A Comparative Analysis of Reports on COVID-19 Outbreak in China by China Daily and CNN

Yi Luo [1] and Wenbao Luo [2] *

[1] School of Humanities, Southwest Jiaotong University, Chengdu, Sichuan, China

[2] School of Management, Yangtze Normal College, Fuling, Chongqing, China

[1] 2746202563@qq.com, [2] 76957270@qq.com

* Corresponding author

Keywords: Covid-19 Outbreak; Frame Theory; Content Analysis; China Daily; CNN

Abstract: This paper used content analysis to comparatively analyze the news reports on COVID-19 outbreak in China from January 20 to February 10 by China Daily and CNN from the angle of reporting framework and discourse construction strategies. Study found that the two media framework is closely related to politics, economy and ideology. China Daily reports on the "novel coronavirus outbreak in China" with liability framework, leadership framework and the risk control framework, placing people's life safety and prevention and control of the outbreak in the first place, in order to carry out the image of a responsible big country. Meanwhile, CNN's report on" new epidemic situation" mainly based on facts, conflicts and economic consequences, presenting a neutral and negative image of country with social trauma, economic shutdown and information blockade.

1. Introduction

At present, novel coronavirus has spread from China to the world, the outbreak has become a global public health emergency, causing the world's media attention. At the end of December 2019, novel coronavirus entered China and quickly broke out in January, becoming the focus of media attention around the world. In addition to the focus on the situation in China itself, various information about China's efforts to help the country is widely disseminated in the Chinese media, but on the other hand, the voice of stigmatizing China, represented by the United States, is always there. Since trump referred to the virus as the "China virus" at the White House press conference on March 16, there have been discriminatory and even beatings of Chinese in many places overseas. The battle to keep up with the epidemic ended on March 25 when President Donald trump said he had decided not to use the term "China virus."

As xu dovelet (1996 [1]), points out that "international news communication plays an important role in shaping the national image, the imbalance of international news flow will lead to wrong or the misunderstanding between the negative image of the country and international, affect the governments, organizations and people's understanding of the relationship and communication, and even cause the conflict between the international". Therefore, how to better display national image, safeguard national interests, and effectively guide international public opinion through the global information flow is focus of Chinese and foreign media researchers. In view of this, based on the propagation force and influence of media, considering the availability of samples collected at the same time, this paper selected respectively in the two countries more influential mainstream media China Daily and CNN as the main object of study, to compare the two media in new epidemic news reports on the similarities and differences, and through this study of China Daily and CNN to explore the causes of the formation of different frameworks, and summarizes how to better promote China's international news reports, in order to improve the external propagation force.

2. Samples, Categories and Methods

The purpose of this paper is to study the differences between China and the United States in reporting the peak period of the outbreak and spread of the new coronavirus in China. Therefore, the sample time starts from January 20 (Zhong Nanshan believes that there must be human-to-human transmission of Wuhan novel coronavirus), and the sample time ends from February 10.Using Python, 1681 relevant reports were obtained by using "coronavirus" as the word to retrieve www.chinadaily. com.cn, and 364 related reports were obtained by using "coronavirus" and "China" as key word to retrieve edition.cnn.com).Finally, 203 valid samples were randomly selected for every 10 articles, including 162 China Daily articles and 41 CNNS.

The 10 categories of this study are set as follows:[2]1.Report Frequency;2.Report Genre: message, communication, commentary, features, in-depth reporting.3.Report Length; 4.Report Originality; 5.Report Types; 6.Report Sources:(A)China Daily: national leaders, international organizations and important figures, government departments and officials, medical personnel or medical institutions, novel coronavirus infection、experts and scholars、business organizations or associated person、the public、the court, public utilities, other medias, (B)CNN: national leaders of China, U.S. government departments and officials, Chinese government departments and officials, medical personnel or medical institutions, novel coronavirus infected patient, international organizations and important figures Chinese experts and scholars, non-chinese experts and scholars, Other media in the United States, Chinese social media, Chinese state media, business organization or associated person、the public, other; 7. Initiative: government departments' active output, voluntary output by non-governmental departments; 8.The Framework of Coverage: fact, conflict, human touch, responsibility, moral, economic consequences, leadership, international solidarity and support; 9. Risk Topic Framework: situation, regulation, reflection; 10.Reporting Tendency: positive, negative, neutral.

This paper uses Python crawler technology and NVivo software to grab the content of the news text and coding, and combined with content analysis method to the China Daily and CNN news about China's new crown outbreaks reported general framework and risk issues framework for research and analysis, finally using statistical analysis software SPSS23.0 the relationship to the object of study, the change rule and developing trend for visual analysis.

3. Content Analysis

Report Frequency. From January 20, when the information of "novel coronavirus can be transmitted from person to person" was made public, to February 10, when the press conference on the prevention and control of covid-19 epidemic was held in Hubei province, it could be found that the report frequency of China Daily generally showed an increasing trend. After January 20, the epidemic began to spread on a large scale, and both China Daily and CNN carried out regular reports on it. From January 28 to January 31, a variety of sudden and dense hot events emerged, which stung the audience's nerves. China Daily and CNN instinctively chased hot news during this period, and reported the outbreak, relief supplies, the status of government departments and personnel from a variety of angles and by a variety of ways. So, their coverage have reached a peak. However, CNN, as an overseas media, was unable to match China Daily in the advantages of in-depth coverage of the news scene and access to the latest information resources. Therefore, the number of reports was limited to some extent and the range of changes was small. From the angle of the number of reports, the total number and Daily number of China Daily are far more than that of CNN, and the Daily' reports number is about 3-7 times that of CNN. After January 31, as a window for China to spread to the outside, China Daily's reports have gradually shifted from the initial situation to the anti-epidemic relief work, as well as international solidarity and support actions. It mainly focuses on the "political news" and "diplomatic news". Meanwhile CNN's focus has also shifted from the outbreak in China to its spread to Asia and other parts of the world, its vision gradually expanded, such as the potential spreading ability of novel coronavirus, the impact of the epidemic on social life, the economic consequences of the epidemic, etc., and it paid less attention to China's anti-epidemic measures and international assistance.
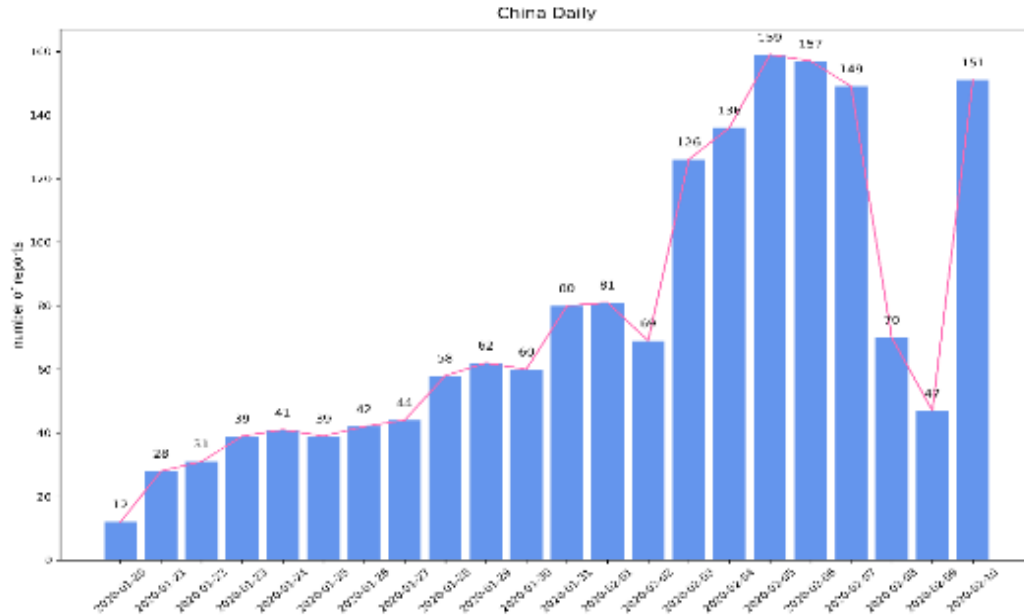
Figure 1 Statistical Graph of report frequency of China Daily
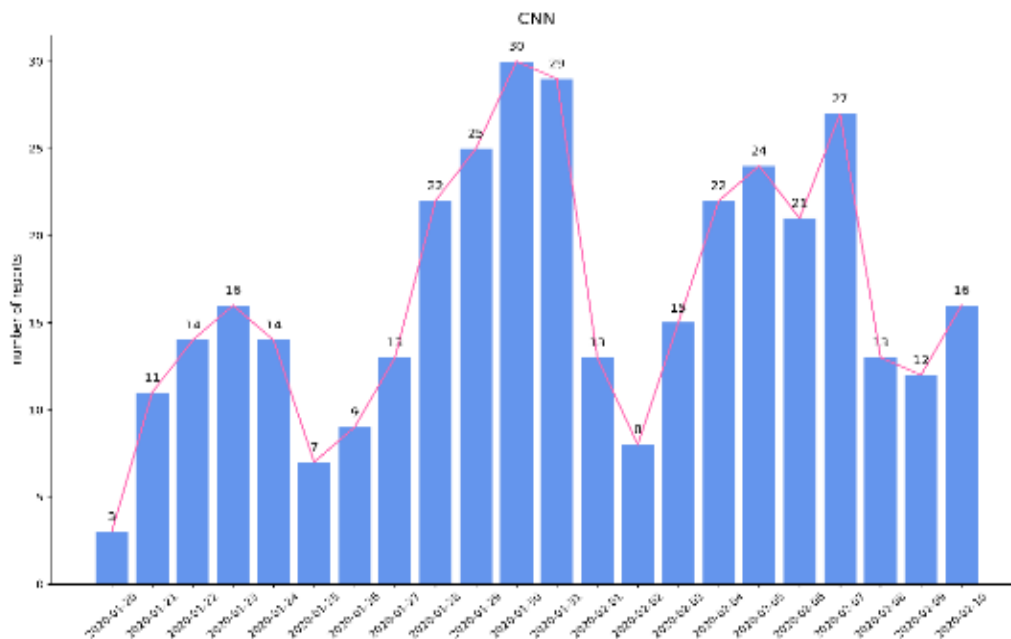

Figure 2 Statistical Graph of report frequency of CNN

Report Genre. The spread of the new epidemic involves all aspects of society, so there is a large space for news mining. From the perspective of news types, the reports of China Daily and CNN show obvious differences. China Daily focused on hard news, including news and communications. News accounts for the largest proportion among all reports. Those characteristics are mainly reflected in the rapid and concise reporting of the latest developments of the epidemic, the latest introduction of measures to prevent and control the epidemic, and the latest developments in epidemic prevention and control assistance. [3]However, the CNN report focused more on the cause and impact of the new outbreak. They explored the root causes of the incident through in-depth interviews, at the same time published relevant popular science articles. In general, CNN has more diversified reporting methods, three-dimensional and comprehensive reporting perspectives, and clearer reporting intentions. It is more prominent in striving for the right to speak and making

positive comments, demonstrating its strong ability to report on public emergencies. Most of CNN's reports are comprehensive news and commentary, whose characteristics are mainly reflected in the multi-sided induction and synthesis of the relative dynamics of the epidemic, and the use of point and surface combination in the adoption and presentation of information, not only the general description of the general situation, but also the detailed materials with individual characteristics to give people a specific and vivid impression.[4]

Length of coverage. The length of China Daily's reports is relatively short, with more than 71.6 percent of the reports containing fewer than 500 words. The report genre is dominated by news (47 percent) and communication (33 percent), with only 1.23 percent of the in-depth reports. The number of words in CNN's report is mostly 501-2000 words, and the genre is mostly communication and in-depth report. These reports comprehensively show the event through the multi-layered and multi-angle investigation and analysis of the event and the characters. At present, the communication technology is more and more developed, and the information dissemination in the reports of public emergencies is becoming more and more homogeneous. Therefore, the in-depth exploration of public emergencies has become the key to occupy the opinion field. In the reports of mainstream media in the United States represented by CNN, the proportion of communication reports and even in-depth reports exceeds that of news reports, and shows the characteristics of multi-dimensional and whole-process mining. Such reports can firmly attract readers and subtly influence the public's attitude towards public events, which is an important reason why the mainstream American media, so it is very easy for them to occupy the right of discourse in international communication. CNN reports not only to fill the domestic report blank to satisfy the audience's psychological demand, and through its internal framework and language unconsciously convey those ideology to the audience.

Sources of the news. There are obvious differences between China Daily and CNN in the initiative of government's issue output. More than half of the information reported by China Daily comes from topics published by government departments (such as the National Health Commission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Transport, etc.), especially those published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and foreign affairs offices of governments at all levels. The media plays a supporting role. Such as, *Government helping stranded travelers return home;*[5]*Hubei works to curb spread of pneumonia;*[6]These topics mainly involve confirmation of the situation, notification of the epidemic situation, prevention and control alerts and the release of administrative regulations. e.g., those supportive measures for SMEs issued by Zhejiang government during the outbreak are fully embodied in the related report.[7]The CNN reports focus more on the active output topics of nongovernmental health systems. CNN has a weak dependence on information output from the government and pays more attention to the role of media in setting the agenda, aiming to explore the voices and opinions of various subjects and the impact of the epidemic on all aspects of society, although they also get information from the government, such as President trump and other government departments. It is worth noting that CNN's sources also come from the views of a large number of non-chinese experts and scholars, which often have opposing views in the discourse system of Chinese government departments and the one dominated by Chinese state media. This is a major source of disagreement and controversy. For example, while China described the situation as improving, CNN downplayed it, saying it was worse than predicted.

Reporting Framework. China Daily mainly adopts responsibility framework to construct issues from the perspective of responsibility undertaking, focusing on the responsibility of the government in preventing and controlling the epidemic.[8]In addition, the China Daily also uses *leadership framework*, paying attention to leader's comments and evaluation about the government's efforts to combat disease. China Daily also uses international solidarity and support framework, paying more attention to the financial and moral support provided by international organizations and other countries for the prevention and control of the epidemic in China.[9]However, CNN mostly adopts fact framework and conflict framework, and pays more attention to the positions and views of different interest groups. Both China Daily and CNN seldom adopt moral framework.

Comparatively China Daily adopts a little more than CNN, and mainly applied to the reports of medical care groups and ordinary workers.
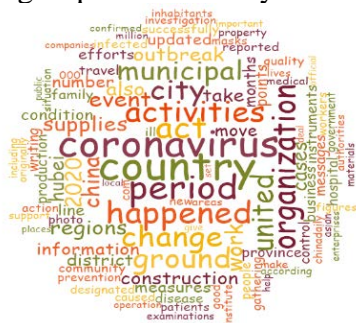

Figure 3 Word Frequency Statistics of China Daily Reports

Figure 4 Word Frequency Statistics of CNN Reports

Risk Topic Framework. The reports of China Daily adopted more risk control topics (77%), focusing on the response measures of the government and relevant departments after the outbreak of novel coronavirus, as well as the achievements of the epidemic prevention and control work, in order to reduce the public panic caused by the outbreak risk. This suggests that China Daily is more inclined to convey an optimistic message to the public that the risks are under control. CNN makes more use of the risk reflection framework and focuses more on the further conflicts and controversies arising from the risk response of social epidemics. For example, in a report, *Wuhan hospital announces death of whistleblower doctor Li Wenliang, said CNN, Li was among a number of supposed "rumormongers" detained in December for spreading news about the virus. He had warned about a potential "SARS-like" virus spreading in Wuhan. Nothing Li said was incorrect, but it came as officials in the city were downplaying the severity of the outbreak and its risk to the public. Li's death and the authorities' clumsy handling of it has exacerbated a crisis that is already shaking the very foundations of the Chinese state.*[10]In addition, both China Daily and CNN pay more attention to the risk facts of the epidemic. By detailing the risk facts of the outbreak and its spreading area, the number of deaths, confirmed number of cases, number of suspected cases, the possible infection process, and the fears of the global outbreak, the public is on high alert for the risk of the new outbreak.

Reporting Tendency. From the perspective of the reporting tendency, both China Daily and CNN are relatively neutral and objective, but China Daily is more inclined to convey positive and objective information to the public, so as to reduce the panic caused by high risk to the public. However, CNN does not reject the use of risk reflection framework to convey uncertainty or even negative information. Specifically, China Daily is more tend to use words with war strategy, such as, battle, combat, etc., to describe the new coronavirus outbreak; While CNN used more words with risk discourse strategies, such as, deadly, deadliest, shocked, etc. to describe the outbreak of the outbreak of new coronavirus, so as to highlight the disastrous consequences of outbreaks. In addition, CNN mostly questioned China's measures to control the epidemic through foreign experts and scholars, and extensively quoted emotional discourse from Chinese social media to report on the Li Wenliang incident, the Red Cross incident and other topics. For example,*Countless young people will mature overnight after today: the world is not as beautiful as we imagined, one commenter wrote. Are you angry? If any of us here is fortunate enough to speak up for the public in the future, please make sure you remember tonight's anger.*[11]

Conclusions

China Daily reports on the outbreak of novel coronavirus in China mainly in the form of hard news,(news and communication). Its position is objective and fair. The length of the report is generally short and the in-depth reports are less. The related topics are mainly dominated by the government, media only play a supporting role. The information of the reports mainly comes from government, experts, scholars and international organizations. It usually adopts the responsibility

framework, leadership framework, international solidarity and support framework, and risk control framework. The main reason for the formation of those characteristics is that the Chinese media represented by China Daily must stick to the political red line, to give top priority to national interests, sense of responsibility and social benefits, adhere to the principle of giving priority to positive reports, and strengthen supervision by public opinion. The orientation of news value is consistent with the line, principle and policy of the Party, which is the reflection of political ideology in the field of news reporting. CNN's coverage of the covid-19 outbreak is dominated by soft news of communication and in-depth reporting, with most of the long-form reports focusing on the in-depth exploration of events, CNN has a variety of reporting techniques and clear reporting intentions, which highlight the powerful ability of reporting public emergencies. In addition to government, there are many non-government channels for CNN to obtain information. The subject of the report is from both official and unofficial, with negative and negative subjects. CNN mainly use framework of facts, conflict, economic consequences and risk reflection. The main reason for the formation of the above characteristics is that the American media, represented by CNN, should not only follow the news value of providing true and accurate information to the public, carrying out public opinion supervision and preventing the abuse of public power, but also follow the market logic of profit maximization. In short, the differences between China Daily and CNN in the coverages reflect the functions and nature of the mainstream media in China and the United States, as well as their positions and value orientations in maintaining their respective social systems and ideologies.

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