Construcción del discurso bélico desde las agencias internacionales de noticias: Estudio de Caso Atentados del 13 de noviembre de 2015.

Ángel Torres-Toukoumidis, Luis-M. Romero-Rodríguez, Patricia De-Casas-Moreno y Ignacio Aguaded.

Cita:

PhD. Ángel TORRES-TOUKOUMIDIS
Universidad de Huelva. España. gustorran@student.gu.se

PhD. Luís-M. ROMERO-RODRÍGUEZ
Universidad Santiago de Cali. Colombia. luis.romero03@usc.edu.co

PhD. Patricia DE CASAS-MORENO
Universidad de Huelva. España. patricia.decasas@alu.uhu.es

PhD. Ignacio AGUADED
Universidad de Huelva. España. ignacio@aguaded.es

Construction of War Discourse on International News Agencies: Case Study Terrorist attacks November 13th 2015

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Abstract

This study analyzes warmongering rhetoric presented by international agencies Reuters, Al Arabiya, Al Jazeera and Associated Press (AP) of the information related to the terrorist attacks in Paris on November 13th, 2015 for 15 days after the event. We have started from a quantitative and qualitative analysis of 550 information units using the software MAXQDA (v. 11.0.11). Subsequently, the semantic criteria of media discourse: functionality, significance and direction of the goal was applied on the selected sample. The results demonstrate the prevailing demonization of Islam, the exaltation of fear and panic in the discursive construction and it highlighted the spectacle of the information as a communicative strategy on the rhetorical guidance.

Resumen

El presente estudio analiza la retórica belicista de las agencias internacionales Reuters, Al Arabiya, Al Jazeera y Associated Press (AP) sobre las informaciones relativas a los atentados de París del 13 de noviembre de 2015 durante 15 días posteriores al acontecimiento. Para ello, partimos de un análisis cualitativo de 550 unidades informativas mediante la utilización del software MAXQDA (v. 11.0.11). A la muestra seleccionada le fue aplicada los criterios semánticos del discurso mediático: funcionalidad, significación y direccionalidad de la meta. En los resultados prevalece la demonización del Islam, la exaltación del miedo y pánico en la construcción discursiva y la espectacularización de las informaciones, como estrategia comunicativa en el tratamiento retórico.

Keywords

News agencies; Discourse Analysis; Armed conflict; Demonization; Information; Terrorism

Palabras clave

Agencias de noticias; Análisis del discurso; Conflicto armado; Demonización; Información; Terrorismo

1. Introduction

Media coverage of the most newsworthy events of the international panorama has a predominant role within what is called "agenda setting". The information becomes a commodity, within a chain of production of multiple messages that are sometimes decontextualized, with the aim of communicating and presenting more up-to-date content on the incident. In this manner, the night of November 13th, 2015 in Paris became an incident that had a great media magnitude, where all the international communication media vied for informing in the shortest possible amount of time.

While the French and German national football teams played a friendly match at the Stade de France with the President François Hollande and the German Minister of Exteriors Frank-Walter Steinmeier in attendance, and the Californian hard rock band "Eagles of Death Metal" played a concert for more than 1500 guests in the Bataclan auditorium, the city suffered a terrorist attack between 9pm and 12:58am. Eight extremists from the jihadist group Daesh, armed with Soviet AK-47 machine guns, grenades and explosive vests with acetone peroxide and improvised shrapnel, coordinately attacked various sites of the community with six shootings and three immolations that resulted in 137 fatalities and 415 injured. These events occurred less than a year since the attack against the satirical weekly paper *Charlie Hebdo* and less than three months after the attack on the train Thalys Amsterdam-Paris.

Before midnight, President François Hollande decreed, through nation-wide channels, the state of emergency with closing of frontiers, mobilization of the Armed Forces to the areas attacked, curfew, shutdown of public transport services in the capital, closing of schools and tourist spaces such as museums and the Eiffel tower. Likewise, three official days of mourning were declared.

Faced with this scenario, communication media from all over the world, especially television, echoed the information. In the case of Spanish media, the main media conglomerates (RTVE, Atresmedia, Mediaset), connected the news programs to give direct coverage of the events. The printed media started the day with the information on the front page, while the social networks showed recordings of the attacks made with smartphones from inside the Bataclan auditorium itself.

The aim of this study is to structure, within the Spanish-speaking academic circuit, the interpretative evaluation of the reality broadcasted by the information coming from the international news agencies that have the broadest media reach, in order to contextualize the line of discourse by discerning the specific treatment granted to conflict scenarios, especially as framed towards terrorist acts. Therefore, the information on the attacks that took place on November 13th, 2015 represents a sample that is sufficiently current and important for establishing the discourse elements and the most common rhetorical devices within this spectrum.

1.1. Spectacularization of conflict

Due to the progressive increase of armed conflict, in the last few years, great changes have taken place in the information routines and coverage of communication media, journalistic practices and information technologies (Neumann, 2015). At present, it can be discerned that conflict coverage possesses new broadcasting, new journalistic genre, new narratives and new audiences (Sacco, 2016). However, this expansion has only increased the influence of traditional media on public opinion, instituting a perception of reality that has an indirect impact on the management and legislation of international relations (Evans, 2010).

Spectacularization starts to become clearly evident in 1990 with the first Gulf War (Hernández, 1992). As a result of this mode of dissemination of the conflicts, the communication media have brought the tragedy *prêt-à-porter* without leaving home: a naked little girl cries as she runs on the road, escaping the effects of napalm, in Washington, thousands of youth protest the war; these are image-symbols that remain in the collective memory, even in the generations that had not been born before that date. The "spectacle" of the confrontation has all the cinematic ingredients necessary to guarantee the entertainment of the audiences: emotions, suspense, violence, uncertainty; and is even narrated live as if dealing with a sporting event.

This change in the narrative, based on the spectacularization of war, coincides with the process of globalization, a complex phenomenon of interdependence that affects the production processes and imposes a model of trans-nationalism of communication media (Keohane and Nye, 1998; Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen, 1998; Cheney, Christensen, Zorn and Ganesh, 2010), at the same time having an impact on power relations for the resolution of potential armed conflicts. The globalization process was substantially accelerated after the September 11th, 2001, attacks through the so-called global war on terrorism led by

the U.S.A (Viviescas, 2002; Mamdani, 2002; Hoffman, 2004; Buzan, 2006; Kavoori and Fraley, 2006; Martínez-Vizcarrondo, 2006; Belasco, 2009; Freedman and Thussu, 2012), as the need to combine efforts in eliminating barriers, not only economic but political and media as well, between countries, especially in the Western hemisphere, was constructed through discourse.

At present, the media lean towards spectacularization of information. According to Cebrián (2004: 22), this type of news should be avoided, as the "price we pay for spectacularization of information is usually decontextualization and loss of depth". However, in times of war, spectacularization in the media reconstruction of armed conflict has resulted in the creation of public opinion becoming a primary objective of national security and military strategy, as "the current wars cannot be fought without the support of public opinion" (Thussu & Freeman, 2003). At the same time, spectacularization of information in times of peace equally implicates the transmission of violent acts that are far from the battlefield, but that negatively condition the dialectic meaning of War-Peace (Palacios, 2008). Among these scenarios, we undoubtedly find the cultural industry, shaper and in binder of civilization, and within it, communication media, carriers of the discourse and mass creators of communication realities.

It should be noted that armed conflicts, due to their tragic character, have become the objects of spectacularization, with which the media have created a parallel reality determined by the dominant groups in a society, in charge of manipulating, influencing and controlling the receptor's senses as a function of the media discourse. Communication media, through their information, try to connect with the people's fear, instilling in them the belief of an imminent threat through the use of a technique known as "the construction of an atrocious enemy" (Tucho, 2003).

So that this task is effective, the support of diverse propagandist stratagems is needed, such as fragmentation through demonization, conceptual simplification and reiteration. Fragmentation is necessary for constructing the image of the "cruel enemy". The search for negative daily incidents will re-enforce the collective memory of the incident, generating society's rejection and disdain against the other civilization, more easily allowing the denaturalization of the otherness through the symbolic construction of a reality that is contrary to the good (Romero-Rodríguez, 2014; Romero-Rodríguez, Aguaded and Gadea, 2015). Likewise, this perceptive devaluation damages social identity, isolating them from the society they belong to, and even from themselves (Goffman and Guinsberg, 1970). Complementarily, demonization (Del -Valle-Rojas, Nitrihual- Valdebenito and Mayorga-Rojel, 2012) is characterized by its altering of the perception on reality through the representation of arguments with emotional and harmful loads for the audience, stimulating in the general public opinion, the reactions of discredit that eliminate moral restrictions and the Ius naturalis (natural law) of their carriers, legitimizing the infringement of their political, economic and/or social faculties and even their own inalienable rights (Romero-Rodríguez, 2014).

On its part, conceptual simplification is the use of euphemisms that are used to attenuate the negative meaning of some action or act through the use of rhetoric-evasive re-formulations that construct a positive or neutral reality, at least symbolically, of events, through polysemic or ambiguous terms that do not allow for the complete understanding of its meaning (Allan y Burridge, 1991; Keith y Burridge, 1991; Chamizo, 2004). Conceptual simplification makes use of semantic procedures such as synonymy (finish-off vs killing), periphrasis (war abnormalities vs barbarism), synecdoche (mobilization of troops vs invasion), ameliorative antonomasia (area clean-up vs extermination), learned words (ablation vs genital mutilation), antiphrasis (pacification vs military trampling), litote (strong images vs torture), negation (occupation forces vs invasion) or the use of foreign words (drone drop vs unmanned bombing –bombardeo por vuelos no tripulados-) (Lechado-García, 2000).

For all of these techniques to become feasible, we add an indispensable strategy: reiteration, which consists on the repetition of the news item or ideas on the incident so that they eventually become part of our reality (Tucho, 2003), generating a feeling of cognitive depletion and defining as "normal" the issues that due to their nature, should not be.

Communication media are creators of public opinion and builders of the audience's identity (Romero-Rodríguez, De-Casas-Moreno and Torres-Toukoumidis, 2015), and in armed conflicts, public opinion is modeled by opinion leaders, who are in charge of framing the questions, manipulating its content and modifying its tone, answering to the events that have occurred (Jamieson and Waldman, 2003). This does not mean that communication media act as simple "opinion conveyor belts", but instead operate as strategic actors between the public, opinion leaders and the decision of international politics (Baum and Potter, 2008), increasingly re-taking their sense as gatekeepers when deciding, filtering and controlling the sources that support the information published.

More specifically, the public opinion created after the onslaught of terrorist attacks is rooted on extreme positions, where scenarios in which society is willing to renounce its freedom, as long as its safety is increased,

are presented (Davis and Silver, 2004). Therefore, media coverage of the attacks and their representation of nation-civilization become a unilateral and unison exercise by the media and opinion leaders, condemning the terrorist attacks and generating a collective trauma in those societies that are influenced by multiple informational messages on the war events (Carey, 2002; Cho *et al.*, 2003).

In second place we find the management of the collective identity of the audience in armed conflicts. The greatest cost for the public opinion leaders is the incompatibility against an audience that does not share their interests in the decisions taken in situations that can have an effect on their liberty. Therefore, the collective identity, far from the shared historical antecedents and the shared vision as determined by an event, becomes constrained to the message sponsored by the authorities and broadcasted by the communication agencies that perpetuate fear in the collective, extolling the dramatic component and victimization with the aim of promoting a common view of the acts of violence that have transpired (Gressang, 2000; Evan, 2000).

On his part, van Dijk (2006) indicates that, under the parameters of manipulation, there is the strategy of positive self-presentation and negative representation of the others, adopting the biased description of the facts in favor of one's own interest, while the opponents are blamed. The development of these strategies results in the polarization of the discourse groups through socio-political manipulation as a form of abuse of power due to the absence of relevant knowledge, ideological values, social status, etc. Therefore, these contextual limitations cause the discursive structures to be focused on emphasizing, due to power or authority, the targeting of beliefs, dis-accreditation of the sources and the invoking of ideologies. Ultimately, discursive strategy is focused on demonstrating those social and cognitive characteristics that are most vulnerable according to the receptor, turning them into victims and provoking inequalities in society. Also, it is responsible for extending social fear and exerting the control of society through the power of cognitive representation.

1.2. Rhetoric of armed conflict

Communication media have emerged as the creators of social realities (Jacoby, 1977; Watzlawick, 1979; Searle, 1997). From their beginnings, although more frequently starting in the 80's decade, the media have opted for the shaping of popular and spectacular discourses to inform on the most relevant events, conceived for attracting the audiences, for the creating of a dynamism in which the commercial aspect has priority over the quality of the informational content.

The spectacularization of the news has been treated in a special way by the scientific community, coinciding in that this phenomenon is linked to strategies of representation and interpretation of reality through the most susceptible aspects for human beings (Ferré-Pavia, 2013). In other words, the factors of journalistic interests are closely related to the audience's wishes, and not to the importance this information has for the shaping of the citizenry as related to its decision-making processes.

There is a clear difference between the traditional and the new media model, in their continuous mediamorphosis and struggle for capturing audiences against the emerging media (digital). While the traditional model has been characterized for addressing a more heterogeneous sector, the new model, known as popular-digital press is destined to more specific segments of society, with more delimited content. Likewise, this new model caters to the interpretation of the facts and simplification of the contents, using a colloquial and expressive style for the creation of discourse (Armentia and Caminos, 2003). In this way, the media find themselves overwhelmed with sensationalist connotations, abusing from human interest information and converting lengthy news items into immediate information (Berrocal, Redondo y Torres, 2015).

According to Berrocal *et al.* (2015), this new focus in narrative discourse is characterized by four strategies as defined by Gingrás (1974): dramatization, which is the emphasis and alarmism in the conflict; fragmentation, catering to explaining the event in isolation before its process; normalization, simplifying the solution to the problems; and personalization, where information is reduced in a specific manner. For his part, Imbert (2003) adds a fifth strategy known as actancialization, characterized by the representation of what is current through the use of the protagonists of the events, and inciting the control of feelings through the story. According to Franco and Martínez (2014), in order to achieve understanding in the communication act, the participation by subjects that possess competent linguistic characteristics is needed. In this way, based on the pragmatic component of the objective, subjective and social worlds, the journalist perceives the elements that intervene in the conflict, shaping a conceptual scheme of the event and assigning the roles of agent/aggressor and patient/victim. In order to determine the good use of discourse in this part, the influence of the journalism policy of the medium, its ideological position, the

sources of information and the criteria of the professional occupy an important place for the construction of information. Also, it is important to pay attention to the linguistic level, lexicon and the syntactic schemes selected due to their positive or negative semantic load in the message. Without a doubt, the rhetoric employed will demonstrate the strategies employed, the values selected for the construction of the social imaginary, beliefs and prejudices of a specific event. The discourse during a conflict is translated into a narrative sequence that is based on argumentation through the functions of legitimization/de-legitimization; victimization, attenuation, cover-up and negotiation, with the aim of establishing an understanding within the receptor in order to achieve a favorable process in the resolution of the conflict.

Armed conflicts have been able to become institutionalized with time, shaping regular discourses with communication media at their service, disseminating war news as part of their professional routine. The history of each country becomes a crucial element for the development of these discourses, becoming ideological weapons that legitimize the conflict. In this sense, war rhetoric is understood to be the construction of an ideological discourse whose objective is to focus in the population the feeling of rejection of the enemy. Likewise, war discourse becomes a differentiating element for the construction of the social icon of civilizations (Arellano-González, 2015).

On his part, focusing on the subject of study, van Dijk (2004) points out that terrorism is defined as a "new threat", characterized by a rhetoric that is loaded with hyperboles, negative images and a persuasive discourse that generates fear and worry. In addition, war discourse cannot be defined only in formal terms, but should take into account the contextualization of the scenarios, the protagonists of the information, the incident itself and its aim. In this sense, the circumstances of the incident should be defined through discourse, with the purpose of offering a legitimate view of the facts. The information discourse generated through conflict is based on argumentative dimensions, verbal resources and inter-subjective relations that are constructed through the broadcasting of the information (Olave, 2014).

Delving deeper into the subject matter, the understanding of war rhetoric implies knowing the objectives through the coherence of the discourse, as well as the justification of its elements (Abril, 2012). Therefore, its formal nature should be encouraged to avoid its acting as a "smoke curtain", hiding the weaknesses of the arguments and the confusion that they create. As a consequence, war rhetoric finds itself in a specific process of change by extension, becoming an ideological vehicle of power, and intensity, obliging the adoption of techniques of concealment in the social context (Bowie, 1988).

On the other hand, it should be noted that the stereotypes are gaining greater strength in the emotional plane of discourse and are making the information consumer adhere to schemes created by the media that are based on constant repetition, whose aim is to make the mirage become an undisputable reality. Therefore, terrorism has acquired its own discourse to inform on the incidents, based on multiple interests (political, economic, ideological, religious or ethical). Likewise, it has had a great effect on public opinion and the formulation of hypotheses, allowing the methods of persuasion to gain a notable role in the social context, manipulating reality (Takahashi, 2013).

1.3. International news agencies and the argumentative monopoly

It is important to highlight the real role played by the international news agencies and the transnational news channels in the information oligopoly of extraterritorial issues.

The mediamorphosis undergone by the conventional communication media (press, radio and television) is viewed within an information ecosystem where the social networks and digital media have gained strength. This new development of technology has forced the conventional communication media to reduce information production costs, for example, the elimination of permanent correspondents abroad, especially in the international news outlets –CNN, BBC, CBS, etc.– and international agencies –Reuters, AP, AFP, EFE, Al-Jazeera, etc.– (Aguaded & Romero -Rodríguez, 2015). More specifically, radio, television and digital media "seem to be ruled even more so by the limitations derived from the intense competition and the exacerbated wish for immediacy" (Gelado-Marcos, 2009: 269). Therefore, this evidence creates in some way a "ventriloquist effect", in which one or a few information perspectives are assumed to be true by every communication media, due to the domestic media system's inability to verify the facts with their own field staff (Arráez, 1998).

In other words, these agencies and transnational media are the ones who fix the information agenda, the focus and its versions, creating matrices of globalized public opinion. Although plurality appears to exist, as the product of paraphrasis from each national medium, or in the information that is shared in the social networks themselves (Romero-Rodríguez, 2014), society finds itself covered by the ideological umbrella of

media conglomerates (Galindo, 2010). This means that international news coverage is framed by a "domestication" of the information (Gurevitch *et al.*, 1991; Clausen, 2004), in the sense that the agencies and international media maintain a concrete ethnocentric view, trying to frame, construct –and judge- the events from a dominant discourse demanded by their audiences, in which political information and short-term news prevail (Fowler-Watt and Allan, 2013).

2. Methodology

The aim of the present research is to analyze the journalistic discourse from the international news agencies through a review of the arguments found in the information related to the terrorist attacks that took place on November 13th, 2015, in Paris. In order to accomplish this, specific objectives were established: to determine the re-iteration of the news associated to the incident, to decompose the war discourse from the international news agencies through the cataloguing of emergent codes, and lastly, to distinguish the discursive differences between the Western agencies (Reuters and AP) and the ones from the Arab world (al Jazeera and Al Arabiya).

This research work is therefore framed within the theoretical configuration of discourse analysis, assuming that the construction of the categories corresponds to the inductive results of the previous review of the sample, identifying the reiteration of said codes with the assistance of the MAXQDA software (v. 11.0.11), which will serve for better understanding the discursive strategies of these communication media.

This study seeks to demonstrate if the dissemination of information on the conflicts, in this case the terrorist attacks, generates clichés or ideas related to negative attributions such as fear or damaging stereotypes on a specific civilization, through disinformation. The bombardment of news about the incident, as well as the images of the event, generate a surplus of attention for the citizens, who are influenced by fear, persuasion and cognitive instruments used by communication media to explain and interpret the reality in which we live (Marco and López, 2011). Based on this circumstance, Buckingham (2005) affirms that communication media do not offer a scenario based on transparency, but shows an adaptation of it through the representation of the events.

In order to answer these questions, an interpretative-based semantic analysis of the discourse will be conducted, with the understanding that this type of method "involves the interpretation of findings across studies to generate new inductive understandings of the phenomena, events or experiences" (Saini y Shlonsky, 2012: 31), seeks the sense of the words and the analysis of the categories proposed. In agreement with the academic literature that shows the multiple methodologies used for discourse analysis in the news (Van-Valin y LaPolla, 1997; Chouliaraki y Fairclough, 1999; Titscher y Jenner, 2000; van Dijk, 2006), various criteria that governed the semantic study of media discourse were selected. Therefore, the discourse analysis of the news items in this research study was based on three basic principles abridged by van Dijk (1983): functionality, meaning and directionality of the goal. Functionality is focused on the lexical options and the style of the sentences for the possible actions that should be performed with the declaration of the discourse. Meaning refers to the establishment of structures of coherence in the sentences towards a general theme, and lastly, directionality of the goal is oriented on the potential actions infused in the discourse. Likewise, it should be noted that the principles are not exclusionary, revealing the information units that comprise the various principles of semantic analysis of the discourse.

To conduct the interpretative-based discourse analysis of the information units of the international agencies, a selection of the 4 agencies with the most web traffic in the last trimester of 2015 was performed, which coincidentally were two Western agencies (Reuters and Associated Press) and the other being from the Arabic world (Al Arabiya and Al Jazeera). In this way, with the aim of determining the type of information and the war rhetoric on the events that took place after the Paris attacks on November 13th, 2016, the selection of the agencies was conducted by proposing those that had the greatest number of links accessed per day. In this sense, according to van Dijk (2013), the greater the web traffic, the greater number of referrals conducted through domestic media (see table 1).

Table 1: International agencies with the most web traffic

International agency	Place in the ranking	Website	N. of external links/day	Percent of rebound (%)
Reuters	348	http://www.reuters.com/	121,821	63.90
Al Arabiya	1,193	http://english.alarabiya.net/	10,606	36.80
Al Jazeera	1,792	http://www.aljazeera.com/	30,567	64.30
Associated Press (AP)	2,108	http://ap.org/	32,481	75.20

Source: Author created

For the screening of information, the information of the agencies referenced that included the words "Paris", "Attack", "Terrorism", "13N", "Jihad", "Assailants", "France", "Daesh" and "ISIS" were accepted, filtering those that only had direct relation with the incident investigated.

After, an initial exploratory screening was conducted of the information from the period between November 13th, 2015 (day of the attack) and 27th of November, 2015 (two weeks after), whose function was to create a family of codes that would allow for the differentiation of the discursive sides of the information presented by these agencies. In this way, the determination of the code families was conducted following the three basic principles used for the analysis of news discourse (van Dijk, 1983): The first principle on which the hermeneutical units are extracted from is meaning, which determines the structure of agreement to the general theme. In this context, the premises presented by Said (2011) and Buzan (2006) were taken into account: ideological attribution of Islam, ideological attribution of the Arab world and the making of decisions by the political leaders with respect to the relationship West-Middle East. The second principle for the discourse analysis of the news was the directionality of the goal, which is oriented to the aspirations of the prescribed discourse. Palacios (2008) specifically states that the effect of the discourse on the emotional state of the population when facing a conflict, is the emphasis of fear of emphasis of peace. The third and last principle is functionality, represented by the rhetorical expression of the discourse. According to Allan and Burridge (1991), the most-utilized rhetorical expressions in the presenting of news are euphemisms and dysphemisms, with both selected as hermeneutical units.

The emergent families from the hermeneutical round were the following:

a. Ideological attribution of Islam

      a.1 Demonization of Islam.

      a.2. Extoling of Islam

b. Ideological attribution of the Arab world.

      b.1. Demonization of the Arab world.

      b.2. Extoling of the Arab world.

c. Foreign policy West-Middle East.

      c.1. Polarization West-Middle East.

      c.2. Coexistence West-Middle East.

d. Emotional state of the civilian population desired.

      d.1. Emphasis of fear/panic on the civilian population.

      d.2. Emphasis of tranquility/peace on the civilian population.

e. Rhetorical expression of the discourse.

      e.1. Use of dysphemisms.

   e.2. Use of euphemisms / conceptual simplification.

For conducting the interpretative-based qualitative analysis, the MAXQDA (v. 11.0.11) was used for the classification of the hermeneutical units, codes, families and semiotic relation trees in order to extract the imaginary projection of the conflict through the agencies studied.

3. Analysis of the results

In the period analyzed (from November 13th to 17th), the four agencies presented a total of 1,697 units of information, usually genres of news and reports, from which 550 information units were taken as the sample, which contained the pre-cataloguing codes related to the attacks and their effects. Reuters and AP were found to be the two agencies with the most productions on the subject, with 197 and 172 related information units, respectively, while Al Arabiya and Al Jazeera reported a total of 99 and 82 units, respectively.

Figure 1: Information units according to international news agency

Source: Author created.
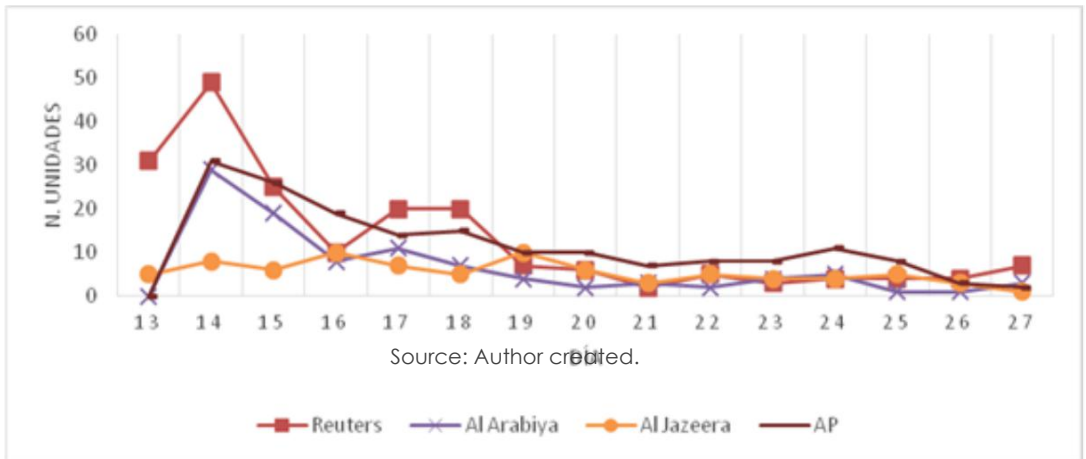
From the total sample selected (550 information units) shown in figure 1, a total of 1452 emergent codes were counted in the four agencies analyzed, from which the most reiterated were the emphasis of fear/panic of the civil population, with 331 emergent codes. It is important to highlight that in the demonization of Islam and the Arab world families (combined) and the polarization West-Middle East, each had 263 codes. Likewise, the number of codes in extoling of Islam and the Arab world (combined) and coexistence West-Middle East coincided, with 117 emergent codes each. The emphasis of peace appeared with 115 codes, while euphemisms emerged in 200 codes and dysphemisms in 46.

As for the analysis of emergent families, the following families were likewise combined: a.1+b.1 (Demonization of Islam and Arab world) and a.2+b.2 (Extoling of Islam and Arab world); with the rest remaining with independent units, conserving their pre-classification (see figure 2).

Figure 2: Emergent codes classified by code families and agencies

Source: Author created.
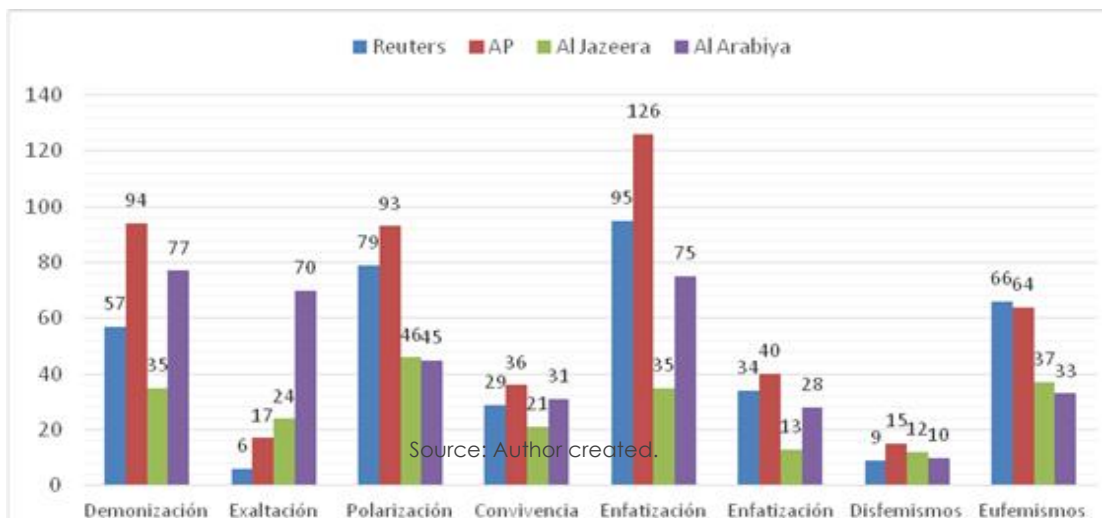
When adapting the criteria shown by the semantic study of media discourse (van Dijk, 1983) to the emergent families extracted from the hermeneutical analysis of the international news agencies, the following relationship was shown:

a. Functionality: the lexical substitution is the property defined as the main indicator in this specific context. Even if we value the existence of other components such as neologisms, archaisms and technicalities, the reiteration of euphemisms and dysphemisms beset by the sensibility of the message contrasts on the surface with the discourse emitted by all four international agencies (see table 2).

Looking at the results, 60% of the information units of Al Jazeera lean towards lexical substitution, followed by AP (45%), Al Arabiya (43%) and Reuters (38%). Among them, we can see the following:

Euphemism: *Paris and the new normal (Al Jazeera, November 14th, 2015).*

Dysphemism: *TATP - or "Mother of Satan" as it is known in security circles - can be made from basic household products and was used in the attacks on London in July 2005 (Reuters, November 20th, 2015).*

Table 2: Lexical substitution of the international agencies in the rhetorical expression of the discourse

International agency	Reuters	Al Arabiya	Al Jazeera	Associated Press (AP)	Total
N. Euphemisms	66	33	37	64	200
N. Dysphemisms	9	10	12	15	46
Rhetorical expression of the discourse	75	43	49	79	246

Source: Author created.

b. Meaning: The finding of the unit of discourse on the November 13th, 2015 attacks is represented by the local and global coherence manifested in the information endorsed by the four international agencies. In first place, the local coherence is symbolized by the ideological attribution of Islam and the Arab world, regarding the semantic implication of the text that is derived from the facts. While the global coherence is no more than the general theme of the information presented in the local coherence, in this case, the global coherence is shaped by the foreign policy of the West with the Middle East.

In other words, the ideological attributions of the international agencies towards Islam, just as what occurs with the Arab world, construct a reality through the demonization or extoling of their social and cultural values, which, as they are immersed in this specific context, tend to be oriented to propositions that encompass and summarize the semantic macrostructure (subject matter), which in this case is determined by the foreign policy between the West-Middle East (see table 3):

Table 3: Semantic meaning of the codes extracted from international agencies

Semantic meaning	N. of codes
Ideological attribution of Islam (local coherence)	203
Ideological attribution of the Arab world (local coherence)	177
West-Middle East Foreign policy (global coherence)	380

Source: Author created.

When the international agencies and the emergent codes from the local coherence were specified, there was a synchronization of the data with the emergent subcodes of global coherence. This means that the demonization of Islam and the Arab world corresponded to the subject matter presented by the polarization West-Middle East. Meanwhile, the extoling of Islam and the Arab world corresponded to the coexistence West-Middle East (see tables 4 and 5):

Table 4: List of negative connotation codes classified by agency

Negative codes	Reuters	Al Arabiya	Al Jazeera	Associated Press (AP)
Demonization of Islam	21	59	19	42
Demonization of the Arab world	36	18	16	52
Polarization West-Middle East	57	77	35	94

Source: Author created.

Table 5: List of positive connotation codes classified by agency

Positive codes	Reuters	Al Arabiya	Al Jazeera	Associated Press (AP)
Extoling of Islam	0	37	15	10
Extoling of the Arab world	6	33	9	7
Coexistence West-Middle East	6	70	24	17

Source: Author created.

When comparing the information units, the results showed that the information from international agencies: AP (38%), Reuters (25%), Al Jazeera (13%) and Al Arabiya (13%), constructed a discourse that leaned towards polarization of West-Middle East (global coherence).

In this specific context, two patterns that were reiterated in the Middle East agencies as well as the Western ones were evidenced: the rhetoric of discredit was superimposed on the rhetoric of acknowledgement, and the demonization of Islam was the ideological attribution with the greatest amount of semantic meaning. This affirmation can be observed in the following headlines:

France to urge EU to tighten passport checks (Reuters, November 18th, 2015).

Europe beefs up security after deadly Paris attacks (Al Arabiya, November 14th, 2015). *Europe anti-refugee rethoric swells after Paris attacks* (Al Jazeera, November 16th, 2015).

After Paris, US political shift on privacy vs. Security (AP-Associated Press-, November 27th, 2015).

The discrediting of Islam was perceived as a common discourse despite the determination by the international agencies from the Middle East in counteracting it through the extoling of Islam, equilibrating polarization with the coexistence West-Middle East (global coherence). In order to confirm these evidences, the following examples are shown:

#TerrorismHasNoReligion trends worldwide to denounce ISIS (Al Arabiya, November 15th, 2015). *Islamic world body urges joint action against terrorism* (Al Arabiya. November 15th, 2015).

Pakistan school massacre survivors tell France: 'you are not alone' (Al Arabiya, November 17th, 2015). *A message from Molenbeek: "We are not terrorists"* (Al Jazeera, November 19th, 2015).

Indian Muslims protest against deadly ISIL attacks (Al Jazeera, November 19th, 2015). *Stigmatising Muslims in France can only do more harm* (Al Jazeera, November 22nd, 2015).

Ultimately, the meaning of the discourse was organized according to the ideological implication of the semantic unit. In this case, the local coherence, composed of the attributions of Islam as well as the Arab world, had a hierarchal positioning of the global coherence represented by the West-Middle East foreign policy, in which the polarization was regarded as a priority before coexistence, emphasizing a negative image of the Muslims, Arabs and refugees.

c. Directionality of the goal: the media discourse has an established purpose (van Dijk, 1983). Then, when taking into account the emergent families found in the functionality and meaning principles, the communicative aim was associated with the social situations projected in the specific context. In this case, the four international agencies reflect that the reason for the discourse subsumed after the terrorist attacks was the emphasizing of a desired emotional state onto the civilian population.

The codification extracted showed how this was presented in the results: AP 48%, Al Arabiya 47%, Reuters 30%, and Al Jazeera 27% for the accentuation of fear and panic (maximum expression of fear) over the information directed towards tranquility and peace (maximum expression of calmness) in the civilian population (term used to exclude members of the armed forces):

Table 6: Communicative aim of the international agencies on the emotional state desired from the civilian population

Communicative aim	Reuters	Al Arabiya	Al Jazeera	Associated Press (AP)	Total
Emphasizing fear/panic on the civilian population	95	75	35	126	331
Emphasizing tranquility/peace on the civilian population	34	28	13	40	115
Emotional state desired from the civilian population	129	103	48	166	446

Source: Author created.

The international agencies analyzed re-constructed social realities through the use of war rhetoric in the projection of information. The media aim was concentrated in provoking the feeling of an eventual threat that is able to extol an emotional state presided by fear and panic in the civilian population, just as shown in the following headlines:

France to decree state of emergency, shut borders: Hollande (Reuters, November 13th, 2015).

Belgium terror alert linked to risk of 'weapons and explosives' attacks (Al Arabiya, November 21st, 2015).

Muslims face "worsening environment of hate" in UK (Al Jazeera, November 18th, 2015).

*Officials: IS determined to produce chemical weapons (*AP-Associated Press-, November 19th, 2015).

4. Conclusions and discussion

The discourse-media construction of the incidents that occurred on November 13th, 2015 in Paris becomes evident in the sense that from the days analyzed, a total of 550 information units emerged that were related to the attack, in the four most-important international news agencies according to daily access numbers. This means that from the total number of information bits (1,697), 32.41% of them were directly related to the incidents. This repetition of the news results in its integration into our reality, generating a feeling of cognitive depletion that makes it part of "normality" (Tucho, 2003: 142). Through discursive reiteration, the media served as creators and shapers of public opinion and the identity of the audiences –indirect, as we are dealing with international news agencies- (Jamieson and Waldman, 2003; Baum and Potter, 2008; Romero-Rodríguez, De-Casas-Moreno y Torres-Toukoumidis, 2015), rooting public opinion to extreme positions (Davis y Silver, 2004; Carey, 2002; Cho et al., 2003).

Language, as the creator of realities Jacoby, 1997; Watzlawick, 1979; Searle, 1997), is also shown to be a means of social control, as out of the 1452 emergent codes, 445 (30.71%) had as their communicative aim (directionality), the modification of the emotional state of the civilian population, out of which 331 codes sought to emphasize fear/panic as opposed to 115 whose aim was to instill tranquility/peace. Likewise, the demonization of Islam and the Arab world families, and the polarization West-Middle East combined resulted in 526 codes (263 each), which represented 36.22% of the emergent codes. Therefore, it is clearly seen that the international agencies –and the media that replicate them- serve as the main factor of demonization and polarization, altering perceptions through the representation of arguments and stimulating the reactions of discredit against the Muslim population. This makes legitimate the infringement of their political, economic and/or social faculties and even their inalienable rights (Romero-Rodríguez, 2014). The alarmist argument advocated by the four international agencies seeks to alter the perception of public opinion through intersubjectivity of the discourse, contributing then to the increase of intolerance, prejudice and discrimination in the civilian population.

The classification of the emergent codes according to international agency also allowed to define the discourse differences between the Western (Reuters and AP) and the Arab world (Al Jazeea and Al Arabiya) agencies, with the results indicating that the Western ones had a total of 302 emergent codes belonging to the demonization of Islam, demonization of the Arab world and polarization West-Middle East families; while their Middle Eastern peers had 224 emergent codes in those same families. It is interesting to

note that in the case of Al Arabiya, 59 discourse units related to demonization of Islam were counted, making this agency the one that most reiteratively did it, even though it was an Arab agency. It is clearly evident, then, that the treatment of the information on the terrorist attacks of November 13th, 2015 in Paris and the events that occurred later on in the most important international news agencies was characterized by the use of a war-like, demonizing and polarizing discourse, which contributed to the creation of a generalized feeling of fear that sought to influence the audiences through verbal and non-verbal strategies. This news bombardment on the tragic incident, as well as the images of the incident, generate a surplus of attention by the citizens, who are influenced by fear, persuasion and the cognitive instruments used by communication media to explain and interpret the reality we live in (Marco and López, 2011), not offering a scenario of transparency, but instead offering an adaptation of the incident through representation (Buckingham, 2005).

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