

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Hespress' News Articles on the Issue of Irregular Migration



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ABSTRACT: Over the past few years, the arrival of social media has altered the Moroccan news media landscape. Online newspapers have become inescapable sources of information thanks to their accessibility and interactivity. Accordingly, this study adopts a Critical Discourse Analytical approach to investigate how Hespress, the most popular Moroccan online newspaper, represents the issue of irregular migration in the country. To uncover the hidden ideologies which reside in news discourse, this study focuses on the linguistic practices of the Hespress news articles as well as the contextual background surrounding them. The study takes a closer look at the thematic patterns and lexical paradigm used to represent the irregular migrants. It has been found that the online newspaper, Hespress, utilizes a humanitarian discourse to legitimate and justify the integration of the irregular migrants in the Moroccan society.

KEYWORDS: Critical Discourse Analysis, Online Newspapers, News Produces, Irregular Migration, Morocco

1. INTRODUCTION

Thanks to their accessibility and interactivity, online newspapers have become a frequent source of information people rely on to be informed about different issues around the globe. However, although news is typically expected to reflect reality and adhere to principles of objectivity, impartiality and the norm of reporting mere facts, news discourse is inherently biased and ideological (Kitis & Milapides, 1997). For Fowler (1991), there is no neutral representation of reality and that all news is reported from some particular angle. Similarly, many scholars like Althusser (1971), Hall (1982), Fairclough (2006) and van Dijk (2000) confirm that news discourse includes opinions, attitudes and not only facts. In spite of the importance of the Moroccan news media, scientific research remains very limited and this is evidently seen in the clear scarcity of reliable sources that investigate the Moroccan news media sector. In fact, although the history of the Moroccan press has been the subject of some studies (Baida 1996) as has television (Zaid 2009), contemporary debates have been poorly studied with the exception of participant testimonies (Daoud 2007; Alaoui2012), reports by international organisations or debates which are sometimes stimulating but not based on investigations (El Ayadi, 2006). Therefore, this research investigates the news discourse of one of the most prominent Moroccan online newspapers, Hespress, in the way it represents the issue of irregular migration.

To guide my analytical process I used the following research question:

How do Hespress news articles represent the issue of irregular migration in Morocco?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The aim of this section is to situate this study in the context of its related literature and academic traditions with the aim of developing a theoretical and conceptual framework that examines news discourse and migration representation. Therefore, the relevant theories and key concepts needed for the analysis are reviewed

2.1. News Media in Morocco

The news media sector in Morocco is sponsored and controlled by the state under the supervision of The High Authority for Audiovisual Communication (HAAC). The Moroccan media perspective is divided into audio, visual, written press and electronic press. On the visual level, there are currently nine public TV channels run by the government in terms of finance and in terms of administration and supervision. Their programs are mainly broadcast in Arabic and French, before the Amazighe language (dialect in some Moroccan areas) significantly emerged in their programs. Moreover, Spanish can also be seen, especially in Channel one, through some news bulletins aired in Spanish. On the audio level, the country comprises fourteen radio stations, some of which are national, while others are regional. All are public state-run radio stations, except for Medi 1 Radio Station (known as the Mediterranean Sea International Radio Station), that is owned by the foreign private sector, and the US Sawa Radio, which broadcasts its programs from the Moroccan territory. As for the written press, there are 618 which are diverse in terms of language; that is to say, Arabic and French mainly, and less in Amazighe and Spanish.

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2.1.1. E-Newspapers in Morocco

Internet was introduced to Morocco in 1995 and has since then experienced a rise in use. According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Internet access in Morocco has increased in recent years and was among the highest penetration rates of the continent of Africa. For the Moroccan electronic press, many news media outlets have shifted towards electronic and interactive models to deliver their products to their audiences. Some online newspapers are distributed in independent websites private-owned and owned by certain individuals. Others are public and run by the State, the most important of which is the Ministry of Communications' website and "Menara".

Pioneer examples of electronic news organisations are the daily Arabic-language "Akhbar Alyawm Almaghribia" which allows citizens to take part in making the news on a daily basis through a rubric called "Arraay" and the free French-language "Au Fait" which provides an online-based platform for people to create blogs, in addition to other examples from both written and online press. Alexa (2019) states that the most widely visited platforms were Moroccan Arabic news websites. Most popular was Hespresse, with 2.5 million visitors per day, ranking fourth, after Google, Facebook and Youtube. Next was Chouftv (5th), followed by two football websites (elbotola.com and khooora.com, 9th and 11th, respectively). Other general websites have become popular as well, such as the bilingual site le360.ma (13th) and several Arabic activist sites Goud (14th), Alyaoum24 (19th), Febrayer (31st) and Hibapress (34th).

2.1.1.1. Hespresse as a Research Site

Hespresse presents a good example of citizen media in Morocco. It is considered to be the first online newspaper run by the mass as it is now number one in terms of readership (Alexa, 2019). With two million visitors every day, Hespresse is the third most popular site in Morocco, just behind Google and Facebook, thus surpassing Youtube (telquel.ma:1). It was ranked as the first electronic newspaper in the Maghreb region and the third most powerful Arab information website in 2012 after "Masrawy" (Egypt) and "Sabq" (Saudi Arabia). Its name is inspired from the Greek "Hesperis", which referred to Gardens in ancient Morocco. It is also a homonym of the French study magazine about Morocco during the colonial time: Hesperis.

Hespresse reflects the perspective of a privately-owned and independent national newspaper which aspires to cultivate democratic values by serving and informing the public objectively and professionally. It defines its mission statement as follows: "Our mission is to provide independent, impartial news for audience and to offer a voice with no taboos to a diversity of perspectives". With a mission statement which is clearly seeking to promote freedom of speech of the general public, Hespresse obviously tenets the involvement of its audiences as central to its mandate. In fact, it was the first ever Moroccan Arabic media to publish a caricature of the Moroccan king Mohammed VI.

Hespresse is edited by the company Marocads, with a capital of 300 000 dollars, whose only shareholders are the above mentioned founders, the El Guennouni brothers. The site's popularity is in part due to the fact that it was a precursor of the online Arabic-language press in the country. It is very active on social media and has managed overtime to attract a large span of readers, in part due to a wide editorial line, that covers all tendencies, thanks to an interactive commentary section and the participation in the media of external contributors.

2.2. The New Migration Policy 2013

On 10 September 2013, Morocco's King Mohamed VI held a meeting with his Minister of Home Affairs and a number of human rights representatives (among them the National Council of Human Rights, CNDH) to initiate a new "migration and asylum policy" for foreign residents of the kingdom, especially aimed at illegal migrants. This announcement was considered a turning point in Morocco's human rights approach to irregular migrants, mainly sub-Saharan Africans from countries such as Mali, Senegal, Niger, Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, but also refugees from Libya and Syria.

The new Moroccan migration policy comprises three main elements: (1) an exceptional regularization process for immigrants, carried out in 2014 (this operation benefited nearly 45,000 migrants); (2) extended power for the UNHCR to grant the right of asylum to a greater number of asylum seekers in Morocco; (3) new laws allowing for better integration of migrants and asylum-seekers into Moroccan society, as well as increased emphasis on the fight against human trafficking and traffickers.

The new migration policy has been employed in the service of Morocco's diplomatic objectives on the global stage. Its post-2013 migration policy has been heavily publicised globally. This has helped build Morocco's reputation as a progressive leader on migration issues and improve its global status, including its credentials to host major migration events such as the Marrakech Intergovernmental Conference to endorse the Global Compact for Migration in December 2018. This global influence, combined with the perception of Morocco as a trusted partner and ally of both African and European states, is a significant achievement, and one that is based on the use of migration as a platform for external engagement. Besides, through its strategic use of migration policies to build alliances, attract financial resources, and develop credibility as a trusted regional and global player, Morocco offers some useful insights into the political economy of migration as a foreign policy strategy.

Morocco's migration policy reflects the interconnectedness of foreign policy priorities, desired reform and the reality of domestic politics. Morocco has positioned itself as a counterterrorism and migration ally for Europe and at the same time leaning toward the African Union, and African markets. The primary purpose of Morocco's migration agenda appears to be oriented towards

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achieving specific foreign policy objectives, as represented by its positioning under the ministry responsible for foreign affairs. These foreign policy objectives promote Morocco's development through wide-ranging economic and political gains including the country's geopolitical relations with Africa and Europe.

2.3. Irregular Migration in News Discourse

News is a late Middle English word which means new information about recent events (Reah, 2002). This definition indicates that news includes any happening anywhere in the world over the last 24 hours. However, according to Fowler (1991), this is not the case since news does not include everything; decisions about what to include and exclude in a specific newspaper have to be made. These decisions are usually seen as editorial decisions. They highlight news items which they consider of interest to them and exclude those which are of little interest. Furthermore, news is managed by many news workers, such as journalists, editors, printers, camera operators, and sound technicians, and is selected to reflect the social and economic interests of the owners of the news institution and the political party whom the owners support. Similarly, Richardson (2007) views the news media to be biased and ideological. He has explained that "language as the medium to do so" and when he has examined the language use or discourse of newspapers he has identified that language is a "non-neutral element" (Richardson, 2007, p. 13).

Previous academic research and literature investigations on the topic of media representation of minority groups have shown that there has been a binary framing of these people as either objects of humanitarian concern, or objects of security risk (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017). At the international level a delicate balancing act broadly takes place between discourses of the wanted (skilled, rich migrants) and discourses of the unwanted (poor migrants). Meanwhile, the general focus of those in powerful positions at the international scale is to prevent and combat illegal immigration (Guild, 2004, p. 3). This focus largely ignores broader governmental and capitalist processes that cause people to migrate without official permission.

In general, representations of irregular migrants tend to sit within complex discourses of problematization and victimization within which they are predominantly framed as either objects of fear: potential terrorists and security risks, and a threat to the Western way of life, or victims: helpless, suffering and innocent people, seeking safety from war and persecution. Previous studies of the media representation of migration identify them as ambivalent media figures; that is to say, there are positive and negative representations. On the one hand, they emerge as victims of geopolitical conflict in need of protection; on the other hand, however, they appear as a threat to the hosting community. This symbolic instability of the irregular migrants, shifting between victim and threat, lies at the heart of critical scholarship on irregular migration representation. In what follows, the literature which points to these two prominent media representations of irregular migrants, problematization and victimization representations is presented.

2.3.1. Problematization Representation

Problematization discourse constructs irregular migrants as problematic and as a potential security risk that threatens the hosting society (Ibrahim, 2005). This stance is closely linked to the need to protect the country's borders from the irregular migrants. The discourse of sovereignty is often used as an exclusion strategy by the media, which rely on categorizations of refugees and asylum seekers as problematic, illegal and, therefore, a threat (Pickering, 2001).

One area of consensus among scholars is that immigrants are generally constructed as a problem and more specifically frequently depicted as being involved in crime. Many scholars have studied the construction of migrants and refugees as a threat to the hosting society including Ibrahim (2005), and van Dijk (2000). Securitization or probelamization discourses aim to demonise irregular migrants by portraying them as illegal, bogus and a threat to 'Our' way of life (McNevin, 2007). The critique of threat representation forms part of a broader critique of agency in the representation of irregular migrants. It draws upon two features of agency: the attribution of sovereignty, which construes irregular migrants as active and hopeful individuals rather than destitute bodies, and the attribution of malevolence of the irregular migrants' will to harm.

2.3.2. Victimization Representation

On the other side of the spectrum, there is a victimization or humanitarian representation of irregular migrants by showing them as victims, worth of empathy, solidarity and humanitarian help (Fehrenbach & Rodogno, 2015a). Although the victimization representation of irregular migrants is less theorized, it is the process whereby migrants are presented as victims either of their culture by criminal smugglers, or by some regimes. Within such discourse, irregular migrants are represented as vulnerable victims, sad, and distressed individuals (Wright, 2002).

In mediated representations, humanitarian understanding of the migrant's unfortunate condition is evoked in emotional, gendered, and personal treatment of the story. For Silk (2000), there is a number of ethical concerns around media representations of humanitarian subjects. First, media coverage of humanitarian disasters often depicts the Global South as dependent on a Global North response, while ignoring the wider structural injustices involved. Second, there is a tendency to represent people as passive victims rather than as active agents, raising questions about who is doing the representing and who gets to speak (Silk, 2000). Thus, as Szorenyi (2018) argues, people affected by humanitarian crises become framed as the distant suffering other, objects of compassion who need to be saved by 'Us'. However, such victimization representations have been widely criticised for portraying humanitarian subjects as passive, helpless victims and in need for humanitarian aid and as such discourses risk encouraging a regime of compassion and charity that may speak more about ourselves as humanitarian actors than the very people we purport to help

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(Chouliaraki, 2013b). Although such pictures attracted international attention and donations, they were widely criticised for violating the identity and culture of the individuals depicted, and for producing and perpetuating a patronising, orientalist and dehumanising view of the Global South (Cohen, 2001).

2.4. Theoretical Background

To closely examine the discourse *Hespess'* readers use in their comments about the irregular migration issue in Morocco, a theoretical framework that gives insight of language as a form of social practice is used. Therefore, this study's research problem is looked at from the lens of the following theories as they hold a great significance to mediated communication and they explain the relationship between language, power and society.

2.4.1. Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis

Within the CDA field, one of the most dominant and frequently used approaches for analyzing discourse was developed by Norman Fairclough in the 1980s. Fairclough's sociocultural approach has been the keystone for many researchers that aim at finding structures and discourses in different communications (Fairclough, 1992). Fairclough (2010) defines the role of the discourse analyst as "focusing on discourse, but never in isolation, always in its relations with other elements" (p. 5). Fairclough (1992, 1995) has developed his own approach to media discourse. Drawing on Halliday's functional framework, Fairclough's (1995) approach is concerned with language, discourse, and power in society. He also draws on knowledge of social theory, especially the ideas of French philosopher and social theorist Michel Foucault. He is also influenced by social theorists such as Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, and Jurgen Habermas and literary theorists like Mikhail Bakhtin (Fairclough, 1992; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). The view of this approach is that events and actions may be described with linguistic variations, which hide the ideologies. Fairclough's (1995) study aims to contribute to the struggles for social emancipation through increasing the critical awareness of news readers.

Fairclough's discourse analysis employs both linguistic and social analysis. Fairclough's method examines discursive relationships and social systems in three separate domains, local, institutional, and societal. Fairclough argues that these domains do not exist distinctly or individually as each domain constantly interacts with the others. Further, he points out the existence of dialectical relationships within elements that constitute social practices. These elements are semiotic or language-based constituents and non-semiotic constituents such as social relationships, individual beliefs, attitudes, history, and the material world. Fairclough (1992) contends that to make new meanings both semiotic and non-semiotic social elements need reconfiguration.

2.4.2. Social Representation Theory

Social Representation Theory holds great significance to this study as the news media are considered as a significant agent in the production of discourse and social knowledge. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, this theory is used to explore the social representations of irregular migrants through the ways in which they are used, and shaped by, discourses in *Hespess*, which functions as the mediating system. Social Representation Theory was advanced by Serge Moscovici in 1961. This theory suggests that one's perception of the world is largely shaped by the news, and the discourse they carry. This theory is about the processes of collective meaning-making resulting in common cognitions which produce social bonds uniting societies, organisations and groups. As a theory of communication, it links society to the individual, media to the public. It specifies a number of communicative mechanisms explaining how ideas are communicated and transformed into what is perceived of as common sense; that is to say, the common ways of conceiving, thinking about and evaluating social reality. This touches the very heart of mediated communication; that is to say, how media naturalises social thinking and generates collective cognition. For Hall (1997), the material world is shaped by a given meaning through the language individuals use to represent concepts. Constructions of meanings are made by social actors that use ideas and norms to construct and represent through meaning, thereby also making the world meaningful to others. Representation systems are of great importance behind the construction of world meanings.

News media constructions of reality are inevitable because the relationship between the world and media is in itself constructive. News media constructs social reality, which further on causes individuals to construct that given material from the media into further categorizations. Meanings are the only factor that determines people's views on the world. According to Hall (1997), the way people understand the meaning of social categorizations such as gender, race, class, age, and ethnicity affects how one's reality is shaped, and therefore the meaning of such categorizations are therefore extremely important because "the practices of representation describe how ideas, concepts and emotions can be interpreted (p. 28).

Social Representation Theory assumes the centrality of self-other-object relations (Moscovici, 1972), which essentially illustrates the role of relationships in how meaning is developed, maintained and changed whilst highlighting the indispensable focus on self-other communication. The self is relationally and socially composed which means that what starts as external also becomes internal (Moscovici, 1972), and in this process, social representations provide specific contents that correspond to one's knowledge, beliefs, images, and uses of language.

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2.4.3. Post-Humanitarian Theory

The post-humanitarian style of appeals has been first discussed by Lilie Chouliaraki, who has approached the communicative structure of humanitarianism as a theatre of suffering (Chouliaraki, 2013). She explored the communicative event as spectacle, in which refugees are actors and the western audience is the spectator. Moreover, she argues that humanitarian organisations, in order to renew the legitimacy of humanitarian communication, had to move from the emotion-oriented discourse of pity to the post-humanitarian discourse of irony in their communication strategies. The discourse of pity can be used to provoke emotions in the audiences by using a victim-oriented narrative.

It is important to critically analyse and deconstruct the meaning within humanitarian discourse to uncover the power dynamics involved in the representation of others as it has been criticised for encouraging a regime of compassion and charity that may speak more about ourselves as humanitarian actors than the very people we purport to help (Chouliaraki, 2013). The critique of victimhood representations takes its starting point from two features of irregular migrants representation: massification, which depicts them as a multitude of indistinguishable individuals (Berman, 2016, p.102) and passivization where they are portrayed as in need, deprived of food, clothes or shelter which contributes to the de-humanisation of the migrants.

The post-humanitarian style of influencing has addressed the 'self' to achieve solidarity with the migrants. What characterizes the language of this new style of appeal is a meaning-making system and a contrast in the narrative due to which the spectators are faced to their own cultural distinctness rather than that of the migrants. However, Chouliariki (2010) argues that there is a de-emotionalization of the cause in this new type of humanitarian communication in which the case of suffering "becomes disembedded from discourses of morality" (p.118). The contrasting elements in language and visual content also help to build up the moral agency by concentrating on the 'self' instead of universal claims. These contrasts create a reflexivity in the audience and render the psychological world of the spectator a potential terrain of self-inspection where they can judge and decide how to act on the case of refugees based on their own values. This self-inspection has critical importance in reinforcing cosmopolitan sensibility of self-fulfilment, which implies the moral obligation of taking action for a cause. At the same time, it has the risk of turning the attention away from the broader political context and historical background of the cause of suffering as the focus is on the act of helping over the 'Other' and on the self-gratitude that is related to it (Chouliariki, 2010).

Post-humanitarian appeals prioritize corporate branding strategies to marketize their cause instead of sharing universal claims and influencing the audience on what they should think and feel about a humanitarian situation. According to the post-humanitarian critique, humanitarian organisations focus on building organizational brand and image by moving from explicit marketing of suffering as a cause towards an implicit investment in the identity of the humanitarian agency itself (Chouliariki, 2010).

3. METHODOLOGY

To capture the complex and multidimensional nature of Hespres' news articles, an in-depth qualitative investigation is adopted. However, in order to address the data in terms of its latent as well as its manifest content, there has been the incorporation of some quantitative data.

3.1. Research Design

The study starts by a Thematic Analysis in order to identify and categorise the dominant themes used to represent the issue of irregular migration in Hespres news articles. To overcome the criticism placed upon Thematic Analysis as being too vague in its method, the six stages of Thematic Analysis proposed by Braun and Clark (2006) are adopted. The six stages are: to familiarize oneself with the data, to generate initial codes, to search for themes, to review the themes, to name the themes, and then to describe the findings in tables. Accordingly, the starting point of Thematic Analysis is through the grouping of the Hespres news articles which helped to identify themes that are important to the research questions by exhibiting "patterns of meaning" (Braun & Clark, 2006, p.86). Once the data was collected, it was analyzed to identify a coding scheme. A coding scheme is a list of codes and their associated definitions, beneficial for the organization of the data in a systematic and meaningful manner that helps prepare the dataset for analysis.

The second cycle of scrutiny is that of Frequency Analysis which aims to count the emergent themes' frequencies. This is done with the help of the Excel software.

The third cycle of analysis is that of Fairclough's three dimensional framework. This framework allows the analysis of the internal linguistics properties of discourse as well as their external contextual properties in order to uncover the hidden ideologies within Hespres readers' discourse and show how language exercises power.

The integration of these three cycles of analysis in this research paradigm helps this study to benefit from the strengths of each method and mitigate their weaknesses. That is to say, these three methods complement one another for a rigorous and reliable analysis.

3.2. Data Collection and Sampling

Hespres' news discourse has been chosen as the data for this study because its data is accessible, it represents reality through language, and that ideologies are expected to be found in its news texts. To focus on Hespres news articles, a body of data corpus

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was collected from Hespress official website www.hespress.com archive. Similar to Holst and Bingöl (2016), the data collection was done through the selection of news articles which contain specific keywords as search parameters. *Hespress* integrated search engine was used by typing the following keywords: irregular migration, Morocco, integration policy, new migration policy 2013. Each of these keywords was used individually and then several combinations of key words were used in order to make the search of related news articles as extensive as possible in *Hespress*. This variety of keywords was utilized in order to access all possible texts that were written about irregular migration in Morocco during the time under study.

The timeframe selected for this dissertation starts from September 9, 2013 to December 11, 2018. This six years' time frame is chosen because it represents six spike periods that have marked the main reforms brought by the new irregular migration policy. The prominent event of the adoption of the new migration integration policy was issued in September 9, 2013. The years 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 have all very significant reforms and important events about the new migration policy and 2018 marks the end of the reforms and also marks the time when the new law was in effect. This renders the analysed data more meaningful in the light of broader contemporary socio-political events (KhosraviniK, 2009).

In this study, a purposeful sampling technique is used. This means that the sampled news articles are intentionally selected in a way that allows the researcher to deeply focus on and examine certain phenomena or issues (Flick, 2009). The rationale behind the purposeful sampling is that it allows the researcher to meaningfully select ones' own texts which is the most relevant to fully answer the research questions. As the present study is carried out within a research project targeting irregular migration representation in news discourse, the sampling method was designed to match this objective. Therefore, *Hespress*' news articles were purposefully selected following some inclusion and exclusion data collection criteria as the next table shows:

Table 1. Criteria for data collection inclusion and exclusion

Inclusion Criteria	Origin	<i>Hespress</i>
	Country	The issue of irregular migration in Morocco.
	Time Period	From September 9, 2013 to December 11, 2018.
Exclusion Criteria	Origin	Other sources than <i>Hespress</i> .
	Country	The issue of irregular migration in other countries than Morocco.
	Time Period	Articles that are beyond the specified time frame.

The included news articles are the ones originated from *Hespress*, issued during the timeframe from September 9, 2013 to December 11, 2018, dealing with the issue of irregular migration in Morocco, and containing at least ten comments. The excluded news articles, however, are the ones which originate from other news sources than *Hespress*, the ones issued beyond the specified time frame, the ones dealing with the issue of irregular migration in other countries than Morocco, and the ones which contain less than ten comments.

The full corpus of data collected is comprised of articles which were found to contain the query terms. But the amount of articles had to be downsized to a more manageable sample before implementing the qualitative methods of CDA. By adopting a systematic downsizing procedure introduced by KhosraviNik (2009), the number of articles was reduced to a more manageable size (36 articles; 6 articles for each year) for the purposes of the more in-depth critical analysis. More importantly, the data sample of 6 news articles per year has helped to reach the point of sample saturation or redundancy. That is to say, when the researcher reaches the state saturation, there is no more new information or insight that emerges from the data and that only the same information gets repeated.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Findings from Thematic Analysis

Despite being widely used in qualitative research, there was a lack of clear conceptualisation and explanation of thematic analysis processes in most of the literature (Boyatzis, 1998). In order to overcome the criticism placed upon thematic analysis as being too vague in its method (Holloway & Todres, 2003) and give this study more reliability and rigour, the analytical process adopts the six stages proposed by Braun and Clarke (2013).

Findings from Thematic Analysis has led to the identification of the following pro-migration themes as the table shows.

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Table 2. Overview of overarching themes, themes, and their description

Overarching Themes	Themes	Description
Pro-migration	Human Rights	Principles from the International Human Rights law or the universal right of asylum are referred to as they emphasize emotions like solidarity, empathy and compassion.
	Politics	The ideas which emphasise that the Moroccan government has a political obligation towards helping the irregular migrants are stressed. Voices of political elite groups and political issues are highly incorporated in news reporting to represent irregular migrants.
	Integration	The sectors in which irregular migrants are integrated are referred to and the idea that the integration of the migrants does not represent any problem is stressed.

The overall finding from this thematic analysis has led to the identification of the dominant themes in Hespress news articles which are pro-migration themes, they involve the following Human Rights Theme, Politics Theme, and Integration Theme.

4.2. Findings from Frequency Analysis

After categorising the identified themes as defined by the previous thematic analysis, the quantitative description of Hespress news articles is conducted. The focus here is on the frequencies of the emergent themes in the news articles during the specified time frame. With the help of the excel software application, tables and figures are designed in order to clearly display counts of theme frequencies falling under the categories of pro-migration discourse as sampled in the methodology chapter. The purpose of this numerical analysis is to provide the reader with a comprehensive view of the analysed readers' comments by discussing the data in the form of numbers and frequencies before moving to a more in-depth discursive analysis.

The following table and graph show the frequency distribution of anti-migration themes during the sampled time frame.

Table 1 : Distribution of the pro-migration themes in Hespress news articles

Year	2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Human Rights	238	62,47	45	22,39	95	37,55	57	25,11	99	39,29	169	53,82	703
Politics	90	23,62	120	59,70	107	42,29	73	32,16	70	27,78	94	29,94	554
Integration	53	13,91	36	17,91	51	20,16	97	42,73	83	32,94	51	16,24	371

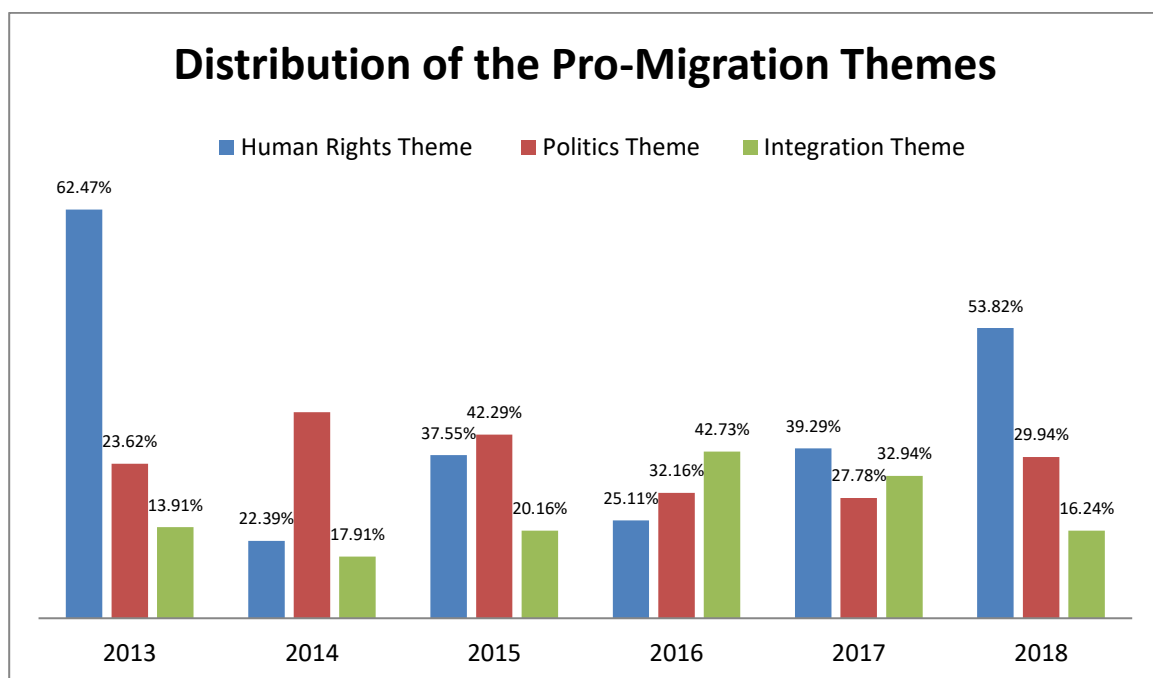


Figure 1 : Pro-migration themes in Hespress news articles

4.3. FINDINGS FROM FAIRCLOUGH'S THREE DIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS

4.3.1. The Text Level

Throughout the timeframe 2013-2018, which is the sampled period of this study, the data content of *Hespress* news articles categorized under the pro-migration themes was found to involve current issues of great interest to the representation of the phenomenon of irregular migration. The discourse of *Hespress* news articles enclosed pro-migration concerns in which Human Rights theme, Politics theme and Integration theme are very dominant. Therefore, most of the issues raised were found to relate to human rights, solidarity, integration, and victimization of the migrants.

- Human Rights Theme

The most dominant theme that has reached the highest frequency rate in *Hespress*' news articles is the Human Rights theme. This theme reached its highest frequency rate in the year 2013 with 33.83% (N=238) and the year 2018 with 24.03% (N=169). This can be explained by the issuing of the new migration law in 2013 when the King officially announced the adoption of a humanitarian approach to migration and asylum. The year 2018 also witnessed a very important international event which was hosted in Marrakesh, Morocco, and which was about the adoption of a Global Compact about the protection of the irregular migrants. During that international event, the world leaders acclaimed Morocco's significant role in managing migration. These two events can be linked to the way *Hespress* emphasises the humanitarian representation of the irregular migrants.

In their humanitarian representation to the issue of irregular migration, *Hespress* editorial team have resorted to a lexical paradigm from which they have chosen certain lexis to communicate their pro-migration attitude, such as: humanitarian (الإنساني /al-insānī/), tolerance (التسامح /ltsāmḥ/), respect the rights (احترام حقوق /aḥtrām ḥqūq/), coexistence (التعايش /al-t'āīṣ/).

In *Hespress* news articles, the Human Rights theme represents the issue of irregular migration as an important phenomenon that should be dealt with in a humanitarian. There is high reference to Morocco as a country of tolerance, coexistence and fraternity. As such, the Moroccan people should show such humanitarian qualities and have a positive attitude and approach vis-à-vis the irregular migrants. Therefore, it is very common to find in the news articles expressions like:

- the necessity to deal in a humanitarian way (ضرورة التعاطي الإنساني /ḍrūrī al-t'āī al-insānī/).
- respect the rights of immigrants (احترام حقوق المهاجرين /aḥtrām ḥqūq al-mhāğrīn/).

Besides, within the Human Rights theme, the irregular migrants are also constructed within a narrative of victimhood and as masses of vulnerable and helpless people who are reliant on Moroccans' humanitarian help to save them. They are represented as desperate and victims of circumstances as in the example:

- They live in a tragic situation and in a state of homelessness (يعيشون وضعا مأساويا وفي وضعية تشرد /ī'īṣūn ūḍ'ā m'asāwā ūfī ūḍ'ī'ī tšrd/).

- Politics Theme

The political discourse which reports on irregular migration is highly prevailing in *Hespress* news articles during the six years period under study. With regard to the historical context in which the highest frequencies of the Politics theme is situated, its highest frequencies took place in 2014 with 21.66% (N=120) and in 2015 with 19.31% (N=107). In 2014, there was the adoption of the National Strategy on Immigration and Asylum which was described. In 2015, the Moroccan government launched the National Strategy on Immigration and Asylum and guaranteed migrants access to basic services such as education, health care, and labour-market integration.

Hespress editorial team has resorted to a lexical paradigm that stresses politics lexis such as: policy (سياسة /sīāsī/), ministry (الوزارة /sīāsī/), the government (الحكومة /al-ḥkūmī/), migration pact (ميثاق الهجرة /mīṭāq al-ḥğrī/), UN Organisations (منظمات أممية /mnzmāt ammī/), international (الدولية /al-dūlī/).

Throughout the time frame under study, the data content categorized under the Politics theme is found to involve frequent political terminology which emphasises that the Moroccan government has a political obligation towards helping the irregular migrants, like:

- The working session chaired by the King was devoted to examining the problem of migration in Morocco. (جلسة العمل التي ترأسها الملك وخصصت لتدارس إشكالية الهجرة في المغرب) /ğlsī al-'ml al-tī tr' ashā al-mlk ūḥṣṣt ltdārs īškālī al-ḥğrī fī al-mğrb/).
- The Ministry in charge of the Migration Affairs (الوزارة المكلفة بشؤون الهجرة) /al-ūzārī al-mklfī bšu'ūn al-ḥğrī/).

- Integration Theme

The integration of irregular migrants into the Moroccan society is an evident discourse in *Hespress* news articles. The high occurrence of the Integration theme was mainly in the year 2016 with 26.14% (N=97) and the year 2017 with 22.37% (N=83) frequency rates. The year 2016 witnessed the King's visits to Africa in order to secure Morocco rejoin the African Union. The year 2017 saw the second regularisation process which granted residency permits to 28,400 migrants. Therefore, it is clear from the data texts that *Hespress* editorial team has resorted to a lexical paradigm that focuses on integration lexis, like: Development (تنمية /tnmī/), contribute (تساهم /tsāḥm/), integration (إدماج /idmāğ/), employment (تشغيل /tšğīl/), benefit (يستفيدون /īstfīdūn/), granted rights

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(الحقوق الممنوحة /al-ḥqūq al-mmnūḥī/), job market (بسوق الشغل /bsūq al-šǧl/), residency cards (بطاقات الإقامة /bṭāqāt al-iqāmī/), regularisation (تسوية /tswyī/), housing (السكن /al-skn/).

At the textual level, *Hespress* news producers construct a positive image about the integration of the irregular migrants into the Moroccan society. They stress the advantages of the new migration policy and consider their integration as a positive option from which the Moroccan society can benefit, as in the example:

- The African community contributes to the development of Morocco.

(الجمالية الإفريقية تساهم في تنمية المغرب) /al-ǧālī al-ifrīqī tsāhm fī tnmī al-mǧrb/).

- In order to benefit from the competence of the migrants.

(من أجل الاستفادة من كفاءة المهاجرين) /mn aǧl al-āstfādī mn kfā'ī al-mhāǧrīn/).

In the examples about Integration theme, *Hespress* journalists refer to the different sectors and services which the irregular migrants have already been integrated in, like in the examples:

- The rights granted to migrants to include housing

(الحقوق الممنوحة للمهاجرين لتشمل السكن) /al-ḥqūq al-mmnūḥī llmhāǧrīn ltšml al-skn/).

- Children from sub-Saharan countries flock to Moroccan schools

(الأطفال القادمين من دول جنوب الصحراء يتدفقون على المدارس المغربية)

4.3.2. The Discursive Level

This level of analysis focuses on the second dimension of Fairclough's (1992) analytical framework which is the discursive practice. This stage of the analysis focuses on the interpretation of how the text is produced and consumed. This article, however, is limited to examining only the production process of the online newspaper. For Fairclough (1989), this level is concerned with the relationship between the text and the interaction by seeing the text as the product of a process of production, and as recourse in the process of interpretation. The discursive dimension sees the social practice as something which people actively produce (Fairclough, 1992).

As previously discussed, the analysis of the text production process involves the analysis of the specific social context it is situated within. To identify the social practice in which the text is situated, Fairclough (2003) identifies the one who performed the text and the field where the text is coming from. In this case, the performers are *Hespress'* editorial team and journalists. The news texts function within the social practice of news reporting which works within a larger social structure which is privately owned media companies.

The discursive analysis of *Hespress* demonstrates that the news texts typically work within a social structure of the news media as a genre. Despite being privately owned media companies, they generally feature reports that present the government as the initiator of social reforms. This assertion is highlighted in Hartley's (1982) declaration that press freedom has always yielded to higher considerations such as the security of the state and the right and duty of the state to provide for the well-being of its citizens; among others and that the government is the most important agency in news production. In this case, it is clear that when the news articles present the government's positive attitude toward the issue of irregular migration, the news articles are indirectly representing the government and the security of Morocco as having primacy.

4.3.3. The Social Level

The third level of analysis in Fairclough's three dimensional framework is the social practice. The final part of the analysis focuses on the third dimension of Fairclough's model, social practice. Social practice refers to the wider economic, political, and cultural context in which the communicative event is happening (Fairclough, 1995). This is an explanation phase which is concerned with the relationship between the interaction and its social context. At this level, Fairclough discusses discourse within a view of ideology and hegemony. He stresses that ideology contributes to the construction of reality including social relations, social identities, and the physical world through discursive practices, which play a significant role in producing, reproducing, or transforming relations of domination (Fairclough, 1992). This level of analysis has explained why *Hespress* communicates the way it is. It has been found that *Hespress* makes use of the humanitarian discourse to legitimate and justify the integration of irregular migrants into the Moroccan society.

5. IMPLICATIONS

This study has mainly pedagogical implications, this paper informs that there should be media literacy classes to equip students their critical thinking skills to be able to cope with the digital age. Teachers should open up space for students to critically examine how news media texts are driven by dominant elite discourses. That is to say, news consumers must become web literate and use critical thinking tools to evaluate the credibility of news as it has become possible for anyone to write articles and post them on the Internet. As it has become increasingly simple for anyone to have an impact in the news world through tools like comments on news stories on news websites, it has become increasingly difficult to sift through the massive amount of information coming in from the digital area of journalism., which makes the need for media literacy more important.

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6. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study has been to understand how the words chosen by the news producers of Hespress as an online newspaper contribute to creating particular meanings, or representations, of the events reported, and if through these representations any hidden ideologies are put forward. The choice of studying the issue of irregular migration representation stemmed from the increasing public attention this phenomenon has gained in the past few years, and from my personal experience and interest in the subject. The framework used to carry out the research integrated thematic analysis, quantitative content analysis and Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, resulting in the study of three different but interrelated elements of discourse: 1) linguistic analysis of the text through lexis analysis; 2) discourse practice, hence the processes behind the production of the online news articles; 3. sociocultural practice, or the social and cultural context of the issue of irregular migration integration in the Moroccan society.

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