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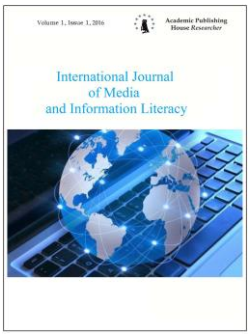

On the Balkan Route: the Image of Migrants in Bulgarian Online News

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Abstract

This study focuses on the multumodal devices in representing migrants along the Balkan route in Bulgarian online news during the "migrant crisis" of 2015/2016. It reveals a broader sense of the term 'text' in describing the migrants including both verbal text and pictorial display of their social activities. They are seen as 'social actors' with particular social relationships between them and the people in the countries they pass through. A series of conceptual mappings characterizes the excerpted material: WATER metaphor, COMPETITION metaphor, EUROPE IS A PERSON metaphor, THE CRISIS IS A PERSON metaphor, EUROPE IS A HOUSE metaphor. The visual representation corresponds to the verbal one, therefore giving the reader a sense of objectivity of the news. Mostly the image of the refugees in the news is positive. The poor conditions they live in on their way to Europe are discussed with sympathy and compassion, consistent with Bulgarian foreign politics.

Keywords: media discourse, migrants, multimodality, conceptual metaphors.

1. Introduction

The war in Syria chased thousands of people away from their homes. The ongoing violence in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the famine in Kosovo are also a driving force for asylum seeking. This caused an unprecedented rise in the number of refugees seeking asylum. In 2015 Hungary recorded 764 000 illegal crossings of the border by migrants, which is an increase of 16-times compared to 2014 (see Figure 1). The top-ranking nationality was Syrian, followed by Iraqis and Afghans. Earlier the same year, extraordinary numbers of Kosovo nationals crossed the Serbian-Hungarian border illegally (see Figure 2).

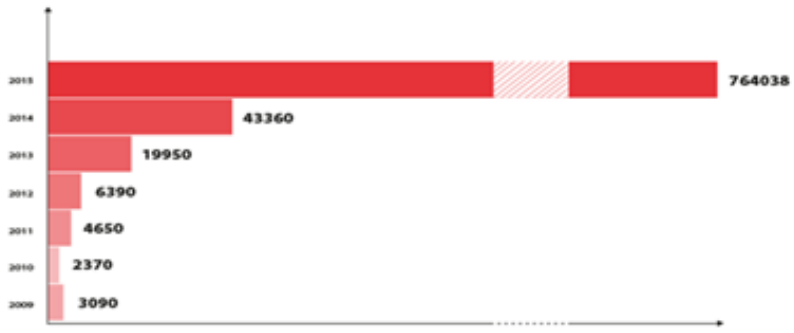

Fig. 1. Frontex. 2016. Western Balkan Route (frontex.europa.eu)

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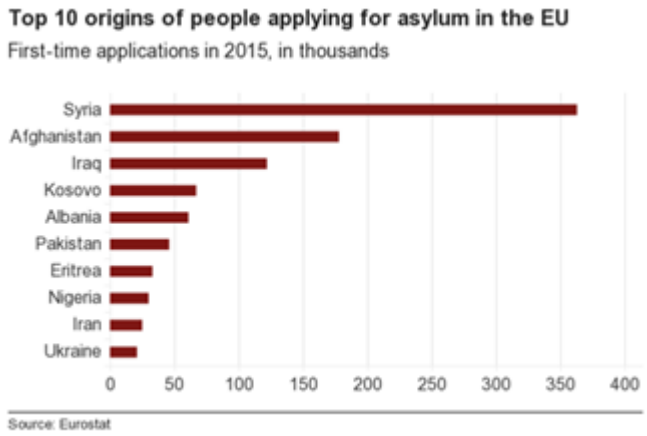

Fig. 2. Top ten nationalities applying for asylum in EU (www.bbc.com)

The Balkan route became a popular passageway into the EU in 2012 when Schengen visa restrictions were relaxed for five Balkan countries – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In 2015 more than a million immigrants and refugees headed for Europe initiating a crisis because the countries on their way had to struggle to cope with the influx. The migrants came from Turkey to Greece, passed through Macedonia and Serbia, then through Hungary or Croatia and Slovenia on their way to Germany (see Figure 3).

Fig. 3. The Balkan route of migrants to Germany (www.bbc.com)

The increased migration caused division among the EU member-states over how best to handle resettling people.Although Germany has had the most asylum applications in 2015, Hungary had the highest in proportion to its population, despite having closed its border with Croatia in an attempt to stop the flow in October 2015. The Balkan route was closed in March 2016. Broadcasters all over Europe commented on the migration and presented it in text, pictures and videos. As the Balkan route passed next to and sometimes through Bulgarian borders Bulgarian TV news discussed in detail the refugees' movement.

2. Materials and methods

This article focuses on the different devices used in the news in order to present thoroughly and vividly the "migrant crisis". We have chosen TV online news (btvnovinite.bg) as a corpus source as it presents the largest number of news pieces extracted with the key word "immigrant" when compared to other broadcasters, i.e. 24chasa.bg, Novini.bg, nova.bg. The corpus of the study comprises all 381 pieces of news discussing migrants for 7 months (from 15 August 2015 till 15 March 2016) together with the images and video clips. The verbal parts are accompanied by one

to three images and one or two video clips. We, however, do not analyze the whole videos but only the initial still image of the clip. The number of news does not correspond to the number of days because in the peak of the 'migrant crisis' there are days with up to 11 pieces of news, for instance on August 26, 2015 there are eleven, as well as on August 30, 2015, ten on August 25 and October 16, 2015, nine on September 7, 2015, etc. Some of the news contain just a headline and a picture.

The corpus was collected and prepared for analysis in three stages as it is suggested by Bateman et al. (Bateman et al, 2004) and Bateman (Bateman, 2014). First, we constructed the multimodal corpus ('data set'). Second, we annotated ('tagged') this set of 'raw' data so that it directly supported the aim of our research to reveal the multimodal devices used in the online news to represent the migrants. "Bare data are generally insufficient for effective empirical research because it is difficult, or even impossible to interact with the data in ways that are appropriate for framing and exploring research questions" (Bateman 2014: 241). The third stage involved quantitative analysis and finding patterns using the annotated corpus.

The methodology used is multimodal discourse analysis (van Leuween, 2008; Kress, van Leeuwen, 1996/2006; Jewitt, Bezemer, O'Halloran, 2016) which focuses not only on verbal texts but understands "text" in a broad sense and includes all available semiotic resources, such as graphic design and images. The term 'multimodality' refers to multiple means of meaning making. According to Jewitt et al., "different means of meaning making are not separated but almost always appear together: image with writing, speech and gesture, math symbolism with writing and so forth. It is that recognition of the need for studying how different kind of meaning making are combined into an integrated, multimodal whole that scholars attempted to highlight when they started using the term 'modality' " (Jewitt et al., 2016: 2). An additional point that is significant to recognize is "not only the need to look at the co-occurrence and interplay of different means of making meaning but also that each 'mode' offers distinct possibilities and constraints" (Jewitt et al. 2016: 3).

Following Saric, Felberg Radanovic (Saric, Felberg Radanovic, 2017) we regard the discourse participants as social actors who perform particular actions represented in the texts. Some of them are back grounded, others are fore grounded, and still others are present only implicitly in the discourse. They influence directly or indirectly the representation, thus framing the event.

The multimodal texts in our discourse samples draw on certain social practices, for instance, helping the migrants on their way with food, water, clothes, etc., and are represented by various semiotic means (metaphors, photographs of children in the foreground, etc.). However, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (Kress, van Leeuwen, 1998: 2), this does not mean that visual structures are like linguistic structures. "The relation is much more general. Visual structures realize meanings as linguistic structures do, and thereby point to different interpretations of experience and different forms of social interaction."

3. Discussion

The studies on the representation of migration in the media increased in number during 2015 as a result of the largescale European refugee crisis. O'Regan and Riordan (O'Regan, Riordan, 2018) explore the portrayal of refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants and migrants from September to November 2015, in UK and Irish newspapers. Felberg and Šarić (Felberg, Šarić, 2017) investigate the image of migration and migrants in Croatian and Serbian public broadcasters' online portals during the "migrant crisis" in 2015/2016. These studies witness the same results as two earlier studies, namely Baker et al. (Baker et al., 2008) and Khosravinik (Khosravinik, 2009), focusing on samples from the UK news corpora. They show that words like *migrant, refugee, asylum seeker, immigrant*, and even the offensive short-form *illegals*, are used fairly synonymously and sometimes increasingly negatively, to describe people who have lost their homes.

In the news pieces considered in the present research the most frequently used lexical items are *migrant*, *immigrant* and *refugee*. Similarly to the abovementioned studies they are used interchangeably in labeling groups of people in the samples. Yet, there are a couple of texts (e.g. bTV: 33) that rely on United Nations' definition to show that there are considerable differences between the terms.

A *refugee* refers to people who had escaped their countries because of persecution on racial, social or political grounds. *Migrants* and *immigrants* choose to leave their countries due to various reasons, such as studying abroad or looking for a job and better living conditions. Rarely the terms

emigrant[1] (bTV: 34), *asylum seeker*[2] and *foreigner* are used, not in their narrow meanings but rather generally. Sometimes two terms appear in the same sentence:

(1) 'More than 400 000 *migrants* have submitted *requests for asylum* in the EU'[3] (bTV: 33)

(2) 'According to Macedonian law system, each *immigrant* who has submitted a request for becoming a *refugee* has the right…' (bTV: 38)

A couple of times they are called by their nationalities, Syrians and Afghans: (3) 'The new comers are mostly *Syrians* and *Afghans*…' (bTV: 39). Twice 'hitchhikers' is used to refer to the refugees: (4) 'The Ministry of foreign affairs recommended that we shouldn't take *hitchhikers* when we are travelling in Greece' (bTV: 34).

Immigrant in most of the cases is collocated with 'illegal':

(5) '…the movement of a big number of *illegal immigrants* and refugees on the roads of the country…' (bTV: 33)

(6)'…the sentence is two years minimum for each *illegal immigrant…*' (bTV: 34).

Another modifier that appears with the noun *immigrant*is 'economic':

(7) 'Economic migrants. These are people who leave their country to improve their economic conditions' (bTV: 35).

(8) 'Bozhidar Dimitrov: the migrant influx consists of *economic immigrants'* (bTV: 21).

In this research we use *migrants* and *immigrants* as cover terms for all the groups: refugees, asylum seekers, illegal and economic migrants. The reason is that they all take part in the migration process irrespective of their personal motives.

In an interview of Kinga Gal, a Hungarian politician, the refugees were called *the needy*: (9) 'To be able to help *the needy*, we must make this distinction,' Gal insisted. The substantivized noun is attributed to those migrants who really need international protection and help and they are differentiated from the ones who want a better life and therefore come to Europe.

WATER metaphor

In his study on how the print media, in both the UK and Australia, draw on a number of interpretative repertoires when constructing accounts of refugees and asylum seekers, Parker (Parker, 2015) claims that the most common metaphor used, as a rhetorical device, is the "criminal metaphor". According to Dervinyte (Dervinyte, 2009), who investigates conceptual metaphors and their linguistic manifestations in the British and Lithuanian press articles, the most common source domains include: NATURAL FORCE relating to *FLUID* and *WAR*.

The dominating metaphor in our corpus is the *WATER* metaphor (Nedelcheva, 2017). The same tendency is observed in the comparative study of British and Romanian headlines on migration by Neagu and Colipca-Ciobanu (Musolff et al., 2014: 205), which presents *Times* and *Guardian's* attitude to Romanian immigration to the United Kingdom in 2006.

4. Results

Likewise, the movement of people in our corpus is conceptualized as

- a *wave*, e.g. (10) 'the *wave* of refugees from Syria' (bTV: 39);
- a *flow*, e.g. (11) 'the *flow* of immigrants' (bTV: 37);
- an *influx*, e.g. (12) 'the immigrant *influx*' (bTV: 34);
- and even a *tsunami*, e.g. (13) 'The immigrant wave threatened to turn into a *tsunami*' (bTV: 36).

The WATER metaphor is further developed mapping the water's typical features on the migrants.

(14) 'Unprecedented wave of refugees drowned Macedonia' (bTV: 36)

(15) 'Theimmigrant wave flooding the Balkans threatens to turn into a real tsunami. Then the wave spreads in the Schengen area.' (bTV: 36)

(16) 'The wave of immigrants floods Serbia and Hungary' (bTV: 35)

[1]'Emigrants' leave their country or region to settle in another. The focus is on the country of origin, e.g. My grandparents are emigrants from Poland.

[2]This term is further related to the official status some persons can acquire in countries in which they seek asylum.

[3]All the excerpts are translated by the author.

These pieces of news are arranged chronologically here to show how the impact of the migrants' movement is represented in the media. Macedonia is the first country on their way after Greece. The immigrants don't only go there as a powerful *wave*, because of their great number, but they are also able to crowd its villages and towns, thus making the local people invisible. The idea of migrants outnumbering the Macedonian population is expressed metaphorically as *drowning*. Comparing the immigrant wave to a *tsunami* exhibits the great force that is correlated with their movement. Another characteristic of such an enormous wave is that after hitting the shore it spreads over, submerging everything on its way. This is the impression created by the crowds of migrants moving to Central Europe in example (15). Example (16) mentions the subsequent destinations on the route, Serbia and Hungary, which are also displayed as *flooded* by the immigrants.

Not only waves are able to flood the land but also *flows*: (17) '…Washington may have a problem with its international image if they accept only a small number of refugees compared to the flow flooding the European countries.'(bTV: 25)

'Crisis' is an abstract notion and it is identified with the people who cause it, then it is also conceptualized as a wave, stream or flow which can also sweep over and flood: (18) '…Heinz-Christian Strache accused the US and NATO that they had caused the refugee crisis which swept over Europe.' (bTV: 27)

Moving water has considerable force which is used nowadays by people to create energy. However, when this force is uncontrollable it exerts pressure on everything on its way and can destroy it. A number of samples in out corpus describe the migrants as exercising pressure:

(19) 'Skopje and Athens will cooperate to reduce the refugee pressure.' (bTV: 37)

(20) 'The Minister does not expect strong pressure at the borders' (bTV: 35), etc.

On one occasion a quite morbid metaphor is used comparing the Mediterranean to a mass grave: (21) 'Schultz: The Mediterranean is turning into a mass grave' (bTV: 31). This correlation is inspired by the great number of people who lost their lives in the waters of the sea while trying to reach Europe.

According to the International Migration Organization, nearly 300,000 people crossed the Mediterranean in 2015. The Organization keeps an approximate number of the refugees who survived crossing the sea but no corresponding number is found for those who drowned. Therefore, we can find a strong conceptual relation between the Mediterranean and a mass grave.

The WATER metaphor implies a number of mappings, i.e. moving masses of people are dangerous water causing disasters, flows and influxes are not easy to stop as well as moving people, crowds of moving people are able to 'drown' the local population by outnumbering it. Some authors define such metaphorical categorization of social and political adversaries as "parasites" in communication, which determines the "uni-directionality" of metaphorization processes (Musolff, 2014). However the corpus of the present study does not include dehumanizing metaphors such as depictions of immigrants as *parasites, leeches*, or *bloodsuckers* that are found in British debates about immigration (Musolff, 2015). It should be noted that this kind of stigmatizing imagery occurs mainly in Blogs than in the Britishmainstream press. A study of media discourse on migration in Italy regards it as a means of reproducing and maintaining a racist interpretation of inter-group relations (Montali et al., 2013).

COMPETITION metaphor

Sports competitions are another source of metaphorical mapping used in one of the discourse samples:

(22) 'Ralph Jeger, the Minister of Internal Affairs of North Rhine-Westphalia, criticizes on *Handelsblatt* pages: 'In this competition the provinces, municipalities and many volunteers get sweaty and gasp for breath. The heartbeat of all them is 190 beats per minute. And the federal government has pitched in the stands for spectators observing the spectacle and cheering. This is wrong."(bTV: 39)

The author draws the picture of a sports competition in details. On the one hand, he introduces the competitors, who have already started the competition, breathing heavily and sweating. These are the people taking part in the social activities related to the coming migrants: organizing camps for temporary settlement, providing food and water, as well as medical aid. On the other hand, he depicts the audience sitting comfortably on their seats at the stand and

shouting just to make the participants in the competition exert themselves even more. This image illustrates the federal authorities who are distant observers of the whole scene.

EUROPE IS A PERSON metaphor

A series of human characteristics are mapped on the descriptions of Europe. Europe is a human being with a heart and a soul; hence, we can draw the conceptual metaphors: EUROPE IS A PERSON; *EUROPE IS A PERSON WITH A HEART*; *EUROPE IS A PERSON WITH A SOUL*, for instance:

(23) 'The immigrant wave will show how big the heart of Europe is' (bTV: 24). The big heart is a metaphor for humanity, tolerance and compassion. If Europe has a big heart it will accept the refugees with sympathy and care.

(24) "The deepening crisis of immigration threatens to wring the soul of the European Union,' said Paolo Gentiloni, the Italian Foreign Minister, expressing concern about the possibility of cancelling the Schengen agreements.' (bTV: 37)

The Schengen agreements abolished many of the EU's internal borders, giving the right of passport-free movement across the Schengen area. This is the part of Europe considered carrying the Europe's soul as it entitles every EU citizen to travel, work and live in any EU country without special formalities. However, Schengen is often criticised by nationalists and Eurosceptics who say it provides an easy access for migrants and criminals, especially after the attacks on 13 November, 2015 in Paris, which killed 130 people. With the migrant crisis, all EU states re-imposed temporary border controls. This act was regarded as a step back from the accepted common Schengen rules.

Further on in the same interview Gentiloni elaborates on his metaphor saying:

(25) 'There is a danger for Europe to show the worst of itself as immigration is concerned: selfishness, taking risky decisions and disputes among Member States… Europe will either rediscover its soul or lose it for real…' (bTV: 37)

Similarly to the metaphor of having or, on the contrary, not having a heart, losing one's soul is identified with a hateful and xenophobic attitude to the immigrants. Europe is used in this excerpt in a very abstract way to represent all the people living in the countries situated on the continent of Europe.

In some cases 'the heart of Europe' is simply a metaphor for the geographical area of Central Europe, e.g. (26) 'Thousands continue their way through Serbia to the heart of Europe.' (bTV: 36) The refugees pass in transit through Greece, Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia to reach the countries in Central Europe, mainly Germany, regarding it as the Promised Land.

The corpus contains an instance of a PART-WHOLE metonymy: (27)'We have to distribute the responsibility and put it on more shoulders in Europe.' (bTV: 39) European countries are contiguous with the people that inhabit them. Responsibility is envisaged as a burden that these people can carry on their shoulders. Another interpretation is that the European countries themselves are personified. They are people with shoulders who are able to carry heavy loads.

THE CRISIS IS A PERSON metaphor

Mapping human characteristics on abstract notions engenders a metaphor that personifies the crisis: THE CRISIS IS A PERSON because it has a face, e.g. (28) 'The world continues to comment on the shocking face of the immigrant crisis and the picture of the three-year-old Kurdish boy' (bTV: 28). The crisis has a shocking face which is the face of death. The death of the three-year-old Syrian boy of Kurdish background, Aylan Kurdi, who drowned on 2 September 2015 in the Mediterranean Sea shocked the world as the photographs of his lifeless body quickly spread globally, prompting international responses.

An expansion of the metaphor EUROPE IS A PERSON is the metaphor EUROPE IS A PERSON THAT CAN BE THREATENED, for instance:

(29) 'Europe is currently facing the biggest refugee crisis since the end of WWII' (bTV: 25)

(30) 'Andrej Babis defined the migrants as "the greatest threat to Europe" ' (bTV: 35)

In example (29) the threat is only implied. It requires reader's knowledge about the world in order to correlate the fact that if someone is facing a crisis that person's way of living is threatened. Example 30, however, explicitly defines the migrants as the greatest threat to Europe in the words of the Czech Republic's Minister of Finance, Andrej Babis.

A step further from threatening is killing, hence the metaphor EUROPE IS A PERSON THAT CAN BE MURDERED, e.g. (31) 'Vaclav Klaus, who was president of the Czech Republic from 2003 till 2013, has already said earlier this week that Europe would commit suicide, accepting the migrants' (bTV: 27). The Czech politician looks at the mass immigration as an attempt for Europe's suicide because

of its fundamental threat to the stability on the continent and the member states of the European Union. He warns of the danger and risks posed by artificial mixing of different nations, cultures and religions, which can lead to damaging the present status quo.

EUROPE IS A HOUSE metaphor

Apart from being a person *EUROPE IS A HOUSE*, e.g. (32) 'I think it's important for the French to react to what is happening at the door to Europe.' (bTV: 27) Europe is depicted as having a door and the closest association is with a house as it provides accommodation for a lot of people. If something happens at the door of a house it is in close proximity and is clearly seen and heard. If it is something dangerous then the people in the house should be on the alert.

As Europe is mapped on an object such as a house, then it is a thing that can be destroyed, e.g. (33) 'If we let all the immigrants in this will destroy Europe' (bTV: 26). It is not that Europe will be destroyed as a continent, rather the mapping is on the European way of living, culture and standards. Migrants bring their own culture, beliefs and traditions which are different from those of the people in Europe. Inevitably the different cultures will influence each other and the result will be a change in the surroundings and in the standard of living.

Visual representation

The images that accompany various news stories show migrants performing various activities (e.g., resting or being given food).The visual representation corresponds to the verbal one, therefore giving the reader a sense of objectivity of the news.

Following Saric, Felberg Radanovic (Saric, Felberg Radanovic, 2017) we have grouped the images into several types: 1) photographs of groups of migrants, 2) photographs of children (with a parent or families), 3) photographs of politicians, 4) photographs of police forces, and 5) photographs with no people. Each of the groups can be further subdivided to display different perspectives on the scene.

1) Photographs of groups of migrants

Subgroups of this category are:

- photographs of groups of men

-

Fig. 4. bTV: 33

Fig. 5. bTV: 37

In these photographs the men bear very sad, thoughtful expressions (see Fig. 4, 5). There is no eye-contact with the camera. In the first picture they are just looking down deep in their thoughts. In the second picture, however, they look in one direction, focusing on something in front of them which is invisible to the camera. Both pictures represent the psychological state of the migrants, showing how helpless they are in the present situation.

- photographs of mixed groups

Fig. 6. bTV: 33

Fig. 7. bTV: 37

Some of the photographs in this group show migrants having a rest after the long travel. They are either sitting or lying directly on the ground (see Figure 6). On one occasion they are shown lying on the railways. These representations make them look vulnerable and helpless.

Other photographs exhibit migrants while they are moving. The movement of such a great mass of people justifies their association with a wave. Moving water can bring a natural disaster, big groups of people moving can bring a social disaster to the places they pass through. An interesting detail of this particular photo (see Figure 7) is the towel on the shoulders of the man in the centre. It creates an allusion with the map of Europe and the stars on the EU flag and it says 500 euro. This message can probably be interpreted in different ways. One of them is to see the migrant as aspiring to the 500-euro banknote. In the EU currency this is the euro banknote with the highest value and among those with the highest value in the world. Such a banknote can provide for a number of people for a certain period of time. It can be regarded as a symbol of well-being in the EU, something which maintains a distinct standard. A standard the migrants aim at.

- close-ups of migrants

Fig. 8. bTV: 39

Fig. 9. bTV: 34

Close-ups present a type of personalization of the people in the picture (see Fig. 8, 9). They are shown as individuals as opposed to group photographs where faces are either not clearly seen, or the perspective taken is at the backs of the migrants. No matter whether we see their faces or just their posture or way of walking they are depicted as sad, devastated.

- photographs of migrants with no faces

Fig. 10. bTV: 39

Fig. 11. bTV: 36

A common device found in the visuals accompanying the news is taking pictures at the backs of the migrants (see Figure 10). This is a way to avoid personalization and to achieve a generalized view on the migrants' movement. According to Banks (Banks, 2012) this technique depicts asylum seekers as "faceless and deidentified". "The anomalous and ambiguous nature of such strangers makes the designation of deviance impossible, but this unknowing allows for the construction of a panoply of feared subjects" (Banks 2012: 396). Migrants are not represented as individuals but as members of a group (see Figure 11). Therefore, they are rarely referred to in the news by their names and consequently very few personal stories are told. Logically, the number of migrants appearing in the close-ups is very low.

2) photographs of children

Fig. 12. bTV: 38

Fig. 13. bTV: 37

Fig. 14. bTV: 39

Another popular device is the exploitation of the images of children to gain a particular impact. Children are very often in the focus of the camera. They are undoubtedly the most vulnerable and defenseless victims of the war and the ensuing migration. In the photographs they are usually depicted in one of their parents' arms, which can be interpreted as protection to a certain extent.

Parents try to make their children feel as comfortable as possible. A father tries to ensure a place for his daughter on the train by helping her enter through the window (see Figure 12). Another photo shows a father carrying his daughter on his shoulders (see Figure 13) and still another one represents a father with a little boy in his arms (see Figure 14). The father is with his back to the camera, while the child is facing the camera, smiling. There is an inscription on the father's T-shirt "Happy end". Probably this is the happy end of their journey and they have already arrived at their final destination.

3) photographs of politicians

Fig.15. bTV: 27

Fig.16. bTV: 25

There are a number of photographs of politicians of different European countries, especially those the migrants pass through but not only: Sigmar Gabriel, Vice Chancellor of Germany (bTV: 36); Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany (see Figure 16); Martin Schultz, chair of the European Parliament (bTV: 31); Victor Orban, Prime Minister of Hungary (see Figure 15); Vaclav Klaus, ex-President of the Czech Republic (bTV: 27); Ahmet Davutoglu, Turkish Prime Minister (bTV: 27); BeniaminNetaniahu, Prime Minister of Israel (bTV: 25); Kinga Gal, Hungarian Member of the European Parliament (bTV: 24); Manfred Weber, German Member of the European Parliament (bTV: 24), etc.

Our discourse samples contain also interviews with Bulgarian politicians accompanied by close-ups of their faces: Daniel Mitov, Bulgarian minister of foreign affairs (bTV: 35), Meglena Kuneva, Vice Prime Minister of Bulgaria (bTV: 31), Bozhidar Dimitrov, a Bulgarian historian and politician (bTV: 21). Two of them, Mitov and Dimitrov, point out that a difference should be made between refugees and economic migrants, and that Bulgarian borders are not under considerable migrant pressure. Kuneva discusses the cases of human trafficking in which Bulgarian drivers were involved. None of the politicians mentioned is depicted as visiting any of the reception centres. They all discuss migrants' issues from a distance in TV studios or at formal meetings.

4) photographs of police forces

Fig. 17. bTV: 37

Fig. 18. bTV: 36

Fig.19. bTV: 26

Banks (Banks, 2012) sees these photographs as similar to mug shots, i.e. "images of asylum seekers under apprehension for criminal offences" (Banks, 2012: 396). "The mug shot verifies our stereotypes, prejudices and anxieties, and is depicted as making visible the very essence of the individual. This photographic portraiture is synonymous with the construction of the modern criminal body, providing a mode of representation that imbues the individual with criminal propensity" (ibid.).

Police forces are depicted as antagonists of migrants. In the pictures police officers stay upright as a live barrier in the way of migrants. Sometimes they are very few compared to the number of migrants (see Figures 17, 18). In other cases, they seem extremely heavily armed standing against harmless women and children (see Figure 19). However, the discourse samples in these pieces do not criticize the armed forces in any way. On the contrary, they point out that measures should be taken to stop the immigration flow, e.g. (34) 'Most of these people come from regions that are not affected by the war. They just want to live a life like ours. I understand them, but it's impossible. If we let them all in this will destroy Europe' (bTV: 26).

Considering both the text and the photograph in this sample we can interpret the picture as an illustration of the subtitle: 'Hungary is determined to stop the flow of migrants passing through the country'. Text and photograph together create the multimodal text that influences the reader with the impression the journalist wanted to create.

5) photographs with no people

Fig. 20. bTV: 39

Fig. 21. bTV: 39

devoid of people are used as a device to draw the reader's attention to particular objects, metaphors in themselves. The fence with barbed wire (see Figure 20) represents the borders the migrants have to pass and signifies all the obstacles they have to overcome. The building of the German Parliament (see Figure 21) stands for German law system which allows the refugees to be given an asylum in the European Union.

5. Conclusions

Media have the power to influence human thinking and this influence is not negligible. Although we agree with Vicsek et al.'s (Vicsek et al., 2008) position that the interpretation of media information is an active process, in certain cases their influence can be enormous. "In the case of refugee affairs the media can be a more important source of information for many people than personal contacts, especially if there are relatively few persons involved in refugee affairs in the given country" (Vicsek et al., 2008: 105).

The analyzed material presents the migrants primarily in terms of sympathy, exhibiting them as victims of wars and terror or as people who want a better life for themselves and their families. Although the topic about the appropriate terms in referring to the people passing through (e.g., *refugees, migrants*, or *asylum seekers*) is discussed a couple of times in the discourse

samples the terms are mainly used interchangeably, the most preferred being *migrants* and *immigrants*.

The migrants are rarely given the floor to speak for themselves, however, information about their social actions and conditions is spread daily and even hourly by journalists.

The choice of particular semiotic means implies that some others are ignored for particular reasons. These devices influence the reader; for instance, the WATER metaphor creates the effect of generalization, which was additionally intensified by referring to people by using numbers. Extensive use of numbers is a distinguishing feature of our corpus. On the other hand, when the personal stories of certain migrants are told together with close-ups of their faces the effect of personalization is achieved.

The analysis shows that the photographs accompanying the news follow the verbal context and in most of the cases the migrants are presented as groups. When the photographs display individuals, they are representatives of very general categories, e.g. families with children or separate persons whose fate is viewed as common for all the people around.

We claim that the positive representations of the migrants in our corpus relates to Bulgarian official foreign politics and the positive image of Bulgarian politicians who appear as illustrative models of Bulgarian people (e.g., as humane, compassionate, responsible, willing to helpthe migrants) in contrast to the negative image and decisions of other countries (e.g., Hungary for erecting a wall, Macedonia and Serbia for not collaborating in logistics, etc.).

The news items in our corpus constantly shift the focus of attention between the migrants' movement and living conditions and the politicians discussing their fate. Although in the periphery of the Balkan route, Bulgaria was afraid of having to shelter large numbers of people. In the period of the migrant crisis, the politicians appeared more often in the media justifying the need for strengthening border controls.

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