ARTICLE

SUPERHERO MOVIES IN THE GENERALIST AND SPECIALIZED MEDIA:

Marvel and DC in El País, The New York Times, Espinof and Comic Book Movie

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ABSTRACT – Superhero cinema has become one of the pillars of pop culture that generates a great media impact. This paper aims to analyse its treatment in journalism, specifically of Marvel and DC live action films in the generalist media El País and The New York Times (NYT), as well as in the specialised media Espinof and Comic Book Movie (CBM). To achieve this objective, fifteen texts published between 2017 and 2023 in these media are analysed. The results show more differences than similarities in the way generalist media deal with this information than specialised media. The former continue to be rooted in the traditional method of doing journalism with dense, formal and structured information, while the latter are committed to faster and less elaborate coverage, also with fewer sources and a more colloquial tone.
Key words: News processing. specialised press. Comic strips. Journalism. News analysis.

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FILMES DE SUPER-HERÓIS NA IMPRENSA GENERALISTA E ESPECIALIZADA: Marvel e DC no El País, The New York Times, Espinof e Comic Book Movie

RESUMO – O cinema de super-heróis se tornou um dos pilares da cultura pop que gera o maior impacto na mídia. Este artigo busca analisar seu tratamento no jornalismo, especificamente dos filmes live action da Marvel e da DC nas mídias generalistas El País e The New York Times (NYT), e nas mídias especializadas Espinof e Comic Book Movie (CBM). Para atingir esse objetivo, foram analisados quinze textos publicados entre 2017 e 2023 nessas mídias. Observamos mais diferenças do que semelhanças na forma como a mídia generalista lida com essas informações do que a mídia especializada. A primeira continua enraizada no método tradicional de jornalismo, com informações densas, formais e estruturadas, enquanto a segunda está comprometida com uma cobertura mais rápida e menos elaborada, também com menos fontes e um tom mais coloquial.
Palavras-chave: Tratamento informativo. Imprensa especializada. Quadrinhos (histórias em quadrinhos). Jornalismo. Análise de notícias.

EL CINE DE SUPERHÉROES EN LOS MEDIOS ESCRITOS GENERALISTAS Y ESPECIALIZADOS: Marvel y DC en El País, The New York Times, Espinof y Comic Book Movie

RESUMEN – El cine de superhéroes se ha convertido en uno de los pilares de la cultura pop que más impacto mediático genera. Este trabajo busca analizar su tratamiento en el periodismo, en concreto, de las películas live action de Marvel y DC en los medios generalistas El País y The New York Times (NYT), y en los medios especializados Espinof y Comic Book Movie (CBM). Para lograr este objetivo, se analizan quince textos publicados entre 2017 y 2023 en estos medios de comunicación. Se observan más diferencias que similitudes en la forma que tienen los generalistas de tratar esta información respecto a la que tienen los especializados. Los primeros continúan arraigados al método tradicional de hacer periodismo con información densa, formal y estructurada, mientras que los segundos apuestan por una cobertura más rápida y menos elaborada, también con menos fuentes y un tono más coloquial.
Palabras clave: Tratamiento informativo. Prensa especializada. Comic. Periodismo. Análisis de noticias.

1 Introduction

Superheroes are an essential part of today's society as one of the most distinct pillars of modern culture (Caño Díaz, 2022), due to their presence in a plethora of entertainment media including entertainment channels (movies, video games, comics, novels, etc.), but also because they are a common topic in the press and journals (generalist and specialized).

The development of both the internet and the information and communication technologies (ICT) has created a new paradigm in which information is created and expanded relentlessly. This has led to a change in the population's consumption habits regarding

audiovisual content, and following this, the readaptation of traditional, digital and social media journalism, which continues to influence society (Segado-Boj et al., 2022) and, in many cases, turns out to be the vehicle for information along with social media per se. The journalistic and the sociocultural landscape are constantly feeding back into each other (Serra, 2019) and enhancing the characteristics of other environments, such as those inherent to the entertainment industry.

The multiplicity of formats, platforms, and media has increased transmedia strategies and attracted more users who pay to enjoy exclusive, original, and even traditional content. The seventh art is one of the main protagonists in this scene, in part thanks to the increase of shared cinematic universes that establish a canon by expanding their story through different channels.

The evolution that superhero cinema has undergone from its beginnings to the last decades has been remarkable. From the adjustment of the superhero to the important social changes that took place throughout the 20th century (Johnson, 2014), or the change of the stereotype of the protagonist superhero and/or his companions (Wanzo, 2010; Nama, 2011; Omanga, 2016; Brown, 2022; Killian, 2023), to the generations of authors joining the industry (Round, 2010) or the incorporation of diverse and/or socially topical themes (Hudoshnyk & Krupskyi, 2022; Mangiavillano, 2023). In 2008, a turning point occurred with the popular consolidation of the genre, led by DC and Marvel (acquired in 2009 by Disney – Calandro, 2023), which has resulted in a long trajectory of films since then along with an increase in the film production of this genre (Tetik, 2022), as well as an interest in establishing a relation between this genre and other subjects (Costa & Orrico, 2016; Castro, 2019; Silva Filho et al., 2021; Vargas & Gomes, 2022; Pavarina, 2023). This aforementioned development had a significant impact on journalism and society, in addition to the film industry itself.

Comic strips and the press have been linked since their beginnings. From the mid-nineteenth century, when newspapers began to incorporate comic strips (daily or on Sundays), until years later, when publications included information on film adaptations of comics and printed graphic novels. Superhero cinema has been part of the contents of traditional generalist journalism, and in the same way it has also been included as an object of information in specialized

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journalism (Fernández del Moral, 2004; Meneses Fernández, 2007; Ronda & Alcaide, 2010), reaching the birth of comic journalism (López-Hidalgo & López-Redondo, 2021) and, also, from the creative perspective of comics, publications understood as journalistic comics (Matos Agudo, 2017a; González Cabeza, 2017) or, also, the "comic-report" (Melero Domingo, 2012; Sacco, 2016).

Media promotion is one of the main tools film production and distribution companies use to advertise their creations. These actions seek to generate information related to the production that will later appear in the media. Press conferences, invitations to attend the filming extended to different outlets, or simply sending dossiers and promotional material to newsrooms are the most common ways of garnering media attention (Casado et al., 2011).

These practices can jeopardize professional autonomy, which is associated with independence, critical thinking skills, and the veracity of journalists (Splichal & Sparks, 1994), because they can be influenced by advertising and economic pressures when writing news. This problem has been present since the beginning of the profession. It continues to be present in the new digital setting, where the dictatorship of the click and the desire to position narratives favorable to public or private sector advertisers have the most sway over editorial decisions in newsrooms (Arroyave Cabrera & Garcés-Prettel, 2023). In this changing environment, the importance of journalistic judgment is reaffirmed as the ethical principle of the profession paramount to addressing the limitations that may affect professional autonomy.

In the current context of multiple papers' mastheads and the rise of superhero cinema (Ortiz Hernández, 2020), this paper arises from the following research questions: will superhero films be treated differently in generalist journals than in the specialized press[1]? Will there be differences in approach, tone, and journalists' standpoints, sources, or information density?

The hypothesis assumes that there will indeed be differences in the treatment of information depending on the type of written media since both generalist and specialized media are involved. It is understood that, among others, there will be differences in terms of tone, information density, and sources.

In order to evaluate this hypothesis, this paper seeks to analyze the impact and treatment of superhero movies in the general

and specialized press, as described in the following section.

This study is considered relevant and original because, although there have been several previous researches on cinema in the press (Sánchez Noriega, 2006), even on comics and the press (Matos Agudo, 2017b), earlier works alike the one presented here have not been found.

2 Methodology

For the development of the research, a multiple-case study (Zach, 2006) is applied, since the material to be analyzed is what has been published on live-action films about Marvel and DC Comics characters due to they are the two publishers that lead the superhero hierarchy, in the general written media El País and The New York Times (NYT), and in the specialized media Espinof and Comic Book Movie (CBM), selected for their editorial prestige, as well as for readership data.

The sample publications to be analyzed is made up of the publications included in table 1. Three topics are treated in the form of news in the different media (except for one that is not covered by The New York Times) and one publication in the form of an interview in order to analyze its informative treatment.

Table 1
Materials to be analyzed

	News #1 - Ike Perlmutter's dismissal
Espinof	New bombshell at Marvel: controversial Ike Perlmutter, the executive who sold the highest-grossing franchise in history to Disney for $4 billion, is fired (Meeks, 2023)
El País	Disney fires Ike Perlmutter, the man who brought Marvel back to life (Beauregard, 2023)
CBM	Disney Has Fired Marvel Entertainment Chairman Ike Perlmutter And Others (Wilding, 2023)
The NY Times	Disney Lays Off Ike Perlmutter, Chairman of Marvel Entertainment (Barnes, 2023)

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	News #2 - The Flash (2023) trailer premiere
Espinof	'The Flash' shatters the universe in new trailer and early reactions place it "among the best superhero movies ever made" (Loser, 2023)
El País	Maribel Verdú as the superhero's mother: second trailer for' 'The Flash' arrives (El País, 2023)
CBM	The Flash. Trailer Unleashes The Scarlet Speedster And Sees Michael Keaton's Batman Battle General Zod (Wilding, 2023)
The NY Times	[Not covered]
	News #3 - Spider-Man breaks box-office records
Espinof	'Spider-Man: No Way Home' sweeps international box office to become third-best opening of all time (López, 2021)
El País	'Spider-Man: No Way Home' blows up box office as in pre-pandemic times (Belinchón, 2021)
CBM	Spider-Man: No Way Home Crosses $1 Billion at the Box Office (Lovet, 2021)
The NY Times	'Spider-Man: No Way Home' Ensnares Audiences and Refills Studio Coffers (Barnes, 2021)
	Interview
Espinof	Zack Snyder: "I haven't seen the movie version of 'Justice League' and I don't think I ever will" (Vega, 2021)
El País	Tom Holland: how a boy who was bullied at school became Spider-Man (Ximénez de Sandoval, 2019)
CBM	James Gunn Reveals Why Nova Was Never in Guardians of the Galaxy (Exclusive) (Davis, 2022)
The NY Times	James Gunn, Guardian of the 'Guardians' Franchise (Itzkoff, 2017)

An analysis of the informative treatment will be carried out based on evaluating the parameters of informative quality according to the model proposed by Fernández del Moral (2007). However, it has been adapted ad hoc. The following stages and elements of analysis are included:

2.1 Macrostructural analysis

The macrostructural analysis includes the agenda and pluralism of information. In the first place, to study the news agenda (the topics of interest of each media outlet), the following items are observed:

- Headlines (what are they like?). We analyze whether the headlines are informative, catchy or creative and whether they include direct quotes or not.

- The sections (in which sections is this type of information located?). The section where the analyzed piece is located is of interest due to the approach that can be given to the information.

- Topics (do they relate to other current issues?). Mentioning only the section may be too broad, so it is necessary to narrow down the subject matter to focus on the approach. "Thematic aspect is of great importance in relation to most of the other parameters, since it is of little use to know the angle without referring to the topic in question" ["El aspecto temático tiene gran importancia en relación con la mayoría del resto de parámetros, pues de poco sirve saber el enfoque sin referirlo al tema en cuestión"] (Fernández del Moral, 2007, p. 22).

- Justification. It is related to relevance and information pluralism. Normally, the information is justified in the actuality of the news event, but it must be confirmed.

-The angle or orientation (approach). It is important to know the context in which the news is framed (according to the "Framing" theory). It is determined if it is only informative or if there could be a reactive, perspectivist, documentary, speculative (conjectural), etc. approach.

- Tone and standpoint. Tone can be relevant in conjunction with a standpoint. In relation to tone, it is usually formal, ironic, dramatic, and colloquial or playful. The journalist's standpoint can direct and guide the reading in a certain way so that it can be positive, negative or neutral.

- Sensationalism. Whether it is a sensationalist text or not.

- Sources. According to Fernández del Moral (2007, p. 23) "the analysis of sources is essential to gauge the professionalism of the reporter" ["el análisis de las fuentes es fundamental para calibrar la profesionalidad del informador"]. Therefore, we analyze here whether sources are explicitly included in the news items and which ones are.

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2.2 Microstructural analysis

Within the microstructural analysis, the accessibility of the message is studied. The following items are analyzed:

- Relationship between image and text. The contrast between the verbal and the audiovisual information will be observed (what is the relationship between image and text? Does the emphasis on the former generate confusion or information oversaturation?

- Context. Contextualization is relevant, so it is noted whether or not background information is included.

- Density. Comprehensibility and density are analyzed (a low information density could be interpreted as not serious or frivolous information).

- Adjectivization. It consists of the use and frequency of positive, negative or neutral adjectives.

- Quoting. Finally, the use of indirect and direct quotations is analyzed.

3 Results

Four different topics related to superhero movies have been selected to differentiate the treatment of information between two specialized media (Espinof and Comic Book Movie) and two generalist media (El País and The New York Times).

3.1 News #1 – Ike Perlmutter's dismissal

On March 29, 2023, news of Ike Perlmutter's dismissal came to light. He was the president of Marvel Entertainment for more than two decades and had a lot of influence regarding the decisions made in most of the Marvel Studios movies. The following table sets out the results of the analysis:

Table 2

Analysis of the news of Ike Perlmutter's dismissal

	Espinof	El País	CBM	The NY Times
Headline	Appellative	Appellative	Informative	Informative
Section	Modelos de negocio [Business models]	Cultura	Disney	Media
Relationship with other current issues	Disney cutbacks	Disney cutbacks, recent releases	Disney cutbacks	Disney cutbacks, recent releases
Justification	Current affairs	Current affairs	Current affairs	Current affairs
Approach	Informative	Informative	Perspectivist	Informative and documental
Tone & standpoint	Colloquial and ironic; Positive	Formal; Neutral	Formal; Neutral	Formal and ironic; Neutral
Sensationalism	"New bombshell"	No	No	No
Sources	No source is cited	Disney press release, quotes from media such as CNBC and books	The NY Times' sources	Disney sources, quotes to media outlets such as CNBC, The Wall Street Journal
Relationship between image and text	Collage of the main character with Marvel heroes in the background	Image of the main character with Donald Trump	Image of Marvel superheroes	Image of the main character getting off an airplane
Context	Background: How Perlmutter started at Marvel and his controversies.	Background: summary of Perlmutter's history at Marvel	Background: The Perlmutter controversies	Background: Perlmutter's complete Marvel career
Density	Low density: Low but enough facts	High density: long text, with enough facts and context	Low density: Low facts	High density: long text, with enough facts and context
Adjectivization	No	No	No	Irascible, relentless
Quoting	Direct and indirect quotes	Direct quotes	Indirect quotes	Direct quotes

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Regarding this first news item, it is observed that the headlines are similar in the four media, with the one from El País being more appealing and the one from Espinof being somewhat sensationalist ("New bombshell"). The article is located in the appropriate section of each specialized media (business models – Disney) and the usual section of the generalists (Culture – Media). The articles are all published on the same day that the news event arises and use the cutbacks in Disney as context. The informative approach predominates, although there is also a perspectival approach in CBM and an informative and documentary approach in The New York Times (NYT). The tone and writer's standpoint are neutral in El País and CBM, formal and ironic in NYT, and colloquially ironic and positive in Espinof. Except for Espinof, the other three media use their own private sources (NYT) or other media (CNBC, The Wall Street Journal) and Disney itself as a source. Except in CBM, which illustrates the news exclusively with Marvel superheroes, the texts are accompanied by an image of the news' main character (with superheroes in the background, next to Trump or getting off a plane). The background (Perlmutter's story) to the news event is included in all the articles. Except for the NYT (which can be said to be irascible and relentless), there is no use of adjectives in the text. In all four pieces of information, there are direct and/or indirect quotes. There is a common difference between the generalist and specialized media: in the specialized ones, the information density is low, providing enough facts, while in the generalist media, the density is much higher.

3.2 News #2 – The Flash (2023) trailer premiere

On April 26, 2023, the official trailer for one of the most anticipated superhero movies was released, *The Flash* (2023). The launch was covered by many media outlets due to the impact it had on social media.

In this case, The New York Times did not cover the issue. Because of this, the following table only analyzes the news from Espinof, El País, and CBM:

Table 3

Analysis of The Flash (2023) trailer release news

	Espinof	El País	CBM
Headline	Informative with direct quote	Informative	Informative
Section	Trailers	Cultura	The Flash
Relationship to other current issues	No relation	Presentation of James Gunn as DC Studios' new CEO and Ezra Miller controversy	No relation
Justification	Current affairs	Proximity (A Spanish actress is involved)	Current affairs
Approach	Reactive (focuses on critics' first impressions)	Informative	Informative and speculative (Questions whether it will be the best superhero movie or not)
Tone & standpoint	Colloquial; Neutral	Formal; Neutral	Colloquial; Neutral
Sensationalism	No	No	No
Sources	Lauren Huff of Entertainment Weekly & Erik Davis of Fandango	No source is cited	Warner Bros, James Gunn, David Zaslav
Relationship between image and text	The cover image is the trailer itself	The cover image is the trailer itself, but Maribel Verdú is highlighted in a thumbnail	Image of the movie poster
Context	No background	Background: Ezra Miller's controversy and other superhero movies involving Spanish actresses	No background
Density	Low density: Low facts	High density: Introduces the main cast and contextualizes everything	Low density: Low facts
Adjectivization	No	No	"...obviously meant to be the big draw"
Protagonism	Direct quotes from critics' first impressions	Direct quotes from trailer dialogues	Direct quotes from James Gunn & David Zaslav

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In this case, the headlines are similar in the three media, but Espinof's headline includes a direct quote. The article is located in the specific section of each specialized media (trailers – Disney) and the usual section of El País (Culture). As for the connection with current events at the moment, only El País highlights the presentation of James Gunn as the new DC Studios' CEO and the controversy with Ezra Miller. The publication is justified in the specialized media for being current news, while El País covers it for proximity due to the appearance in the film of the Spanish actress Maribel Verdú, who is also represented in the thumbnail (while in the other media, they use the movie poster or the trailer itself).

The approach in Espinof is reactive (focusing on critics' first impressions), informative in El País, and informative and speculative in CBM. The tone is colloquial in Espinof and CBM and formal in El País. In all three, the writers' standpoints are neutral and there is no sensationalism. Again, there is a difference between specialized and generalist media when the specialized ones name sources directly and the generalists do not. Only El País contextualizes the news, referring to the background and the aforementioned Ezra Miller controversy, as well as the appearances of other Spanish actresses in other superhero movies. CBM is the only one who uses adjectivization in the text ("... the big draw"). We can also see low information density in Espinof and CBM, while in El País it is high. Finally, it should be noted that in the three pieces of information, there are direct quotes from critics' first impressions (Espinof), from dialogues in the trailer (El País), and quotes from James Gunn and David Zaslav (CBM).

3.3 News #3 – Spider-Man breaks box-office records

The release of *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021) revitalized the movie theatres that were at their worst during the covid-19 pandemic. It was the first film to gross $1 billion since the beginning of the pandemic. These four media wrote about that achievement:

Table 4

Analysis of the 'Spider-Man breaks records at the box office' news

	Espinof	El País	CBM	The NY Times
Headline	Informative	Appellative	Informative	Appellative
Section	Estrenos	Cultura	Marvel	Movies
Relationship with other current issues	No relation	Box office takings of other films at that time	No relation	Box office and movie theaters situation
Justification	Current affairs	Current affairs	Current affairs	Current affairs
Approach	Informative	Informative	Perspectivist	Informative and perspectivist
Tone & standpoint	Colloquial; Positive	Formal; Neutral	Colloquial: Positive	Formal; Positive
Sensationalism	No	No	No	No
Sources	No source is cited	Comscore	Spencer Perry, CBM´s journalist	Comscore, Thomas E. Rothman, Mark Zoradi, Richard L. Gelfond, David A. Gross, Steve Buck
Relationship between image and text	Movie image	Movie image with a link to the trailer	Previous video of an interview with the cast	Movie image
Context	No background included	Background: Pre-pandemic superhero movie data	Background: Pre-pandemic superhero movie data	Background: Pre-pandemic superhero movie data
Density	Low density: low facts	High density: large variety of facts	Low density: low facts	High density: large variety of facts and statements
Adjectivization	"Huge"	No	No	No
Protagonism	No quotes	No quotes	Direct quotes	Direct quotes

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In these articles, the headlines are informative or appellative depending on the type of media; the specialized ones are informative, and the generalist are appellative. The publication is placed again in the specific section of each specialized media (Premieres – Marvel), in the usual section of El País (Cultura), and the "Movies" section in NYT. The articles are all published on the same day that the news event arises. It is directly related to current affairs only in the generalist media, where it is linked to the box office takings of other films at that time (El País) and the situation of box offices and movie theatres (NYT). The approach is informative in Espinof and El País, informative and perspectival in NYT, and only perspectival in CBM. The tone of the information is colloquial in Espinof and CBM and formal in El País and NYT. In all of them, the journalist's standpoint is positive, except in El País, which is neutral. There is no sensationalism in the texts. Espinof does not include sources or background (context), but the rest of the media do (they include specific sources and contextualize the information with superhero movie facts that were released before the pandemic). In all four media, they add an image of the movie or an image of a previous interview with the cast (in the case of CBM). A low information density is again observed in Espinof and CBM, while in El País and NYT it is high. There is no use of adjectives except in Espinof ("Huge"). On this occasion, there are no direct quotes in Espinof or El País, while there are in the other two media.

3.4 Interviews – James Gunn, Tom Holland, and Zack Snyder

Interviews with actors, directors, and film industry professionals are often derived from the film's promotional campaign. These are the cases of Tom Holland with his Spider-Man saga, Zack Snyder with his *Justice League* or James Gunn with his *Guardians of the Galaxy*. The following table shows the differences observed in the interviews of each selected media:

Table 5

Analysis of interviews with Zack Snyder, James Gunn, and Tom Holland

	Espinof	El País	CBM	The NY Times
Headline	Direct quote	Creative, coverage style	Appellative, generates curiosity	Creative, coverage style
Section	Entrevistas [Interviews]	Icon	Marvel	Cultura
Relationship with other current issues	Release of *Zack Snyder's Justice League* (2021)	Release of *Spider-Man: Far From Home* (2019)	Release of *Guardians of the Galaxy Holiday Special* (2022)	Release of *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2* (2017) and *The Belko Experiment* (2017)
Justification	Informative report about a current issue	Man of the moment (in the superhero industry)	Informative report about a current issue	Man of the moment (in the superhero industry)
Approach	Informative	Biographical	Informative	Biographical
Tone & standpoint	Colloquial; Neutral	Formal; Neutral	Colloquial; Positive	Formal; Neutral
Sensationalism	No	No	No	No
Sources	No source is cited	No source is cited	Collaboration with the PhaseZero YouTube channel	Chris Pratt, Kevin Feige, Zoe Saldana, and others
Relationship between image and text	A photograph of the journalist interviewing the director	Exclusive image for the interview	Thumbnail of the interview with the main character	Exclusive image for the interview
Context	No background	Background: Review of Holland's life and previous MCU releases	Background: The entire first paragraph (Nova almost appears in the MCU).	Background: How Gunn started at the MCU and some of his other work
Density	Low density: short interview with low facts	High density: long interview with a lot of facts and information	Low density: short and concise interview	High density: long interview with a lot of facts and information
Adjectivization	No	No	No	No
Protagonism	Question-answer format with video	report interview format	report interview format with video	report interview format

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Interviews were included in the analysis in order to not exclusively study news events. Here, the headline is creative (typical of a report) in the generalist media, while Espinof uses a direct quote, and it is appellative (it generates curiosity in the reader) in CBM. The articles are placed in the usual sections in the media, although in this case, possibly because it is an interview, this changes in El País (from "Cultura" to "Icon") and NYT it is placed in "Culture" section, while in the previous ones it was "Media" and "Movies". The interviews are related to current events (release of several films). The justification for the inclusion of the interview in the specialized media is informative, while in the generalist media, it is justified by the person's popularity at that time and, therefore, they have a biographical approach. Once again, the tone of the information is colloquial in Espinof and CBM and formal in El País and NYT. The standpoint is neutral in all publications, except in CBM, which is positive. They all coincide in the lack of sensationalism. Espinof does not use sources, but neither does El País, which in the other cases had included them. CBM and NYT do use them. All four publications include an image of the interview. The information density is again low in Espinof and CBM, while it is high in El País and NYT. There is no use of adjectives in any of the cases. Finally, there is a report interview format in El País and NYT, a report interview with video in CBM, and a question-answer interview with video in Espinof.

4 Discussion and conclusions

After presenting the results obtained, it can be confirmed that there are differences between generalist and specialized media when dealing with information about superhero movies. The main difference is that the generalists do not lose their journalistic writing style and use formal language, with background information, hardly any adjectives, and non-sensationalist headlines. While the specialized ones tend to use colloquial language, sometimes providing the positive or negative opinion of the writer and bordering on sensationalism in some of their headlines (although it is not always).

Generalists provide complete and well-contextualized information (including a large number of facts as long as the content allows it). Therefore, they rely on sources that nourish the content and have a high density of information. On the other hand, specialized media write shorter texts because their articles' production is greater

and, perhaps, because they understand that most of their readers are already familiar with the subject, so they do not need to provide context. They use fewer information sources, implying a lower information density than the generalists. This may be because both types of media derive directly from the context in which they were created. The generalist media follow a set of guidelines established from the beginning of the profession, which consists of treating information as rigorously as possible, regardless of the seriousness of the subject or the target audience. On the other hand, specialized digital media were born in the technological era, where everything is connected, information spreads like wildfire, and users reward interactivity. Therefore, in most cases, they prioritize the quantity of information, even if it is very brief, over quality. This new way of doing journalism is becoming more popular. A variety of strategies are adopted, sometimes even with a touch of infotainment (Paredes-Otero, 2022), regardless of the topic and the channel, in order to achieve better results in terms of audiences and followers.

When it comes to interviews, the generalist media focus on the character (actor, director, producer, etc.) of the moment with a biographical orientation, as opposed to the specialized media that focus on the topic (movie, controversy, etc.) with an informative approach. The rest of the aspects do not vary regarding the treatment of news: the generalists provide context and background (with more questions), and the specialized ones prepare brief texts (fewer questions) with just enough facts. In any case, it should not be understood that they are antagonistic media, but as it is generally said about general and specialized media (Ronda Iglesias & Alcaide, 2010), they are complementary ways of reaching readers interested in these topics.

Regarding the coverage of information, although it was not an aim of the study, in the researching phase, it has been found that specialized media publish much more frequently than generalists. While media such as Espinof and CBM publish daily news, rumors, reactions, and reflections related to superhero movies, El País and The New York Times only cover premieres or important news to upload content. What they all have in common is the use of social media: they turn their profiles into a showcase for their articles to reach as many users as possible.

Once the research has been carried out, fulfilling the general purpose of analyzing the impact of superhero movies in the generalist and specialized press as described in the methodology, it can be concluded

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that the initial hypotheses are largely confirmed. Superhero movies are indeed treated differently in the generalist headers than in the specialized press analyzed, although some similarities can also be observed.

Differences are confirmed in several areas, such that, it can be said that when reading a publication about superhero movies in the general press, it is expected the headline to be informative or appellative; be located in the culture, cinema or similar section; with an informative approach and formal tone; a neutral standpoint; no use of sensationalism or adjectives (maybe a few sometimes); serious and prestigious sources and a high density text with a great variety of facts so the news event is well presented and with the appropriate context.

A text about the same subject in a specialized media is likely to have an informative-appellative headline; to be published in a very specific section within the specialized themes; to have an informative approach (but it can also be perspectivist, speculative or reactive); to use colloquial tone and neutral – sometimes positive – standpoint; to include some sensationalistic expressions; with a lack of sources and sometimes contextualization (more in Espinof than in CBM); and to have low-density texts.

Among the similarities, it is pointed out that, in general, sensationalism is hardly used, the thumbnails are similar in every media, the information is usually related in a similar way to current affairs, adjectives are not usually used, and quoting is a common thing.

Finally, we must mention the limitations of the research, specifically those that stem from the methodology used. Given that the scope of the analysis is dependent on the limited pool of publications selected, which, although relevant, cannot represent the entirety of superhero-related articles in media.

NOTES

1 Specialized media are understood as those that focus on a specific topic and, therefore, generate interest in a smaller sector of the population, while generalist media address diverse topics and can thus attract all types of readers. In addition to the thematic specialization of focus, specialized journalism is usually known for the use of expert sources, a characteristic research methodology, the need for specific training in the subject complementary to the journalistic training itself, or linguistic adequacy (Enguix, 2015).

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