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MODALITY IN CAMEROON PRINT AND AUDIO-VISUAL MEDIA: A CASE STUDY OF *THE GUARDIAN POST/CAMEROON TRIBUNE AND THE CRTV*

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ABSTRACT

This work examines the expression of modality in the written and spoken productions of sport commentators in programmes and slots on the TV, the radio, and in the printed press in Cameroon. The data consists of a corpus from printed texts of two major Cameroonian newspapers (*The Guardian Post* and *Cameroon Tribune*) and audio-visual materials from sports programmes on the CRTV. The theoretical framework used is Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) whose account of modality is widely used for the analysis of the language of sports commentators.

The analysis of the data shows that modality is expressed in a variety of ways by sports commentators with the core modal "will" being the most dominant with meaning generally relating to epistemic predictions. Results also show that there are more instances of epistemic interpretations of modality to the detriment of deontic modality which suggest that sports commentators are not in a position to lay strict permissions and/or obligations. The metaphorical representations of modality in the form of adverbs, adjectives, lexical verbs and even ellipses, show a high degree of certainty, necessity and possibility which suggest that sports commentators display attitudes towards the content of the information they transmit.

Key words: modality, sports commentators, epistemic and deontic modality.

Résumé

Ce travail traite de l'expression des modalités par les journalistes et commentateurs de sport au Cameroun, aussi bien à l'oral qu'à l'écrit. Les données ont été collectées à travers des corpus de coupures de deux principales presses (*The Guardian Post* et *Cameroon Tribune*) ainsi que des documents audio-visuels de la CRTV. Le fondement théorique est celui de la Grammaire Systémique Fonctionnelle de Halliday (1985) qui permet d'analyser l'usage des modalités.

L'analyse des données montre que les modalisateurs utilisés sont de différentes natures, avec une prédominance des expressions renvoyant à un futur proche de par l'utilisation de « will ». Il apparaît aussi que le sens épistémique des modalités est le plus récurrent, contrairement à celles déontiques, ce qui signifie que les commentateurs sportifs ne sont pas en position de force pour intimer des obligations ou donner des permissions. L'étude des modalités révèle également que les commentateurs sportifs adoptent certaines attitudes vis-à-vis des informations qu'ils transmettent.

Mots clés: modalités, commentateur de sport, modalité épistémique et déontique

1. Introduction

The study of modality is often attached to that of evaluative language, since modals constitute entities that help in conveying judgements and revealing speaker/writer's attitude and appreciation of sports events, all of this viewed from a Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) perspective. Despite the seemingly simple uses of the modals to make requests, offers or express obligation and necessity etc., their semantic complexities have presented a challenge to both semantic theory and descriptive grammar (Palmer 1979, 2001; Coates 1983). In addition to their semantic complexity, the modals display a significant degree of regional variation and register variation in Standard English.

The influence of mass media on our society has increased over the past decades and will certainly keep on increasing, given the influence that media and media workers are likely to exert on individuals in the society who are fond of hard news, scoops, detailed analyses and commentaries of their daily lives. This influence of mass media is achieved by a careful choice of the resources offered by languages over the world and that serve as a means to shape listeners', viewers' and readers' perception or understanding of a given event that occurs in the community.

Studies on how language is used by media workers is a new field that is gradually gaining grounds in the domain of applied linguistics, an emerging field that Perrin (2013) labels "media linguistics". At this intersection of applied linguistics and journalism studies, he observes that media linguistics constitutes an emerging sub-disciplinary label, "an umbrella term for the study of mass mediated language use restricted to news media: public or private institutions of mass communication that produce and spread news". A basic distinction is to be made between two approaches within media linguistics, in line with Van Hout and Burger (2015). The first of these distinctions he made is "work on language *of* the media", which "examines how news media use language to represent social life" (P.1). The second point in this dichotomy is "work on language *in* the media" that aims at investigating how language issues such as language standards, language ideologies, and language change are

represented and thematised in news media (Johnson & Ensslin, 2007; Johnson & Milani, 2010). Understanding whose values, beliefs and worldviews are foregrounded and what counts as legitimate language use remains central concerns in media linguistics (Van Hout & Burger, 2015:1).

This growing influence of mass media on language development over the past decades has led some linguists to considering mass media as new languages. However, as Willie (1979) points out, "with the mass media, we are still using the same means of communication", the same, words, the same pictures, the same grammar, with nonetheless some specificities. Also, the language of the mass media constitutes an important and prosperous field of study thanks to the accessibility and the availability of the material, the interest in the way media professionals use language, and the sociocultural influences that they contain (Bell, 1991).

Media organs have flourished in Cameroon, both audio-visual and print media. Newspapers, television and radio programmes to which Cameroonians are exposed daily exhibit a good number of linguistic peculiarities that are signs of the diversity of cultures and languages spoken nationwide. Research on Cameroon English have shown how English in the country is influenced by indigenous languages, the second official language which is French, and this at all levels of language: speech, syntax and vocabulary. An immersion in the field of print media led Tabe (2015) to the conclusion that "Cameroon English is enriching itself from print media sources". But what is true for the print media can also apply to the TV, the radio and even the internet. The whole population is exposed to media productions and journalists are likely to display their cultural identities in their reports and commentaries.

The concept of modality is merely defined by the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary as the "the idea expressed by modals". The modals themselves are referred to as modal auxiliaries and are defined as "verb[s] that [are] used with another verb (not a modal) to express possibility, permission, intention, etc." (P. 951). This definition is relevant in

the sense that it brings forth the meanings that are associated to modality. However, the definition of the concept of modality itself seems to exclude the wide variety of existing linguistic possibilities which perform a modal function as they can be used to convey the meanings of possibility, permission, intention, probability, obligation and many more. In this sense, this study will not concentrate only on the core modals (can, could, may, might, shall, should, will, would), but will go beyond to tackle all other types of expressions that serve the purpose of expressing modality in the language of sports commentators.

To Simpson (1993:47) modality refers “to a speaker’s attitude towards, or opinion about the truth of the proposition expressed by a sentence”. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) on their part define modality as the speaker’s judgement, or request of the judgement of the listener on the status of what is being said. It also explains a writer’s or speaker’s attitude towards the situation or event described by a sentence. Modality can therefore be seen as a major exponent of the interpersonal function of language. The modal auxiliary in ideologically orientated context has perlocutionary effect on both the producer and the receiver. Whenever instructions are given, a modality enters the relationship between the writer and reader.

The above background information on the language of journalism, and especially the personal implication of commentators in their productions, gives us enough reason to dive into the language of Cameroon sports commentators so as to find out how sports commentators are able to include markers of their own inclinations in their productions by means put at their disposal by the language (expressions of modality). The purpose of this study is firstly to investigate the language of Cameroon sports commentators with the objective of determining the expression of modality. Secondly, this study of language use in the media will help describe how the media use some language features, also found in ordinary speech.

2. Methodology and theoretical framework

This section first describes the data collection method (2.1) before laying the theoretical

frame (2.2) used in this study to uncover the specificities of modal markers in the language of sports commentators in Cameroon.

2.1 Data collection methods

Personal communication with professionals of the domain of journalism was conducted. Indeed, this gave the opportunity to note how they endeavour to convince their audience to make them share their opinions on a given issue and how they also try to nuance the overt attitudinal stance that may be adopted during reports and commentaries. Recording and documentation are the main methods of data collection used in this work. A tape-recorder was used to record audio-visual resources on the TV and the radio. In this case, audio material was obtained, hundreds of minutes of sports reports and commentaries as well.

2.2 The corpus

The corpus used in this study consists of newspaper articles culled from two major Cameroonian daily newspapers, namely *The Guardian Post* and *Cameroon Tribune*. The former is a private-owned newspaper, while the latter is the state-owned newspaper often criticised as being not always impartial as far as the treatment of national issues is concerned. Whatever the case, those newspapers are among the most widely read in Cameroon. Even though they are likely to contain similar language given the fact that they belong to the same genre of writing (sports commentary), instances where modality markers would differ can be expected. The articles were taken from ten publications of the newspapers over a relatively same period in the year 2018. As for the Cameroon Tribune newspaper, the issues collected range from April 17 to 20 and from April 23 to 27. As for the Guardian Post, the issues date back to April 18 to 20, April 23 to 27, and May 02 to 04. This makes a total of ten publications collected per newspaper.

As concerns audio-visual resources, a great number of resources was taken from the sports newscast in English which is broadcasted every morning from Monday to Friday as from 07h30 a.m. on the National Station. In order to look at how modality is expressed in live commentary, attention

wasequally paid to the programme "Sports and Music" which holds every Sunday from 03h30 to 06h00 p.m. on the TV. The programme "Sports Vision" that takes place every Friday has also served the purpose of this research project. Live sports event frequently broadcasted on the TV and for which a panel of journalists and experts is generally invited to analyse the performance of sports men and women also served as corpus. These journalists engage into speech productions that are deemed likely to fulfil the objectives of this research. The audio-visual material was collected between January and March 2018. This was a period of high sports activities with the African Nations' championship of football in which Cameroon took part.

2.3 Theoretical framework

The analysis of the data collected from the language of media workers in newspapers and audio-visual media had to fit in the principles laid by the SFG theory on which this work is established.

This theory provides rich and sustainable resources for unveiling the deep meaning of utterances found in journalistic commentary and reports. In the view of SFG, language is a tool for representing knowledge and social interaction. Halliday's SFG distinguishes three broad areas of semantics and grammar, namely the interpersonal (it is concerned with the interaction between speaker and addressee(s) -the grammatical resources for enacting social roles in general, and speech roles in particular, in dialogic interaction; i.e. for establishing, changing, and maintaining interpersonal relations.), the ideational ("grammatical resources for construing our experience of the world around us and inside us" (Matthiessen and Halliday, 1997:13), and the textual (it is concerned with the creation of text -"with the presentation of ideational and interpersonal meanings as information that can be shared by speaker and listener in text unfolding in context" (Matthiessen and Halliday, 1997:13). Modality is a part of the Interpersonal metafunction and will be discussed in subsequent sections of this work. Media language is part of the interpersonal metafunction on the basis that journalistic texts are

addressed to a given audience although no feedback is expected from the addressees, in this context the readership, listeners and viewers.

The central advocacy of this theory is that language use must be seen as taking place in social contexts. Language here is not to be considered as good or bad: it is rather appropriate or inappropriate to the context of use. Moreover, language function (what it is used for) is often more important than language structure (how it is composed). This is why it has come to be known as a Systemic Functional Grammar. In Halliday's (1985: xiv) terms:

The theory behind the present account is known as 'systemic' theory. Systemic theory is a theory of meaning as choice, by which a language, or any other semiotic system, is interpreted as networks of interlocking options... whatever is chosen in one system becomes the way into a set of choices in another, and go on as far as we need to, or as far as we can in the time available, or as far as we know how.

In the analysis of modality, Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) take three variables into account: the type, the orientation and the value. And beyond the simple use of modal grammatical markers, they introduce the concept of metaphorical expressions of modality to account for various expressions that carry modal features.

3. Literature review

The notion of modality has been treated variously by researchers. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) treat modality alongside polarity which is referred to "as the opposition between positive (*It is. Do that!*) and negative (*It isn't. Don't do that!*)."

Modality on its part is defined as "the speaker's judgement, or request of the judgement of the listener, on the status of what is being said (*It could be. Couldn't it be? You mustn't do that. Must you do that?*)" (p.172). Both polarity and modality in the view of the proponents of SFG are realisations of the Mood element, either through the finite element (*It is/It isn't; It is/It must be*) or through a separate mood Adjunct (*It is/It is not; It is/It certainly is*). But

interpersonal judgements, or assessments, extend beyond the 'core' grammatical system of modality to include assessments of temporality and intensity realised like modality through mood Adjuncts (e.g. *It is/It already is/It almost is*), and also other types of assessments beyond the mood itself that relate either to the proposition being exchanged (e.g. *Fortunately it is*: 'it is, which is fortunate') or to the act of exchanging it (e.g. *Frankly it is*: 'I'm telling you frankly it is'). The notion of modality is then seen as a cline between positive and negative polarity, and its discussion is extended to the description to other types of modal assessment based on our account of modality (p.173).

Modality is thus the expression of indeterminacy. It construes the region of uncertainty that lies between 'yes' and 'no'. But there is more than one route between the two, (1) one for propositions, and (2) one for proposals. (1) In-between the certainties of 'it is' and 'it isn't' lie the relative probabilities of 'it must be', 'it will be', 'it may be'. (2) Likewise, in between the definitive 'do!' and 'don't!' lie the discretionary options 'you must do', 'you should do', 'you may do'.

Qun (2010) employs corpus analysis techniques to examine the characteristics of modality in academic papers and newspaper editorials. The findings of his study reveal that scientific papers avoided epistemic modals such as *I think* and *surely* because of their emphasis on presenting an objective view of the news events. Apart from being objective, scientific papers also justify their findings in an assertive, consistent and reasonable way; therefore the occurrence of *often* was higher than the appearances of *usually* and *sometimes*. As for the newspaper editorials, findings of Qun's study also indicate that *should* and *could* were the prominent features in editorials. A possible reason mentioned for this preference was that most editorials tried to comment on events which had already happened, thus the past tense was preferred. On the other hand, though editorial writers tried to show their stance in an unambiguous way, they did not intend to offend readers. Thus they preferred mitigating modal verbs *could* and *might*. Furthermore, editorial writings had more uses of *perhaps* while scientific papers tended

to use *may* more frequently. With the use of *perhaps*, editorial writers were presenting a fuzzy semantic stance to shun possible criticism. If scientific writers used this word more frequently, the objectivity and truth value of their scientific findings would become doubtful.

Alizera Bonyadi (2011) notes that modality is of special importance in editorials in that it allows editorialists to establish favourable or unfavourable bias throughout the text to manipulate their readers' opinion. It therefore behaves like a tool to direct and control the behaviour of the people, especially if we admit that newspaper editorials revolve around sensitive issues to the community. The study whose material is taken from two major newspapers, *The Tehran Times* and *The New York Times*, does not cover all types of editorials, but only those referred to as editorials of criticism. The observation of the two newspapers leads to the conclusion that modality in the selected editorials was expressed through different means: modal auxiliaries, modal adverbs, evaluative adjectives, reporting verbs and generic phrases (It is frustrating that ...It is tragic that ... We are certain...). The comparison of the two newspapers revealed a high occurrence of predictive auxiliary modals (will and should), with the *New York Times* having a higher degree of occurrence, while in the *Tehran Times*, more modals of necessity were found which shows their concern for what should be done.

The analysis of modality in newspaper articles about the Scottish RMS Queen that was carried out by Puteri (2013) reveals traces of authorial subjectivity resulting from the use of modal verbs by authors of journalistic texts, texts that are commonly referred to as objective. Her basic assumption was that in newspapers, real world events are enacted linguistic choices. With an aim of identifying how nine core modals, the analysis of these newspapers at a grammatical level led to the conclusion that mood and modality systems expressing interpersonal meaning were present in those texts and with numerous adverbs presenting subjective meanings. To end, the presence of a great number of modal markers was seen as a subjective assessment that engages the readers dialogically in the subjective assessment of propositions.

Morales (2015) examines the dominant verb phrase structure of the modal *must* under the category of printed media texts of persuasive writing in press editorials. The analysis of 36 media texts in the framework of this study aimed at examining whether they deviates from their standard use in English, since possible variations may exist between varieties of English. The structure *must* + base form of the verb appeared as the most recurrent because of the overtly authoritative tone it conveys. The highly progressive usage of *must* to denote obligation in Philippine editorials expressed compulsion to the readers and appeared as discourse-oriented elements expressing necessity or strong moral obligation. In general, the use of this modal maintained its conformity to the standard usage in American English.

Nkemleke (2012) is an exploration of the extent to which linguistic categories are used in Cameroon English to express modality, amidst claims that the English language constitutes a rather homogeneous entity which makes differences between varieties related to frequency and stylistic values and raises concerns on how these linguistic features expressing modality could be tracked and attached to a group given that they are the same in any variety. The distinction between epistemic and root modality is maintained to account for the values of different modal markers (core modals and semi-modals, adverbs, adjectives, lexical verbs). The comments made on Halliday's metafunctions of language lead him to the remark that "it may not be enough to express an idea, a request, or information or get things done. It is important to examine the context and the conventions governing the relationships between participants" (p.6).

The observations made from the data collected show a higher frequency of the primary modals (*will*, *shall*, *can*, *may*), on the tentative ones (*will should*, *could*, *might*) in all the different kinds of text available in the CCE. A general appraisal of the distribution of the basic meanings of central modal markers show the dominance of the root meaning over the epistemic one, which should be representing a case of variation between Cameroon English and British English. Considering the core modals individually, he observes that *can* is

generally used to express possibility not restricted to particular context; *could* include tentativeness with other meanings relating to the past of ability *can*; *may* mainly serves to express avoidance of commitment, or to soften assertion; *might* which generally expresses the subjective epistemic possibility was less frequent in Cameroon English; the root use of *will* to discuss a state or a predication that refers to a future event was mostly used rather than the epistemic one for prediction and predictability; the root senses of *shall* (intention/addressee's volition, obligation) were more frequent in Cameroon English while *would* as an hypothetical marker was widely used.

The analysis of the frequency distribution of epistemic adverbials shows that most modal adjectives expressed certainty, while modal lexical verbs were less frequent. But be it with core modals or other moralisers, the general observation made is that epistemic modality is less expressed in Cameroon English, what he considers may be due to the complex processes involved in epistemic modality.

What remains clear is that this work is concerned with a professional domain which is sports commentary. While speaking and writing their reports and articles, sports commentators frequently take stances vis-à-vis the issues at hand. These stances in their turn can impact the way their audience will position themselves. Modality is an appropriate framework for the expression of judgement. It therefore goes without saying that the reporter's voice adopted in sports commentary is likely to influence the reader/listener/viewer perception of the news event. This study is then specific in the sense that it contributes to the understanding of how the system of modality operates in sports Cameroon English. It provides new data to existing ones and gives interest to the domain of sports commentary as a professional field where a specific use of language resources is made and that can impact the meaning of texts. Besides, it proposes to see how evaluative language in sports commentary function in the Cameroonian context and help in favouring a specific positioning by the audience towards a given event.

The previous works thus reviewed, the next section analyses the data collected following the SFG theory.

4. Data analysis and findings

Three central questions were set to guide the present research paper, notably:

- 1- Which types of modal expressions commonly appear and how frequently are they used by Cameroon sport commentators?
- 2- What are the dominant meanings expressed by the modal expressions used in the language of Cameroon sports commentators, given the interpersonal function played by modality and the impact it is likely to have in the understanding of commentators' messages?
- 3- What accounts for the variation in frequency distribution and meaning of modal markers across sports commentators talk text types?

4.1- Modals and their frequencies in sports commentaries in Cameroon

Following the first research question, it is possible to conclude, basing on the data that modality in the language of Cameroon sports commentators is expressed in all the possible ways so far identified. This is notably seen in the use of central modal verbs, semi-modals, adjectival and adverbial expressions as well as lexical verbs which have a modal character. The statistical presentation of the various occurrences of expressions of modality shows that there is an even distribution of the dominant modal verbs across the various text types that constitute the sample. It appears that *will* is the mostly-used modal by Cameroon sports commentators, and this is true for the printed press, the TV, and the radio. Apart from *will*, the other traditional present tense modals *can* and *shall* are seldom used, to the preference of the tentative traditional past tense forms *could* and *should*, without forgetting *would*. A keen attention to the distinction between hard news and soft news has also shown that in there were more soft

news/comment sections that contained tentative modals, while in the case of hard news/reports, the traditional present forms were used, with the dominance of *will* in the later type.

Table 1: Summary statistical distribution of central modals across media types

Modals	TGP	CT	Radio	TVR	TVL
Will	60	40	100	34	40
Would	42	07	07	01	09
Can	08	/	08	10	23
Could	20	03	11	02	13
Shall	/	/	/	02	/
Should	12	/	07	17	16
May	12	01	/	05	3
Might	/	/	/	/	01
must	2	/	09	07	16

In the case of semi-modals, *be going to*, *be able to have to*, and *need to* were abundantly used. Adjectival and adverbial representations of modality that were recorded mainly related to possibility, certainty and necessity, and lexical verbs representations generally had to do with tentativeness and future expectations.

Table 2: Distribution of semi-modals

Media	TG P	C T	Radi o	TV R	TVL	
					Colour Commenta ry	Play -by- play
Semi- modal s						
Be able to	02	0 3	02	06	04	/
Have to	06	/	07	12	08	/
Be going to	01	/	/	18	18	09
Need to	04	0 3	07	06	24	/

4.2- Meanings of Modals in Cameroon sports commentaries

The dominant meaning of modals has also been scrutinised. The analysis reveals that epistemic

modalities that mark the degree of confidence and commitment of the speaker/writer in the truth of the proposition dominate in the language of sports commentators, exception made of the uses of *must* and *should*. The tentative modals (*could*, *should* and *would* especially) which are traditional past tense forms of the primary modals *can*, *shall* and *will*, were mostly used because of their potentials to make assumptions of probability and possibility, and to express strong desires and obligations. The marginal presence of *shall* is also to be underlined.

In the case of *will*, the prediction meaning marked strong future expectation, but in most cases, it appeared to be more like a simple reference to future tense. Expressing predictability, it rather marked certainty and confidence, and was widely associated to evaluators. On the other hand, its tentative past tense form *would* was entirely used in an epistemic way to make speculations, state beliefs, certainty and possibility.

While *shall* appeared only twice to substitute *will* in instances where it was likely to occur, the meanings of *should* related generally to epistemic assumptions and assessments of probability/possibility. The factive use in phrases of the type "*It should be noted that...*" which are common of journalistic expression has also been found. In its root uses, *should* essentially appeared in contexts where the sports commentators reported strong obligations from external sources, or uttered statements that simply looked like advice to stakeholders on the sports scene. This left us with the claim that sports commentators are certainly not in a position that enables them to state commands.

The claim above was confirmed in the analysis of the uses of *must*. Though the root uses of *must* dominate in the language speech and writing of sports commentators, this did not meet all the criteria of stating strong obligations in that sports commentators are not in a position likely to lay obligations. Therefore, root uses of *must* generally denote a root necessity or state a moral obligation. Whatever the case the four meanings associated to the use of *must* by Nkemleke (2005) have been identified notably obligation, exhortation, intention,

and root necessity. In its epistemic sense, it had to do with epistemic necessity based on a logical deduction from facts known by the commentator.

Can and *could*, were seen in their most obvious shade of meaning, that of expressing ability, present/future for *can* and past ability for *could*. They are also used in the sample to express possibility, while *could* takes a tentative meaning so as to express possible future events or actions based on facts known by the speaker/writer, with however a low degree of commitment and certainty. No instances of root uses could be found.

May and *might* were seen as expressing possibility with avoidance of commitment from the speaker.

The third and last line of data analysis considered the distribution of central modals (4.3) in the language of Cameroon sports commentators.

4.3. Distribution of central modals in the language of Cameroon sports commentators

In this section, the frequency distribution of central modals (*can*, *could*, *may*, *might*, *will*, *would*, *shall*, *should*) in the different sources that have been used will be presented successively, starting with the printed press, then the audio-visual sources.

4.3.1. Distribution of central modals in sports commentary in the printed press

Two major Cameroonian newspapers were used for this study: the private-owned *The Guardian Post* (TGP) and the state-owned *Cameroon Tribune* (CT). A total of twenty publications, ten per newspaper, were scrutinized. These issues were collected over the same period of time with the hope that they would discuss the same topics which is unfortunately not the case as was seen in the previous chapter. This however does not hamper the ability to tackle issues related to modality in those texts.

4.3.1.1. Distribution of central modals in TGP

A total number of 45 sports issues were treated in TGP in all the ten publications that were selected. These publications proved to be rich enough as far as the expressions of modality using the central modals are concerned. The result of the

Careful scrutiny of these publications to find these newspapers in these publications is presented in the table below.

Table 3: Central modals in TGP

Modal	Occurrences	Percentage
Will	60	38.46%
Would	42	26.92%
Could	20	12.82%
Can	08	05.12%
Should	12	07.69%
May	12	07.69%
Must	2	01.28%
Total	156	/

The above table shows the dominance of the modal *will* which accounts for 38.46% of the total number of central modals that appear in the sample of TGP. The modal *would* is second with 26.92%. *Could* on its part accounts for 12.82% of the total number of occurrences central modals in TGP, far above *can* (5.12%), for which it often carries the past tense aspect. *Should* and *may* are in relatively short number, while the single occurrence of *must* from the 172-total use of central modals already suggests that its use and in the printed press as far as sports commentary is concerned may not fulfil adequate semantic functions. *Might* is totally absent. Such an assumption still needs to be confirmed when looking at the modals used in the CT.

4.1.1.2. Distribution of central modals in CT

Only fifteen sports-related articles were collected from the ten publications of CT and were used in this study. This is mainly due to the act that CT is a bilingual newspaper. The present study deals only with sports articles that are written only in English. Such publications appeared to be in a shorter number the ones in French. In terms of quantity, the use of modals will certainly not challenge the ones in TGP but the proportion of use of different modals will certainly generate relevant observations as seen in the table below.

Table 3: Central modals in CT

Modal	Occurrences	Percentage
Will	42	82.14%
Would	07	12.5%
Could	03	1.16%
May	01	0.58%
Total	53	/

The table above shows that only four central modals have been used in the fifteen articles that were analyzed. It can be concluded that this table is that sport commentators of the printed press (private or public), have a high preference of the modal *will*. As it was the case in TGP, *will* is dominantly used in CT. This is emphasized by the fact that in this case, it covers 82.14% of the total use of central modals in CT. *Would* still follows in terms of frequency. This suggests that there are high semantic implications of the use of these two modals in the language Cameroon sports commentators of the printed press. The marginal presence of *may* and *could* is also to be noted as well as the absence of other modals that already appear in TGP. From this frequency distribution of modals in TGP and CT, it was noted that *shall*, with its meanings associated to intention, volition and obligation, is also totally absent in the sample of printed texts.

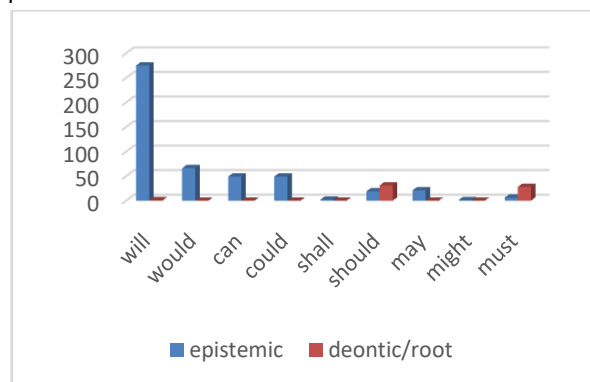


Fig. 1: Summary distribution of the dominant meanings of central modals

The use of semi-modals also proved to be rich enough for the description of the system of modality in Cameroon. The dominant one are *need to* and *to be going to*, with the latter being more frequent in the commentary of live events to express futurity

when used in the simple present tense, while in the simple past it takes the meaning of the tentative *would*. *Need to* express strong necessity, both epistemic and root/deontic, but associated to *may*, it expressed a weak future necessity. *Have to* carries the same root meanings as *must*, while ability, be it past, future, or present was seen in the uses of *to be able to*.

Possibility, necessity and certainty are the meanings carried by most of adjectival and adverbial representations of modality that are found in sports commentary. Tentativeness and possibility were constituted the meanings of lexical verbs representations, while it was also pointed out that ellipses at the level of the verb phrase also served the purpose of expressing necessity and/or obligation.

Table 3: Distribution of adverbial and adjectival expressions of modality

Media	Adverbs	Adjectives
TGP	Certainly (02), likely (02), incredibly (01), seemingly (01), apparently (01)	Vital (01), pivotal (01), possible (01)
CT	/	Vital (01), important (01), certain (01)
Radio	Likely (01), maybe (01)	Obliged (01)
TVR	Gradually (05)	Possible (01), obvious (01), indispensable (01)
TVL	Certainly (07), probably (01)	Possible (01)

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