for reproducing the discourse of others that is present in the journals analysed is implicit quotation, characterised by the fact that the indicated reported speech lacks explicit attribution to a specific person. Therefore, this procedure is an example of discursive heterogeneity, an expository detachment of the journalist who declines his or her illocutionary responsibility in one part of the discourse, which allows the journalist to show an ironic attitude or critical stance, as one might experience when reading the next headline:

[Ex. 40]. Vox and its "false" and "manipulated" conception of the Reconquest (El País, 12/04/2019)

The qualifying adjectives in [Ex. 40] appear in quotation marks, so it can be inferred that this is a quotation, yet the source from which they come is not specified. One might say that the purpose of this headline, published in the early hours of 12 April 2019 on the digital front page of *El País*, is to attract the reader's attention with the aim of having them access the hyperlink of the news. This is the only way for them to know that such assessments of *Vox*'s ideology were not formulated by the newspaper itself, but by so-called "expert historians of the Middle Ages", as the following subtitle states:

[Ex. 41]. Expert historians of the Middle Ages claim that the term was never used during that period and that it refers to an erroneous and anachronistic view of history (*El País*, 12/04/2019)

Perhaps as an epistemological safeguard, in the 14:53 h. edition the decision was made to include a reference to the source in the headline in order to delimit the quotation, although it was not very specific:

[Ex. 42]. Vox's idea of la Reconquista (the Reconquest) is "false" and "manipulated", according to experts (El País, 12/04/2019)

3.3. The framing strategy at the enunciative level

Finally, there are three main aspects that Gallardo Paúls (2021, in press) identifies in the analysis of the enunciative framework, which are elements with the objective of discovering the communicative intention present in the headlines:

⁷ Alcoba Rueda (1999: 94-95) explains the development of the headlines "as the result, first of all, of a process turning into a cliché... of a news segment, and later, of a consequent and compulsory technique of pre-positioning... which creates the headline segment related to the news segment that it precedes by using different manifestations of an anaphoric or polar relationship with a particular segment of news".

illocutionary speech, which refers to the type of action that the sender intends to carry out by means of his or her message; propositional speech, as evidenced by the lexical selection; and "actantiality", which is associated with the distribution of the action and its responsibility in the extra-verbal field.

In [Image 5] we present the quantitative results of the analysis of the speaker's intention in the texts that comprise our corpus:

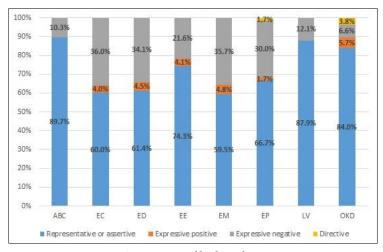


Image 5. Types of illocutivity present in the different newspapers

Source: prepared by the authors

In all the newspapers analysed, there is a clear predominance of representative illocutivity (with percentages between 89.7% and 59.5%), as they provide information with truth value:

[Ex. 43]. The judge releases the four people arrested in the incidents following the *Vox* rally yesterday in Bilbao (*El Diario*, 14/04/2019)

[Ex. 44]. Vox collects 50,000 signatures to endorse its European list (El País, 22/04/2019)

Sometimes this value is even ascribed to what are in fact mere predictions, and at times the source is not even mentioned:

[Ex. 45]. Abascal "surpasses" *Podemos* and is close to being a threat to *Ciudadanos* (ABC, 20/04/2019)

For example, it is not possible to know until the second paragraph of the news that the statement in the previous headline is a speculation on the voting intentions of Spanish citizens based on a survey carried out on behalf of *ABC* by the GAD3 polling firm on 16 April 2019

At times, truth value becomes obvious, as in the following headline in which *El Confidencial* uses the epistemic technique to "advertise" an exclusive story, highlighting the degree of certainty of the proposition contained in its headline and, at

the same time, implicitly challenging one of the arguments put forward by Pedro Sánchez during the electoral debate held the night before:

[Ex. 46]. The truth behind the letter regarding gender-based violence: it is not from *Vox* and no data has been provided (*El Confidencial*, 24/04/2019)

In the course of the debate, the socialist candidate had shown a letter in which the Andalusian regional government allegedly requested data from a worker in the gender violence units in Sevilla. This was displayed by Pedro Sánchez as proof that the government of this autonomous region (headed by the *Partido Popular* and *Ciudadanos*, as we explained previously) was following Vox's orders, due to the fact that in February of 2019 Santiago Abascal's party questioned the professionalism of the members of the gender violence units, alleging that these units were "ideological beach bars" and, through the Board of the Andalusian Parliament, *Vox* requested that the details of their workers be made public. However, the headline of *El Confidencial* announced an investigation that would be carried out by the newspaper itself in which the veracity of such argumentation was questioned. Enguix Oliver and Gallardo Paúls (2020, in press) made the following observations:

The intentional strategy, predominantly representative, is associated above all with the structural approach of informative genres (news, reports, chronicles), while that which is predominantly expressive is more often related to opinion genres (columns and editorials).

Nevertheless, although the headlines of our corpus are exclusively texts corresponding to informative genres, we have been able to identify many examples in which negative expressiveness prevails. This is especially true of *El Confidencial* and *El Mundo*, which account for 36.0% and 35.7%, respectively:

[Ex. 47]. Vox gives up on Facebook, because it is the only party that no longer pays to advertise itself (El Confidencial, 23/04/2019)

[Ex. 48]. Right-wing turmoil: the 1+1+1 vote in the Senate; the dissemination of messages calling for the division of the vote between *PP, Ciudadanos* and *Vox* generates doubts among voters (*El Mundo*, 25/04/2019)

According to *la Real Academia Española* (the Spanish Royal Academy) (*RAE*) (2014), *tirar la toalla* means "to give up, or abandon an endeavour. Therefore, the pre-eminence of the axiological modality can be observed in this headline, since *El Confidencial* uses this colloquial verbal expression to make a negative assessment of the campaign strategy adopted by *Vox* on Facebook. Such polarity can also be attributed to the nominal syntagma, "right-wing turmoil", with which *El Mundo* summarises and values the information presented below. These two media are joined by *El Diario* and *El País*, with high percentages of negative expressiveness at 34.1% and 30%, respectively.

Positive expressiveness is especially evident in *OK Diario* (with a figure of 5.7%) where this type of headline was published in which the augmentative suffix and the adjective "total" add value to the information about the large number of people attending *Vox* rallies:

[Ex. 49]. Santiago Abascal's full house in Albacete: "VOX doesn't call for the left or right, but for all of Spain" (OK Diario, 20/04/2019)

[Ex. 50]. Elections 2019: Full house for VOX in Las Rozas: 5,000 supporters rally around Abascal (OK Diario, 23/04/2019)

This newspaper also makes the most use of directive illocutivity in 3.8% of the examples in order to appeal to its readers, asking them questions, and even encouraging them to follow the propagandistic actions of Santiago Abascal's party through the media itself:

[Ex. 51]. What economic changes will take place if the PP-Citizens-Vox block governs after 28 April? (OK Diario, 26/04/2019)

[Ex. 52]. Follow in OK Diario the discourse of Abascal with which he has counterprogrammed the debate (OK Diario, 23/04/2019)

Evidence of expressive illocutivity is displayed in the newspapers analysed by means of what could be described as a "distinct lexical strategy", especially in the case of *El Mundo* (66.7%), *El Confidencial* (56.0%), and *El Español* (52.7%) [Image 6]:

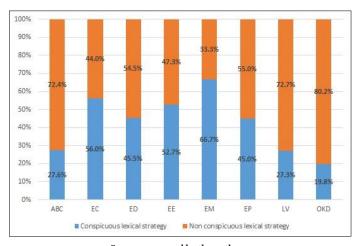


Image 6. Existence or absence of a conspicuous lexical strategy

Source: prepared by the authors

For example, the recurrent use of metaphors connected with the semantic area of seduction⁸, or to the area of warfare⁹, seems to follow this strategy:

[Ex. 53]. Vox courts Henríquez de Luna for its lists (El Mundo, 17/04/2019)

[Ex. 54]. Carlos Herrera's weapons for overcoming Cadena Ser radio: Vox and political radicalisation (El Español, 19/04/2019)

⁸ In Garrido Medina (2013) an interesting analysis can be found on various metaphors, including those that link sex with politics.

⁹ As Llamas Saíz (2010) has shown, the conceptual metaphor, AN ARGUMENT IS WARFARE (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 77), is very recurrent in journalistic news.

[Ex. 55]. From Lezo to Covadonga: heroic deeds define Vox's campaign (ABC, 13/04/2019)

There are also metonymies:

[Ex. 56]. Ortega Smith and Monasterio, the faces of Vox in City Hall and the Regional Government (ABC, 19/04/2019)

Nominalisations¹⁰ are also present, an example of which is the following headline in which an ironic reference is made to the "pleasant state of emotional and admiring exaltation" (Royal Spanish Academy -*Real Academia Española*-, 2014), supposedly reached by the *Vox* leader when he pronounced his first campaign rally during a visit to the *Covadonga* sanctuary:

[Ex. 57]. Abascal, ecstasy in front of *Don Pelayo* (*La Vanguardia*, 12/04/2019)

As we pointed out in Mancera Rueda (2014), there are many headlines in the Spanish press with this type of dual-member structure in which the journalist uses a comma to reflect the reader's oral pause and assimilate it to the elided copulative verb. However, in our corpus it is also possible to locate single-member structures such as the following, which consists exclusively of a nominal syntagma modified by one that is prepositional:

[Ex. 58]. Disgust aimed at Vox and the PSOE (El Mundo, 15/04/2019)

The headline shown in [Ex 58] is also a sample of what we commented on earlier about giving true value to a mere prediction taken from a survey. In this example, the negative judgement that the noun "boredom" implies could be understood as a reflection of the critical attitude of potential voters toward the two political parties mentioned in the headline. However, reading the news story reveals that the intention was to report on how discontent with *PP* leadership among the population of Ceuta and Melilla, which had governed in both territories for 18 and 19 years, respectively, could be channelled into an increase in votes for *Vox* and the *PSOE* in both territories, yet not in all of Spain, as the headline implies. Perhaps the ambiguity of this headline led to its replacement in the digital edition a few hours later by another in which the nominal structure is dropped as follows:

[Ex. 59]. Discontent with the PP turns into votes for Vox and PSOE in Ceuta and Melilla (El Mundo, 15/04/2019)

Likewise, in the headlines of our corpus it is common to find the pre-activation of implicit meanings through inferences that only readers who are aware of the current news will be able to interpret fully, as reflected in the following texts:

[Ex. 60]. Vox's trident: still focused only on women, immigration and historical memory (El Confidencial, 14/04/2019)

[Ex. 61]. Queues for Vox do not reach the bookshops: Dragó and Abascal sell less than Sánchez (El Confidencial, 15/04/2019)

The headline in [Ex. 60] refers to the initiatives that *Vox* supported in the Andalusian Parliament, which received no support from the other parties. On the other hand, [Ex. 61] refers to the biography of Santiago Abascal, written by Fernando Sánchez Dragó (hence the reference to this writer in the headline), and that of Pedro Sánchez, thereby establishing a comparison between both in terms of the number of copies sold and at the same time highlighting that the influx of

¹⁰ The tendency toward the nominalization of headlines was already shown by Steel (1971: 13), for whom "the nominal group acquires [in this type of text] greater relevance and extension than in other styles of language", or by Casado Velarde (1978: 103), who was able to notice how "very often in the headlines the fact that it is expressed with a verb in the body of the news is presented in a nominalized way".

people to the campaign events organised by *Vox* was not reflected in the number of people who went to the bookshops to buy the biography of their leader.

The third element that Gallardo Paúls (2021, in press) identifies as a manifestation of the enunciative framework is actantiality. Despite the fact that when configuring our corpus we have selected only the headlines that contain at least one reference to *Vox* or its leader, we have found it significant that in most of them the people from this political party are not involved in the acts they refer to, as can be seen in [Image 7]:

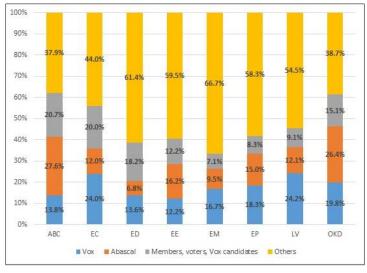


Image 7. Distribution of actantiality in relation to Vox

Source: prepared by the authors

This is especially evident in the texts we have taken from *El Mundo* and *El Diario*, in which the responsibility for action lies with politicians and social agents outside of *Vox*, at 66%, 7% and 61.4% of the cases, respectively. This can be seen in the following examples:

[Ex. 62]. Sánchez allows Vox be seen as one of "the three right-wing parties" (El Mundo, 12/04/2019)

[Ex. 63]. The Andalusian Regional Government spoil the debate that Sánchez wanted with Vox (El Mundo, 17/04/2019)

In [Ex. 62], a report appeared with the strategy used by the *PSOE* leader in agreeing to take part in a debate in which the *Vox* candidate would also participate, which was eventually blocked by the *Junta Electoral Central* -Central Electoral Board-. The reasons for this was that participation by Abascal's party in the debate was in breach of Spanish law, which requires all television broadcasters to respect the proportionality obtained in the previous elections, and the participation of *Vox* in the debate would have been injurious to other parties that had received greater national representation yet had not been invited to speak in the "five-way debate" organized by *Atresmedia*, as reflected in [Ex. 63].

The action of *la Junta Electoral Central* (the Central Electoral Board) was prompted by an appeal lodged by the legal team of Carles Puigdemont, and thus, the former President of the *Generalitat* (Regional Catalonian Government) is presented as an actant in the next headline:

[Ex. 64]. Puigdemont takes Vox out¹¹ of the Atresmedia debate thanks to the 2015 jurisprudence (El Diario, 16/04/2019)

Some media report other parties' assessments of the electoral strategy adopted by *Vox*, as these headlines from *ABC* and *El Confidencial* confirm:

[Ex. 65]. The PP believes the electoral debates will leave Abascal out of the picture (ABC, 20/04/2019)

[Ex. 66]. General elections: Narbona warns that Vox's agenda is already being "felt" in Andalusia (El Confidencial, 25/04/2019)

These headlines even echo warnings of the rise of this political force; thus, in [Ex. 66] the actant who formulates the statement is Cristina Narbona, president of the Socialist Part.

In addition, reference to Vox often appears together with remarks about the other two major parties on the right-wing political spectrum, which are referred to by the nominal syntagma of "the right-wing block", or "the right of the trident", by putting this party on the same level as the other two and standardising this radical right-wing party under the label of "the right", and forming a kind of synecdoche that enhances its public image:

[Ex. 67]. Zapatero warns against voting for the right-wing bloc: "Vox is contagious" (OK Diario, 26/04/2019)

[Ex. 68]. Minister Dolores Delgado speaking against the *PP, Ciudadanos* and *Vox*: "Voting for the right of the trident is taking Spain into the shadows" (*OK Diario*, 13/04/2019)

4. Conclusions

In 1925, Dr Glenn Frank, Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin and Editor-in-Chief of The Century Magazine¹², pointed out the influence of newspaper headlines on the shaping of public opinion with the following words: "When you stop to think how few people read beyond the headlines and how much of public opinion is made by headlines, you begin to realize the enormous influence exerted by the journalist who sits at a desk and writes the headlines"¹³. Two years later, Emig (1927) carried out a survey with a sample of 375 people, which allowed him to show that the majority of American newspaper readers based their opinions exclusively on reading the news headlines. Decades later, van Dijk (1983: 78) also warned of how the values and ideologies of journalists and newspapers are reflected in such texts often 'in a subtle way', influencing "the way readers will understand, memorize and use the information in the news to develop their knowledge and opinions about the "reality".

¹¹ The verb *saca*r (take out) could be included among the so-called *verba omnibus*, as it is a pro-forma that is not very limited semantically. Therefore, here we are faced with a characteristic lexical feature of the presence of the colloquial mode of use in newspaper headlines. For a more detailed study of this issue than we can provide here, see Mancera Rueda (2014).

¹² A New York periodical that became very popular during the 19th century and the first few decades of the 20th century.

¹³ Cited in Emig (1927)

According to Gallardo Paúls and Enguix Oliver (2014: 97), "Spanish journalists, compared to their colleagues in northern and central Europe, have a tendency to maintain relations with parliamentary politicians that are more symbiotic than competitive, and... their attitude is generally more partisan and biased". This can be seen in the headlines of the news articles that comprise our corpus, many of which have been written according to the linguistic-cognitive frameworks proposed by the political structures (Charaudeau, 2012) and the agendas set by the parties. Thus, as we have confirmed, the most recurrent news in Vox's electoral coverage during the April 2019 elections were those that reported campaign issues related to the electoral events led by this party and its candidates, or to the polls about the intention to vote for this party. This coverage was significant, as in the short campaign period both Vox and its leader appeared in as many as 413 news headlines.

The quantitative study of the headlines related to *Vox* or its leader published in news genres in eight Spanish newspapers during the campaign has revealed how two digital media, *OK Diario* and *El Español*, offered the most extensive coverage of this party, mainly by the former, where the coverage reached more than 25% of the total (25.7%). The journalists at *OK Diario* used dialogue as a strategy of interactive framing to publish headlines of a declarative nature that gave visibility to the statements made by Santiago Abascal. Furthermore, *El Español* made use of a considerable amount of direct discourse (mentioned above), yet it was introduced by *verba dicendi*, which showed their critical position toward the spokespersons of a party that had "banned" them, according to the newspaper's own information, thereby disallowing their presence at rallies and other campaign events. Even the selection of certain statements reproduced in direct style in which *Vox* candidates made use of the dysphemism might have been a framing strategy carried out by Pedro J. Ramírez's newspaper as well as *El Confidencial* in order to discredit them. Similar to what Enguix Oliver and Gallardo Paúls (2020, in press) have pointed out regarding the 2018 Andalusian Regional elections, the majority of the coverage by the Spanish press during the 28 April 2019 campaign was in line with models 2 and 3 identified by Esser et al, or in other words, the coverage was basically critical of the campaign events organized by *Vox* and the statements of its representatives.

According to the results of our research, references to *Vox* were nonstop in the media with different political viewpoints, either left-wing or right-wing, mostly when reporting on issues related to the electoral campaign issues themselves. In other words, despite its low level of political representation at the time, it achieved considerable visibility in the newspapers throughout the period analysed.

Furthermore, we have noted that the newspapers under study framed their discourse on *Vox* by mainly reporting on issues related to the campaign, matters concerning the political strategy of the party with regard to the organisation of electoral events, the ceremonies in which they took part, or in which they were banned, or in other words, issues that are ultimately secondary and far removed from the debate on the political commitment itself, or policy issues). In fact, only two media, *OK Diario* and *El Mundo*, gave considerable coverage to issues related to their programme or their political position.

The dominant coverage of this issues related to the electoral campaign and, secondly, of political issues taking a back seat, or in other words, issues related to polls, citizen participation, electoral programmes, coalitions, internal party issues, etc., allows us to point out that there has been a mediatisation of politics in this case, as described by Mazzoleni and

Schutz (1999). As pointed out by Casero Ripollés (2012: 23), such mediatisation causes the media themselves to regulate "the social visibility of events and public problems that affect society as a whole", encouraging either the political debate of ideas and civic commitment, or the predominance of trivial matters, political conflict, scandal, and the spectacle of politics. With regard to *Vox*, the latter seems to have occurred in the electoral period analysed. A recommended future line of study would be to find out how the news coverage of this party evolves in upcoming elections.

Lastly, even though there is a clear predominance of representative illocutivity in the eight media analysed, in some reports published by *ABC* and *El Mundo*, a true value has been ascribed to what in fact are no more than mere predictions about people's voting intentions with regard to *Vox*. Moreover, contrary to what might be expected in texts belonging to the informative genre, we can also find in this type of headline numerous signs of negative expressiveness, highlighted by what we have identified as a conspicuous lexical strategy. Thus, in spite of supporting a very different editorial approach, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* or *El País* and *El Diario*, employ metaphors of a belligerent nature, metonymies and nominalisations with an ironic value, or axiological terms capable of provoking pre-activations contrary to this political party in the mind of the reader who is up to date with the news. Such strategies are located at the enunciative stage as well as the actantiality, which in most of the texts of our corpus is placed not on the representatives of *Vox*, but on other politicians and social agents who announce warnings, an example of which is the negative consequences that might result from the rise of this political party. As we have seen, both "traditional" and "digital native" newspapers use similar framing strategies when writing their headlines, whether in front of a computer or at a desk, and it is certainly possible that the journalistic practices described by Dr. Glenn Frank in 1925 may not have changed very much...

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