



## Article

# Comparative Study of the Information about the COVID-19 Pandemic and COVID-19 Vaccines on the Covers of United Kingdom, France, Spain and United States' Main Newspapers

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**Abstract:** This study compares the information coverage of the vaccine against the information of the COVID-19 pandemic in eight newspapers (two per country) from the United Kingdom, France, Spain and the United States. The newspapers analyzed are The Times and The Guardian (United Kingdom), Le Monde and Le Figaro (France), El País and El Mundo (Spain), and The New York Times and The Washington Post (United States). On a methodological level, the work uses a descriptive approach of hemerographic analysis. As a result, it is observed—in the case of coverage of the pandemic—that the presence of affected persons and health personnel in the front-page information was negligible, with a predominance of news journalistic genres (brief and newsworthy, especially), evidencing a leading role of political figures and the high degree of politicization of the crisis. In addition, the visual frames in the analyzed newspapers tended to promote humanization through emotional representation. On the other hand, the results of the news coverage of the vaccine showed a predominance of news journalistic genres, wherein supranational entities and pharmaceutical companies starred in the front pages to a greater extent. The study denotes the importance of media literacy among citizens, especially in the face of this type of informational events of global significance.

**Keywords:** coronavirus; COVID-19; front pages; news coverage; information processing; pandemic; vaccine; newspaper; daily information press; media; comparative analysis



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## 1. Introduction

The global COVID-19 pandemic has spread across the globe with record numbers. In this global health crisis, the media have become—especially during the harshest phases of confinement—key players in informing citizens of the spread of the virus. During the quarantine, media consumption experienced a deep growth. What is more, the internet has been decisive in the consumption of messages generated by the media. In this regard, social networks ranked first among the sources most consulted by the audience. According to Twitter, between December 2019 and January 2020, the information about the pandemic and the conversations generated by this topic produced an increase of 23% in daily active users, reaching 164 million quarterly (Comscore 2020). The peak in the consumption of news content coincided with the first measures of social distancing, reaching high levels with the different communications from government spokespersons around the world.

This set of data links to the current crisis in journalism, which is also a crisis in the credibility of the audience towards the media. A report by the consulting firm Ipsos Global Advisor (PrNoticias 2019) on trust in the media in 27 countries established that citizens were skeptical of the information they receive from the media, especially from digital newspapers.

Starting from the referential role and the trust placed by readers towards the printed media as being more reliable and rigorous, this research analyzes the covers of the main newspapers in the United Kingdom, France, Spain and the United States, gathering news about the vaccine and the informative coverage of COVID-19 in relation to the type of text, type of informative sources, characters, use of color, inclusion and focus of photographs and location on the page, among other parameters. This study conceives the front page of a newspaper as being a fundamental element that synthesizes and hierarchizes the content that a medium considers to be of greatest importance on a daily basis. The cover is, in short, a privileged space for the construction of public identity (Sunkel 2002). In this regard, an attempt has been made to answer the following research questions:

- How have the front pages of the main newspapers covered the issue of the vaccine and the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What type of journalistic texts have disseminated these contents?
- What type of characters and institutions have predominated?
- What role has photography played in the information about the vaccine and the pandemic on the front pages?

It is worth mentioning that the objective of this research work was to analyze the informative treatment of the subject of the vaccine for COVID-19 against the coverage of the pandemic on the front pages of the main newspapers in the United Kingdom, Spain, France and the United States through a descriptive comparative study.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

In 2020, the articles published in all areas of knowledge had a common denominator: COVID-19. In the case of communication sciences, the studies by Moreno et al. (2020), Orduña-Malea et al. (2020), Alexandre-Benavent et al. (2020), Odriozola-Chéné et al. (2020), Castillo-Esparcia et al. (2020), Sales et al. (2020) and Ferrer-Sapena et al. (2020) have demonstrated how this health crisis, on a global scale, has been a research opportunity for universities around the world. Furthermore, the issue of the coronavirus has improved the dissemination of science, because the scientific community and society have demanded updated information on the pandemic (Cañales López et al. 2020).

The analysis of the front pages of printed newspapers has been the subject of recurrent study in the last 50 years. From the classic works of Kayser (1974), Arnold (1984), Evans (1978, 1984), Bogart (1985) and El-Mir et al. (1995), to the investigations of López (2001), Davara et al. (2004), Cunha da Silva (2006), Burgueño (2008) or Núñez-Romero (2009), different studies have addressed the analysis of the contents of the covers of the written press. They are joined by the research of Jaraba Molina et al. (2020), who have established comparisons between the selection of the content on the covers of printed editions and the digital editions of the same media or its projection on social networks such as Twitter.

At this point, this paper takes as reference the work of Tejedor et al. (2020b), wherein the information on the COVID-19 pandemic was analyzed in 72 front pages of printed newspapers in Spain and Italy, through a comparative study of the newspapers El País, El Mundo Corriere della Sera and La Repubblica, applying a mixed design based on content analysis.

The front page of a newspaper is conceived as the main page and projects its informative priorities. At the same time, it transmits an editorial position towards current news. In this sense, as Canga (1994) pointed out, the preparation of the cover is the result of a complex process due to its informative impact and on sales, which will determine the main showcase of the medium and which will inform its readers of the topics that are considered more important. According to Verón and Sabés (2008), there are three series that participate in the process of shaping the front page of a newspaper: the headlines (visual linguistic series), the texts (visual series for linguistics) and the images (visual series not linguistics).

The COVID-19 crisis has posed new challenges for journalism. In this regard, the World Health Organization (WHO) has used the term “infodemics” to refer to the overabundance of information that the coronavirus has introduced and to warn citizens of the risks derived

from this excess of information—within which are circulated a lot of hoaxes or rumors. For [Salaverría et al. \(2020\)](#), in this context, misinformation has multiplied, with social networks being the main scenario where “decontextualized content and lies of all kinds and conditions have proliferated” (p. 2).

In the current scenario, the importance of AMI (informational media literacy)— which refers to the ability of citizens to access, use, evaluate, decide and generate responsible, ethical and quality content—becomes crucial.

The AMI points to the decisive role of information and the media in the day-to-day life of any citizen. In this sense, it is an essential ingredient to be able to talk about freedom of expression and information. The works of [Pérez-Tornero and Varis \(2010\)](#); [Pérez-Tornero et al. \(2018\)](#) or [Tejedor et al. \(2018\)](#), among others, emphasize the importance of promoting digital literacy that goes beyond the instrumental or technical stage to cover aspects related to the critical use of the media.

### 3. Materials and Methods

The methodological starting point of this research transfers the mixed design proposed by [Tejedor et al. \(2020b\)](#), wherein the authors analyzed the information on the COVID-19 pandemic and COVID-19 vaccines on 72 covers of printed newspapers through a comparative study in the most critical year of the pandemic: 2020. In addition, the work of [Penarrieta et al. \(2014\)](#) analyzed the contents of printed elements of a Peruvian newspaper using the mixed method at a descriptive level.

To select the news, the constructed week method was used ([Riff et al. 2014](#)). This technique is based on condensing a stratified–systematic sample of each of the media. In each of them, a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday of each of the months was randomly selected, ensuring that each month of the year was represented by at least one day, and avoiding the overrepresentation of a particular month. Eighteen dates were obtained during the 12 months of 2020.

This study excluded the following types of news: infomercial, entertainments section, horoscope, weather, gaming and social life sections. In this research, the front pages of the main newspapers from the United Kingdom, France, Spain and the United States were analyzed from a matrix made up of 15 variables and 64 categories which were extracted mainly inductively. The study focuses on eight reference newspapers in the countries indicated (two per country). The analyzed newspapers are: The Times and The Guardian (United Kingdom), Le Monde and Le Figaro (France), El País and El Mundo (Spain), and The New York Times and The Washington Post (United States).

These newspapers were selected according to the data provided by the “2019 Newspaper Web Rankings” official document developed by the International Media and Newspapers, which is an international directory and search engine focusing on worldwide newspapers, and which includes 7000 newspapers, ranked by web popularity in 200 countries ([International Media & Newspapers 2019](#)).

The work, of a descriptive nature, uses a mixed method (qualitative and quantitative) based on content analysis, complemented with direct observation and hemerographic analysis as the main techniques. The first technique focused on the analysis of the different elements that make up the physical design of the cover from the matrix table designed in the framework of the research. On the other hand, the hemerographic analysis served to describe the content of the elements of each of the covers from analysis sheets for texts, headlines and photographs designed after the bibliographic review of studies close to this object of study. The data processing was carried out through descriptive statistics planning with the SPSS software. The analyzed newspapers, selected according to their importance, scope and trajectory in each country, are shown in [Figure 1](#).

The research takes as a unit of analysis the news on the front pages of newspapers, conceived as a fundamental element that synthesizes the content offered by the medium and that offers a hierarchy of information. The cover is a determining factor to attract the attention of readers as the space that exposes the formal characteristics and content of a

medium, being a privileged place where a public identity is built and that is recognized by its readers (Sunkel 2002) (see Table 1).



Figure 1. Analyzed newspapers.

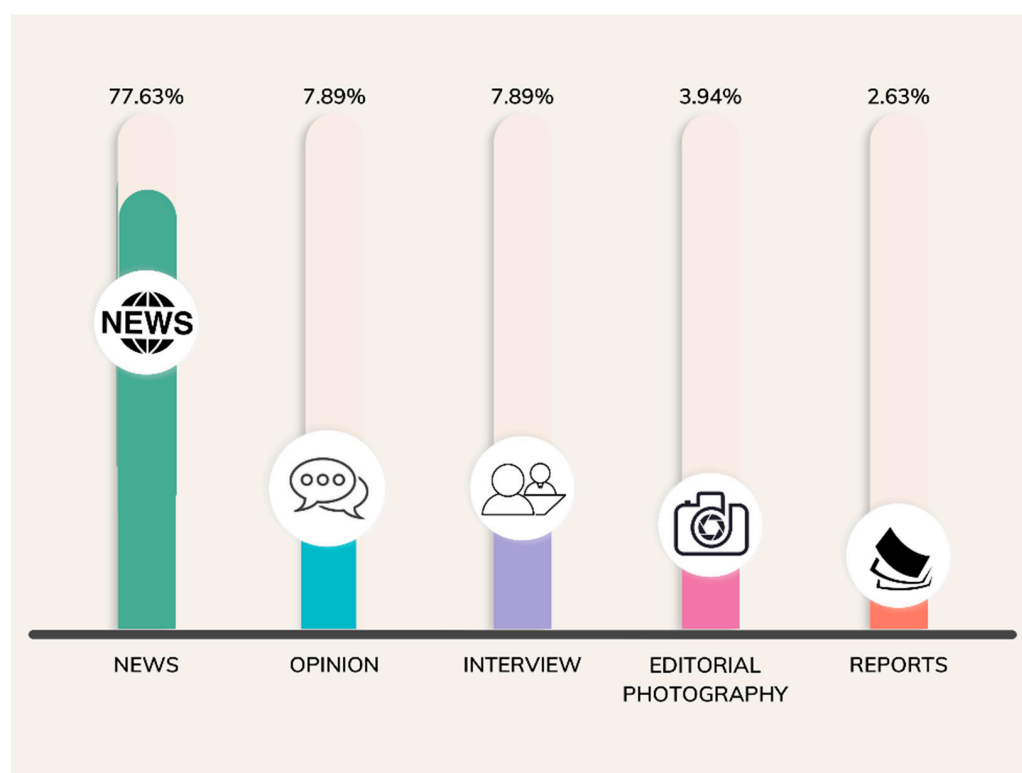
Table 1. Analysis parameters.

Cover Pieces	Total Number
Typology of pieces	News, interview, chronicle, report, editorial, opinion article, brief news, editorial photo, vignette.
Position on the page	Top left, top right, entire bottom area, bottom left, bottom right, entire top area, entire page.
Predominant type of information	Data or interpretation.
Information entities	National nonpolitical entities, national political entities, geographical entities, foreign political entities, foreign nonpolitical entities, others.
Characters in the information	National politicians, international politicians, citizens, health personnel, researcher, scientist, patient, public figures.
Headline type	Informative, expressive or appellative.
Speech act type	Direct, indirect or partially direct quotation.
Verb type	Narrative, interpretation (low), interpretation (high), perlocutives.
Photography	Number of photographs.
Photography type	Color or black and white.
Photo function	Documentary or artistic.
Characters in the photographs	National and international political figures, health personnel, researcher—scientist, affected—patient, citizens, public figures, others.

Source: elaborated by the authors based on López (1995); Cabrera (2000); Salaverria and Noci (2003); Parra and Álvarez (2004); Boczkowski (2004); Pavlik (2005); Verón and Sabés (2008); Tejedor (2010); Marrone (2018); Cobo (2012).

#### 4. Results

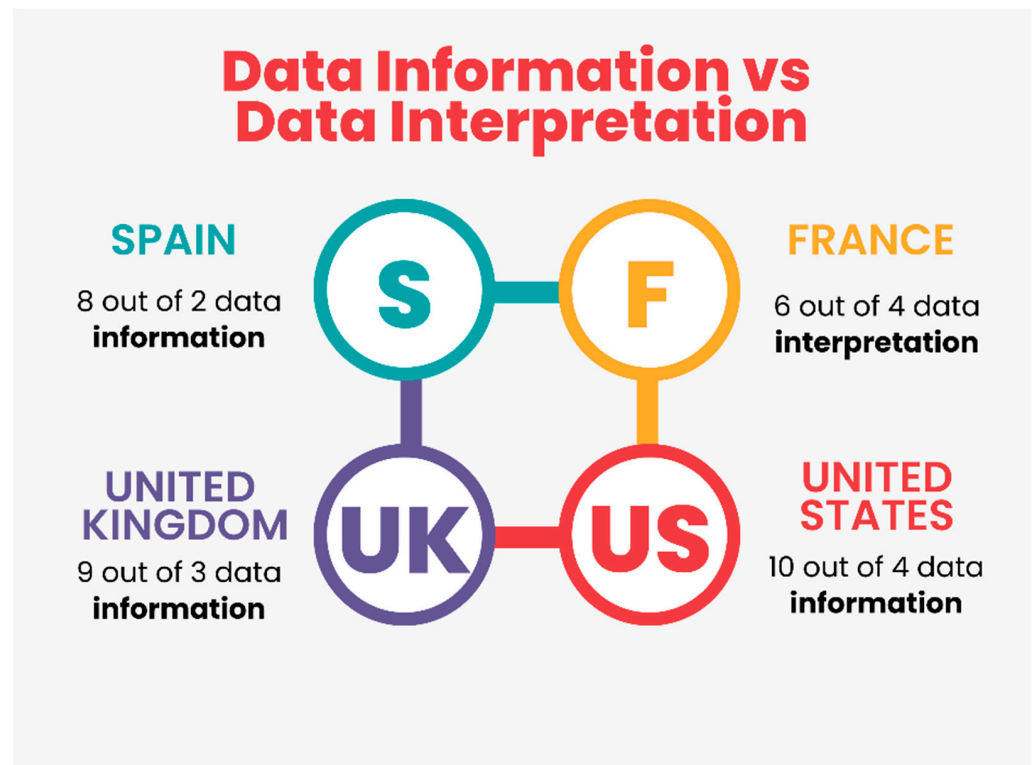
In the case of news coverage of COVID-19, journalistic genres, strictly informative in nature, have been the most numerous. The informative briefs, which condense the information in a title or line without photographs or any other complementary element, are the most predominant type of piece. For its part, the news occupies the second place. This data denotes the commitment to informative content and, specifically, to brief information. Vignettes, reports and opinion articles are the other types of genres that are most abundant on the front pages of newspapers. The editorial photo brings together a total of 3.94% cases, an aspect that affects the prominence conferred on the photographic component in the daily coverage of the pandemic. In this sense, there is a commitment to informative messages that are very concise and lacking in context, an aspect that invites us to reflect on the reason for this type of content and its relationship with the current user profile of the media (see Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Journalistic genres in the information about COVID-19.

Another aspect of great interest is the type of information that appears in the pieces that inform about the vaccine. The study has analyzed if these conferred greater importance on the data or if, on the contrary, they made an interpretation of them, avoiding that the reader had to face alone figures, statistics or other numerical contents. In this sense, countries such as the United States or the United Kingdom where the impact of COVID-19 has been very high, have a predominance of data information compared to those based on an interpretation of them. In the case of the United States, the difference between one approach and the other is especially relevant to the extent that it exceeds it by more than double. In Spain, the data have greater prominence, but on a smaller universe. France is the only country where a predominance of interpretive news is detected compared to those articles that are limited to offering statistical figures and percentages (see Figure 3).





**Figure 3.** Data information vs. data interpretation.

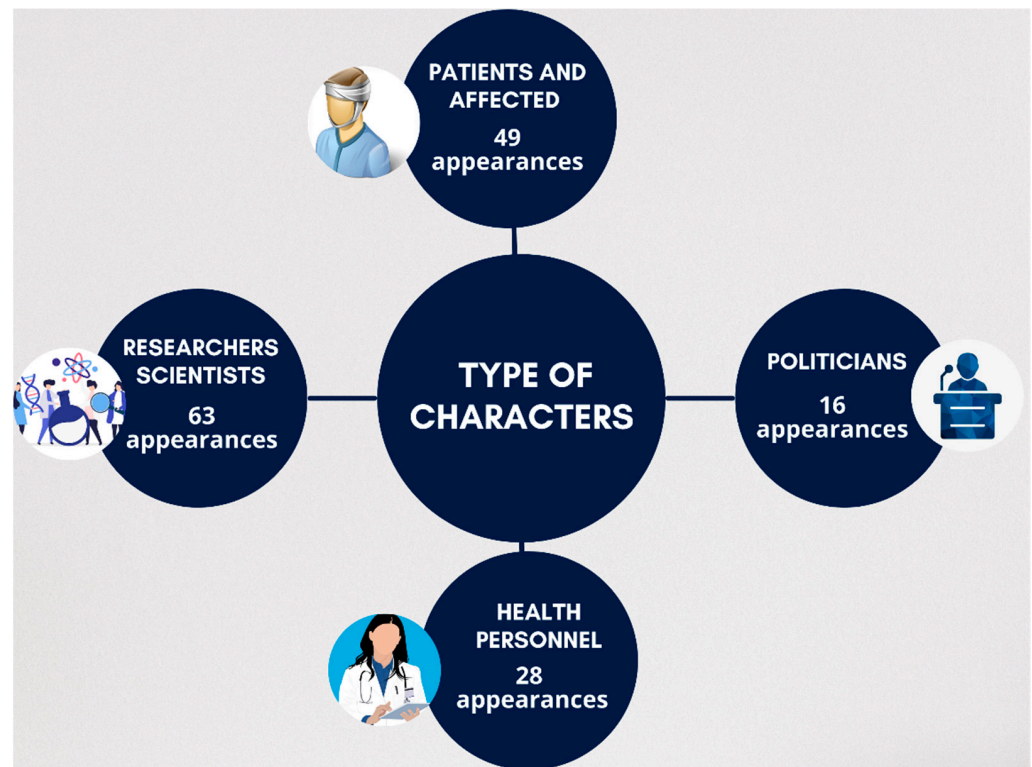
In the case of coverage of the pandemic, the informative pieces that appeared on the front pages of the newspapers corresponded to content related to COVID-19, with a predominance of data. The United Kingdom and Spain are the countries with the highest presence of news about COVID-19 on their front pages, while the United States had the least. It is striking that the latter country has come to occupy the first positions in the number of infected or, at least, very high rates of cases. In this way, the study identifies an initial stage that, at an informative level, did not confer a leading role on the health crisis.

The study has also analyzed the type of characters that appeared in the cover stories that addressed the subject of the vaccine. This aspect is crucial to identify what type of characters are linked to the news about the vaccine and, at the same time, to establish whether there was a difference between the different countries analyzed. In all the information on the vaccine, the presence of figures from the public sphere far exceeds the anonymous figures. In relation to this, it is observed that researchers and scientists are the profile of characters that has had the greatest prominence. Then, patients and affected have occupied second place, followed by health personnel and politicians (see Figure 4).

In the informational treatment of COVID-19, national political figures have been the ones that have occupied a greater presence together with citizens. These data reveal the prominence of the political sphere in crisis management and the importance that citizens, as the main affected by the pandemic, have been absorbing in the news coverage of the crisis. The low presence of health personnel and researchers or scientists indicates that the importance given to this type of profiles, especially the first of them, does not materialize in their presence within the information on COVID-19. In the same way, 9.25% corresponding to those affected and patients come to point out that, despite being the main affected by the pandemic, their informative role has been negligible. International political figures have barely been present, an aspect that results in the coverage of the pandemic from a proximity approach. Even public figures have surpassed political leaders from outside the country.

Referring to the coverage of the vaccine, the study identifies a trend in the group of countries to confer a greater presence on their covers to researchers and scientists, on the one hand, and to patients and affected people, on the other. In this sense, except for France

where health personnel and patients or affected persons are the type of characters with the greatest exposure on their covers, the rest of the countries coincide in giving scientists and researchers a prominent role. Of these, the United Kingdom has the highest number of appearances of this type of profile.



**Figure 4.** Type of characters that appeared in the cover stories.

The worldwide comparative analysis of the typology of characters present in the information about COVID-19 on the front pages confirms the importance of national politicians vis-à-vis the citizens themselves. Health personnel, scientists, researchers, patients and affected people do not have a prominent importance in the world radiography, which continues to be absorbed by the politicians of each country. In the United Kingdom, health personnel have a presence of 2% and in the United States, 7%. Dealing with patients or affected, in Spain they occupy only 3% of the total information, while in the United Kingdom it amounts to 9%. These countries give less importance on their covers to those directly affected. In addition, Spain is the country where public figures have had the greatest presence in information about COVID-19. On the contrary, the United States is the country that gives the least importance to international political leaders, who occupy 3% of the total of the informative pieces on its front pages. France and Spain are the countries where this type of person has the greatest presence. Politicians absorb a prominent preeminence in the news coverage of the pandemic, while health personnel and scientists are relegated to a lesser level of importance. This aspect affects the need to reflect on the role that media companies confer on the different characters in a story, as well as the processes of invisibility of certain groups.

The location of the information on the vaccine is another important element to analyze. In this sense, the area in the upper right is the one with the greatest prominence. This part, in the field of cover graphic design, acquires an outstanding importance insofar as it is the space on the first page where the user directs his gaze and attention first. The upper left part, which would be the second in importance, had a total of 15 cases; surpassed only by the lower left (with 16 cases). Added to this is that, in 10 cases, the news completely occupied the top of the page. This aspect denotes a disparity in the hierarchical criteria of

the information that, although they report the same topic, occupy different positions on the front page. Therefore, it is possible to affirm that the importance given by the media to the subject of the vaccine has been varying and occupying different areas according to its media evolution. Only one case was detected wherein the information on the vaccine occupied the entire page, excluding other types of information and concentrating the entire information focus (see Figure 5).

## Location of the information



Figure 5. Location of the information about vaccines.

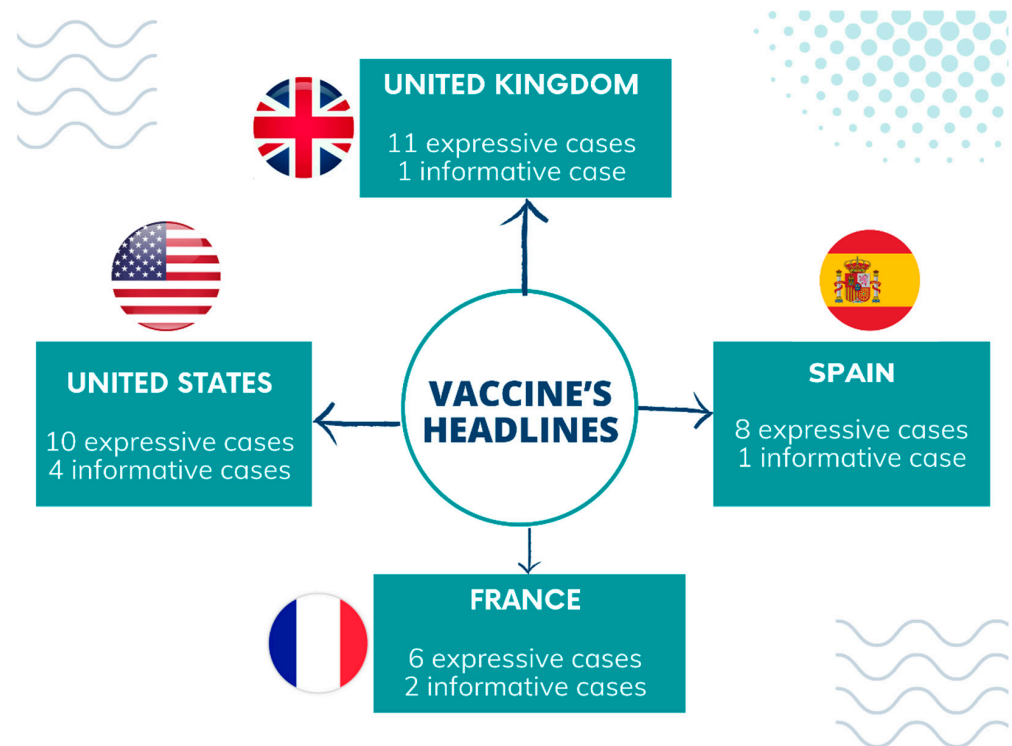
In the case of COVID-19 coverage, the area in the upper right part, together with the area in the upper left part, concentrate a greater presence of pieces on the pandemic. These two data, together with 8% of the covers that were entirely dedicated to the subject, indicate that in 54% of the cases analyzed, the information was placed at the top of the covers. The location in the lower part (both on the left, on the right or in the whole of that area) brings together 36% of the information. Thus, the difference between the two percentages does not indicate very wide differences. The coverage of the pandemic was, in general, a news event considered of great relevance by the media as a whole, an aspect that is justified by the global scope of this health crisis (see Figure 6).



Figure 6. Location of the information about COVID-19.



The study has given special importance to the type of information that appeared in the headlines. The degree constitutes a decisive aspect in the information process due to its ability to establish a hierarchy, on the one hand; and for its role of synthesis on the information presented. In the coverage of the topic of vaccines, expressive headlines predominated, followed by informative ones. Expressive headlines stand out for their evocative mission about an event already known to the reader and for lacking grammatical structure. Basically, they emphasize words or expressions. On the other hand, the informative news exposes a fact with an objective frame. They are characterized by stating the subject of the information and the main action of the event (generally responding to the 'what' and 'who' questions). The news headlines opt for grammatical structures that clearly identify the subject and the action carried out. The appellatives present a single case. The comparative study of the subject of the vaccine allows us to point out that the United Kingdom, the United States and Spain are the countries where there is a greater difference between the predominance of expressive and informative headlines. In the case of the United States, it concentrated a greater number of expressive headlines (see Figure 7).



**Figure 7.** Analysis of vaccine headlines.

Regarding the verbs of the headlines about COVID-19, the study denotes a predominance of story verbs (affirm, communicate or declare), followed by strong interpretive verbs (threaten, accuse, insult or disqualify), weak interpretive verbs (warn, assure or insist) and perlocutionary verbs, which seek to achieve a reaction by saying something (such as surprise, shock, convince or dissuade). In relation to this, the United States showed a great presence of perlocutionary verbs, aimed at generating a reaction in the public. In the case of Spain, no case of weak interpretive verbs appeared, an aspect that invites reflection insofar as they are verbs close to the type of warning messages typical of a health crisis such as that caused by COVID-19 (see Figure 8).

In the case of the topic of the vaccine, there was a predominance of high interpretive verbs (threaten, accuse, insult or disqualify), an aspect which denotes a marked positioning of the media around the announcement of the vaccine. The story verbs (affirm, communicate or declare) were in second place and showed a significant number of news stories about the vaccine that tried not to position themselves around the aforementioned advertisement.

The number of perlocutionary verbs, which are characterized by trying to reach a reaction by saying something (such as surprising, impacting, convincing or dissuading) were very small and only five cases were detected, while weak interpretive verbs (warn, assure or insist) were testimonials (with a single case). For its part, the United States was the country with the highest number of story verbs (see Figure 9).

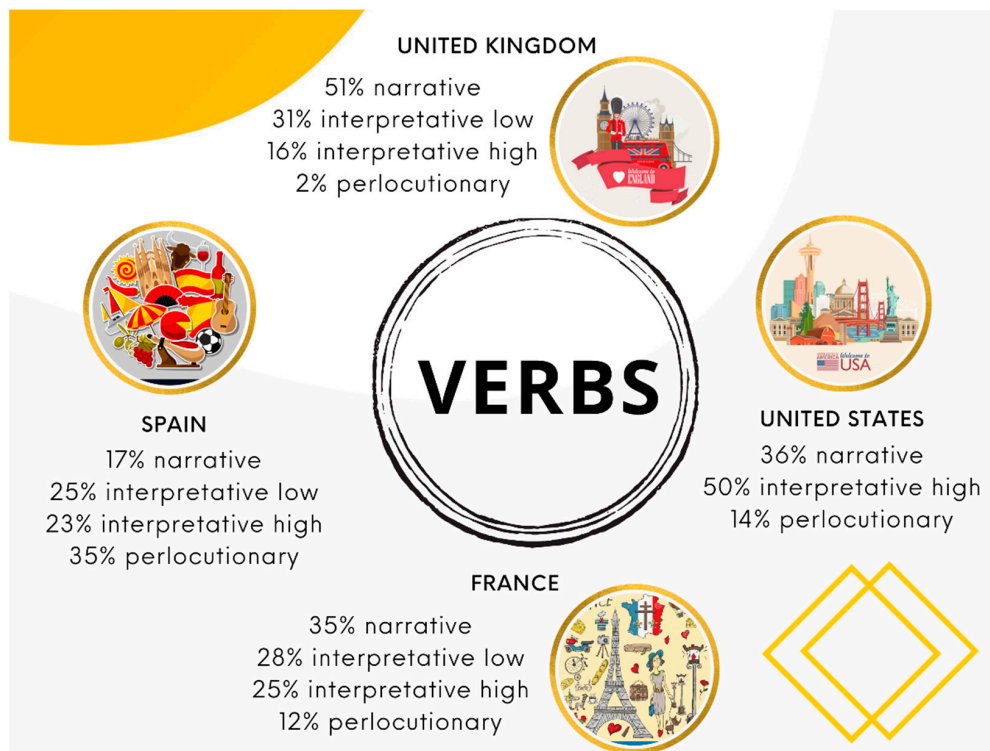


Figure 8. Analysis of COVID-19's verbs.

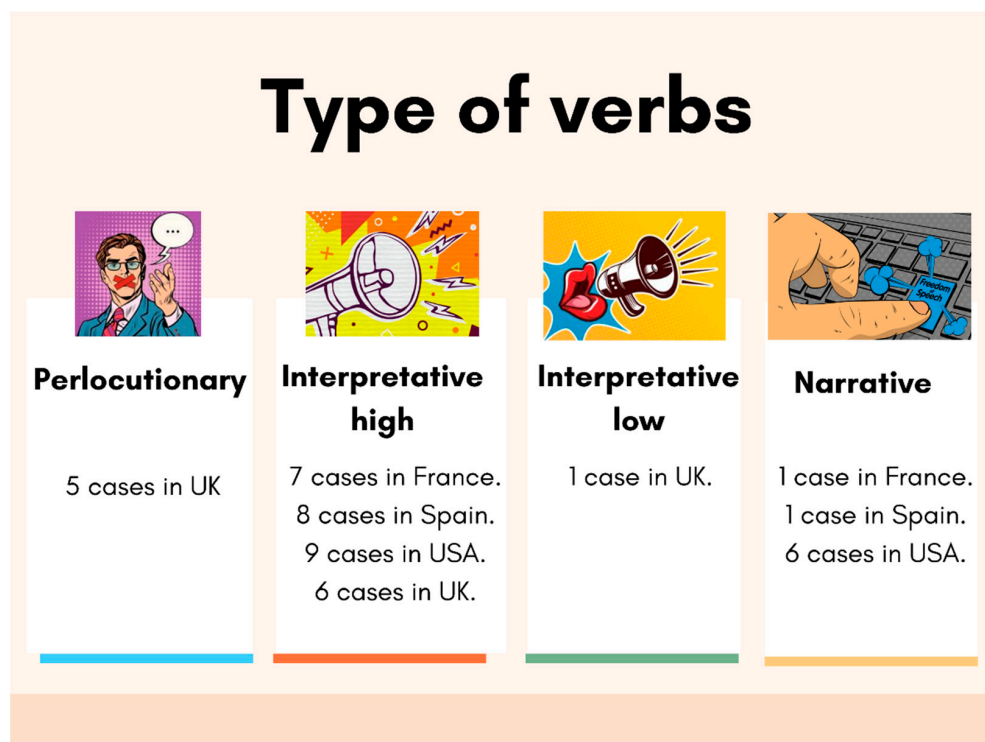


Figure 9. Analysis of vaccine's verbs.

The presence of the photograph on the vaccine is practically testimonial. Photographs appeared in only 12 of the analyzed news items, most of them in color and with a clearly illustrative function, without the will to provide additional information to the piece in which they were inserted. In the case of COVID-19 covers, a total of 537 photographs were identified. Of these, only four were in black and white. Except for 29 which were of an artistic nature, the rest were documentary photographs. Spain was the country with the largest number of photographs on its covers. For their part, and together with the journalistic tradition of paper newspapers, France and the United Kingdom were the countries with the least images on the front page.

## 5. Discussion

During this crisis, the influence of framing managed to mobilize public attention since it has caused 78% of citizens to inform themselves more than before. Fifty-two percent do it three or more times a day, when before the crisis they only did it 28%, and 90% report at least once a day about COVID-19 (Cantero de Julián et al. 2020). This increase in the consumption of news shows that, in critical situations of risk to human life, citizens demand key information (Casero-Ripollés 2020); however, society does not want any type of content but opts for identified information sources and with extensive trajectories. In fact, the COVID-19 crisis revitalized the traditional media as their news coverage is perceived more positively and is linked to credibility and trust (Cantero de Julián et al. 2020). In this research, the news headlines predominated, which shows the effort of the media to inform the public of the pandemic through simple structures and, at the same time, point out the large volume of data and news derived from the news coverage of the pandemic. In second position were the names, characterized by drawing the reader's attention to partially known events. This presence can be justified by alluding to the continuity in time of the pandemic and, therefore, to the familiarization of the public with said phenomenon. These are headlines that involved a higher level of detail than expressive ones. In this regard, Spain was the country with the highest number of expressive headlines (see Figure 10).

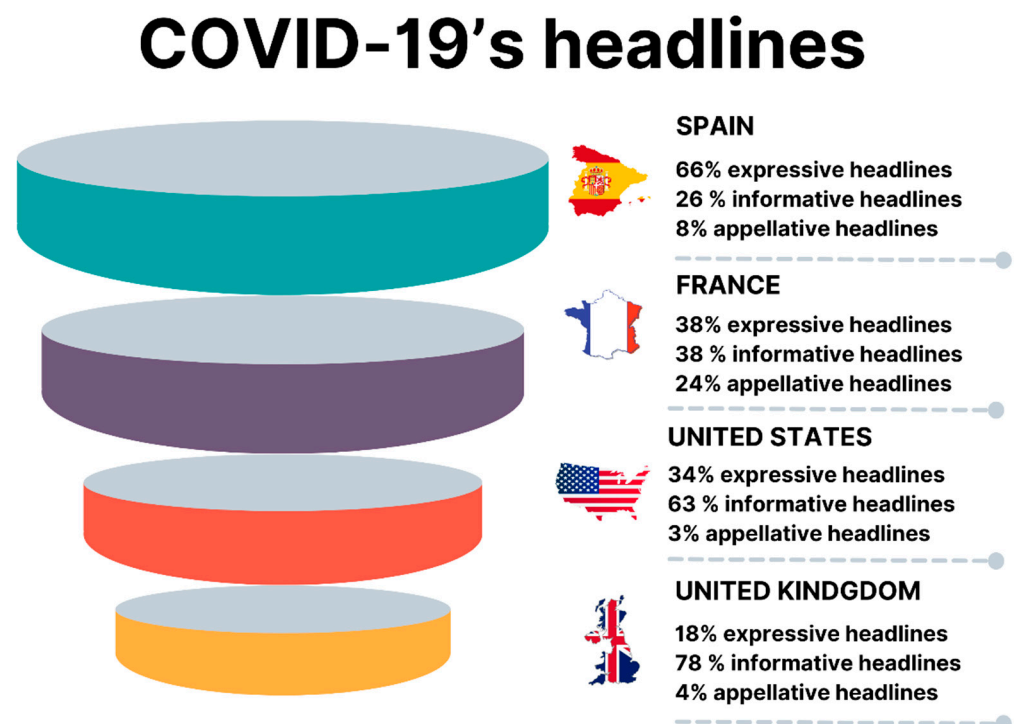
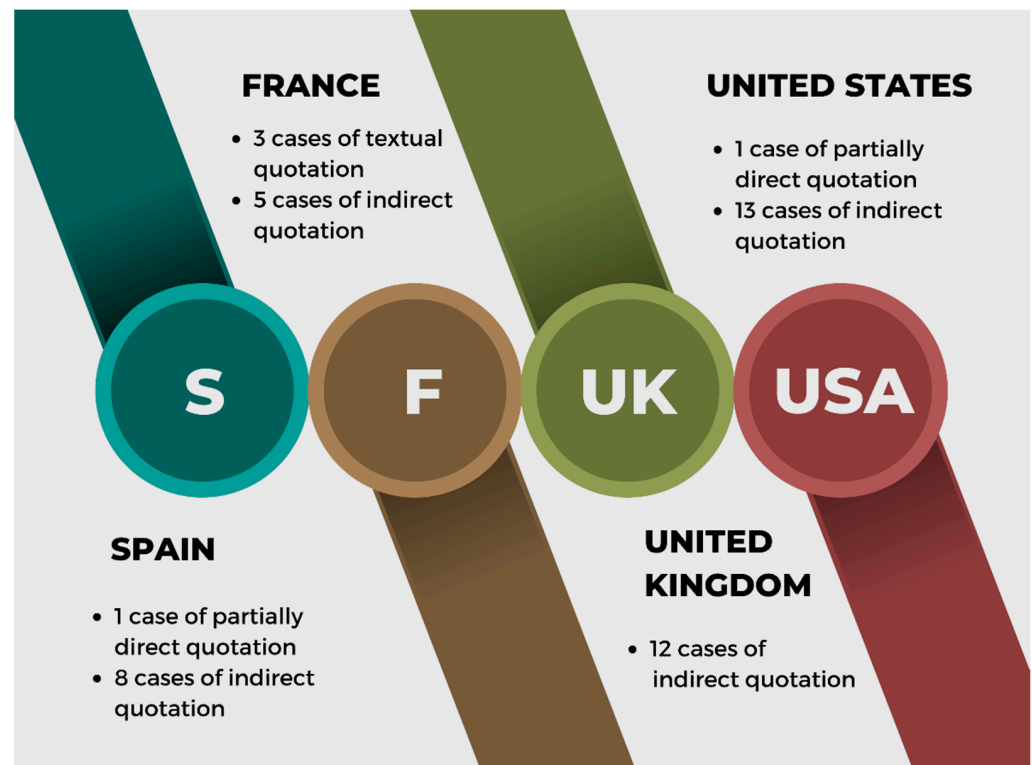


Figure 10. Analysis of COVID-19's headlines.

In the informational treatment of COVID-19, the headlines with direct or indirect quotes were the most numerous, an aspect that affects the delicate coverage that the pandemic has introduced and, especially, the importance of locating any statement in the mouth of a specific source. In the case of coverage of vaccine covers, a predominance of headlines with indirect quotes was detected. This aspect denotes a willingness to attribute the information to a source (person), but in a gentler way than through direct citation headlines. Those of indirect citation, followed by those of partially direct citations, which seek to emphasize some expression (fragment of a phrase or word) of the issuer, were the most present in the set of newspapers analyzed (see Figure 11).



**Figure 11.** Analysis of quotes in COVID-19's headlines.

The media have played a decisive role in the management and knowledge of COVID-19 with respect to information, perceptions and decision-making (Lubens 2015); that is, they have become the main source of information on risk perception (Major and Atwood 2004). However, the need to simplify reality can generate biases and misperceptions (Herranz de la Casa and Cantero de Julián 2019), which is why the media are required to resume long-term reports in order to return to the path of contextualized investigative journalism, beyond an informative frame. In this research, the limited presence of information about the vaccine was observed on the front pages of the analyzed newspapers. Most appealed to the use of notes over editorials and opinion pieces. The country that gave the most publicity on the subject was the United Kingdom, which became the first country to approve a vaccine against COVID-19. In the cover images, its protagonists were scientists, health personnel and patients. At a general level, the photographs were of the testimonial type, with an illustrative function. Concerning the headlines, in the United Kingdom, the United States and Spain, expressive and informative headlines predominated. With respect to the use of citations, a predominance of headlines with indirect citations was detected, referencing sources such as scientists, ministers of health, health personnel and experts. Interpretive verbs were mostly used in the headlines, an aspect that denotes a marked positioning of the media around the vaccine announcement. In addition, the newspapers sought to sensitize and make readers aware of the importance of getting vaccinated, demystifying conspiracy

theories and pseudoscience positions that put the project of a planetary immunization against the virus at risk. To do this, they showed the protagonists behind these medical findings and reported in a clear and understandable way how the vaccine works and its side effects within the body. The official spokesmen of the Ministries of Health and Sanitation, as well as scientists and laboratory researchers, were given wide openness.

The results of the study are transversal to the new line of research of COVID-19. Thus, we have different scientific publications such as [Xu et al. \(2022\)](#), [Piltch-Loeb et al. \(2021\)](#), [Ghazali et al. \(2020\)](#) and [Asogwa \(2021\)](#), which have also analyzed the journalistic framing of newspaper front pages from an exploratory study and have applied computational methods for their analysis. In this investigation, with reference to the type of journalistic genre, this denotes the importance given to a topic by a medium and, at the same time, the degree of prominence given to it in the thematic agenda. In 77.63% of cases, information about the vaccine was presented through news, the genre par excellence of informative journalism. Next were the interviews and opinion articles, respectively. Editorial photography and reports were other journalistic genres used, although to a lesser extent. It is equally striking that cartoons, briefs, editorials and chronicles were not used in any of the cases. The study therefore detects a clear prominence of the strictly informative pieces, while the interpretive and opinion texts, which would be of great value for approaching the subject, were not used.

In relation to the information coverage of COVID-19, a series of dynamics and inertias shared by countries from different sociogeographical enclaves have been reproduced. The study of the media coverage of this pandemic, based on the analysis of the types of journalistic texts used to disseminate these contents on the covers of paper editions, warns of a particular practice on the part of the world's newspapers that respond to proposals shared. The predominance of characters and institutions and the analysis of the photograph on the cover opens, at the same time, a line of research of interest in monitoring the information generated by the media around the coronavirus pandemic. In this regard, 48% of the informative pieces corresponded to content related to COVID-19. Although it is a relevant figure, it does not speak of an exclusive presence on the issue of the pandemic. The journalistic genres of an informative nature have been the most used, with the brief informative being the most predominant resource. Relative to the location of the information, the area in the upper right, together with that in the upper left, concentrated the largest number of pieces on the pandemic. This aspect denotes a desire to place the information in the area of greatest visual impact on the cover. Likewise, the comparative analysis of the typology of characters on the covers about COVID-19 confirms the importance of national politicians in front of the citizens themselves. It is even observed that newspapers leave aside their neutral-objective stance, trying to influence, in a direct way, the citizen perception and mobilizing the reader's action about the vaccine issue, as it is identified in the works of [Boychev \(2021\)](#), [Gehrau et al. \(2021\)](#), [Rzyski et al. \(2021\)](#) and [Saiful Islam et al. \(2021\)](#).

## 6. Conclusions

The study allows us to conclude that the qualitative analysis of content at the journalistic level must be the subject of a deep review and reformulation process. It is important to continue researching the situation of the pandemic crisis and its informative approach in the different world media. Therefore, as mentioned in the works by [Calvo-Calvo \(2014\)](#) and [Gómez de la Hoz and Padilla \(2015\)](#), this is a field of study that needs new and renewed research.

The study raises, as possible future developments, the relevance of researching the digital and media literacy of readers, owing to the fact that communicative and persuasive commitment of newspapers will depend on the ability of the audience to successfully decode the content offered, as suggested by the studies of various authors in relation to the importance of media literacy ([Romero-Rodríguez et al. 2015, 2016](#)).



In an infodemic context, as the WHO has pointed out, it is striking that the presence of spaces or content focused on the pandemic (characteristics, advice or recommendations in case of contagion) does not occur in its entirety, which should lead to newspapers continuing to monitor the issue of COVID-19 and vaccines, which would help to have a better-informed citizenry (Tejedor et al. 2020a). This aspect, considering the postulates of Hedy, Wald et al. (2007), should lead to reflection on the importance of health communication so that citizens can be informed and make appropriate decisions.

In conclusion, there is a need to project the line of research based on communication and health, as argue Jha et al. (2008), with the aim of delving into the communicative aspects that, especially in the current context, contribute to facing the threat of the infodemic that has emerged in the scenario of the new normality in a highly digitized society.

One of the limitations of the study was the choice of the nonprobabilistic statistical sample by convenience of the six countries participating in the research. The authors consider in the future to continue working on the agenda of setting research line and to extend the sample of countries by categorizing its analysis at the geographical, linguistic and political levels.

As a final consideration, it is urged that studies continue working in the line of cover content analysis, a recurring theme in communication sciences research in the last 50 years (Kayser 1974; Arnold 1984; Evans 1978, 1984; Bogart 1985; El-Mir et al. 1995; López 2001; Davara et al. 2004; Cunha da Silva 2006; Burgueño 2008; Núñez-Romero 2009); it is necessary to deepen the content analyses and symbolic elaborations of the covers in order to make visible the forms of representation in the discourse and the media company ideology that is exposed there (Tusa et al. 2017).

Finally, this global health crisis must be considered as an unprecedented space for transversal research in all areas of knowledge, thus demonstrating the transfer value of science and its social contribution. For academia, COVID-19 has meant an opportunity to redefine scientific dissemination in a society that demands more health information every day.

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