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## IS THERE ANYTHING WRONG WITH THE EXPRESSION “A BUNCH OF MIGRANTS”?

*Abstract:* By analysing some of the syntagmatic lexical relations of the phrase “a bunch of”, the paper deals with the question whether the outbreak of public anger caused by David Cameron’s use of the phrase “a bunch of migrants” was understandable or not. In an attempt to answer this question, sources such as the contemporary dictionary definitions of the lexeme “bunch” (when used to refer to people) as well as the instances of its modern usage were used. The modern contexts were retrieved from the written corpus which included some of the UK broadsheet and tabloid newspapers analysed by means of a corpus analysis tool *WebCorp*. The results led to the conclusion that the said outbreak of anger was fairly justified as, besides very few instances of its neutral usage, the phrase “a bunch of” has a strong tendency to be used negatively and with dislike when describing groups of people.

*Key words:* corpus linguistics, written corpus, daily newspapers, “a bunch of”, collocates

### 1. INTRODUCTION

“Words are powerful. They are the means through which we communicate meaning. How we choose to use our words determines whether we create positive or negative meaning. [...] The choice is ours. Everything we think or say carries meaning. The words we use can heal or wound, affirm or diminish, liberate or enslave, foster love or incite hatred” (Preston 2012: x). The entire quote, particularly its last sentence, came to be especially true when the former UK and pro-EU Prime Minister David Cameron used the phrase “a bunch of migrants” to refer to a group of refugees at a camp in Calais during a PMQs (Prime Minister’s Questions) session in January 2016. Labour MPs and the general public in the UK were rather appalled at such use of language. Consequently, Cameron was publicly and severely criticised for using the phrase which, after going viral, was reported on in various newspapers across the country and described as “dehumanising”, “unstatesmanlike”, “inflammatory”, “unbecoming of the prime minister’s office”,

“callous”, “shameful”, “disgraceful”, “a disgrace”. These comments strongly suggest that there is something wrong with the phrase.

After the controversial incident took place, I discovered a very interesting, informative and thought-provoking article on Cameron’s use of the phrase “a bunch of migrants” by Robbie Love (Love 2016). In his article, Love explained that he had searched through 4.5 million words of spoken corpus (he actually transcribed people’s present day conversations across the UK) to find out how people in the UK normally use the phrase “a bunch of”. He learnt that words such as “people”, “flowers” and “things” were most likely to be described in this way. In addition, he found that there were several other words used the same way to refer to groups of people including “kids”, “volunteers”, “retards”, “losers”, “lads”, “individuals”, “friends”, “dickheads”, “dancers”, “Aussies”, “alcoholics”, “thieving sods” and “thieving fuckers”. What Love also noticed was that the word “migrants” was absent from the list. The linguistic evidence, according to Love, clearly indicated that “people do often use ‘bunch of’ to refer to groups of people negatively or with distaste”, and led to the conclusion that “the upset caused by Cameron’s use of the phrase ‘a bunch of migrants’ was perhaps understandable” (Love 2016).

## 2. THE PRESENT RESEARCH

Reading Love’s article, I was interested in finding out, using a different kind of corpus, whether the negative reaction triggered off by the use of the phrase “a bunch of migrants” was justified or not. The most reliable way to do it, it seems, was to look into both the definitions of “bunch” as provided by some of the online dictionaries of British English and the examples of its contemporary usage. In other words, the paper seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What can contemporary dictionaries tell us about the definition and usage of “a bunch of” used in reference to people?
2. Which words referring to people are, based on corpus-based research, normally used with “a bunch of” by native speakers of British English?
3. Was all the criticism concerning the use of “a bunch of migrants” to refer to a group of refugees understandable?

## 3. METHODOLOGY

Whereas Love’s research was conducted on the spoken corpus of British English, the present one employed the written corpus of British English using *WebCorp*. As a corpus analysis tool, *WebCorp* allows anyone interested in language and the way words and phrases are used to access the World Wide Web as

a corpus. It consists of a substantial collection of “real world” texts from which facts about real language can be extracted and analysed. As far as the search engine options are concerned, *WebCorp* works using various web search engines, each covering different sub-sets of the Web’s content. The one used for the purpose of this research was *Bing*. The number of pages *WebCorp* will search through depends solely on the search engine one chooses. In this case, the number of pages was limited to 50. One of the advanced options I used was *One concordance line per web page*, producing only one match from each page searched. It proved to be an extremely useful option since it stopped one web page from dominating the results. The last step was choosing the sites *WebCorp* was to search through. As one of the aims of the paper was to analyse the real-world contexts in which “a bunch of” appears, UK broadsheet and tabloid newspapers seemed to be the right choice. Newspapers provide a significant and fresh insight into how a real language is used, especially a language that evolves as fast as English. On *WebCorp*, the UK broadsheet newspapers included the quality newspapers such as *The Times*, *The Telegraph*, *The Guardian* and *The Independent*, whereas the UK tabloid newspapers included *Mirror*, *The Sun* and *Daily Star*. Once the results were obtained, the search was further refined by specifying the time span, i.e. from August 6, 2006 to August 6, 2016. Also, the results where the collocates of “a bunch of” were not used in reference to people were excluded from further analysis. Needless to say, the instances related to David Cameron’s controversial use of the phrase were excluded from further analysis as well (word filter option was applied).

Prior to the research described, some of the renowned online dictionaries of the English language were consulted regarding the definition and, more importantly, usage of “bunch”. The dictionaries used in this paper are as follows: *OxfordDictionaries.com*, *Dictionary.Cambridge.org*, *MacmillanDictionary.com*, *LDOCEonline.com* and *CollinsDictionary.com*. The primary reason for choosing *online* versions of these dictionaries is that they are updated far more frequently than the printed ones and so provide the most recent information on how a real language is used.

#### 4. RESULTS

Given below are the definitions of “bunch” as retrieved from the above-mentioned dictionaries. Some of them are more exhaustive (e. g. 3a) than the others and, therefore, far more valuable for the results analysis, discussion and, eventually, conclusion. The example(s) pertaining to the definition were copied so as to extract the collocates of the phrase in question.

- 1) “*informal* a group of people” (Bunch [Def. 1.1]. (n. d.). In *Oxford Dictionaries – Dictionary, Thesaurus & Grammar*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/>).

e.g.

- a) A **bunch of people** piled into the van, and even more crowded into the flatbed.
  - b) UTV's Hell's Kitchen brought together a **bunch of C-list celebrities** and turned them into chefs.
  - c) And it's even more fun to get a **bunch of friends** together and team up.
- 2) “a **group of people**” (Bunch [Def. 2]. (n. d.). In *Cambridge Free English Dictionary and Thesaurus*. Retrieved from <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>).

e.g.

- a) They're a **bunch of jerks**.
  - b) Those **builders** are a **bunch of cowboys** – they made a **terrible job of our extension**.
  - c) These **politicians** are just a **bunch of crooks**.
- 3) “*informal* a **group of people**; *showing disapproval* often used in **negative contexts**, to refer to a **group of people** that you **dislike** or **regard** as **stupid, inferior** etc.” (Bunch [Def. 1 a.]. (n. d.). In Bunch [Def. 2]. (n. d.). In *Cambridge Free English Dictionary and Thesaurus*. Retrieved from <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>. Retrieved from <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/>).

e.g.

- a) The **volunteers** are a very **mixed bunch of people**.
  - b) The **article referred** to his **opponents** as “a **bunch of hypocrites**”.
  - c) What a **pathetic bunch of losers!**
- 4) “*informal* a group of people” (Bunch [Def. 2]. (n. d.). In *Longman English Dictionary Online*. Retrieved from <http://www.ldoceonline.com/>).
- e.g. a friendly **bunch of people**

- 5) “*informal* a group or company” (Bunch [Def. 3]. (n. d.). In *Collins Dictionary | Always Free Online*. Retrieved from <http://www.collinsdictionary.com/>).

e.g.

- a) a bunch of boys
- b) My neighbours are a bunch of busybodies.
- c) We were a pretty inexperienced bunch of people really.

The above dictionary definitions provide more or less the same definition of the noun “bunch”. Interestingly enough, only *MacmillanDictionary.com* tackles the question of the noun's current usage by assigning the label “showing disapproval” to it when used in reference to people. Based on the dictionary search

results, the following are the words that form syntagmatic lexical relations with “bunch of”: “people”, “C-list celebrities”, “friends”, “jerks”, “cowboys”, “crooks”, “hypocrites”, “losers”, “boys” and “busybodies”.

As was pointed out previously, the next step was extracting the results for “bunch of” from the UK “qualities” and “populars”. The following are the examples the said UK “qualities” produced:

- 11: But some of these City people act like a **bunch of cry babies**.
  - 43: Golf A **bunch of amateurs**
  - 33: **bunch of writers** The write stuff: Lewis Dartnell, Caoimhe McKenna, Clare Neve
  - 27: UN forces – just a **bunch of thugs?**
  - 23: Germany Storm over ‘**bunch of gays**’ in Germany’s World Cup team Agent of injured captain
  - 10: SNP activist: Dead British soldiers are a **bunch of child killers**’
  - 36: Ashley Cole apologises for labelling FA a ‘**bunch of twats**’ after his evidence in John Terry trial is
  - 40: softly focused lenses the company is nothing more than a **bunch of soap and deodorant peddlers** looking to make a quick buck
  - 34: A **bunch of lying bastards**’ - Brian May and Paul McCartney hit out
  - 32: This is what happens when you die, according to a **bunch of different people**
  - 46: David Cameron described Mr Corbyn and his allies as “a **bunch of terrorist sympathisers**” as the debate over air strikes in Syria
  - 35: Rowling attacks ‘**bunch of racists**’ who criticised a black Hermione
  - 24: the British used to be stylish, but now we’re a **bunch of scruffs**
  - 20: Rugby Players’ Association chairman wants to avoid scenario of having ‘**bunch of cripples**’ in 15 years’ time
  - 31: What makes a **bunch of teenagers** from Brighton go to Syria?
  - 38: Did a **bunch of little kids** get shot today?’ Stars join march for gun
  - 19: to leave the EU, other countries will think we’re a **bunch of spoilt children**.
  - 30: Probably the equivalent of an evolutionary biologist listening to a **bunch of creationists** tell the public creation theory is right and evolution
  - 22: I’d rather fight ten more EU referendums than let a **bunch of lawyers** tell Britain what to do
  - 37: The Musketeers: just a **bunch of silly little boys** – review
- The following are the examples retrieved from the UK “populars”:
- 16: **bunch of bullies** EU bunch of bullies EUROPEAN Union chiefs have sparked
  - 13: YOU **BUNCH OF DRIPS**
  - 6: **BUNCH OF DIVVIES**
  - 2: **BUNCH OF MORONS**

4: FIFA Uruguayan President Jose 'Pepe' Mujica has labelled FIFA “a **bunch of old sons of bitches**” in his latest attack on world

17: No, a **bunch of Irish priests** did not hack someone’s Facebook page

5: USA goalkeeper Hope Solo brands Sweden football team a “**bunch of cowards**” after Olympic defeat

9: Defeated England team branded ‘a **bunch of overpaid nonces**’ live on BBC.

## 5. DISCUSSION

As stated earlier in the paper, “people”, “C-list celebrities”, “friends”, “jerks”, “cowboys”, “crooks”, “hypocrites”, “losers”, “boys” and “busybodies” are found to co-occur with “bunch of” based on the examples provided by the dictionaries. Further analysis of these words and phrases shows that seven out of ten are generally understood to convey an unfavourable meaning. In other words, apart from “people”, “friends”, and “boys”, all other collocates are viewed negatively.

For instance, in the phrase “C-list celebrities”, it is the adjective “C-list”, defined as “specifically designating or relating to a (notional) roster of relatively unimportant or formerly prominent individuals, especially in the entertainment industry or the media” (C-list. (n. d.). In *Oxford Dictionaries – Dictionary, Thesaurus & Grammar*. Retrieved August 6, 2016, from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/c-list?q=C-LIST>), that has a negative meaning and thus a negative influence on the entire noun phrase.

Further evidence of the negative usage of “bunch of” comes from the word “jerks” for which the dictionaries suggests as a secondary meaning “a **contemptibly foolish person**” (Jerk [Def. 2]. (n. d.). In *Oxford Dictionaries – Dictionary, Thesaurus & Grammar*. Retrieved August 6, 2016, from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/jerk#nav1>), or “a **stupid person, usually a man**” (Jerk [Def. 2]. (n. d.). In *Cambridge Free English Dictionary and Thesaurus*. Retrieved August 6, 2016, from <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/jerk>).

An interesting example of a collocate of “bunch of” is “cowboys”. First, the word “cowboys” is not used here in its primary meaning of a man whose job is to tend cattle. It is rather used colloquially in relation to, as the dictionary puts it, “someone who is not **honest, careful, or skilful in their trade or business**, or someone who **ignores rules** that most **people obey** and is **therefore not considered** to be **responsible**” (Cowboy [Def. 2]. (n. d.). In *Cambridge Free English Dictionary and Thesaurus*. Retrieved August 6, 2016, from <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/cowboy>). Based on this definition, it is all too obvious that there is a negative tinge to the word “cowboys” when used this way and as a result to the entire noun phrase. When people refer to those considered

dishonest, among the many attributes they can think of is “crooks”, yet another word bearing an unfavourable meaning.

The previous four examples indicate that there is a strong tendency for the use of “bunch of” in negative contexts. Further confirmation of that comes from the word “hypocrites” as it is used to describe “a person who claims to have certain moral principles or beliefs but behaves in a way that shows they are not sincere” (Hypocrite. (n. d.). In *Macmillan Dictionary | Free English Dictionary and Thesaurus Online*. Retrieved August 6, 2016, from <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/hypocrite>).

The word “losers” is no exception when it comes to examples carrying a negative meaning, for it is normally used to characterise “a person who fails frequently or is generally **unsuccessful** in life” (Definition of loser in English. (n. d.). Retrieved August 6, 2016, from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/loser>).

Last but not least, among the “blacklisted” words is “busybodies”. Used to show disapproval, the noun describes a person who “is very interested in other people’s private activities and tries to get involved in them in way that is annoying” (Busybody definition and synonyms | *Macmillan Dictionary*. (n. d.). Retrieved August 6, 2016, from <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/busybody>).

No matter how valuable the above results are in terms of the current usage of “bunch of”, they are just the tip of the iceberg. We have yet to examine what some of the UK newspapers have to say about how “bunch of” is used in modern contexts. The following examples represent the collocates of “bunch of” as extracted from the UK “qualities”: “cry babies”, “amateurs”, “writers”, “thugs”, “gays”, “child killers”, “twats”, “soap and deodorant peddlers”, “lying bastards”, “different people”, “terrorist sympathisers”, “racists”, “scruffs”, “cripples”, “teenagers”, “little kids”, “spoilt children”, “creationists”, “lawyers”, “silly little boys”.

Similarly to the dictionary examples, almost all of the listed collocates are used pejoratively to describe groups of people except for few neutral ones such as “writers”, “different people”, “teenagers”, “little kids”, “creationists”, “lawyers” and “gays”, the word which “became established in the 1960s as the term **preferred** by **homosexual** men to describe themselves. It is now the standard accepted term throughout the English-speaking world.” (Definition of gay in English: (n. d.). Retrieved August 9, 2016, from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/gay>).

Unlike these seven neutral terms, the phrase “cry babies” has a rather disapproving meaning as it denotes “someone, usually a **child**, who **cries** a lot without good **reason**” (Cry-baby [Def. 1]. (n. d.). In *Cambridge Free English Dictionary and Thesaurus*. Retrieved August 9, 2016, from <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/cry-baby>).

Another word similar in meaning to the previously mentioned “cowboys” having a “disapproving” label to it is “amateurs”. The word is glossed in the

dictionary as follows: “someone who does not have much **skill** in what they do” (Amateur [Def. 2]. (n. d.). In *Cambridge Free English Dictionary and Thesaurus*. Retrieved August 6, 2016, from <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/amateur>) and is normally used to show disapproval.

“A violent person, especially a criminal” is often referred to as a “thug” (Thug [Def. 1]. (n. d.). In *Oxford Dictionaries – Dictionary, Thesaurus & Grammar*. Retrieved August 6, 2016, from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/thug>). Speaking of violence as one of the commonest of the world’s evils, there are other examples such as “child killers” and “terrorist sympathisers” also found to collocate with “bunch of”. Although the word “killer” may have positive connotations in the English language as in ‘Dizzy was a **real** killer on the **trumpet**’ (Killer [Def. 5]. (n. d.). In *Cambridge Free English Dictionary and Thesaurus*. Retrieved September 19, 2016, from <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/killer>), meaning a very skilful trumpet player, it is all too apparent that being “a killer of children” has only a negative sense. Also, the fact that someone approves of and supports terrorism (“terrorist sympathisers”) cannot be attributed other connotation than a negative one. Another dictionary entry linked to violence and abuse to which a label “disapproving” is attached is “racists”. It is used to denote “someone who **believes** that other **rac**es are not as good as their own and **therefore treats** them **unfairly**” (Racist. (n. d.). In *Cambridge Free English Dictionary and Thesaurus*. Retrieved August 6, 2016, from <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/racist>).

“Twats” is used as an extremely offensive word with the gloss of “a stupid or unpleasant person” (Twat [Def. 2]. (n. d.). In *Cambridge Free English Dictionary and Thesaurus*. Retrieved August 6, 2016, from <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/twat>). Another pejorative term, though somewhat milder, used to describe unpleasant people is “bastards”. The adjective “lying” that accompanies it only adds to its negativity.

Typically found in British English, the noun “peddler” is defined according to *Oxford Dictionaries* as a “person who goes from place to place selling small goods” (Peddler [Def. 1]. (n. d.). In *Oxford Dictionaries – Dictionary, Thesaurus & Grammar*. Retrieved August 6, 2016, from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/peddler>). Although this relatively rare word has no negative connotation on the basis of the definition provided, its historical context requires closer examination. In England, “peddler” used to have negative associations. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, peddlars were believed to be engaged in questionable activities. For instance, Jonathan Swift, the author of *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726), represents peddlars as the members of a bad company (Salman 2013: 15). Further evidence of the word’s negative reputation comes from *Cambridge Dictionary*. Namely, the dictionary gives as a secondary meaning, labelled disapproving, “someone who gives ideas to other people” and as a third meaning, labelled old-fashioned, “someone who sells illegal drugs to people” (Peddler. (n. d.). In *Cambridge Free English Dictionary and Thesaurus*. Retrieved August 6, 2016, from [160](http://diction-</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)



ary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/peddler). Closer examination of the example in question shows that the phrases such as “to make a quick buck” and “female insecurities”, representing its immediate context and having negative connotations themselves, only add to this word being still perceived negatively.

Having a scruffy appearance is certainly not a desirable quality in people. One of the various terms used to make reference to such people within British English informal register is, quite predictably, “scruffs”.

Further evidence for the negative associations of “bunch of” comes from the word “cripples”. Based on the authority of *Collins Dictionary*, the word itself, being labelled as offensive, refers to “someone who seems disabled or deficient in some way” (Cripple [Def. 2]. (n. d.). In *Collins Dictionary | Always Free Online*. Retrieved August 6, 2016, from <http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/cripple>).

“Spoilt” with the gloss of “a spoiled person, especially a child, is rude and behaves badly because they have always been given what they want and allowed to do what they want” (Spoilt [Def. 1]. (n. d.). In *Longman English Dictionary Online*. Retrieved August 6, 2016, from <http://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/spoiled>) is obviously negative in meaning and represents another example of an adjective negatively influencing the whole noun phrase, i. e. “spoilt children”.

In a similar fashion, the phrase “silly little boys” is negatively coloured owing to the presence of the adjective “silly”, being defined as “having or showing a lack of common sense or judgement; absurd and foolish” (Silly [Def. 1]. (n. d.). In *Oxford Dictionaries – Dictionary, Thesaurus & Grammar*. Retrieved August 6, 2016, from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/silly>).

As far as the results retrieved from the UK “populars” are concerned, “bullies”, “drips”, “divvies”, “morons”, “old sons of bitches”, “Irish priests”, “cowards”, “overpaid nonces” are found to co-occur with “bunch of”. Closer examination of the results indicates that only the example containing the noun phrase “Irish priests” is not used negatively.

“Someone who **hurts** or **frightens** someone who is **smaller** or less **powerful**, often **forcing** them to do something that they do not **want** to do” is often referred to as a “bully” (Bully. (n. d.). In *Cambridge Free English Dictionary and Thesaurus*. Retrieved August 9, 2016, from <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/bully>). On the other hand, weakness to confront these bullies is one of the main attributes of “cowards”, another disapproving term co-occurring with “bunch of”.

Another example used to show disapproval is “drips” as it denotes “a **bor-ing person** without a **strong character**” (Drip [Def. 2]. (n. d.). In *Cambridge Free English Dictionary and Thesaurus*. Retrieved August 9, 2016, from <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/drip#british-1-2-2>). Speaking of ineffectual and weak people, “divvies” is often used within British English informal register to denote those considered stupid. When it comes to stupidity and

intellectual inferiority, also recorded to collocate with “bunch of” is “morons” as a particularly offensive and insulting word for very stupid ones.

Even though the definition of “sons of bitches” may vary widely, from being used as “a general term of contempt or abuse” (Son of a bitch. (n. d.). In *Oxford Dictionaries – Dictionary, Thesaurus & Grammar*. Retrieved August 9, 2016, from [http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/son-of-a-bitch?q=son of a bitch](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/son-of-a-bitch?q=son%20of%20a%20bitch)), to a more concrete definition of “an unpleasant man” (Son of a bitch. (n. d.). In *Cambridge Free English Dictionary and Thesaurus*. Retrieved August 9, 2016, from <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/son-of-a-bitch>), there is no question about it being an insulting term.

Last but certainly not least collocate of “bunch of” having a negative tinge is “nonces” as in the phrase “overpaid nonces” used by a journalist in relation to the defeated England team at Euro 2016 and reported on in one of the UK “populars”, namely *Daily Star*. The noun “nonce” is used as a slang term to refer to “a person convicted of a sexual offence, especially against a child” (Nonce [Def. 2]. (n. d.). In *Oxford Dictionaries – Dictionary, Thesaurus & Grammar*. Retrieved August 6, 2016, from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/nonce#nav2>), or to “a **rapist** or child molester; a **sexual** offender” (Nonce [Def. 2]. (n. d.). In *Collins Dictionary | Always Free Online*. Retrieved August 9, 2016, from <http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/nonce>).

## 6. CONCLUSION

As far as the definition of “bunch” is concerned, it seems all too appropriate to quote Steven Pinker when saying: “[...] a definition (which is admittedly always incomplete) is [...]” (Pinker 2008: 100) because the dictionaries used throughout the paper provide rather loose definitions for the entry “bunch”, apart from *MacmillanDictionary.com* which sheds some new light on its contemporary usage. Based on a relatively small number of examples provided below each of the definitions and thus a modest number of collocates, it is difficult to reach a definite conclusion whether “a bunch of” is used in a derogatory sense or not. It is also worth noting that none of the dictionaries provided the word “migrants” as the collocate of “a bunch of”.

The instances excerpted from the UK broadsheet newspapers seem to reflect people’s pronounced tendency to use a rather informal phrase “a bunch of” with nouns and noun phrases expressing disapproval. The odour of negativity also hangs over almost each and every collocate of “a bunch of” found in the “populars”, reaching its climax in a highly offensive word such as “morons”.

All the results considered, it is safe to say that despite few neutral uses (owing to which Cameron’s choice of words may be justified at least to some extent), the furore the controversial remark “a bunch of migrants” caused among the Labour MPs and the general public in the UK was fairly understandable. As

further confirmation of that, there is an extra-linguistic, social context, in this case the British debate about migrants, which is more often than not expressed in negative terms, and which, as such, makes critics' reactions justified (Butterfield 2015). It would also be interesting to see how the same phrase is used in other written corpora as it would surely contribute to its more comprehensive dictionary definitions as well as to it being used in everyday spoken and written communication more appropriately. Only in this way could controversies such as this one be avoided.

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## ПОСТОЈИ ЛИ НЕШТО ЛОШЕ У ИЗРАЗУ „A BUNCH OF MIGRANTS”?

*Резиме:* Рад је инспирисан изјавом сада већ бившег британског премијера Дејвида Камерона у којој је за групу миграната у француском граду Калеу употребио израз „a bunch of migrants”. С обзиром на то да је употреба тог израза изазвала бурно реаговање његових политичких противника те јавног мњења, поставља се питање шта није у реду са самим изразом. Циљ овог рада јесте да покуша да одговори на питање да ли је таква реакција била оправдана кроз анализу неких речничких дефиниција одреднице „bunch”, затим примера датих у тим речницима и ограниченог новинског корпуса. Што се тиче дефиниција и примера из речника, користили смо се следећим онлајн речницима: *OxfordDictionaries.com*, *Dictionary.Cambridge.org*, *MacmillanDictionary.com*, *LDOCEonline.com* и *CollinsDictionary.com*. Истраживање је употпуњено корпусом новинских текстова из неких дневних листова који излазе у Уједињеном Краљевству, а у којима се осликава стварна употреба језика. Том приликом коришћена је алатка за анализу корпуса *WebCorp*. Већина наведених речника наводи да се сама одредница користи у неформалном регистру да означи групу људи. Тако се анализом ексцерпираних примера дошло до закључка да највећи број именица и именичких синтагми које колоцирају са одредницом „bunch” има негативну конотацију, односно да постоји тек неколико примера употребе ове одреднице у неутралном значењу. Такође се намеће закључак да је негодовање политичких противника Дејвида Камерона а и шире друштвене заједнице у Великој Британији том приликом у највећој мери било оправдано.

*Кључне речи:* корпусна лингвистика, писани корпус, дневни листови, „a bunch of”, колокати.