To Brexit or not to Brexit? Media Re-contextualization of the Brexit Process in Spain. A Case Study.

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Abstract

This paper sheds light on how the Brexit process is presented in the Spanish media three years after the 2016 referendum took place. By drawing on two different types of TV information programmes and comparing the discursive features that characterise documentaries and infotainment, the analysis will identify which framing devices are used in two programmes about Brexit broadcast in Informe Semanal and in La Sexta Columna in April 2019. Framing devices are understood in this paper as mechanisms used to construct particular views of a given reality. Hence, the paper reflects on how different discursive choices may result in different construals, which eventually result in different representations of the Brexit process in Spain. Results show that these construals are not only influenced by how these programmes aim to represent Brexit, but that these are also motivated by the programmes leaning more on information or on infotainment.

Key words: *Brexit, constructivism, framing, infotainment, worldview*

1. Introduction[1]

Following previous research on the language and representation of Brexit (Bennet, 2019; Buckledee, 2018; Koller et al., 2019; Zappetini & Krzyżanowski, 2019), in this paper I focus on how Brexit is represented in the Spanish media three years after the 2016 referendum. The paper follows research started by Adler-Nissen (2016), Adler-Nissen et al. (2017), Krzyżanowski (2019) and Tincheva (2019) in their studies of how Brexit was represented outside the UK at the time of the 2016 referendum. Thus, the novelty of this paper lies not only in its post-referendum approach, but also in Spain being the geographical and political context analysed.

The importance of analysing the Spanish context arises not only from the legal consequences that the UK leaving the EU could have for its citizens, and which are arguably similar for all EU countries, but also from the notable geo-political relationship between the two countries. Since 1704, when the British occupied Gibraltar, the rocky promontory in the South of Spain, and 1713, which marked the establishment of British sovereignty over this territory with the Treaty of Utrecht, there has been an ongoing struggle with Spain aiming to regain sovereignty over this territory (Gold, 1994, Murray, 2012; see also Mármol Queraltó, this issue). The push for retaining Gibraltar's status as part of the UK is evidenced by the existence of a specific protocol on Gibraltar in

the UK/EU Withdrawal Agreement: a protocol aimed at 'facilitating close cooperation between Spain and the United Kingdom in respect of Gibraltar' (EU, 2019a). Although the legal document does establish a protocol, it remains to be seen how the negotiating partners react to this demand, and it is interesting how this is represented in the media (Adler-Nissen, 2016; Ballentine Perera, 2019). However, as we will see in the analysis, even if the UK leaving the EU may have important socio-political consequences for Spain, these are often backgrounded in the media, which tend to portray the Brexit process as an exclusively British issue without touching on the Spanish dilemma arising from it.

With this in mind, this paper seeks to shed light on how the Brexit process is presented in the Spanish media in two videos which, in principle, belong to the informative TV genre and which are aimed at people reflecting on what has happened in the UK three years after the EU referendum. They were broadcast on *Informe Semanal* (RTVE) and *La Sexta Columna* (La Sexta), two widely viewed programmes in Spain. Although both programmes presumably offer as objective a view as possible of the situation, their focus is different, with the first one focusing on the political identity of the UK after Brexit and the second one also reflecting on the social consequences of this process.

This paper addresses two research questions: i. How is Brexit represented in Spanish media and which aspects are foregrounded and backgrounded?; and ii. How is Brexit used to represent Spanish and British national identities in the media?

2. Socio-Political and Media Background

2.1 Socio-Political Context

Lack of political consensus has characterised the relationship between Europe (and its institutions) and the UK since the UK's first attempts to join the EEC. The British uncertainty about their willingness to be part of European institutions could be seen during the 1975 referendum campaign, where EEC membership was endorsed by two thirds of the population, and the 2016 Brexit referendum, where British people voted to leave the EU with a percentage of 52% to 48%. A number of factors have been provided to explain this change together with the different crises that the EU has suffered since its foundation, including the Eurozone crisis between 2008 and 2012, a migration crisis (particularly in 2015), and growing doubt regarding the legitimacy of EU institutions (Nugent, 2018).

Compared to the increasing Euroscepticism in the UK, the Spanish population is still mainly in favour of the EU (EU, 2019b). However, the result of the Brexit referendum could influence the relationship between Britain and Spain, particularly on a number of issues such as the trade relationship between the two countries, fisheries, citizens – including tourism, British citizens living in Spain and Spanish citizens living in the UK – and sovereignty over Gibraltar (Chislett, 2017; Kennedy, 2016). All these issues remain to be addressed and negotiated, although some of them underlie the legal description provided in the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement (EU, 2019a).

The three-year time span between the 2016 referendum and the signing of that agreement were characterised by internal negotiations in the UK on the terms of that agreement, and ongoing debate between the trading conditions that would characterise the relationship between the EU and the UK. On March 29, 2017, Theresa May, as the Prime Minister of the UK, sent a letter to the European Council President, triggering Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), which would let the UK leave the EU within the next two years, i.e. March 29, 2019.[2]

The two TV programmes analysed in this paper were broadcast in April 2019, just a few days after Theresa May lost a third meaningful vote in parliament about the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement and was forced to ask the EU for an extension of the so-called Brexit deal.

2.2 Media Background

Two TV information programmes are analysed in this paper: 'To Brexit or not to Brexit', an episode of the TV programme *Informe Semanal* broadcast on the Spanish national TV station RTVE; and 'Brexit. Should I Stay or Should I Go', an episode of *La Sexta Columna,* broadcast on Spanish private TV station La Sexta. A description of each programme can be seen in Table 1 below.

Episode	TV show	TV station	Broadcast date	Length	No. of viewers	Share[3]
'To Brexit or not to Brexit'	*Informe semanal*	National TV Station – RTVE	13 April, 2019	08:21 minutes	1,131,000	8.7%
'Brexit. Should I stay or should I go'	*La Sexta columna*	Private TV Station La Sexta	5 April, 2019	56:06 minutes	1,229,000	7.6%

Table 1. Data description

Informe Semanal, launched in 1973, is a 60-minute show broadcast on Saturday nights. It consists of a varying number of approximately 10-minute news stories covering a wide range of topics, including national and international politics, society, culture and entertainment from an allegedly objective stance (Menor Sendra & Pérez-Amat García, 2009, p. 55). RTVE is a public station and its regulations establish that information provided there must be 'objective, true, plural and independent of any political, economic or lobby group' (RTVE, n.d.).

La Sexta Columna is an information programme broadcast on Friday nights and provides documentary-style news stories where some aspect of the relevant socio-political situation is analysed. On its website, it is described as 'savage journalism and music' with 'its own hallmark,' and indeed, watching the programme shows that music plays a significant role in the social or historical accounts provided. La Sexta is a private TV station owned by Atresmedia Corporation, whose stance on news reporting is described as progressive (Soengas Pérez, 2015).

3. Televised Information and Infotainment

The analysis of news stories and how these may provide different constructions of society has been of wide interest in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and media studies (Couldry, 2008; Phelan, 2018; Richardson, 2007). Following Richardson (2007, p. 7), the production and consumption of news stories and information is understood here as a means of entertainment. The tendency towards entertainment has gained importance with the growing prominence of TV news (Thussu, 2007), and the tendency towards *infotainment* has been identified in previous studies on news production about political topics in Spain (Berrocal Gonzalo et al., 2014; Carrillo & Ferré-Pavia, 2013; Monclús & Vicente-Mariño, 2010). TV information pieces become hybrid products whose main aim is to make the viewer react emotionally to the news piece. The main characteristics of this type of programme are their choice of current and novel topics which are approached from a dramatic, parodic or humoristic point of view, and the reliance on de-contextualized expert voices combined with those of citizens embedded in a narrative sequence which incorporates subjective comments by the narrator (Berrocal Gonzalo et al., 2014).

The neologism *infotainment* reflects this trend in that it blends 'information' and 'entertainment'. The term emerged in the late 1980s and stresses the existence of a 'genre-mix of "information" and "entertainment" in news and current affairs programming' (Thussu, 2007, p. 7). This type of programme thrives on emotional appeal and irrational human impulses, as compared to intellectual curiosity and rational discourse (Thussu, 2007, p. 162). The effectiveness of this type of communication may be related to its use of simple and ambivalent messages which may leave room for the audiences' own interpretation (Castells, 2004, p. 372; Thussu, 2007, p. 133).

The mix between information and entertainment becomes of key significance when understanding TV as a mechanism of constructing social reality. Following the ideas of constructivist rhetoric (Pujante, 2016, 2017) and cognitive linguistic (CL) approaches to CDA (Hart, 2018), we can argue that through news stories different versions of the world can be constructed. These eventually reflect and impact our understanding of reality. As argued by Gunther (2015, pp. 16-17), televised news could potentially 'determine what people think about; shape their perceptions, beliefs and opinions about current events and issues; and impart knowledge and understanding'.

The notion of framing has proved to be of interest for media studies, especially for the analysis of TV news pieces (Gunther, 2015). News frames are specific strategies of interpretation adopted by journalists (McCombs et al., 1997), and they do not only show a particular position, but they also may rely on social, political or cultural knowledge shared by the discourse participants. When this knowledge is activated, frames may function as interdiscursive mechanisms which do not only establish connections with other, frequently previous, discourses, but which also strengthen the affective qualities of the news story (Kelsey, 2019). Affective responses are possible because of the associations and evaluations stimulated by frames, which eventually result in particular construals of reality (Langacker, 2008). That is, through the use of frames, construals are activated where some aspects of reality are foregrounded at the expense of others which are either backgrounded, or even silenced, depending on the linguistic and discursive choices made by the

journalists. These choices eventually result in a construction of the message, which expresses a particular worldview or representation of reality.

4. Method of Analysis

The two programmes selected for examination have been manually analysed following a qualitative approach, which focuses on explaining how particular framing choices result in a representation of the world, i.e. in a discourse world. For the sake of the analysis, frames are understood as being equivalent to the metaphors (Hart, 2019), cultural myths (Kelsey, 2019) or other knowledge schemata (van Dijk, 2008) which are activated in each programme. Although originally following a CL approach, media studies have also been taken into account, and frames have been classified into two groups, following de Vreese (2005): issue-specific frames, which are related to prior knowledge about the political situation described, i.e. Brexit, and generic frames, which are activated by prior social, cultural, or intertextual knowledge (Filardo-Llamas, 2019; Kelsey, 2019; van Dijk, 2008). Following multimodal approaches to CDA, frames are identified regardless of whether they are textually or visually activated.[4] Once frames are identified, the narrative – or storyline (Gunther, 2015, p. 74) – of each programme is uncovered and the relationship between the different frames is established.

Given that frames imply taking a particular perspective, the analysis also tries to establish whose point of view is presented in each information programme. Thus, besides the narrator's point of view, two other types of subjects are identified: internal participants – understood as those who are presented as the main socio-political actors in the news story –, and external participants – or those who are presented as sources for observation of 'facts' (Gunther, 2015, pp. 73-75), and who tend to be equated with witnesses, individuals with second-hand information, or official sources, including government representatives or academic experts (Gunther, 2015, p. 73; Lewis, 2015, p. 132).

As explained above, both the activation of knowledge schemata, such as metaphors or cultural myths, and their discursive realisation are frame-building elements. These do not only have an anchoring function, but at the same time help in triggering a construal whereby certain ideas are profiled. Besides, each profiled idea is also related to a type of frame (Entman, 1993) which is defined in terms of the discursive function it performs. The analysis is aimed at uncovering and contrasting the construal of Brexit that is triggered by each of the two programmes analysed, with the aim not only of identifying which arguments are foregrounded, but also whose perspective is adopted.

5. Analysis

5.1 Traditional News Structure: *Informe Semanal*

An analysis of the structure of the programme 'To Brexit or not to Brexit' shows that it is organized in a pyramidal structure in which new layers of information are added to one single issue-specific frame: the political identity of the UK after Brexit. This frame, which functions as a macro-proposition,

triggers and represents a specific worldview based on describing a main topic – the new political identity of the UK after it has left the EU – and the possible internal effects this may have. A summary of the main frame building elements together with the profiled ideas for each of them can be seen in Table 2.

Frame building elements	Profiled ideas		Type of frame
What is the political identity of the UK	Present	The UK's withdrawal is changing the EU.	Define problem
		The UK relies on Isolationism.	Make moral judgement
	Possible future	There could be a renewed importance of the Commonwealth.	Make moral judgement
		There could be a rushed treaty with Trump in the USA.	Make moral judgement
		There could be a balkanization of the UK.	Make moral judgement
Who	Role of social actors	People voted leave in the 2016 referendum.	Name cause
		Let us vote [in a 2nd referendum].	Suggest remedy
	Role of political actors	Present political leaders cannot be compared to past ones.	Make moral judgement
Where	Westminster	Westminster has a corroded structure.	Make moral judgement

Table 2. Frames in *Informe Semanal*

As we can see in the table, three main elements are foregrounded in *Informe Semanal*: what is the new political identity of the UK, who has (had) a role in this change in identity, and where it is being developed. However, the reference to location is not related specifically to the geographical description of the UK and the EU, as the areas involved in this political process, but it is rather used to trigger the conceptual metaphor GOOD GOVERNING IS CREATING at the beginning and the end of the programme. Just immediately after the title of the programme appears – 'To Brexit or not to Brexit' – we can see an image of the Houses of Parliament while the narrator explains that the 'structure' of 'Westminster' is 'corroded by asbestos'. This information is presented as part of a report that has been released at the same time as the Brexit process began, and it is described as 'potentially catastrophic'. Both references being in the same co-text recall a metonymic reference to Westminster as the place where British politics takes place and a metaphoric evaluation of British politicians and the possible outcome of their political decisions. The metaphor is triggered again in the final sentence of the programme. While we can see an

image of 10 Downing Street on screen, the narrator refers to 'Brexit and the foundation of democracies', hence evoking the initial building metaphor. An implicit negative evaluation of Brexit is triggered not only by the potential collapse of buildings mentioned at the beginning of the programme, but also by the final image of the programme: a group of people singing in a protest with EU flags. The political actor that is to blame for the potentially negative impact of Brexit is Theresa May, as we can see in the lyrics of a song played as part of the TV programme and which is based on Tom Jones' 'Delilah': 'Why, why, why Theresa.' Moral judgement is achieved in both cases by re-contextualizing generic knowledge – provided by the building metaphor and the song. This re-contextualization of the metaphor and Tom Jones' song have framing effects which eventually contribute to the negative evaluation of the whole Brexit process.

Political actors are not only explicitly mentioned at the end of the programme; they are also explicitly named at the beginning, with references to then current leaders – Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn – in opposition to past leaders – 'Churchill, Thatcher, Tony Blair' [01:05]. Voiced by an academic observer, moral judgement is triggered by negatively evaluating current political leaders as not being 'coherent in their approach' and very different from the 'strong leadership' of past Prime Ministers who had the support of parliament. Although both Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn are mentioned in the text of this extract, the visual emphasis is on Theresa May later in the programme when references to political satire are made while showing a cartoon of Theresa May with the caption 'breakfast means breakfast' [04:14], and when her name is mentioned in the final song mentioned above. Thus, by relying on two distancing devices – the voice of an academic expert as a source of epistemic knowledge and the use of 'reporting' images with horizontal angles (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006)[5] – the political actions of Theresa May and Nigel Farage are criticised, and the lack of political support for her is implicitly presented as the main cause of political uncertainty in the UK.

Social actors are discursively presented by giving voice to Britons living in the UK, who appear twice in the programme. At the beginning, a middle-aged British man talks about possible future solutions, which, in his view, would be calling for a second referendum in which, he hopes, 'we vote to remain' [00:40]. The use of the first-person plural pronoun stresses the active involvement of citizens and foregrounds a specific desired outcome. His view contrasts with that of a young British man who relies on a generalisation strategy (van Leeuwen, 2008) when stating that 'the majority has decided' and hence the result of the 2016 referendum now has to be implemented regardless of 'whether you voted for or against' [04:28]. The voice of participants is also used to delegitimize the actions of politicians, who 'are always lying' [04:38] according to a middle-aged British woman speaking in Spanish. A discursive opposition is created between 'they' – implicitly interpreted as politicians – and 'the people' who do not understand their decisions. This woman is not only a concrete social actor, but she also presents herself metonymically as part of the 'people' who are tired of listening to lies from both sides of the political spectrum. As in previous cases, a delegitimization of political actions can be observed.

The description of the reasons for and possible future of the Brexit process are mainly presented through external voices, including academics and

writers, although some implicit visual triggers can be seen in the information appearing on a computer screen [05:32], in a poster with joined elements of the UK and the EU flags appearing in the background [05:35], or an academic expert speaking in front of Winston Churchill's statue in London [00:58; 07:22]. All these elements emphasise the idea of Britishness – mostly by metonymically foregrounding British traits within a European background – and are aimed at discussing the role of the UK 'in a changing EU' [05:36].

Academic voices are used to provide an objective view of the situation, linguistically achieved through the use of distancing devices like third person pronouns or nominalizations to refer to the political consequences of Brexit, which are described as present 'isolationism' [06:30] and a possible future 'balkanization of the UK' [02:38]. The use of these nouns has a mystifying effect (Hart, 2014, p. 33). These nouns render the process of political change a 'thing' (Hart, 2014), and thus silence the role of political actors and the circumstances in which it might take place, while at the same time foregrounding the atemporal nature of the 'balkanized' or 'isolated' political identity. While used by the narrator, the meaning of those nouns is explained immediately afterwards by academic voices. Balkanization is, for example, explained by Misha Glenny, a British journalist expert on the Yugoslav wars, who establishes a parallelism between the 1990s disintegration of Yugoslavia and the possible breakup of the UK if Brexit takes place. Hence the word 'balkanization' works as a generic frame which contributes to evaluating the possible future consequences of Brexit negatively, thereby delegitimizing the whole process. This evaluative judgement is backed by other academic voices who describe Brexit as a 'challenge' to the 'UK's political system' [06:10].

5.2 Infotainment: *La Sexta Columna*

A clear difference can be seen between the organization of *Informe Semanal* and *La Sexta Columna*. While the former had a clear pyramidal organization, the latter follows a narrative that is focused on two elements: explaining the (historical) process that has led to Brexit and identifying the (economic) consequences that Brexit could have for Spain. As we can see in Table 3, different discursive strategies are used in each of the sections with a more prominent activation of generic frames through references to cultural and intertextual knowledge in those sections whose aim is to explain Brexit. There is also a wider use of issue-specific frames by giving voice to social actors when trying to explain the social and economic consequences of Brexit.

Key topic		Cultural frames[6]	Issue-specific frames	Profiled ideas	Type of frame
Topic	Sec.				
Origin of Brexit	I	Peter Pan [to describe UKIP]		Brexit is an imaginary objective.	Define problem + make moral judgement
			Brexit means taking back control	Internal arguments about immigration are inaccurate.	Name causes
		The Spice Girls [to describe the EU] *Spice Girls - 'Wannabe'*		Brexit is a disintegration of a group. The UK is indecisive.	Define problem + make moral judgement
			Problem of UK's countries after Brexit	There may be an independence referendum in Scotland. There is a problem with the border in Northern Ireland.	Name problematic consequences
History of the UK and the EU	IV	Gollum in *The Lord of the Rings* [to describe T. May]		T. May is a selfish politician.	Make moral judgement
		Cliff Richard and The Drifters – 'Schoolboy Crush'		Winston Churchill admired Europe.	Make moral judgement
		The Beatles – 'Twist and Shout'		France opposed the UK joining the EEC. The UK succeeds in joining the EEC.	Make moral judgement
		Sex Pistols – 'Anarchy in the UK'		There is a first referendum on the UK's EEC membership.	Make moral judgement
		Bonnie Tyler's – 'It's a Heartache' *George Michael – 'Careless Whisper'*		Margaret Thatcher's negotiated benefits for the UK (The British cheque).	Make moral judgement
			Past vs present British politicians	May's, Corbyn's and Cameron's political actions were not positive.	Make moral judgement
		The Titanic [to describe the UK]		May's actions may sink the UK.	Name problematic consequences + make moral judgement

(Leftmost vertical label: B R I T I S H   H I S T O R Y)

IMPACT OF BREXIT IN SPANISH AFFAIRS						
			Katrina & the Waves – 'Walking on Sunshine'		There are some stereotypes about British people in Spain.	Make moral judgement
	Consequences for British people living in Spain	II		Retired British people live in Spain	Healthcare provision may change after Brexit. British people play a role in Spanish economy.	Name problematic consequences
				Social and political status of Gibraltar	There are economic consequences if border is closed.	Name problematic consequences
	Consequences for Spanish people living in the UK	III		Reasons for moving to the UK	Spaniards moving to the UK have suffered from beliefs about immigration. Life in the UK has changed in the last few years.	Define problem + make moral judgement
	Consequences for Spanish enterprises	V	Typical food of European countries *Elton John – 'Don't Go Breaking My Heart'*	Spanish exports to the UK	Custom duties may impact the fish and wine markets.	Name problematic consequences
	Conclusion	VI	*The Clash – 'Should I Stay or Should I Go'*		The socio-political consequences of Brexit are uncertain.	Name problematic consequences

Table 3. Frames in *La Sexta Columna*

Several discursive strategies are worth mentioning in how information is discursively constructed in *La Sexta Columna* as they clearly show the hybrid nature of *infotainment* in this programme. Particularly significant is the constant activation of generic cultural frames, which is more prominent in those sections where the historical origins of Brexit are explained. Two main strategies are to be highlighted here. On the one hand, the schematic nature of words and their acquiring meaning contextually is used to activate specific intertextual knowledge which is mostly related to British cultural manifestations. As we can see in the narrative in the two examples included in Table 4, a blended discourse world (Filardo-Llamas, 2015) is constructed where British politicians are morally evaluated by relying on specific features of well-known literature, film or singers. A blended world can be defined as a construal in which elements from two different communicative situations are combined in a single mental space. This may result from the textual, visual or musical activation of metaphorical or cultural frames and tends to construct an evaluative narrative. The examples included in Table 3 constitute elaborations of a blend whereby a number of elements, which have a world-building function, are foregrounded with the aim of evaluating the political process that has resulted in Brexit. In both examples, the activation of the

blended world results from the schematic meaning of words used by the narrator and which can be used to describe the two communicative situations which are discursively presented as being equivalent.

In both cases, two world-building elements are prominent: a spatial anchorage, which is visually shared by the political actions and the cultural frame evoked; and a visual reference to political and cultural discourse participants whose distinguishing features are blended through a very quick succession of images.[7] These multiple visual activations are possible because the selected images fit within the prototypical meaning of words like 'personaje' (character; example 1) or 'grupo' (group; example 2) which are used at the introduction of each narrative sequence. The actions performed by each of the political participants is evaluated by relying on the cultural knowledge (Filardo-Llamas, 2019; Kelsey, 2019; van Dijk, 2008) that the audience is assumed to have about Peter Pan, in example 1, or the formation and break-up of the Spice Girls, in example 2. Besides, in example 1 we can also see how the blended nature of the narrative is stressed creating a dialogue between fictional characters – Wendy or Peter Pan – and politicians such as Boris Johnson. This blend foregrounds a construal of British politicians as children dreaming of Neverland, hence profiling the Brexit process as a dream of the impossible.

Example 1 [0:55 – 2:05]	Example 2 [12: 45 – 13:48]	
Textual activation: '*había una vez en una ciudad de la vieja Europa, un personaje que no quería ataduras*'	Textual activation: '*Eran el grupo de moda, se codeaban con la realeza y los jóvenes querían parecerse a ellas.*'	
[Once upon a time, in a city of old Europe, there was a character who didn't want to have any ties.]	[They were the trendy group. They rubbed shoulders with the royals and young people wanted to be like them]	
Animation: London bridge (from above)		
London bridge (from above)	Spice Girls – videoclip	
Peter Pan – smiling and making faces		
Nigel Farage – smiling and making faces		
Y un lugar mágico donde no hacía falta dar explicaciones	Spice Girls posing for photos	
[And a magic land where it was not necessary to explain anything]	EU politicians posing for photos	Music: The Spice Girls – 'Wannabe'
Peter Pan and children flying	Spice girls shaking hands with Spanish king	
Boris Johnson in front of red bus	Politician shaking hands with Spanish king	
Peter Pan (pointing)		
Wendy: *¿A dónde vamos?*	Young people with painted faces dancing before concert	
[Where are we going?]	Young people with painted faces at pro-EU demonstrations	
Boris Johnson (pointing): 'Outside the European Union.'		
Wendy: '*¿Cómo llegaremos a Nunca Jamás?*'	*Pero una de ellas decidió ir por su cuenta, y el grupo se rompió.*	
[How will we get to Neverland?]	[But one of them decided to leave on her own, and the group broke up.]	
Peter Pan: '*Volando, Wendy*'		

[Flying, Wendy]		
Boris Johnson: 'Vote, vote Leave'		
Peter Pan llevó a los niños británicos más allá del Támesis, hizo parada en el Parlamento, y llegó a Nunca Jamás. Pero allí las cosas no eran tan fáciles como el eterno preadolescente había prometido.	Geri Halliwell saying hello, making faces	
[Peter Pan took the British kids far away from the Thames. He stopped at the parliament and arrived with them at Neverland. But things there were not as easy as the eternal pre-teen had promised.]	Theresa May saying hello, making faces	
Peter Pan and children flying over the Thames.	Spice Girls on a bus through streets	
Nigel Farage on a boat on the Thames.	EU politicians in group photograph	
Peter Pan and children flying over the Houses of Parliament.	Geri Halliwell gesturing angrily	
Image of Houses of Parliament. Nigel Farage at a public conference.	Theresa May in parliament with angry voice: 'The United Kingdom is leaving the European Union on the 29 of March 2019'	[no song]
	Geri Halliwell singing alone at concerts	
Arrival at Neverland.	Theresa May dancing at party conference	
Inside parliament. Theresa May. Background noise.	Theresa May at Downing Street.	
Children and animals running.	*Hace dos años, Theresa May informó a Bruselas de que se iban.*	
Children captured in Neverland.	[Two years ago, Theresa May told Brussels they were leaving.]	Spice Girls – 'Wannabe' [end of song]
Images of campaign posters showing opposing views.	Theresa May in parliament: 'The United Kingdom is leaving the European Union.'	
Indian character to children: '*Esta vez, no os soltaremos.*'	*Bruselas advirtió. Si se marchaban, tenían que pagar la cuenta. 45.000 millones de euros.*	
[This time, we won't free you.]	[Brussels warned them. If they left, they had to pay the bill: €45,000 million.]	
Theresa May: '… and these have been unable to agree on a way to implement the UK's withdrawal.'		

Table 4. Blended worlds in *La Sexta Columna*

In example 2, we can see that music also has framing effects and stresses given evaluations of the historical problem described. The narrative starts with the first verses of 'Wannabe' by The Spice Girls: 'I'll tell you what I want, what I really, really want // So tell me what you want, what you really, really want.' This emphasis on the desire of one of the participants – the UK in the blended world – contributes to highlighting that it is the desire of one of the participants – the UK – to leave the EU. However, this desire is also framed as being partly indecisive, as we can see in the title of the programme – this evaluation of the UK as an indecisive political actor is also present in the title of the programme – 'Should I Stay or Should I Go?'. This is, in turn, the title of a song by The Clash that is evoked by the presenter when introducing the topic and which is again used to close the programme. The use of this song at the

beginning and end of the programme foregrounds the lack of decision of the UK, which is thereby presented as the main reason why there is uncertainty about the likely outcome of Brexit. Likewise, evoking the Spice Girls and establishing a blend between Gerri Halliwell's leaving of the group and the UK leaving the EU helps the viewer predict a likely outcome of the Brexit process: if the downfall of the Spice Girls and Geri Halliwell's careers are marked by the latter leaving the group, so can the viewer infer that the downfall of the EU and the UK is going to be marked by the latter leaving the European political institution.

The framing effects of songs can be also seen in section IV of the programme, where a historical account of the relationship between the UK and the EU is provided (see Table 3 above). The title of each song already shows how each historical step is evaluated and constructs a narrative which goes from 'Schoolboy crush' between the UK and Europe at the time of Winston Churchill to the UK being compared to the Titanic in 2019, going through a phase of 'Twist and Shout' during the early negotiations between France and the UK in the 1960s, a time of 'Anarchy in the UK' with the first EU referendum in 1975, or the description of Margaret Thatcher as engaging in 'Careless Whisper' in the negotiations to obtain the UK rebate. This strategy contributes to emphasising a narrative aimed at trying to understand 'small incomprehensible things about Britain' [36:48]. Once again, a parallel is drawn between a stereotypical description of British customs which, for outsiders, might be difficult to understand – having beans for breakfast, eating fish and chips, having tea at 5pm, driving on the left, or wearing socks with sandals – and 'why they entered the European Union if they didn't want to be part of it' [37:20]. The British anthem, 'God Save the Queen', functions as a soundtrack for this description, once again humorously anchoring the above-mentioned stereotypes as part of a patriotic feeling in the UK, which is also visually evoked by footage of the Union Jack going down amidst EU flags outside the EU parliament in Brussels.

While cultural frames are more actively evoked in sections I and IV, which describe the political process leading to Brexit, a different strategy is pursued in those sections where the social and economic consequences of Brexit are presented, which tends to be done through the 'voices of participants'. Two main types of participant can be found: internal main participants (Gunther, 2015, p. 73) and academic external voices. Including first person narratives by main participants contributes to providing subjective points of views which here emphasise the suffering of particular social actors. These subjective construals are afterwards supported by the objectivity associated with third person academic voices. An example of how this is achieved can be seen in Table 5, where the personal narratives talking about episodes of discrimination suffered by Spanish workers living in the UK (exemplified by Ana and José Luis) are subsequently backed by academic evidence, as we can see in Giles Tremlett's[8] voice.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="1">Example 3
[32: 18- 34:20]</td></tr>
</table>

Narrator: *Uno de los argumentos a favor del Brexit, es que los inmigrantes les roban el trabajo. [...] Ese argumento de odio lo han vivido de cerca Ana y José Luis.*
[One of the arguments in favour of Brexit is that immigrants steal their jobs [...] Ana and José Luis have lived through that argument of hate.]

(Each participant speaking in their own environment and afterwards edited as a single narrative)

José Luis: *Desde la votación, nos han hecho sentir emigrantes, pero con la connotación negativa de la palabra. Como si venimos a ocupar su puesto. [...] En mi antiguo colegio tenía muy buenos amigos, buenísimos. Y un día me di cuenta de que me había borrado del Facebook, que no, que nunca quería hablar conmigo.*
[Since the vote, they have made us feel like immigrants, but with the negative connotation of the word. As if we came here to occupy their position [...] At my old school, I had very good friends. And one day I realised they had deleted me from Facebook. They never wanted to talk to me.]

Ana: *Un par de amigas con los que, bueno, ellas empezaron a hacer muchos comentarios con los que, bueno, fuera de lugar a mi parecer, sobre los inmigrantes. Y les dije, ¿qué pasa? ¿por qué estáis compartiendo todas estas cosas? ¿No os dais cuentas de que a mí me está afectando? Y me decían, tú has venido a este país, pues, estás integrada, tú hablas el idioma, tienes un trabajo normal, tú no eres como ellos.*
[A couple of friends started to make comments about immigrants which, in my view, were out of line. And I told them, what's wrong? Why are you sharing those things? Don't you realize that it's affecting me? And they told me, you have come to this country, you are integrated, you speak the language, have a normal job. You are not like them.]

Giles Tremlett: *El trato al inmigrante en el Reino Unido es muy duro. Lo primero es una sensación de no ser querido, de que tu vecino no quiere que estés ahí.*
[How immigrants are treated in the UK is very hard. The first thing is the feeling of not being wanted, that your neighbour does not want you to be there.]

Ana: *Yo sí soy como ellos. Yo soy ellos. Y bueno, pues ahí se acabó la amistad.*
[I am like them. I am them. And that was the end of the friendship.]

Table 5. Internal and external voices in *La Sexta Columna* (with translations)

The use of internal voices talking about their personal narratives, summarised in Table 6, functions in this programme as a mechanism of emotional involvement by relying on an individualisation (van Leeuwen, 2008) strategy. This recalling of voices has been identified as one of the main features of *infotainment* (Berrocal Gonzalo et al., 2014). Each of the people presented in the narrative functions metonymically as a representative of others who might be in the same situation and provides a first-person point of view of pre-Brexit life and the effects of Brexit that they anticipate. Some of the arguments provided by participants in section I are similar to the ones found by Miglbauer and Koller (2019) when analysing Leave voters' views.

Section[9]	Main participant	Main argument
I. Brexit – Should I Stay or Should I Go	Castlepoint inhabitant	'There are just too many reasons why we should leave. One is immigration, which is the main one.'
	Castlepoint inhabitant	'They are getting all these people in, when our own people haven't got enough work.'
	London inhabitant	'Of course, they get benefits from the state, but they also contribute to the state, so they deserve it as much as the rest of us.'
	Castlepoint inhabitant	'We shouldn't be in Europe. We are Great Britain. We should be great.'

II. Benidorm	Retired British man living in Spain	*'Yo he votado para mis hijos y mis nietos, etc. Porque estoy convencido que el futuro de Gran Bretaña mejor afuera de la unión que dentro.'* [I voted for my sons and grandchildren. Because I believe that the future of Great Britain is better outside than inside the union.]
	Retired British woman living in Spain	*'Los jubilados […] necesita sanidad reciproca. Tiene miedo que se pierde todo esto.'* [Retired people […] need reciprocal health provision. I am afraid that we lose all this.]
	Spanish woman working in Gibraltar	*'Perdería toda la clientela que tengo allí.'* [I would lose all the customers I have there]
III. Mind the gap	Spanish man living in the UK	*'Hay un 4% de desempleo. Es decir, que aquí el que no trabaja es porque no quiere.'* [There is a 4% of unemployment. That means, if you don't work here, it's because you don't want to.]
	Spanish woman living in the UK	*'Mi salario ahora mismo es como quizá casi un 200% de lo que era en España hace 7 años.'* [My current wage is about 200% more than it was in Spain 7 years ago.]
V. *Cosas que importan* [Things that matter]	Manager of a Galician ship-owner cooperative	*'En unos meses tendrían que salir todos los barcos. Ese sería el peor escenario'* [In a few months, all the ships would have to leave. That would be the worst scenario.] *'La pesca española ya está perdiendo dinero'* [Spanish finishing is losing money]
	Export manager of a Galician winery	*'Han subido ya algunos impuestos aduaneros, con lo cual ya compran más caro. […] Eso está ralentizando muchísimo los pedidos.'* [Taxes have risen, so they buy more expensive ones. […] That's slowing down the orders.]

Table 6. Internal voices in *La Sexta Columna*

Besides the strategies mentioned above, moral judgement in *La Sexta Columna* also tends to be based on a comparison between what is considered good and bad. These comparisons do not acknowledge in-between positions, but rather emphasise contrast in such a way that given politicians and their actions are delegitimized. Amongst them, the humorous description of Theresa May as 'the Teflon prime minister' [42:58] is not only used to implicitly compare her to Margaret Thatcher but also functions as a frame for an (implicit) parody of May [42:58-46:50]. Likewise, we can see both visual and textual activations of metaphors that were used during the referendum campaign (Charteris-Black, 2019). Amongst them, we can see the reference to the UK as the Titanic [46:04] to delegitimize the political role of Theresa May or the re-contextualization of the marriage metaphor to describe a possible new love relationship between Scotland and the EU [14:37].

6. Conclusion

The analysis of the two programmes included in this article shows that they both emphasise the uncertain political and socio-economic consequences of Brexit. Both programmes present such uncertainty as a consequence of the political actions of negatively evaluated politicians whose actions are compared to those of former Prime Ministers. *La Sexta Columna* also stresses the inability of the UK to take a clear decision about when and how to leave the EU. This indecision is presented as the main feature of current British political identity and is presented as historically embedded in a process where the UK has taken decisions depending only on the actual gain it would obtain. Likewise, in *La Sexta Columna* several cultural and social stereotypes are recalled. Both are discursively used as viewing frames which tend to stress the idiosyncratic nature of the British people. Cheese-rolling, eating fish and chips, drinking tea, wearing specific types of clothes, or the love for the Royal family are presented as defining features of British identity and the perceived outlandishness associated with them is equated with their desire of leaving the EU. According to the programme, none of those aspects can be easily understood.

While both programmes give voice to internal and external participants, their use is different. In *Informe Semanal*, British citizens mainly focus on their tiredness with the political situation, and it is academic voices that evaluate political action and try to predict possible outcomes for the new identity of the UK. In *La Sexta Columna* the use of both internal and external voices is discursively blended, and they are frequently combined to construct a single narrative which includes a first-person view of the social and economic consequences of Brexit and an academic explanation for those personal reflections. Two main types of social actors appear in *La Sexta Columna*: when the views of those who live in Spain are presented – regardless of whether they are British citizens or Spanish business people – the economic consequences of Brexit are foregrounded. However, when it is Spanish people living in the UK that tell their story, social issues, for example British views on immigration, are highlighted. As argued above, this type of strategy results in an emotional involvement of the viewer, hence adopting the distinguishing features of *infotainment*. The analysis presented in this article does not only show how each of the programmes adopts a different perspective when explaining Brexit to Spanish viewers, but it also shows that these stem from how they adapt to the traditional and conventional expectations about documentaries, in *Informe Semanal*, or how they adopt the hybrid nature of *infotainment* in *La Sexta Columna*.

Notes

2. Negotiating the terms in the Withdrawal Agreement proved to be difficult not only for the EU-UK negotiators, but also inside the UK where the Withdrawal Agreement was repeatedly rejected in parliament. This led to the UK asking for several extensions to

Article 50. Eventually, this agreement was signed in January 2020 and it entered into force on January 31, 2020. This date marks the beginning of an 11-month transition period and the UK not being a member of the EU but a third country.

3. In this table, the percentage of the audience that watched the programmes is included. Total number of viewers refers to the estimated number of people who watched the programme. Share refers to the mean percentage of houses where it is estimated that the programme was watched with respect to the total number of houses where the TV was switched on. The data have been taken from Barlovento Comunicación (available at https://www.barloventocomunicacion.es/audiencias-diarias/).

4. In the case of *La Sexta Columna,* music is also important, so its framing effects will also be mentioned.

5. The whole programme can be watched on the RTVE website: https://www.rtve.es/alacarta/videos/informe-semanal/informe-semanal-to-brexit-or-not-to-brexit/5141080/. Examples of reporting images can be seen in minutes 4:04 to 4:11.

6. Frames activated by music are indicated in italics.

7. The whole programme can be watched on the *Atresplayer* Premium platform: https://www.atresplayer.com/lasexta/programas/lasexta-columna/temporada-8/brexit-should-i-stay-or-should-i-go_5ca5ee887ed1a869e4edd506/

8. Giles Tremlett is correspondent for *The Guardian.* He is based in Spain.

9. The sections in this table correspond with the ones included in Table 3. The connection between both tables is indicated in the number of the section.

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