

Modalization strategies and axiological values in sports discourse: an analysis of a media dossier

Ismail Zahidi

Université Ibn Tofail, Kenitra, Morocco

Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to explore how axiological values are integrated into sports journalism discourse by analyzing the dossier titled “*Walid Regragui Sir! Siir! Siiiiiiiiir!*” published by the Moroccan francophone magazine *Maroc Hebdo*. The objective is to understand how linguistic modalization contributes to the narrative construction of the Moroccan national football team’s successes during the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

Design/methodology/approach – The study employs Olga Galatanu’s framework of modalization to identify linguistic modalities within the analyzed dossier. The analysis focuses on how these modalities influence readers’ perceptions and shape their views of the reported events. The methodology is based on a qualitative analysis of modal expressions, associating them with specific modal forms and values to uncover the underlying discursive strategies.

Findings – The findings reveal a significant interaction between the factual and axiological aspects of the discourse. There is a marked tendency to valorize the Moroccan team’s sporting achievements, evidenced by the strategic use of modalization to influence readers’ perceptions and emotions. This interaction enhances the importance of these achievements while contributing to the formation of favorable public opinion.

Research limitations/implications – The study is limited by its focus on a single journalistic dossier and a specific theoretical framework. Additionally, the analysis is centered on a particular cultural context, which may restrict the generalizability of the results to other contexts or types of journalistic discourse. However, these limitations also provide opportunities for future research, particularly by extending the analysis to other corpora or exploring different theoretical frameworks.

Practical implications – The research findings offer practical tools for journalism professionals and media analysts. By better understanding how modalization strategies can influence perceptions, editors and writers can reflect on the ethics and consequences of their discursive choices. This study can also inform journalism training, highlighting the importance of linguistic choices in constructing media narratives.

Social implications – This study highlights the influence of modalization strategies on the formation of public opinion, particularly in the context of national sporting achievements. By revealing the discursive mechanisms that can manipulate collective perceptions, it underscores the media’s responsibility in representing events. This may provoke broader discussions on the media’s role in society and its impact on the construction of cultural values and identities.

Originality/value – This research stands out for its application of the modalization framework to the field of sports journalism, a relatively underexplored area. By focusing on a specific corpus and using a detailed analytical approach, the study makes an original contribution to understanding axiological dynamics in media narratives. The originality also lies in combining precise linguistic analysis with considerations of the societal impact of media.

Keywords Axiological values, Modalization, Sports discourse, Discursive strategies

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The print media plays a fundamental role in mediating and representing public events, influencing how these events are perceived and interpreted by the general public. In the context of major sporting events, the media does more than just report the facts; it also contributes to the construction of a narrative around the events, often imbued with axiological values that



shape the reader’s perception. These values, whether moral, aesthetic or pragmatic, can reflect implicit or explicit judgments, social attitudes or even worldviews that transcend simple factual reporting.

This study is part of a broader reflection on objectivity and subjectivity in journalistic discourse, examining how axiological values are mobilized in a journalistic dossier dedicated to a major sporting achievement. The analysis focuses on a dossier published in the wake of the exceptional performance of the Moroccan national football team during a major international tournament. Beyond the celebration of sporting achievements, this dossier serves as a privileged object of study to understand how axiological values structure media discourse and influence the reception of information.

The central issue of this article is to determine how axiological values are codified in journalistic discourse and their influence on the narrative and emotional construction of sporting events. In other words, it seeks to understand how media discourse oscillates between objectivity and subjectivity, using axiological values to guide the reader’s perception and to impart a certain tone to the narrative.

The stakes of this study are manifold. On the one hand, it aims to unveil the mechanisms through which the media can subtly shape public judgments and emotions. On the other hand, it contributes to a better understanding of the interaction between language and values in the construction of media reality. Finally, by highlighting these dynamics, the study invites critical reflection on the role of the media in contemporary society and on their responsibility in representing public events.

Theoretical framework

Linguistic discourse analysis according to Olga Galatanu

In her approach to linguistic discourse analysis, Olga Galatanu places modalization at the core of the mechanisms involved in the construction and (re)construction of discursive meaning (Cozma and Galatanu, 2019). According to her, modalization results from the interaction between a “modal value” and a specific “linguistic form,” both of which fulfill essential discursive functions (Galatanu, 2019).

Discursive modalization is structured around several key dimensions: modal forms, modal values and their functions within discourse. Modal forms, which include lexical markers, modal adverbs and specific grammatical constructions, are the tools through which the speaker expresses their point of view, commitment and involvement in the discourse.

The modal values associated with these forms allow for a nuanced expression of the speaker’s attitude toward the content of their statement. These values encompass notions such as certainty, possibility, obligation or desire, with each modal value adding a particular nuance to the statement (Galatanu, 2019). These modal nuances enrich the perception of the discourse, thereby altering the audience’s interpretation.

The cross-examination of modal values present in discourse and the modal forms used reveals four discursive mechanisms, each distinguished by the degree of subjectivity or objectivity of the values and forms employed. These mechanisms are illustrated in the table below:

- (1) Mechanism for explicating objectification (transparency) (A)
- (2) Mechanism for explicating subjectification (transparency) (B)
- (3) Mechanism for concealing subjectification (withdrawal) (C)
- (4) Mechanism for concealing objectification (revelation) (D).

Thus, Galatanu’s approach offers a valuable analytical framework for understanding the complex mechanisms at play in discursive modalization. It highlights how linguistic forms and modal values interact to construct and modulate meaning in verbal interactions, thereby

enriching our understanding of communication and meaning-making processes (Cozma, 2021).

The theoretical framework proposed by Galatanu has proven its relevance through its numerous applications in various fields, providing in-depth and insightful analyses of discursive strategies. Le Thiec (2004) applied Galatanu's LDA in his study of the French press, highlighting the role of modalization in constructing identity narratives. A few years later, Cozma (2009) further developed this perspective by exploring alethic modality within the framework of the Semantics of Argumentative Possibilities. Her work demonstrated how modal values influence discursive positioning, particularly in institutional contexts related to bioethics.

In another application, Malkawi and Suleiman (2013) used this same theoretical framework to examine modal values in *Le Monde* and *Présent*. They showed how modalization supports the development of argumentative narratives, especially in political journalism.

More recently, Zahidi (2024a, b) applied Galatanu's theoretical framework to study the interaction between objectivity and subjectivity in Moroccan Francophone press dossiers. His analysis revealed how modalization and axiological values are strategically used to balance factual reporting with emotional engagement, particularly in journalistic narratives covering culturally significant events.

These studies, all grounded in Galatanu's LDA framework, provide a solid theoretical foundation for understanding how axiological values are mobilized in journalistic discourse. They highlight the dual role of modalization as both a linguistic tool and a discursive strategy aimed at influencing readers' emotional and cognitive responses. By applying this methodology to sports discourse, our study extends this tradition and offers new insights into the tension between objectivity and subjectivity in narratives celebrating national achievements.

The “dossier” genre

In the contemporary media landscape, the dossier stands out as an essential genre, particularly suited for an in-depth analysis of axiological values in sports discourse. Unlike traditional news articles, which often focus on immediate events, the dossier is distinguished by its ability to integrate a variety of perspectives, analyses and testimonies, offering a nuanced overview of the topics addressed (Zahidi, 2024b).

The complexity and richness of the dossier lie in its hybrid structure. This journalistic genre combines different formats, such as articles, analyses, interviews and even visual elements like infographics, creating an immersive and comprehensive reading experience. The dossier, through various angles, aims for the most complete understanding of a subject (Zahidi and Zighighi, 2021, 2022, 2023). This flexibility allows the dossier to explore issues from multiple angles, offering a nuanced interpretation that encourages critical reflection in the reader.

The concept of hyper-structures, as proposed by Adam and Lugrin (2006), is also relevant for understanding the complex organization of content in dossiers. These structures enable the grouping of various textual and visual elements within a coherent editorial space, facilitating a modular and selective reading experience for readers. This structuring not only enriches the reading experience but also enhances reader engagement by providing multiple entry points into the subject matter.

The choice of the “dossier” genre for our corpus is justified by its ability to offer a multidimensional and integrative exploration of the topics discussed. This genre, with its complex structure and rich content, is particularly well-suited for a linguistic analysis of axiological values in sports journalism discourse.

Corpus and methodology

The corpus

The dossier, titled “Walid Regragui Sir! Siir! Siiiiir. . .” (MarocHebdo, 2022), published in issue number 1,465 of the Moroccan French-language magazine *Maroc Hebdo*, is dedicated to

the remarkable achievements of the Moroccan national football team during the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, an event that marked a historic turning point in the history of Moroccan and Arab football. With its 7,590 words, the dossier offers a rich and diverse array of articles penned by seven different journalists, each providing unique perspectives on the tournament and its significance. The articles are as follows:

- (1) The opening article, written by Wissam El Bouzdaini, sets the stage for the dossier's exploration of the Moroccan team's success.
- (2) "*Huitièmes de finale de la Coupe du Monde Qatar 2022: Un Maroc solide élimine une Espagne insipide*," by Louay Kerdouss, offers a detailed analysis of Morocco's solid performance in the round of 16 against Spain.
- (3) "*Sursaut de patriotisme à la suite de l'exploit historique des Lions de l'Atlas au Mondial Qatar 2022: Toujours plus fiers d'être Marocains!*" by Marouane Kabbaj, reflects on the surge of national pride following the Moroccan team's historic achievement.
- (4) "*La presse internationale encense la prouesse marocaine: Quand le Maroc éblouit le monde*," by Ibtiha Bassir, highlights the international acclaim received by Morocco's remarkable performance.
- (5) "*Le Maroc en quarts de finale du Mondial: La victoire du Maroc célébrée par les ressortissants subsahariens*," by Elimane Sembene, examines how the Moroccan team's victory was celebrated by sub-Saharan African communities.
- (6) "*Le Royaume fédère le monde entier autour de ses exploits: Qatar 2022, un Mondial marocain par excellence*," by Louay Kerdouss, explores how Morocco's performance unified the global community in celebration.
- (7) "*Comment la sélection nationale a défié les grandes puissances du football mondial*," by Hiba Chaker, delves into Morocco's defiance against the football giants of the world.
- (8) "*Yassine Bounou, désigné homme du match par la FIFA*," by Aissa Amourag, focuses on the recognition of goalkeeper Yassine Bounou, named Man of the Match by FIFA.

The rich variety and depth of these articles provide valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of the tournament, from in-depth match analyses to emotional reflections on the team's historic success. This diversity allows for an in-depth exploration of the discursive strategies used, particularly those that express emotions, evaluations and perspectives, all while adhering to the objectivity requirements of the journalistic dossier genre.

In selecting French as the language of the corpus, we recognize the linguistic reality of Morocco's media landscape, where French occupies a central position, especially in the press. Although Arabic and Berber are official languages, French serves as the primary language of communication in many of the country's major media outlets, including *Maroc Hebdo*, which caters to both Moroccan and international audiences. This choice reflects not only the practical importance of French in Moroccan journalism but also the specific context of *Maroc Hebdo* as a francophone publication. The use of French allows for an analysis rooted in the specific discursive practices of Moroccan journalists writing for a francophone readership, ensuring that the study remains focused and relevant to the linguistic and cultural dynamics of the region. The inclusion of French in the corpus thus aligns with the goal of examining the discursive strategies in the genre of Moroccan sports journalism, which is predominantly articulated in this language.

Methodology

The methodology of this study is based on a rigorous analytical approach aimed at uncovering the modal and axiological dimensions of sports journalism discourse. To achieve this, we

Modalization is defined as the process through which speakers or writers convey their attitudes via specific linguistic markers, shaping both the propositional content and the interactive function of discourse (Galatanu, 2002). It serves as an indicator of:

- Galatanu's framework further posits that the discursive meaning of each speech act aligns with the semantic protocol of words, which may be reinforced, transformed or reconstructed by the co-text and context (Galatanu, 2021).

Our framework identifies and categorizes modal expressions, grouping them into three linguistic forms:

- Each modal expression is then associated with specific modal values (e.g. alethic, deontic, axiological) to examine how they contribute to the discursive strategies employed.

Below is a partial illustration of this analytical framework (Table 1), which highlights how linguistic expressions are classified and interpreted based on their forms and modal values.

The notation adopted in our analysis is based on a classification of linguistic forms and modal values. The linguistic forms are divided into three main categories:

- Each category is further subdivided to refine the analysis (Table 2).

Modal values are numbered to represent different modal classes, with a sub-numbering system used to refine distinctions within each class (Table 3).

By integrating these elements into a cohesive analysis, this methodology provides a robust framework for understanding how modal and axiological values are utilized in sports discourse. This approach highlights how these values are employed to construct a rich and meaningful narrative, while simultaneously meeting the requirements of journalistic objectivity.

The analysis of modal forms and modal values in the dossier “*Walid Regragui Sir! Siir! Siiiiiniir!*” (MarocHebdo, 2022) from *Maroc Hebdo* reveals complex discursive mechanisms and varied strategies used to represent the Moroccan national football team’s achievement during the 2022 World Cup. This section provides an overview of the modal forms and modal values, and then focuses on the discursive strategies employed. The following table (Table 4) illustrates the distribution of modal forms and modal values identified in the dossier, offering a detailed insight into the discursive mechanisms and strategies used to portray the Moroccan national team’s accomplishment in the 2022 World Cup.

[illegible]

Table 2. Notation of modal forms

R: De re modalities

- R1: Nominal and verbal labels
- R2: Qualifiers of the noun, descriptors of the process

D: modalités de dicto

- D1: Modal verb and sentence-level operator adjective with a modal subject that is neither an impersonal pronoun nor a first-person pronoun
- D2: Modal verb and sentence-level operator adjective with a modal subject that is an impersonal pronoun
- D3: Modal adverb
- D4: Modal verb and sentence-level operator adjective with a modal subject that is a first-person pronoun

E: modalités d'énonciation ne se présentent pas

- E1: Interrogative and exclamatory sentences
- E2: Performative structure

Source(s): Author's own work

Table 3. Notation of modal values

1: Alethic values

- 1₁: Necessary
- 1₂: Impossible
- 1₃: Possible
- 1₄: Contingent

2: Deontic values

- 2₁: Obligatory
- 2₂: Forbidden
- 2₃: Permitted
- 2₄: Optional

3: Epistemic values

- 3₁: Certain
- 3₂: Excluded
- 3₃: Probable
- 3₄: Uncertain

4: Doxological values

- 4₁: Believed to be
- 4₂: Believed not to be
- 4₃: Not believed not to be
- 4₄: Not believed to be

5: Ethical-moral values

- 5⁺: Good
- 5⁻: Bad
- 5^{+/-}: Good/Bad

6: Aesthetic values

- 6⁺: Beautiful
- 6⁻: Ugly
- 6^{+/-}: Beautiful/Ugly

7: Pragmatic values

- 7⁺: Useful/Advantageous
- 7⁻: Useless/Disadvantageous
- 7^{+/-}: "Useful/Advantageous"/"Useless/Disadvantageous"

8: Intellectual values

- 8⁺: Interesting
- 8⁻: Uninteresting
- 8^{+/-}: Interesting/Uninteresting

9: Hedonic-affective values

- 9⁺: Pleasure/Happiness
- 9⁻: Disgust/Unhappiness
- 9^{+/-}: "Pleasure/Happiness"/"Disgust/Unhappiness"

10: Volitive values

- 10₁: Volition
- 10₂: Refusal
- 10₃: Acceptance
- 10₄: Involution

11: Desiderative values

- 11₁: Desire to be
- 11₂: Desire not to be
- 11₃: Not desire not to be
- 11₄: Not desire to be

Source(s): Author's own work

Modal forms in the dossier

The analysis of modal forms in the dossier "Walid Regragui Sir! Siir! Siiiiiiiir!" (MarocHebdo, 2022) reveals a notable distribution of modalities, which helps to understand the construction of the discourse. The modal forms are primarily categorized into three types: *de re*, *de dicto* and *enunciative*.

- (1) *De re* modalities: These forms dominate with 96.68% of occurrences, illustrating a strong focus on factuality and objectivity. *De re* modalities, including nominal and verbal labels as well as qualifiers of the noun and characteristics of the process, provide

Table 4. Distribution of modal forms and modal values

Modal forms modal values	R 1	R 2	D 1	D 2	D 3	D 4	E 1	E 2	Total	%
<i>1: Alethic values</i>	956	154	20	1	0	1	0	0	1,132	27.19
1 ₁ : Necessary	795	130	0	1	0	0	0	0	926	
1 ₂ : Impossible	4	3	5	0	0	0	0	0	12	
1 ₃ : Possible	112	18	15	0	0	1	0	0	146	
1 ₄ : Contingent	45	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	48	
<i>2: Deontic values</i>	372	58	5	8	2	0	2	2	449	10.79
2 ₁ : Obligatory	275	46	2	8	1	0	2	2	336	
2 ₂ : Forbidden	14	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	
2 ₃ : Permitted	80	9	3	0	0	0	0	0	92	
2 ₄ : Optional	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	5	
<i>3: Epistemic values</i>	260	78	4	13	45	0	10	0	410	9.85
3 ₁ : Certain	229	66	1	10	40	0	0	0	346	
3 ₂ : Excluded	11	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	17	
3 ₃ : Probable	20	7	2	3	5	0	0	0	37	
3 ₄ : Uncertain	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	10	
4:	27	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	35	0.84
<i>Doxological values</i>										
4 ₁ : Believed to be	27	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	
4 ₂ : Believed not to be	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
4 ₃ : Not believed not to be	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
4 ₄ : Not believed to be	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	
<i>5: Ethical- moral values</i>	263	99	0	0	1	0	1	0	364	8.74
5 ⁺	245	90	0	0	1	0	1	0	337	
5 ⁻	17	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	
5 ^{+/-}	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	
<i>6: Aesthetic values</i>	14	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	38	0.91%
6 ⁺	14	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	38	
6 ⁻	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
6 ^{+/-}	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>7: Pragmatic values</i>	561	178	2	1	2	0	0	0	744	17.87
7 ⁺	500	157	0	1	2	0	0	0	660	
7 ⁻	61	21	2	0	0	0	0	0	84	
7 ^{+/-}	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>8: Intellectual values</i>	158	39	0	0	0	0	0	0	197	4.73
8 ⁺	154	39	0	0	0	0	0	0	193	
8 ⁻	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
8 ^{+/-}	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
<i>9: Hedonic- affective values</i>	486	94	0	0	2	0	1	0	583	14.00
9 ⁺	455	84	0	0	1	0	1	0	541	

(continued)

Table 4. Continued

Modal forms modal values	R 1	R 2	D 1	D 2	D 3	D 4	E 1	E 2	Total	%
9 ⁻	30	7	0	0	1	0	0	0	38	
9 ^{+/-}	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	
10: Volitive values	166	2	10	1	1	1	0	0	181	4.35
10 ₁ : Volition	152	2	9	1	1	1	0	0	166	
10 ₂ : Refusal	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	
10 ₃ : Acceptance	6	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	7	
10 ₄ : Involution	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
11: Desiderative values	26	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	30	0.72
11 ₁ : Desire to be	25	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	29	
11 ₂ : Desire not to be	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
11 ₃ : Not desire not to be	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
11 ₄ : Not desire to be	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Total	3,289	736	43	24	53	2	14	2	4,163	100
Percentage	79%	17.7%	1.03%	0.58%	1.27%	0.05%	0.34%	0.05%	100%	

Source(s): Author's own work

a solid factual basis for the discourse. This predominance indicates an intention to present the facts objectively, offering a tangible and realistic perspective on the described events.

- (2) *De dicto* Modalities: Less frequent, these forms introduce elements of subjectivity and interpretation, such as judgments and opinions. The different nuances of *de dicto* modalities add personal perspectives and evaluations, contributing an interpretative dimension to the discourse.
- (3) *Enunciative* Modalities: *Enunciative* modalities, including interrogative and exclamative sentences, add a dynamic and engaging dimension to the discourse. They allow for the expression of emotions and attitudes while enriching the text with stylistic variations.

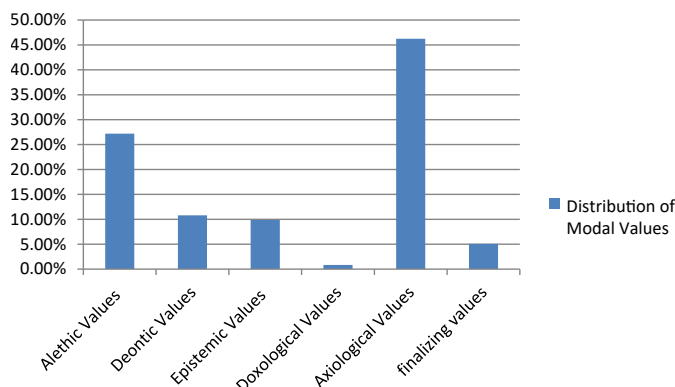
This distribution highlights a discursive strategy where objectivity and subjectivity are carefully balanced, emphasizing the complexity of the narration in the dossier.

Now that the distribution of modal forms has been examined, we turn to the study of modal values to uncover their role in shaping the narrative's depth and meaning.

Modal values in the dossier

The analysis of modal values in the dossier “*Walid Regragui Sir! Siir! Siiiiir!*” (MarocHebdo, 2022) sheds light on the complex discourse surrounding the Moroccan national football team's achievement during the 2022 World Cup. The following diagram (Figure 1) illustrates the percentage distribution of these values:

- (1) *Alethic values* (27.19%): These values emphasize the inevitable and essential aspects of the achievement, grounding the discourse in a reality perceived as necessary and



Source(s): Author's own work

Figure 1. Distribution of modal values

indisputable. The focus on “necessity” and “impossibility” reflects a desire to portray the event as an incontrovertible truth, thus enhancing the dossier’s credibility.

- (2) *Deontic values (10.79%)*: These highlight the social norms and obligations associated with the event. This distribution indicates a strong orientation toward necessity and obligations, framing the narrative within a normative context that guides the reception of the achievement as a collective and moral duty.
- (3) *Epistemic values (9.85%)*: These values convey a strong affirmation of facts, ensuring the veracity of the information presented. The predominance of values such as “certainty” underscores a discursive approach aimed at reassuring the reader of the authenticity of the events described.
- (4) *Doxological values (0.84%)*: These add a dimension of personal conviction, allowing for a distinction between the objectivity of facts and subjective perspectives. The low occurrence of doxological values may indicate restraint on the part of journalists in expressing personal beliefs, striving to maintain the objectivity of the dossier.
- (5) *Axiological values (46.25%)*: Representing the largest portion, axiological values introduce an evaluative perspective that highlights the emotional, symbolic and cultural significance of the achievement. This dominance underscores the discourse’s reliance on subjective assessments that evoke pride, admiration and national sentiment.
- (6) *Finalizing values (5.07%)*: Despite their smaller proportion, finalizing values emphasize the *purpose* and *end goals* embedded in the narrative. These values suggest that the Moroccan team’s achievement is not only a historic sporting success but also a driving force for future aspirations and collective ambition.

The significant predominance of axiological values, juxtaposed with the measured presence of alethic and deontic values, reveals a strategic construction of discourse. By foregrounding subjective evaluations and symbolic meaning, the dossier transforms the achievement into a unifying event that resonates deeply within the national consciousness, while still anchoring it in objective necessity and moral obligations.

While modal values reflect essential dimensions of the discourse, it is the axiological values that bring emotional and ethical richness to the narrative. The following section delves into these values, highlighting their role in shaping perceptions of the Moroccan team’s achievement.

Axiological values: an emotional and ethical assessment of the discourse

The analysis of axiological values reveals various evaluative dimensions that contribute to the richness and nuance of the discourse. While subjective, these values are crucial for understanding the emotional and ethical impact of the achievement.

- (1) *Ethical-moral values (8.74%)*: These celebrate moral principles and the ethical performance of the team, reinforcing respect and admiration for those involved in the achievement. Such values are often expressed positively, highlighting the integrity and honor associated with the event.
- (2) *Aesthetic values (0.91%)*: These values appreciate the beauty and elegance of the game, contributing to the aesthetic enjoyment of the event. Although they are less prevalent, these values enrich the discourse by adding a dimension of visual and artistic pleasure.
- (3) *Pragmatic values (17.87%)*: These highlight the practical advantages and positive implications of the achievement. The high occurrence of these values reflects a particular focus on the concrete outcomes and tangible benefits for the nation.
- (4) *Intellectual values (4.73%)*: These values emphasize strategic and intellectual skills, acknowledging the cognitive abilities demonstrated during the event. This adds complexity to the analysis by incorporating dimensions related to thought and strategy.
- (5) *Hedonic-affective values (14%)*: These values reflect the emotions and collective joy elicited by the achievement, playing a key role in fostering a sense of national pride and belonging, underlining the emotional impact of the event on the populace.

It is crucial to highlight the tension between objectivating values (alethic, deontic, truth judgment) and subjectivating values (axiological, finalizing) within this dossier. Although this type of report is often regarded as an objective genre, the unprecedented sporting achievement of the Moroccan national football team could influence the objectivity of the journalists, who are themselves Moroccan. This potential influence manifests in the notable presence of subjectivating values which, while enriching the discourse, may challenge its apparent objectivity.

Having analyzed the emotional and ethical dimensions through axiological values, we now turn to the discursive strategies that underpin the construction of the dossier's narrative.

Discursive strategies in the dossier

The analysis of objectivation and subjectivation dynamics within the dossier "*Walid Regragui Sir! Siir! Siiiiiiiiir!*" reveals two complementary yet competing discursive strategies, each underpinned by distinct mechanisms. The following table offers a comprehensive breakdown of these mechanisms, shedding light on their respective contributions to the construction of the discourse.

- (1) *Zone A: Explicit Objectification (45.95% of occurrences)*: This strategy aims to present the facts transparently and directly, in accordance with the standards of the "dossier" genre. Explicit objectification reflects a desire to maintain a formal distance from the event, focusing on an objective and factual narrative. This approach meets the genre's expectations and allows for a clear and structured presentation of the facts.
- (2) *Zone C: Concealment of Subjectivation (50.73% of occurrences)*: This mechanism relies on a discordance between subjective values and the objective forms used in the discourse. It reflects a strategy of concealment of subjectivation, where emotions and opinions are expressed in a measured way while adhering to the dossier genre's requirements. This discordance indicates a desire to maintain neutrality while subtly suggesting the writer's enthusiasm and emotion.

These strategies highlight a tension between the need to adhere to the objective norms of the “dossier” genre and the expression of emotions related to the sports achievement. The complexity of these discursive strategies illustrates the delicate balance between factual presentation and emotional engagement in the discourse.

The analysis of modal forms, modal values and discursive strategies reveals a sophisticated approach to constructing the discourse on the sports achievement. The predominance of “*de re*” modalities and the balance between objectification and subjectivation demonstrate how the dossier successfully combines objectivity and emotion. Modal values enrich the discourse by offering ethical, aesthetic, pragmatic, intellectual, and affective dimensions. Discursive strategies, on the other hand, reveal the mechanisms of narration and the tensions between genre requirements and emotional expressions. These elements contribute to a deep understanding of how the dossier constructs and conveys the significance of the Moroccan national team’s historic achievement.

The examination of discursive strategies provides a comprehensive understanding of how objectivity and subjectivity are managed within the dossier. In the following discussion, we reflect on the broader implications of these findings for sports journalism discourse.

Discussion

The analysis of modal forms, modal values and discursive strategies in the dossier “*Walid Regragui Sir! Siir! Siiiiir!*” (MarocHebdo, 2022) offers a *nuanced understanding of how the Moroccan national team’s historic achievement* is represented. This section highlights the central role of axiological values in shaping the emotional and cultural narrative, while also revealing the deliberate interplay between objectivity and subjectivity in sports journalism.

Modal forms: objectivity anchored in factual representation

The analysis of modal forms in the dossier “*Walid Regragui Sir! Siir! Siiiiir!*” reveals a pronounced preference for *de re* modalities (96.68%), underscoring the central role of factuality and precision in shaping the discourse. This dominant use of *de re* forms aligns with the expectations of the *dossier* genre, which prioritizes an objective presentation of verifiable facts. By focusing on observable realities, *de re* modalities ensure the narrative remains grounded in a tangible context, reinforcing the credibility and trustworthiness of the *dossier*.

While *de re* forms provide the objective foundation, the less frequent inclusion of *de dicto* (interpretative) and *enunciative* (expressive) modalities introduces important layers of subjectivity and emotional engagement. *De dicto* forms, which convey judgments or opinions, allow for nuanced interpretations of the events, adding depth to the portrayal by framing them within a broader cultural or ideological context. Similarly, *enunciative* forms, such as exclamations and questions, enrich the discourse with emotional resonance, inviting readers to connect with the events on a personal level.

This selective incorporation of subjective forms enhances the narrative without undermining its factual integrity. The balance between *de re* and *de dicto* or *enunciative* modalities illustrates a sophisticated approach to storytelling, where objective reporting is complemented by emotional engagement.

By combining *de re* modalities with the strategic use of *de dicto* and *enunciative* forms, the dossier creates a multidimensional narrative that is grounded in both a solid factual base and emotional depth. This approach highlights the media’s ability to construct a persuasive narrative that upholds the principles of objectivity while allowing the emotional and ideological dimensions of the event to emerge. Such a strategy resonates with Malkawi and Suleiman’s (2013) analysis, where, in their study of the Gulf crisis through two French newspapers, they highlight the use of modality as a linguistic tool to shape the reader’s perception, while maintaining a balance between factual reporting and subjective interpretations. Malkawi and Suleiman demonstrate how modality serves to interpret events

by imbuing them with ideological meanings, while still preserving a form of objectivity in the presentation of facts.

In a similar vein, [Zahidi \(2024a\)](#) emphasizes the significance of modal choices in constructing a collective identity within journalistic discourse, particularly in a national context. This idea finds a pertinent echo in the dossier under study, where modalities are used to strengthen the Moroccan collective identity through the performance of the national football team. The interplay between objectivity and subjectivity, facts and values, illustrates how the media manipulate modalities to influence the reader's perception and reinforce social and national cohesion.

Modal values: balancing objectivity and evaluation

The analysis of modal values in the dossier “*Walid Regragui Sir! Siir! Siiiiir!*” ([MarocHebdo, 2022](#)) reveals the intricate relationship between objectivity and subjectivity within the journalistic narrative. [Figure 1](#) illustrates the distribution of modal values, with alethic values (27.19%) foregrounding necessity and inevitability. These values assert the unquestionable significance of the achievement, grounding the discourse in objective truth. By emphasizing necessity and impossibility, they create a solid foundation for the narrative, reinforcing the event as an indisputable fact within the cultural context.

In contrast, deontic values (10.79%) introduce a moral dimension, linking the achievement to collective responsibility and pride. These values frame the event not just as a personal triumph but as a shared success that reflects societal norms and obligations, aligning the audience's emotional response with a collective, national sentiment.

Though less frequent, epistemic and doxological values contribute to the epistemic dimension of the discourse, ensuring credibility and confirming the truth of the facts. Epistemic values (9.85%) such as certainty affirm the veracity of the event, while doxological values (0.84%) introduce an evaluative layer, highlighting personal beliefs or convictions that reinforce the narrative's emotional tone.

Yet, it is the axiological values (46.25%) that bring the discourse to life, transforming the sports achievement into a national, cultural and emotional event. These values provide a nuanced ethical and emotional framework for the achievement. Ethical-moral values (8.74%) highlight integrity, honor and the moral dimension of the team's performance, while hedonic-affective values (14%) evoke the collective joy and pride that the achievement inspires in the national consciousness. Pragmatic values (17.87%) reflect the tangible, practical benefits of the achievement, linking it to real-world implications for the country, such as national unity and social cohesion. Though less frequent, aesthetic (0.91%) and intellectual values (4.73%) add artistic and intellectual layers to the narrative, celebrating the beauty and strategy of the game, further enriching the text.

The strategic incorporation of these values does more than merely enhance the factual reporting of the achievement; it transforms the sports event into a cultural symbol, imbued with collective significance. By blending alethic, deontic and axiological values, the dossier moves beyond presenting mere facts, creating a multilayered narrative that resonates emotionally and ideologically with the audience. This interplay between objectivity and evaluation demonstrates how the media can balance the demands of factual rigor with the emotional and cultural dimensions that shape the audience's experience.

The deliberate and strategic use of these modal values ensures that the narrative is not only grounded in objective reality but also conveys the emotional resonance of the event. The next step in our analysis involves understanding how these values interact with the discursive strategies used to present the event, reflecting how the media manipulates these elements to engage both the emotions and intellect of the audience.

Discursive strategies: managing objectivity and subjectivity

The interaction between objectification and subjectivation in journalistic discourse represents a sophisticated approach to constructing narratives, particularly in the context of significant

events like the Moroccan national football team’s achievement. In this dossier, these strategies do not simply coexist but are carefully interwoven to enrich the narrative. As shown in [Table 5](#), Zone D (50.73%), which focuses on the concealment of subjectivation, reveals a deliberate orchestration of linguistic forms and modal values. In this zone, the emotional undertones of the achievement are subtly incorporated into the narrative, while maintaining the objectivity and factual reporting characteristic of the “dossier” genre. This strategy demonstrates how the media can preserve credibility while gently introducing emotional elements that engage the reader with the event.

In contrast, Zone A (45.95%), which leans toward explicit objectification, adopts a more traditional journalistic approach. The use of “de re” forms ensures that the facts are presented in a transparent and clear manner, firmly anchoring the narrative in observable reality. This explicit objectification, however, is not devoid of emotional resonance. It is through the nuanced interaction with implicit emotional cues that the event’s significance is fully conveyed. The integration of subjective elements within this ostensibly objective framework allows for emotional engagement without compromising the factual integrity of the report.

Zahidi’s analysis of journalistic discourse, particularly his study of the dossier on the Ukraine war, sheds light on the role of objectivating strategies in presenting facts with clarity and transparency ([Zahidi, 2024a](#)). Zahidi highlights that the use of modalities such as “de re” forms is central to ensuring that the presentation of events remains factual and clear, avoiding unnecessary emotional bias. This strategy aligns closely with the approach seen in the

Table 5. Distribution of objectivation and subjectivation mechanisms in the dossier “*Walid Regragui Sir! Siir! Siiiiitiir!*”

		Objectivation ← → Subjectivation		
		de re	de dicto	d’énonciation
Modal Forms				
Modal Values				
Objectivation ↑	Ontological Values (Alethic, Deontic)	Zone A 1913 occurrences 45,95 %	Zone C 113 occurrences 2,71 %	
	Truth Judgment (Epistemic, Doxological)			
↓ Subjectivation	Axiological Judgment (Ethical-Moral, Aesthetic, Pragmatic, Intellectual, Hedonic-Affective)	Zone D 2112 occurrences 50,73 %	Zone B 25 occurrences 0,6 %	
	Finalizing Values (Volitive, Desiderative)			

Source(s): Author’s own work

Moroccan football dossier, where objectivation predominates, reinforcing the credibility and objectivity of the report while maintaining the balance with emotional elements.

Moreover, Zahidi's work underscores the importance of balancing objectivating and subjectivating modal values in journalistic discourse (Zahidi, 2024a). By integrating subjective perspectives subtly within an objective framework, journalists can engage the audience emotionally without sacrificing the integrity of their reporting. This strategy enables the media to create a discourse that resonates emotionally with the audience, while still adhering to the standards of objectivity required by the genre.

The juxtaposition of these strategies—explicit objectification and concealed subjectivation—illustrates the complex role of sports journalism in navigating the boundaries between factual reporting and the evocation of collective sentiment. By carefully balancing these strategies, the media ensures that the event is both an objective report and a symbol of national pride, capturing the emotional resonance of the achievement without compromising journalistic objectivity.

Bridging objectivity and collective engagement

The strategic use of modal forms and values also highlights the bridging of objectivity with emotional and collective engagement. While the dossier maintains its objective grounding through the use of *de re* forms and epistemic values, it simultaneously opens space for a narrative that reflects collective identity and national sentiment. By foregrounding axiological values, the dossier elevates the Moroccan national team's achievement from a mere sporting victory to a unifying national event. Ethical-moral values, with their focus on integrity and collective honor, and hedonic-affective values, which convey shared joy, underscore the symbolic importance of the event for the nation.

The prominence of pragmatic values (17.87%) reinforces this connection to the national fabric, illustrating how the achievement's benefits extend beyond the realm of sport into practical, tangible outcomes for the country. These values emphasize the significance of the team's performance in strengthening national unity and pride. Such a blend of emotional, ethical and pragmatic values offers readers a deeper connection to the event, enabling them to appreciate its multifaceted impact.

In this way, the dossier creates a multilayered narrative that balances objective reporting with the need to evoke collective sentiment. The achievement is not simply framed as a factual occurrence but as a pivotal moment that contributes to the national consciousness. This dual strategy highlights how media can engage with both the intellect and emotions of the audience, constructing a narrative that is not only informative but also deeply resonant.

Implications and future directions

This study emphasizes the important role of axiological values in shaping sports journalism, demonstrating how they serve to transform factual reporting into a dynamic narrative that fosters emotional and cultural engagement. By examining the discursive strategies of objectivity and subjectivity, the research provides a nuanced understanding of how media constructs meaning, engages emotions and influences public perception. The dual role of sports journalism, as both a source of information and an agent of emotional and ideological engagement, underscores the complexity of contemporary journalistic discourse.

Further research could extend these findings by exploring how these strategies play out in other genres of journalism or by comparing the representation of similar events across different cultural and linguistic contexts. Such studies would deepen our understanding of how media narratives, shaped by both objective reporting and emotional engagement, contribute to the formation of national identities and collective memories. Additionally, exploring the interaction between journalistic objectivity and emotional resonance in different cultural settings could offer valuable insights into the global dynamics of media discourse.

Ultimately, this analysis highlights the sophisticated nature of sports journalism, where the balance between objectivity and subjectivity is not merely a structural choice but a deliberate strategy to engage both the intellect and emotions of the audience. By bridging the factual with the emotional, sports journalism constructs narratives that are not only informational but deeply connected to national identity and collective sentiment, offering a powerful tool for shaping public perceptions and societal values. Future research in this area will continue to illuminate the ways in which media narratives influence our understanding of significant cultural and political events.

Conclusion

The linguistic analysis of axiological values in sports journalism discourse, centered on the dossier “*Walid Regragui Sir! Siir! Siiiiiiiir!*” (MarocHebdo, 2022), reveals a complex interplay between objectivity and subjectivity. The modal forms demonstrate a predominance of objectivity, with a strong emphasis on “*de re*” modalities, while “*de dicto*” and “*enunciative*” modalities introduce subjective nuances that enrich the discourse. Axiological values, particularly ethical-moral and hedonic-affective, are predominant, reflecting an intense and positive celebration of the Moroccan national team’s sports achievement. This prominence of axiological values underscores the emotional and national impact of the event, while highlighting a discursive strategy that balances factual rigor with emotional expression. The results thus illustrate how sports journalism discourse navigates between the demands of precision and expressions of collective pride, offering a nuanced view of the celebrated event. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the discursive mechanisms and values involved in sports journalism. Future research could explore how these findings apply to other media genres, such as television or digital platforms, and investigate whether the interplay between objectivity and subjectivity varies in the representation of sporting achievements across different cultural contexts. Additionally, comparative studies could examine how similar events are narrated in other countries, shedding light on the cultural dimensions of sports journalism.

References

- Adam, J.-M. and Lugin, G. (2006), “Effacement énonciatif et diffraction co-textuelle de la prise en charge des énoncés dans les hyperstructures journalistiques”, *Semen*, No. 22, doi: [10.4000/semen.4381](https://doi.org/10.4000/semen.4381).
- Cozma, A.-M. (2009), “Approche argumentative de la modalité aléthique dans la perspective de la Sémantique des Possibles Argumentatifs: Application au discours institutionnel de la bioéthique”, Doctoral dissertation, Université de Nantes.
- Cozma, A.-M. (2021), “De la controverse à la complexité modale: L’exemple de la valeur sociale complexe ‘vaccination’”, *Espaces Linguistiques*, No. 3, doi: [10.25965/espaces-linguistiques.422](https://doi.org/10.25965/espaces-linguistiques.422).
- Cozma, A.-M. and Galatanu, O. (2019), “La construction discursive dévalorisante du concept de démocratie”, *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, pp. 249-272.
- Galatanu, O. (2002), “Le concept de modalité: Les valeurs dans la langue et dans le discours”, in Galatanu, O. (Ed.), *Les Valeurs*, pp. 17-32.
- Galatanu, O. (2019), “La sémantique des modalités et ses enjeux théoriques et épistémologiques dans l’analyse des textes”, in Gouvard, J.-M. (Ed.), *De la langue au style*, Presses Universitaires de Lyon, pp. 157-170, doi: [10.4000/books.pul.20785](https://doi.org/10.4000/books.pul.20785).
- Galatanu, O. (2021), “Le traitement du potentiel argumentatif des mots en analyse du discours”, *Interfaces numériques*, Vol. 10 No. 3, doi: [10.25965/interfaces-numeriques.4700](https://doi.org/10.25965/interfaces-numeriques.4700).
- Le Thiec, M. (2004), “La construction discursive des identités: L’identité des jeunes de la périphérie parisienne dans le discours de la presse française: Une étude de cas”, Thèse de doctorat, Université de Nantes.

- Malkawi, N. and Suleiman, S. (2013), "Analyse linguistique du discours de presse française: La modalisation dans *Le Monde* et *Présent* sur la rencontre de Genève (1991)", *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 3 No. 11, pp. 1-12.
- MarocHebdo (2022), *Walid Regragui Sir! Siir! Siiiiir...*, No. 1465.
- Zahidi, I. (2024a), "Objectivité et subjectivité dans les dossiers de la presse écrite marocaine francophone: Une analyse discursive", Doctoral dissertation, Université Ibn Tofail, Kénitra.
- Zahidi, I. (2024b), "Le dossier journalistique: Une exploration d'un genre hybride dans la presse marocaine", *Journal des Sciences de l'Information et de la Communication*, Vol. 1 No. 2, pp. 139-145, doi: [10.34874/PRSM.jsic-vol1iss2.1806](https://doi.org/10.34874/PRSM.jsic-vol1iss2.1806).
- Zahidi, I. and Zighighi, Z. (2021), "Subjectivity in journalistic discourse: the case study of issue 810 in the Moroccan weekly TEL QUEL", *SHS Web Conf.*, Vol. 119, 01004, doi: [10.1051/shsconf/202111901004](https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/202111901004).
- Zahidi, I. and Zighighi, Z. (2022), "Le positionnement énonciatif dans le discours journalistique: Le cas du numéro 810 de l'hebdomadaire marocain TELQUEL", *Moroccan Journal of Quantitative and Qualitative Research*, Vol. 4 No. 2, doi: [10.48379/IMIST.PRSM/mjq-r-v4i2.28786](https://doi.org/10.48379/IMIST.PRSM/mjq-r-v4i2.28786).
- Zahidi, I. and Zighighi, Z. (2023), "Entre Objectivité et Subjectivité: Étude d'un Dossier Journalistique Sportif", *Réflexions Sportives*, pp. 230-239, doi: [10.34874/IMIST.PRSM/refsport-i3.44400](https://doi.org/10.34874/IMIST.PRSM/refsport-i3.44400).

Further reading

- Charaudeau, P. (2005), *Les médias et l'information. L'impossible transparence du discours*, De Boeck – Ina coll. « Médias Recherches », Bruxelles.
- Charaudeau, P. (2006), "Discours journalistique et positionnements énonciatifs. Frontières et dérives", *SEMEN*, No. 22, doi: [10.4000/semen.2793](https://doi.org/10.4000/semen.2793).
- Charaudeau, P. (2009), "Une éthique du discours médiatique est-elle possible ?", *Communication*, Vol. 27 No. 2, pp. 51-75, doi: [10.4000/communication.3066](https://doi.org/10.4000/communication.3066).
- Clara-Ubaldina, L. (2001), "Les articles dits d'information: la relation de déclarations politiques", *Semen*, No. 13.
- Errami, A. (2016), *Guide du journaliste professionnel: Les genres journalistiques, les clés de l'information professionnelle*, ISESCO, Éd., Rabat.
- Galatanu, O. (2005), *La sémantique des modalités et ses enjeux théoriques et épistémologiques dans l'analyse des textes. De la langue au style*, in Gouvard, J.M., (Éd.) Presses universitaires de Lyon.
- Galatanu, O. (2016), "La bivalence axiologique de « l'autorité » et de ses discours", *Corela [En ligne]*, HS-19, available at: <http://journals.openedition.org/corela/4339>, doi: [10.4000/corela.4339](https://doi.org/10.4000/corela.4339).
- Grevisse, B. (2014), *Écritures journalistiques: Stratégies rédactionnelles, Multimédia et journalisme narratif*, éd. 2, De Boeck Supérieur, Louvain-la-Neuve.
- Kerbrat-Orecchioni, C. (2009), *L'énonciation: De la subjectivité dans le langage*, Armand Colin, COLLECTION U • LINGUISTIQUE, Paris.
- Maingueneau, D. (2016), "Énonciation et analyse du discours", *Corela*, Vol. 19, doi: [10.4000/corela.4446](https://doi.org/10.4000/corela.4446).
- Maingueneau, D. (2021), *Analyser les textes de communication*, Armand Colin, Paris.

Corresponding author

Ismail Zahidi can be contacted at: ismail.zahidi@uit.ac.ma