Effective Stance in Conservative Newspaper Opinion Articles on Irregular Immigration and Refugee Humanitarian Crises

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This paper presents a quantitative and contrastive analysis of expressions of effective stance in conservative newspaper opinion articles related to irregular immigration and humanitarian crises involving refugees in both English and Spanish contexts. Drawing upon the seminal works of Langacker (2013) and Marín-Arrese (2021a, 2021b, 2023), the study examines six fundamental categories of effective stance expressions established according to factors such as orientation towards self or others, degree of control about the realisation of the event, and agreement with social norms. The dataset under examination comprises a 120,000-word corpus of opinion articles obtained from two conservative newspapers, *The Telegraph* from the United Kingdom and *El Mundo* from Spain. The words are evenly distributed, with each newspaper contributing 30,000 words in articles pertaining to three humanitarian crises involving refugees: Syria (2015), Afghanistan (2021), and Ukraine (2022-2023), and 30,000 words relating to articles on irregular immigration coinciding in time with each of the three refugee crises. The primary objective of the paper is to discern notable differences between the two newspapers and across the different refugee and irregular immigration crises under investigation. The analysis of the results, which uncover a larger number of effective stance expressions in the English subcorpus as well as distributional differences of subcategories across the subcorpora in both languages, provides a valuable understanding of the intricate patterns of usage and distribution of effective stance expressions within the realm of newspaper discourse, thereby enriching our comprehension of journalistic portrayals concerning the complexity of refugee crises and migratory movements.

1. Introduction

Recent scholarship has made significant strides in understanding the representation of marginalised groups such as refugees and irregular immigrants in media discourse, revealing discourse patterns, underlying ideological constructs, and framing techniques utilised by media outlets. To enhance our understanding of the socio-political influences shaping migration discourse and inform potential interventions and policy decisions, research has been approached from various angles. Corpus linguistics has been pivotal in identifying linguistic patterns and semantic preferences (Alcaraz-Mármol and Soto-Almela, 2022; Islentyeva, 2020; O'Regan and Riordan, 2018; Schröter, 2023), while critical discourse analysis has exposed power dynamics and ideological biases within media portrayals (Martínez Lirola, 2023; Terrón-Caro et al., 2022; Martínez Torvisco and Chinea, 2020). Additionally, sociocultural approaches have explored broader societal and cultural contexts, enriching our comprehension of migration discourse (de Rosa et al., 2023; Mustafa-Awad and Kirner-Ludwig, 2021; Seo and Kavakli, 2022). The present paper aims to contribute to the field of research by examining intricate patterns of usage and distribution of effective stance expressions within the realm of conservative newspaper opinion discourse. We draw from previous research (Domínguez Romero, 2023; Martín de la Rosa et al., 2020) to employ a combination of corpus studies and critical discourse analysis to deepen our understanding of journalistic representations concerning the complexity of irregular immigration and refugee humanitarian crises.

Stance is conceived by DuBois (2007: 163) as "a public act by a social actor, achieved dialogically through overt communicative means, […] with respect to any salient dimension of the sociocultural field". It thus consists in the expression of a wide range of attitudes towards the message communicated and / or the addressee of the message. This paper concerns effective stance, which pertains to the realisation of events and aims at determining or influencing the course of reality. The interest of the study of effective stance in newspaper discourse lies in the crucial role that newspapers and the print press in general play in influencing the trajectory of reality through authoritative control over the narrative of events. This paramount role is evidenced by references such as Marín-Arrese (2021a, 2021b, 2023) or Mora-López and Ferrer-Navas (2023), which have explored the intricate mechanisms through which the media carefully curate and present information, skilfully manipulate language, and strategically employ discursive tactics to shape readers' perception and comprehension of reality.

This paper presents a corpus-based quantitative contrastive analysis of expressions of effective stance in conservative newspaper opinion articles in English and Spanish on irregular immigration and humanitarian crises involving refugees, namely those originated in Syria (2015), Afghanistan (2021), and Ukraine (2022-2023). Our analysis model draws from the aforementioned works of Marín-Arrese (2021a, 2021b, 2023) and Mora-López and Ferrer-Navas (2023), and encompasses six primary categories: Directivity, Deonticity, Intentionality, Inclination, Normativity and Potentiality. By means of a mixed method combining manual reading and automatic search, a wide range of effective stance devices have been retrieved from the corpus: English modal auxiliary verbs and Spanish modal periphrases, modal adverbs and adverbials, constructions with modal adjectives and lexical verbs, and imperative clauses and expressions with adjectives and nouns.

Based on our premise that quantitative differences exist between the two newspapers and across the different refugee crises and irregular immigration scenarios under investigation, our study is built upon two fundamental hypotheses:

- First, drawing from the results of previous contrastive analyses of effective stance (Mora-López and Ferrer-Navas 2023), we assume that there will be quantitative disparities across languages, with the number of expressions of effective stance and their distribution varying between English and Spanish.
- Secondly, we posit that quantitative differences will also manifest across the various humanitarian crises and immigration scenarios under analysis.

These hypotheses will be tested by analysing the resemblances and variances in the distribution and usage of specific realisations of effective stance in a 123,952-word corpus comprising conservative newspaper opinion articles on immigration and humanitarian crises involving refugees published in *The Telegraph* (61,712 words in English) and *El Mundo* (62,240 words in Spanish). By doing so, we aim to answer the following research questions:

- RQ1: Is there a difference in the frequency of effective stance expressions between English and Spanish?
- RQ2: Is there a difference in the frequency of effective stance expressions across the humanitarian crises involving immigrants and refugees under analysis?

The subsequent sections of this paper are structured as follows: Section 2 covers the theoretical framework of effective stance including the concept and the subcategories. Section 3 describes the corpora and the annotation criteria. Section 4 presents and discusses the quantitative results of the analysis. Finally, Section 5 sums up the main conclusions.

2. Effective Stance: Concept, Types and Expressions

2.1. The Concept of Effective Stance

Effective stance concerns the linguistic expression of the speaker/writer's striving for control of relations at the level of reality (Marín-Arrese 2021a: 135). The notion of striving for control was first used in Langacker (2007, 2009, 2013): linguistic interaction serves as a mechanism through which individuals can assert control, enabling them to shape their cognitive framework and exert influence over social reality. Langacker introduces a conceptual distinction between two forms of control: epistemic control, which pertains to one's understanding of the world, and effective control, which involves endeavours to have some influence on the world. Building upon this conceptual framework, Marín-Arrese (2011: 193) establishes a categorical differentiation encompassing two overarching domains: effective stance, which involves the speaker/writer's active engagement in shaping reality through acts of stance-taking, and epistemic stance, which communicates the speaker/writer's knowledge pertaining to the realisation of a specific event.[1] This paper concerns effective stance which, according to Marín-Arrese (2011: 201), encapsulates the positioning of the speaker or writer with regard to the unfolding of an event, as conveyed through their attitudes and assessments pertaining to the said event.

Effective stance markers mostly scope over states of affairs, and occasionally over propositions. Propositions and states of affairs both invoke Langackerian processes (Boye 2023: 86); according to Langacker (2008: 112), a process is conceived as "a complex relationship that develops through conceived time and is scanned sequentially along this [the temporal]axis". Later on the same page, the author states that "[a] basic proposal of C[ognitive]G[rammar] is that **a verb profiles a process**" (original bold). That is to say, processes are conceived as states or events. Propositions and states of affairs differ in that "only propositions can be evaluated epistemically – that is, in terms of degree of certainty or information source – or in terms of truth or falsity" (Boye 2023: 87). States of affairs cannot be said to be true or false; rather, they can only be said to occur. The difference is illustrated by contrasting example (1), where the effective stance marker 'I hope' scopes over a proposition, with example (2), where the effective stance marker 'must' scopes over a state of affairs:

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1   The analysis of epistemic stance lies outside the scope of this paper. Examples of expressions realising this category are modal auxiliaries with epistemic meaning, adverbs such as *perhaps*, *maybe*, *probably* or *certainly*, adjectives such as *possible*, *likely* or *certain* or some uses of verbs such as *think*, *believe*, *seem* or *appear*, among many others.

(1) We will see what happens over the next few weeks, and **we all hope <EF, INC>**[2] <u>the war ends quickly</u>. (*The Telegraph*, Refugees Ukraine 2022)

(2) **We must <EF, DM>** <u>create incentives for employers to invest in automation</u> (*The Telegraph*, Immigration Ukraine 2022-23)

Our approach to the scope of effective stance markers will be considered in terms of meaning rather than linguistic expression. This position is adopted from Boye (2010: 292),[3] where the following examples are compared – the original numbering is 2 and 3 and the italics are ours:

(3) There were three other guys on the train – *they were thieves*, unfortunately.

(4) There were three other guys on the train – *thieves*, unfortunately.

In (3) and (4), the adverb 'unfortunately' applies to expressions ('they were thieves' / 'thieves') with different linguistic scope but the same semantic scope: in the second clause, "the meaning of *unfortunately* arguably applies to something like the meaning of the clause *they were thieves*" (Boye 2010: 292, original italics). Therefore, both 'they were thieves' in (3) and 'thieves' in (4) have propositional scope.

A necessary condition for markers of effective stance to qualify as such is that they scope over propositions or states of affairs. Following the aforementioned approach, we will consider that this condition is fulfilled not only if the linguistic scope of the effective stance marker contains a verb, as in examples (1-2), but also if this scope is paraphraseable with a clause containing a verb, as in (5), where the Noun Phrases can easily be paraphrased by clauses, or (6), where a verb may be introduced with virtually no meaning change:

(5) **We need <EF, DM>** <u>far better enforcement of the law, a better regulated labour market and the introduction of ID cards</u>. (*The Telegraph*, Refugees Ukraine 2022)
('We need the law to be far better enforced, the labour market to be better regulated and ID cards to be introduced')

(6) **I want <EF, INC>** <u>Brexit</u> because unless there are annual limits, unless there is public confidence and immigrants arrive as part of a system that is broadly viewed as legitimate, they are going to have an increasingly difficult time. (*The Telegraph*, Immigration Syria 2015)
('I want Brexit to occur…')

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2   The meanings of the labels in the annotation system are specified in Sections 2.2 and 3.2.

3   See also Boye (2012: 183-184).

2.2. Subcategories of Effective Stance

For the analysis of effective stance, we will follow Marín-Arrese (2021a, 2023)'s division according to the subcategories henceforth described in terms of the concept and the most important realisations retrieved from the corpora, accompanied by an illustrative example.

1) **Directivity <EF, DIR>** reflects the speaker/writer's decision with respect to an event and includes directive speech acts (direct and indirect). English devices used for directivity include mainly clauses with imperative mood and hortatives with *let's* or *let us*; Spanish devices include imperative mood, hortatives in the first person plural and the conjunction *que* with a verb in the subjunctive mood.

> (7) **Compare and contrast <EF, DIR>**: Ukrainian refugees are mainly women and children, sent out of the way of harm by their brave, self-sacrificing menfolk. The Channel migrants are mainly fit young men from North Africa and the Middle East who have abandoned their women and children. (*The Telegraph*, Refugees Ukraine 2022)

2) **Deonticity <EF, DM>** concerns the expression of obligation, advisability, and permission. This category aligns with the traditional concept of deontic modality. Deonticity in the English corpus is mainly expressed by modal auxiliaries with deontic meaning, mainly *must, should, ought to, cannot, have to, need/s to*. In the Spanish corpus, the most frequent Deonticity expressions are the periphrastic constructions with *deber* ('must') and *poder* ('can'), followed by *haber que* ('have to'), especially in the non-personal construction *hay que*.

> (8) But the Home Secretary **needs to <EF, DM>** be even more honest and admit that the Home Office has lost control over those coming here legally, too. (*The Telegraph*, Immigration Ukraine 2022)

3) **Intentionality <EF, INT>**. This category involves the expression of the speaker/writer's intention or commitment to realising an action or state. The main English expressions are the modal auxiliary *will* and, to a lesser extent, *willing to* and *would rather*; in Spanish, Intentionality is mainly realised by the future tense (translation equivalent of English 'will') and the periphrasis *ir a* ('be going to').

> (9) We are both clear: tackling this situation is the top priority for the UK and French governments. **We are committed and determined to <EF, INT>** solve this, and to solve it together. (*The Telegraph*, Immigration Syria 2015)

4) **Inclination <EF, INC>** indicates the speaker/writer's wish for or against the realisation of a future event or situation. Examples of English expressions are the verbs *want, hope* and *wish*, while in Spanish the verb *querer* ('want') is by far the most common marker within this effective category.

> (10) We must stop the boats – **it is the express wish <EF, INC>** of the British people. (*The Telegraph*, Immigration Ukraine 2022)

5) **Normativity <EF, NRM>** claims to social desirability or requirement regarding events or situations. Expressions of Normativity have meanings of rightness and instrumentality. Rightness, which pertains to moral desirability, is commonly realised by *it is right* in English. The markers in Spanish are varied; sample expressions include *está bien* ('it is right'), *se supone que* ('it is supposed to'), or *merece* ('it is worth'). Instrumentality, which insists on the appropriateness or importance of (not) carrying out an action because of its consequences, is frequently conveyed in English by *it is important* and *it is (high) time*, and in Spanish by *urge* (literally 'it urges', meaning 'it is urgent'), *toca* ('it is to'), *(no) cabe* ('it is (not) to'), or *hace falta* ('it is necessary').

> (11) **It's time for <EF, NRM>** creative thinking on immigration for a greater Britain. (*The Telegraph*, Immigration Syria 2015)

6) **Potentiality <EF, POT>** concerns evaluations of capability or feasibility regarding the realisation of events. Potentiality, which falls within the conventional category of dynamic modality, is frequently realised in English by the modals *can* and *could*, and the correlate verb *poder* in Spanish. Another frequent marker is English *it is (im)possible* and its Spanish equivalent *es (im)posible*.

> (12) **It is impossible <EF, POT>** to fully understand the desperation of those who are fleeing persecution and oppression in Afghanistan. (*The Telegraph*, Refugees Afghanistan 2021)

3. Corpus Description and Annotation Method

3.1. The Corpus

The self-compiled corpus used in the study, totalling 123,952 words, consists of conservative opinion articles that primarily focus on subjects related to irregular immigration and humanitarian crises faced by refugees. As stated above, these articles were selected from two prominent newspapers, namely *The Telegraph* and

El Mundo, both renowned for their wide readership and influential presence in the United Kingdom and Spain, respectively. *The Telegraph* is notably associated with a conservative stance, while *El Mundo* presents a diverse range of viewpoints, with a predominance of conservative perspectives. Recognising the evolving media landscape, both newspapers have made significant progress in embracing digital platforms, expanding their online presence to remain relevant in the digital age.

Each newspaper contributes an equal share of content in their respective languages (approximately 60,000 words), evenly distributed across six subcorpora selected from articles relating to three refugee crises: Syria (2015), Afghanistan (2021) and Ukraine (2022-23), as well as articles pertaining to irregular immigration. For the sake of comparability, the 30,000-word subcorpus on irregular immigration was also divided into three parts, occurring simultaneously to each refugee crisis (10,000 words for each refugee crisis and irregular immigration scenario). The selected articles clearly fit either irregular immigration or refugee crises: in a few cases, both issues were mentioned, but manual reading (see Section 3.2.) ensured that one of the topics was predominant in all the articles. The irregular immigration articles concern mainly the borders of the countries of the respective newspapers (UK in *The Telegraph* and Spain in *El Mundo*), but also cover general issues about irregular immigration and problems in other immigration-receiving countries such as France, Italy or the US, as well as the Belarus-European Union migrant crisis in 2021.

The composition of the corpus and the exact number of words of each part is specified in Table 1. All the subcorpora consist entirely of complete articles. For this reason, the number of words is a little higher than 10,000 words. The absolute frequencies were normalised to a common scale of frequency.

TABLE 1. Composition of the corpus

Language	Newspaper	Opinion Article Content	Syria 2015	Afghanistan 2021	Ukraine 2022-2023	Total Words
		Refugee Crises	9,870	10,285	10,423	30,578
English	*The Telegraph*	Irregular Immigration Crises	10,285	10,680	10,169	31,134
Total English						**61,712**
		Refugee Crises	10,529	10,163	10,525	31,217
Spanish	*El Mundo*	Irregular Immigration Crises	10,702	10,163	10,558	32,423
Total Spanish						**62,640**
Total English + Spanish						**123,952**

Table 2 provides additional data for each subcorpus: the number of articles and the dates of the oldest and the most recent article (month-day-year). The

articles of *El Mundo* tend to be shorter than those of *The Telegraph*, which motivates their higher number. The dates are comparable: not surprisingly, the Refugees subcorpora are more concentrated in time, since they correspond to specific spans of time while the Irregular immigration subcorpus covers the ongoing processes of immigration crises that unfold parallel to the refugee crises under study.

TABLE 2. Number of articles and timing of each subcorpora

NEWSPAPER	SUBCORPUS	No. of articles	Dates	
			First article	Last article
The Telegraph	Refugees Ukraine	14	03-04-2022	06-16-2022
	Refugees Afghanistan	14	08-17-2021	02-03-2022
	Refugees Syria	11	12-09-2014	09-20-2015
	Immigration Ukraine	11	06-17-2022	05-25-2023
	Immigration Afghanistan	13	05-20-2021	01-17-2022
	Immigration. Syria	13	08-01-2015	10-26-2016
El Mundo	Refugees Ukraine	20	03-01-2022	05-24-2022
	Refugees Afghanistan	19	08-16-2021	09-01-2021
	Refugees Syria	21	07-21-2015	11-04-2015
	Immigration Ukraine	20	03-01-2022	06-27-2022
	Immigration Afghanistan	19	08-10-2021	02-13-2022
	Immigration. Syria	19	07-23-2015	03-24-2016

3.2. The Annotation

The annotation of effective stance categories was carried out by the two authors of this paper, following three steps. For the first two, the English and the Spanish subcorpora were assigned to one author each. The first step consisted in manual reading, to retrieve and annotate other expressions with meanings of effective stance apart from those cited in 2.2, such as English *legitimate* or *our duty and responsibility*, and Spanish *estar dispuesto a* ('be disposed to') or *inaceptable* ('unacceptable'). Manual reading also enabled us to consider authorial voice, so that only expressions belonging to the columnists' authorial voice were labelled, and to exclude occurrences within the scope of direct and indirect reported speech. Expressions within non-assertive clauses such as interrogatives or *if*-clauses were also excluded unless the context made it clear that the utterances were true, as in rhetorical questions, given that

non-assertive contexts interfere with the aim of effective stance to influence the course of reality. Manual reading also facilitated the discrimination of occurrences of modal auxiliaries or Spanish periphrases that expressed deontic or dynamic modality from those expressing epistemic modality, which lies beyond the scope of this study. The second step involved the automatic search for occurrences of the most important expressions from all categories, specifically those mentioned in Section 2.2, to ensure that no instances of these expressions were overlooked. The third step involved corpus-switching: each annotator revised the other's annotation by manual reading to ensure crosslinguistic homogeneity.

During the three steps, the effective stance markers were manually labelled throughout the corpus using angle brackets < > with two indications:

- Indication for the type of positioning strategy employed: Effective (EF);
- Indications for the subcategories of Effective positioning: Directivity (DIR), Deonticity (DM), Intentionality (INT), Inclination (INC), Normativity (NRM) and Potentiality (POT).

4. Results, analysis and discussion

4.1. *English* The Telegraph *versus Spanish* El Mundo

The total number of markers of effective stance retrieved from the English and Spanish subcorpora, as specified in Table 3, uncovers quantitative differences proved to be significant by the chi-square test, carried out on the absolute numbers of each category excluding the totals. The differences are palpable among categories and between the two languages, with English being nearly twice as effective across all categories except Directivity, where virtually no differences exist. Furthermore, the analysis of the total results obtained for English and Spanish reflects a difference in favour of English of 9.05 points in the Refugees subcorpus and 5.93 points in the case of the Irregular Immigration subcorpus, further accentuating the disparities between the two languages and across their two main subcorpora, Refugees and Immigrants. These quantitative and distributional differences serve to initially prove the first working hypothesis of the study.

Contrary to what occurs in English, Spanish discourse on refugees is much less effective than that on irregular immigrants. The differences in the use of effective markers between the two subcorpora are much more significant in Spanish: Spanish Refugees 7.14 versus Irregular Immigration 9.74; English Refugees 16.19 versus Irregular Immigration 15.67. A closer look at the two Spanish subcorpora reveals that the higher ratio obtained for Effective Stance in the case of Irregular

Immigration is due to the use of Deontic and Normative markers, much more frequent in the subcorpus of Irregular Immigration than in that of Refugees: 2.31 for Refugees versus 3.95 for Irregular Immigration for Deonticity, and 0.93 for Refugees versus 2.32 for Irregular Immigration for Normativity.

TABLE **3.** Effective Stance: Total results for Refugees and Immigrants according to *The Telegraph* and *El Mundo*

EFFECTIVE STANCE	DIR		DM		INT		INC		NRM		POT		TOTAL	
ENGLISH	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰
REFUGEES	31	**1.01**	216	**7.03**	24	**0.78**	34	**1.11**	65	**2.12**	125	**4.09**	495	**16.19**
IMMIGRANTS	18	**0.58**	217	**6.97**	7	**0.22**	19	**0.61**	78	**2.50**	149	**4.78**	488	**15.67**
TOTAL *Telegraph*	49	**0.79**	433	**7.01**	31	**0.50**	53	**0.86**	143	**2.31**	274	**4.44**	983	**15.93**
SPANISH	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰
REFUGEES	28	**0.90**	72	**2.31**	12	**0.38**	19	**0.61**	29	**0.93**	62	**1.99**	223	**7.14**
IMMIGRANTS	18	**0.57**	124	**3.95**	5	**0.16**	10	**0.32**	73	**2.32**	76	**2.42**	306	**9.74**
TOTAL *El Mundo*	46	**0.74**	196	**3.15**	17	**0.27**	29	**0.47**	102	**1.64**	138	**2.22**	529	**8.50**

χ^2 with 15 degrees of freedom = 69.5483; p = 0.000000005

However, the distribution of expressions of effective stance in the two subcorpora also displays similarities: both in English and Spanish, Deonticity, Normativity and Potentiality are the most common categories, while Directivity, Intentionality and Inclination are much less frequent. Moreover, the two languages show higher usage frequencies in the categories of Directivity, Intentionality, and Inclination in the Refugees subcorpus, and higher usage frequencies in Potentiality and Normativity in the case of Irregular Immigration. Plausible reasons for this distribution for each language are suggested in Sections 4.2. for English and 4.3. for Spanish.

4.2. English. The Telegraph

In *The Telegraph*, as unveiled in Table 4, the results indicate that Deonticity is the most frequently used linguistic strategy by columnists to express effective stance (7.01), followed at a considerable distance by Potentiality (4.44) and Normativity (2.31). Conversely, Inclination (0.86), Directivity (0.79) and Intentionality (0.50) are the least frequently used categories of effective stance.

TABLE 4. Effective Stance: Total results for Refugees and Immigrants according to *The Telegraph*

EFFECTIVE STANCE	DIR		DM		INT		INC		NRM		POT		TOTAL	
The Telegraph	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰
REFUGEES	31	**1.01**	216	**7.03**	24	**0.78**	34	**1.11**	65	**2.12**	125	**4.09**	495	**16.19**
IMMIGRANTS	18	**0.58**	217	**6.97**	7	**0.22**	19	**0.61**	78	**2.50**	149	**4.78**	488	**15.67**
TOTAL	49	**0.79**	433	**7.01**	31	**0.50**	53	**0.86**	143	**2.31**	274	**4.44**	983	**15.93**

χ^2 with 5 degrees of freedom = 20.2543; p = 0.0010

It is particularly worth noting that the ratio obtained for Directives in the English Refugees subcorpus (1.01) almost doubles that obtained for the Irregular Immigration subcorpus (0.58). In *The Telegraph*, the expression of Directivity is primarily accomplished through the use of authoritative, non-intersubjective directives aimed at asserting direct commands, as exemplified in (13). Hortatives adopt a more suggestive and inclusive tone, often conveying enthusiasm and fostering a sense of collective engagement, as illustrated in example (14). The ratio stands at 31 directives versus 5 hortatives in the Refugees subcorpus compared to 18 directives and 4 hortatives in the Irregular Immigration subcorpus.

(13) **Open <EF, DIR>** your homes, **open <EF, DIR>** your hearts but **don't pretend <EF, DIR>** any of this is as easy as tidying up your spare room. (*The Telegraph*, Refugees Ukraine 2022)
(14) So **let's <EF, DIR>** apply a common-sense solution, and when those who purport to be trafficking victims come from safe countries, send them straight back home. (*The Telegraph*, Immigration Ukraine 2022)

Contrary to what occurs in Spanish *El Mundo*, where Directivity is primarily used to advocate for the protection of both refugees and immigrants as vulnerable individuals (see Section 4.3. below), readers of *The Telegraph* are instead urged through imperatives to reflect upon and raise their awareness about the necessity, as well as the difficulty, of welcoming refugees. This conflict between necessity and difficulty does not exist in the case of the Irregular Immigration subcorpus in English: instead, there is an open insistence on adopting a policy of sending back to their countries all those who seek asylum despite originating from safe countries (example 14).

The total ratios obtained for Intentionality and Inclination are also higher in the Refugees subcorpus than in the Irregular Immigration subcorpus: 0.78

versus 0.22 for Intentionality, and 1.11 versus 0.61 for Inclination. The idea of welcoming refugees with caution persists, with *The Telegraph*'s columnists paradoxically expressing hope and support for refugees' well-being while emphasising needs such as returning home as soon as possible in the case of Ukrainians and integrating in the case of Afghans, as reflected in examples (15) and (16). Meanwhile, advocacy for stricter irregular immigration controls and policies, centring on border security and addressing perceived loopholes, continues to be evident in the Irregular Immigration subcorpus (example 17).

(15) We will see what happens over the next few weeks, and **we all hope <EF, INC>** the war ends quickly, and they can <EF, POT> go home again. (*The Telegraph*, Refugees Ukraine 2022)

(16) **I can only hope <EF, INC>** that the government has smelt the coffee and understands that generous-spirited asylum policies must <EF, DM> be complemented with hard-headed thinking on matters of integration. (*The Telegraph*, Refugees Afghanistan 2021)

(17) We must <EF, DM>, and with this Bill **we will <EF, INT>**, tighten the rules on asylum to address the loopholes and delays. (*The Telegraph*, Immigration Afghanistan 2021)

In the realm of Normativity, examples extracted from *The Telegraph* corpus convey the appropriateness of the government, the nation, or British society embracing a particular stance towards the different humanitarian crises under analysis in accordance with prevailing social norms. Contrary to what occurs with the Effective Stance categories in English analysed so far, a notably higher frequency of Normative expressions is evident in the Irregular Immigration subcorpus compared to the Refugees subcorpus: 2.50 versus 2.12. While the stance of the British government and its Home Office in aiding refugees with caution is positively regarded in the Refugees subcorpus (example 18), the emphasis on restrictive policies and exhaustive border control is more fervently applauded in the Immigration subcorpus (example 19):

(18) We and other rich countries must <EF, DM> recognise **our duty and responsibility <EF, NRM>** not just with money but with expertise to come to their rescue and support in significant scale. (*The Telegraph*, Refugees Afghanistan 2021)

(19) What is surely **not legitimate <EF, NRM>** is to let mass illegal immigration happen while proclaiming that we must have tough border controls. That erodes trust in democracy. (*The Telegraph*, Immigration Afghanistan 2021)

Similarly, the frequency of usage of Potentiality is higher in the subcorpus of Irregular Immigration than in that of Refugees: 4.78 versus 4.09. In the Irregular Immigration subcorpus, Potentiality often refers to a completely broken immigration system that everybody, columnists and citizens alike, can potentially perceive as such, particularly once post-Brexit Britain can have absolute control over its borders far beyond the possibility of hosting refugees or understanding the pros and cons of doing so (example 20).

> (20) But the truth of the matter is that our immigration system is broken and **the public can <EF, POT>** see it more clearly than those politicians too busy pandering for progressive approval. (*The Telegraph*, Immigration Ukraine 2022)

As previously mentioned, Deonticity is the most frequently used linguistic category by *The Telegraph*'s columnists to express effective stance (7.01), with no global differences observed between the two main subcorpora under study: 7.03 (Refugees) versus 6.97 (Immigrants). However, a closer examination reveals significant usage differences across crises and scenarios within each main subcorpus. If we look through the six subcorpora, as specified in Table 5, Deonticity is much more frequently used in the earliest Refugee humanitarian crisis, represented by the Syria subcorpus (9.12), compared to the subcorpora of the Afghanistan (6.22) or Ukraine (5.94) refugee crises. Conversely, among the Irregular Immigration subcorpora, Deonticity is most common in the subcorpus with most recent articles – i.e. the subcorpus contemporary to the Ukrainian refugee crisis, whose ratio is 9.14 in contrast to the ratios of 5.24 and 6.61, corresponding to irregular immigration scenarios contemporaneous with Afghanistan and Syria, respectively.

The results obtained for *The Telegraph*, therefore, confirm the second hypothesis, unveiling differences not only between the two main subcorpora but also among the various refugee and immigrant crises and scenarios they encompass. Thus, results reflect a consistent decrease in the frequency of Deonticity usage in the Refugees subcorpus which parallels an increase in the frequency of Intentionality and Inclination markers in this same subcorpus. Not in vain, the most recent subcorpus of Ukrainian refugees is the least deontic (5.94 Ukraine versus 6.22 Afghanistan and 9.12 Syria), but it presents higher ratios for Intentionality (1.43 Ukraine versus 0.68 Afghanistan and 0.20 Syria) and Inclination (1.63 Ukraine versus 1.07 Afghanistan and 0.61 Syria). This translates into a gradual increase in empathy towards refugees throughout the different crises – with less Deonticity and fewer moral conflicts arising from the ethical obligation to assist Ukrainian refugees despite the difficulties involved in doing so – although Ukraine and Syria do coincide in the use of Directives compared to Afghanistan.

TABLE **5**. Effective Stance: Total results for Refugees and Immigrants subcorpora according to *The Telegraph*

EFFECTIVE STANCE	DIR		DM		INT		INC		NRM		POT		TOTAL	
The Telegraph	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰
REFUGEES														
UKRAINE	14	1.34	62	5.94	15	1.43	17	1.63	23	2.20	45	4.32	176	16.88
AFGHANISTAN	4	0.39	64	6.22	7	0.68	11	1.07	23	2.23	35	3.40	144	14.00
SYRIA	13	1.32	90	9.12	2	0.20	6	0.61	19	1.92	45	4.56	175	17.73
TOTAL REFUGEES	31	**1.01**	216	**7.03**	24	**0.78**	34	**1.11**	65	**2.12**	125	**4.09**	495	**16.19**
IMMIGRANTS														
C/UKRAINE	6	0.59	93	9.14	3	0.29	9	0.88	21	2.06	54	5.31	186	18.29
C/AFGHNISTAN	6	0.56	56	5.24	3	0.28	2	0.19	27	2.53	58	5.43	152	14.23
C/SYRIA	6	0.58	68	6.61	1	0.09	8	0.77	30	2.91	37	3.59	150	14.58
TOTAL IMMIGRANTS	18	**0.58**	217	**6.97**	7	**0.22**	19	**0.61**	78	**2.50**	149	**4.78**	488	**15.67**
TOTAL TELEGRAPH	49	**0.79**	433	**7.01**	31	**0.50**	53	**0.86**	143	**2.31**	274	**4.44**	983	**15.93**

χ^2 with 25 degrees of freedom = 70.3274; p = 0.000003

Additionally, it should be noted that, while the frequency of Deonticity usage in *The Telegraph*'s opinion discourse about irregular immigration increases over the years, Normativity decreases: Syria 2.91, Afghanistan 2.53, and Ukraine 2.06. These ratios indicate that as conservative stances become more critical, English conservative newspaper opinion discourse on irregular immigration becomes more deontic and less normative, focusing more on responsibilities and moral obligations than on appropriateness according to social rules. All indications suggest that the massive influx of irregular immigrants into Britain over the years has taken a toll on British society. And the role of conservative press as a powerful tool influencing the trajectory of reality through authoritative control over the narrative of events should not go unnoticed in this case, as it increasingly reflects the need to toughen immigration laws.

4.3. Spanish. *El Mundo*

The quantitative results corresponding to the effective stance expressions in the Spanish subcorpora of Refugees and Irregular Immigrants are stated in Table 6. A comparison of the chi-square result and p value of this table with the corresponding table for the English subcorpus (Table 4) uncovers that the differences are more significant for the Spanish subcorpus.

Table **6.** Effective Stance: Total results for Refugees and Immigrants according to *El Mundo*

EFFECTIVE STANCE	DIR		DM		INT		INC		NRM		POT		TOTAL	
El Mundo	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰
REFUGEES	28	**0.90**	72	**2.31**	12	**0.38**	19	**0.61**	29	**0.93**	62	**1.99**	223	**7.14**
IMMIGRANTS	18	**0.57**	124	**3.95**	5	**0.16**	10	**0.32**	73	**2.32**	76	**2.42**	306	**9.74**
TOTAL	46	**0.74**	196	**3.15**	17	**0.27**	29	**0.47**	102	**1.64**	138	**2.22**	529	**8.50**

χ^2 with 5 degrees of freedom = 29.4271; p = 0.0000000000

A close look at the occurrences of Directivity uncovers that, in both subcorpora, directives are mainly used to appeal to the protection of both irregular immigrants and refugees as vulnerable people. Therefore, the observed higher frequency in the Refugees subcorpus may be interpreted as a higher degree of insistence on the need to remedy their desperate situation in comparison to that of the irregular immigrants: in fact, appeal to protection is targeted not only at refugees but also at their countries of origin. Directives in the Refugees' subcorpus are commonly hortatory, especially in the Ukrainian crisis subcorpus – with 5 hortatives out of a total of 11 directives. An example is (21):

(21) Los ucranianos nos han dado una lección: que las naciones construyen su futuro cuando sus ciudadanos se unen. Eso es algo por lo que nosotros también podemos <EF, POT> luchar. **Aprendamos <EF, DIR>** de ellos. (*El Mundo*, Refugees Ukraine 2022)
('Ukrainians have taught us a lesson: that nations build their future when their citizens unite. That's something we too <EF, POT> can fight for. **Let's learn** <EF, DIR> from them.')

However, Deonticity and Normativity are more frequently represented in the Irregular Immigration subcorpus, with the ratios for these two categories totalling 6.27 for this subcorpus and 3.24 for the Refugees subcorpus. This could be due to the fact that the use of these expressions in the two subcorpora is geared to achieve different effects. In the Refugees subcorpus, the great majority of Deonticity and Normativity expressions appeal to the moral duty of aiding the refugees, thus resembling Directives. These occurrences are illustrated by example (22):

(22) Cuando se cumple el sexto día de guerra, son más de 660.000 las personas que han buscado refugio en países vecinos. Las potencias

democráticas **deben <EF, DM>** acogerlas, siendo conscientes de que Putin solo entiende el lenguaje de la fuerza. (*El Mundo*, Refugees Ukraine 2022)
('As the war marks its sixth day, the persons that have sought refuge in neighbouring countries are more than 660,000. The democratic powers **must <EF, DM>** welcome them, being aware that Putin only understands the language of force.')

By contrast, expressions of Deonticity and Normativity in the Irregular Immigration subcorpus appeal to human values much less frequently; immigrants are most often considered not as people to welcome but as a force to be controlled, as illustrated in example (23). The concern is about security and the future of Spain or Europe. This demand for control is face-threatening, since it could result in hardness on irregular immigrants. In accordance, the meaning of necessity, rightness or appropriateness conveyed by expressions of Deonticity and Normativity is used as a powerful face-saving strategy.

(23) Una UE que ignora **la necesidad de <EF, DM>** poner en marcha métodos seguros y legales de entrada llevada por el temor a partidos racistas y xenófobos o que simplemente quiere preservar su ámbito de privilegio (*El Mundo*, Immigration Syria 2015)
('An EU that ignores **the need to <EF, DM>** implement safe and legal entry methods driven by fear of racist and xenophobic parties or that simply wants to preserve its sphere of privilege')

As for Intentionality and Inclination, where the writer expresses their willingness or intention to take action, the expressions are overall not very common; however, it is worth signalling their higher frequency in the Refugees subcorpus, where the sum of the ratios is 0.99 against 0.48 for the Irregular Immigration subcorpus. In both subcorpora, Intentionality applies to related issues rather than action directly aimed at immigrants and refugees. The reason is probably the – covert – relative lack of power: writers of opinion columns do not seem to feel that their role enables them to express intention to directly embark on actions towards immigrants or refugees. An example of side issue is (24), which concerns the columnist's will to reflect on the amount of discarded food in Spain – which clashes with the poverty of Syrian refugees:

(24) España es el sexto país del mundo que más comida tira a la basura. **Vamos a <EF, INT>** echar cuentas a lo largo de estas 82 líneas. No creo que le guste verse al final de este artículo. (*El Mundo*, Refugees Syria, 2015)

('Spain is the sixth country in the world that throws the most food into the trash. **We are going to <EF, INT>** do the math along these 82 lines. I don't think you'll like seeing yourself at the end of this article.)

On the other hand, markers of Inclination convey good wishes for irregular immigrants and also for refugees and their countries: the columnists do not have control for the realisation of these wishes but, in accordance with the general aim of effective stance, try to influence on their realisation by other agents, as may be seen in example (25).

(25) Y **ojalá <EF, INC>** que España, a pesar de la reacción inicial tan desleal y cobarde del Gobierno, se convierta en el país más generoso con las víctimas de este drama. (*El Mundo*, Refugees Syria, 2015)
('And **hopefully <EF, INC>** Spain, despite the initial disloyal and cowardly reaction of the Government, will become the most generous country with the victims of this drama.')

The last category, Potentiality, is more frequent in the Immigration subcorpus than in the Refugees subcorpus, the respective ratios being 2.42 and 1.99. In both subcorpora, Potentiality often deals with the capacity or incapacity of Europe or its governments or institutions to tackle the humanitarian crises or the immigration problem. Potentiality in the Refugees subcorpus often occurs in positive statements about the capacity of people to empathize with those suffering humanitarian crises or about the ability of institutions to tackle these crises. On the other hand, Potentiality in the Irregular Immigration subcorpus concentrates more on the human limitations to deal with these crises. Representative examples of Potentiality in each subcorpus are (26) and (27), respectively:

(26) Las neuronas espejo que nos **permiten <EF, POT>** ponernos en la piel del otro están funcionando a pleno rendimiento. (*El Mundo*, Refugees Ukraine 2022)
('The mirror neurons that enable us to put ourselves in someone else's shoes are working at full capacity.')

(27) Argelia, Túnez y Libia son puertos de salida de este **imparable <EF, POT>** flujo migratorio que va del sur al norte. (*El Mundo*, Immigration Ukraine 2022)
('Algeria, Tunisia and Libya are departure ports for this **unstoppable <EF, POT>** migratory flow that moves from South to North.')

The distribution of the effective stance categories in the subcorpora corresponding to each refugee humanitarian crisis and each contemporary irregular immigration scenario is specified in Table 7.

TABLE 7. Effective Stance: Total results for Refugees and Immigrants subcorpora according to *El Mundo*

EFFECTIVE STANCE	DIR		DM		INT		INC		NRM		POT		TOTAL	
El Mundo	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰	N	R‰
REFUGEES														
UKRAINE	11	1.05	27	2.57	5	0.48	8	0.76	9	0.86	17	1.62	77	7.32
AFGHANISTAN	2	0.20	17	1.77	2	0.20	4	0.39	8	0.79	20	1.97	53	5.21
SYRIA	15	1.42	28	2.66	5	0.47	7	0.66	12	1.14	25	2.37	92	8.74
TOTAL REFUGEES	28	**0.90**	72	**2.31**	12	**0.38**	19	**0.61**	29	**0.93**	62	**1.99**	223	**7.14**
IMMIGRANTS														
C/UKRAINE	2	0.19	47	4.45	1	0.09	6	0.57	21	1.99	37	3.50	114	10.80
C/AFGHNISTAN	8	0.79	39	3.84	0	0.00	1	0.10	32	3.15	19	1.87	99	9.74
C/SYRIA	8	0.75	38	3.55	4	0.37	3	0.28	20	1.87	20	1.87	93	8.69
TOTAL IMMIGRANTS	18	**0.57**	124	**3.95**	5	**0.16**	10	**0.32**	73	**2.32**	76	**2.42**	306	**9.74**
TOTAL EL MUNDO	46	**0.74**	196	**3.15**	17	**0.27**	29	**0.47**	102	**1.64**	138	**2.22**	529	**8.50**

χ^2 with 25 degrees of freedom = 58.921; p = 0.0001

The results may be interpreted as confirming the second hypothesis, since all of the three Irregular Immigration subcorpora contain more effective expressions than the three Refugees subcorpora. The difference is smaller for Syria than for the other two crises. However, a closer look at the distribution of the effective stance categories in the Syria subcorpus and the three Immigration subcorpora uncovers differences: the Syria subcorpus contains more expressions of Directivity, Intention and Inclination and fewer expressions of Deonticity and Normativity; in fact, its distribution into categories is far closer to the Ukrainian subcorpus than to the three immigration subcorpora. In its turn, the Afghanistan subcorpus stands out from all the other subcorpora due to its lesser degree of effectivity, probably due to the relatively lesser media coverage that the Afghanistan crisis received in comparison to the Syria and Ukraine crises, which might have resulted in comparably weaker public awareness and interest. Low effectivity could also be accounted for by a feeling of pessimism and helplessness, due to the guilt prompted by the withdrawal of the Western countries from Afghanistan. There is a noticeable difference with the Ukraine refugee crisis in this respect: given the geographic proximity of Ukraine and Russia to both the European Union and each other, a more committed resolution to the conflict, with a stronger dedication to maintaining peace and respecting human rights was initially expected. The actual disappointment is often reflected through effective stance expressions, as in (28).

(28) Solamente por esta acción abyecta, que viola todas las reglas establecidas en los conflictos armados, el autócrata ruso **debería <EF, DM>** sentarse un día ante la Corte Penal Internacional por crímenes de lesa humanidad. (*El Mundo*, Refugees Ukraine 2022)

('Only for this abject action, which violates all established rules in armed conflict, the Russian autocrat **should <EF, DM>** one day sit before the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity').

5. Concluding remarks

This paper has set forth an English-Spanish quantitative analysis of the linguistic expression of effective stance in a corpus of conservative opinion articles from the newspapers *The Telegraph* and *El Mundo*. The articles were related to irregular immigration and humanitarian crises involving refugees. Following Marín-Arrese (2021a, 2021b, 2023) and Mora-López and Ferrer-Navas (2023), effective stance was divided into six categories.

The results of the analysis basically confirm the two hypotheses set as the study's point of departure. The first hypothesis predicted quantitative and distributional differences between the English and Spanish subcorpora. The quantitative difference was corroborated, since effective stance markers are remarkably more common in the English subcorpus, except for the category of Directivity, which displays no difference. In terms of distributional differences, the hypothesis was partially confirmed, since certain disparities were identified: notably, there was a greater dissimilarity observed in Spanish opinion articles discussing irregular immigration and articles concerning refugees, compared to English articles. While refugees are openly considered as vulnerable individuals in need of assistance in the Spanish subcorpus, the moral obligation to help is often presented in a more ambiguous manner in the English subcorpus. However, the results also unveiled several similarities between the English and Spanish subcorpora. Firstly, Deonticity, Normativity, and Potentiality were found to be more prevalent than Directivity, Intentionality, and Inclination in both subcorpora. Secondly, the latter three categories were more prominent in opinion articles concerning refugees compared to those discussing irregular immigration, whereas Potentiality and Normativity showed higher frequencies in articles on irregular immigration in both subcorpora.

The second hypothesis, which predicted quantitative differences across the various refugee crises and immigration scenarios under analysis, was confirmed by a number of findings:

- The consistent decrease in the frequency of Deonticity usage in the English subcorpus of Refugees, which parallels an increase in the frequency of

Intentionality and Inclination markers in this same subcorpus. These variations may be interpreted as a gradual increase in empathy towards refugees throughout the different crises.
- The increase in the frequency of Deonticity and the decrease of Normativity in the English subcorpus of Irregular Immigration over the years, which translates as a growing focus on responsibilities and moral obligations to strengthen border control rather than on appropriateness according to social rules.
- The low effectivity of the Spanish Refugee Afghanistan subcorpus, which might be due to lesser media coverage and / or to a pessimistic and helpless feeling due to guilt from Western countries' withdrawal from Afghanistan.

In conclusion, we believe that this analysis enhances understanding of the nuanced usage and distribution of effective stance markers in conservative newspaper opinion discourse in both English and Spanish. This deepens comprehension of journalistic representations concerning the intricate dynamics of refugee crises and irregular immigration movements, thereby aiding in understanding their actual impact on society. This understanding may well be further strengthened with the extension of research on effective stance to a wider range of newspaper discourse of different ideologies in English and Spanish and in other languages, considering that irregular immigration and refugee crises are currently an issue of major concern in many parts of the world.

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