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## Mood in Motion: A linguistic analysis of imperative dominance in Moroccan Tourist Agencies' Advertisement Slogans

Yassine Jaouad \*, Abdellah El Haloui and Rachid Ed-Dali

*Cadi Ayyad University, Faculty of letters and Human Sciences.*

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### Abstract

In this article, we examine the use of grammatical moods in the slogans of Moroccan tourist agencies' advertisement slogans, analyzing 73 sentence-level slogans out of a total of 100. The study argues that most Moroccan travel agencies employ the imperative mood in their promotional discourse, overlooking, if not neglecting, customers' inclinations and preferences. The analysis reveals a dominance of imperative sentences, followed by declarative and subjunctive moods, while the interrogative mood is entirely absent. This strategic reliance on commands highlights a directive approach to engaging potential tourists, often prioritizing action over dialogue. By investigating this linguistic phenomenon, the study provides insights into the persuasive techniques shaping Moroccan tourism advertisements and their implications for audience engagement.

**Keywords:** Moroccan Tourist Agencies' Advertisement Slogans; Imperative Mood; Promotional Discourse; Linguistic Analysis; Tourism Advertising

### 1. Introduction

In the Moroccan tourism sector, travel agencies play an important role in influencing consumer behavior through their promotional strategies, particularly their use of slogans. These short and impactful phrases aim to engage potential tourists while conveying the core message of the services provided. However, a detailed examination of these slogans reveals a notable pattern: Moroccan travel agencies heavily rely on the imperative mood, focusing on directing action rather than engaging with the preferences and inclinations of their audience. This article analyzes the grammatical moods used in Moroccan travel agency slogans, examining their linguistic structure and exploring how these choices shape audience engagement and communication strategies.

The study argues that the dominant use of the imperative mood reflects a product-centered approach in Moroccan tourism advertisements, often sidelining the audience's perspective. While customer response remains essential to advertising success, this research highlights the role of linguistic and grammatical choices—specifically the use of mood—in shaping persuasive promotional messages. By focusing on the imperative and declarative moods while noting the absence of interrogative structures, the analysis emphasizes the centrality of textual elements in Moroccan travel slogans.

This study addresses a gap in the existing literature by analyzing the mood classification of 73 sentence-level slogans from a dataset of 100. Previous research has largely concentrated on thematic or visual elements of tourism advertisements, with limited attention to the linguistic structures that frame these messages. By investigating how grammatical moods function within the context of Moroccan tourism, this study provides new insights into the ways language is employed to influence potential tourists.

\* Corresponding author: Yassine Jaouad

The main objective of this research is to examine the prominence and implications of specific grammatical moods in Moroccan travel agency slogans. It seeks to determine how these linguistic choices reflect broader advertising strategies and whether they align with the expectations of their target audience. Additionally, the study considers how the absence of certain moods, such as the interrogative, might indicate gaps in audience engagement. The findings aim to guide Moroccan travel agencies toward more balanced and audience-oriented advertising strategies, enhancing the impact of their promotional discourse.

### 1.1. Background

The study of grammatical mood in advertising slogans, particularly in the tourism sector, offers valuable insights into the persuasive strategies employed by marketers. Linguistic elements, such as grammatical mood, play a crucial role in shaping how messages are received and interpreted by target audiences (Cook, 2001, p. 76). In the context of Moroccan travel agency slogans, analyzing the prevalence and implications of specific moods—imperative, declarative, and subjunctive—provides a nuanced understanding of how language influences consumer behavior and decision-making.

Grammatical mood, a fundamental aspect of sentence structure, conveys the speaker's attitude toward the proposition being expressed. The imperative mood, characterized by commands or requests, is commonly used in advertising to prompt immediate action (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014, p. 117). This aligns with the goal of many travel agencies, which aim to inspire potential tourists to explore destinations and book services. In Moroccan travel slogans, the dominance of the imperative mood reflects a direct approach, with slogans like “Discover the magic of Morocco” and “Start your adventure today” emphasizing urgency and action. However, this reliance on imperative structures may also overlook opportunities to engage audiences in a more dialogic or reflective manner (Myers, 1994, p. 38).

The declarative mood, by contrast, is used to provide information or make statements, offering a sense of reliability and authority (Crystal, 2008, p. 232). Declarative slogans such as “We create the event you dream of from scratch” aim to establish trust and credibility, positioning the travel agency as a dependable choice. Although less frequent than imperative slogans, declarative statements play a complementary role in reinforcing the brand's identity and values (Francesconi, 2014, p. 67).

Interestingly, the subjunctive mood, which expresses wishes, hypotheticals, or possibilities, appears sporadically in Moroccan travel slogans. This rarity could be attributed to the perceived lack of immediacy or action-oriented appeal in subjunctive constructions (Quirk et al., 1985, pp. 154-155). For example, a subjunctive slogan like “It's time to get away” might convey aspiration but lacks the directness often favored in promotional contexts.

Notably absent in the dataset of Moroccan travel agency slogans is the interrogative mood. Questions, as a rhetorical device, are known to engage audiences by provoking curiosity or reflection (Cook, 2001, p. 119). Their absence in Moroccan slogans suggests a missed opportunity to foster interaction or encourage prospective tourists to envision themselves in specific scenarios. This absence contrasts with global trends, where interrogative slogans like “Where will your next adventure take you?” are used to stimulate curiosity and invite exploration (Dann, 1996, p. 98).

Moroccan travel agency slogans also reflect cultural and linguistic considerations. As a multilingual country, Morocco's promotional discourse often incorporates French and English, in addition to Arabic. This linguistic diversity not only broadens the appeal of advertisements but also influences the grammatical and stylistic choices made by advertisers (Gretzel et al., 2020, p. 87). For example, English slogans may lean heavily on imperative constructions due to their straightforward and universal appeal, whereas French slogans might adopt a more declarative tone, aligning with cultural preferences for formality and detail (Jaworski and Pritchard, 2005, p. 62).

The dominance of the imperative mood in Moroccan tourist agencies' advertisement slogans raises important questions about its effectiveness. While it succeeds in prompting action, this strategy may not fully account for audience preferences or cultural nuances. Studies have shown that consumer engagement often benefits from a more balanced approach, combining various moods to appeal to different psychological triggers (Kotler and Keller, 2016, p. 145). Thus, the absence of interrogative structures and the underrepresentation of subjunctive moods suggest areas where Moroccan travel agencies could diversify their linguistic strategies to enhance audience engagement.

In summary, the analysis of grammatical mood in Moroccan travel agency slogans provides a unique lens for understanding how language functions in promotional discourse. By examining the interplay between imperative, declarative, and subjunctive moods, this study contributes to broader discussions on the role of language in advertising and highlights opportunities for Moroccan agencies to refine their messaging strategies.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Research design

This study adopts a qualitative–quantitative (mixed-methods) design to examine the distribution and persuasive functions of grammatical mood in Moroccan travel-agency slogans. The corpus consists of 100 slogans collected from publicly available promotional materials (agency websites, social media bios/headers, and display adverts). From this pool, 73 sentence-level slogans were retained for analysis; 27 phrase-level units (e.g., nominal taglines lacking finite predication) were excluded to ensure comparability of mood assignment. All analyses were conducted on the sentence-level subset (N = 73), which permits unambiguous identification of clausal mood following descriptive–functional accounts of English clause structure (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014; Crystal, 2008; Departure and Reed, 2020).

### 2.2. Linguistic Coverage

Slogans were included if they (i) formed a complete clause with a finite verb (or imperative base form), (ii) appeared in stable branding locations (homepage hero, profile header/bio, or pinned advert creative), and (iii) were attributable to a Moroccan tourism enterprise (tour operator, DMC, or retail agency). When slogans were multilingual, mood was assigned in the original language; English glosses are provided for exposition only. Phrase-level taglines (e.g., *Your Gateway to the Sahara*) were excluded from the statistical counts but considered in qualitative remarks where relevant to stylistic positioning.

### 2.3. Specification of mood categories

Mood categories were operationalized as follows

- Imperative: base-form verb with understood second-person subject (*Discover Morocco*), including inclusive let-imperatives (*Let us show you Morocco / Let's go now*), and mitigated imperatives with sentence-initial adjuncts (*Now discover...*, *Please explore...*). Vocatives and exclamative accompanying imperatives were treated as peripheral features, not separate moods.
- Declarative: canonical Subject–Finite order conveying propositions/claims (*We create the event you dream of from scratch; The adventure starts here*), including modalized assertions (*We will take you to the heart of the Sahara*).
- Subjunctive/optative: optative or hypothetical constructions signaling desire, advisability, or non-factuality (*It's time to get away*; cf. Quirk et al., 1985; Bergs and Heine, 2010).
- Interrogative: polar or why-interrogatives designed to solicit a response (*Where will your next adventure take you?*). None occurred in the dataset.

Ambiguous cases (e.g., let-us sequences that can be directive or propositional) were disambiguated using co-textual cues (presence of second-person orientation, call-to-action semantics, and placement in call-to-action zones). Following Hallidayan criteria, mood was assigned on the basis of clause structure and interpersonal function rather than punctuation alone.

### 2.4. Coding procedure and measurement

Each sentence-level slogan received a primary mood label (imperative, declarative, interrogative, subjunctive/optative). A secondary layer annotated salient interpersonal resources (e.g., urgency adverbs *now/today*, inclusive pronouns *we/you/let's*, promotional verbs *discover/explore/find/enjoy*, and value-proposition markers *best price, tailor-made*). Frequencies were aggregated and converted to percentages over N = 73. Given the categorical nature of the data, the study reports distributional patterns and qualitative patterning; no inferential statistics are claimed beyond descriptive proportions. Reliability can be further strengthened in future iterations by double-coding a subset and computing inter-rater agreement (e.g., Cohen's  $\kappa$ ), a procedure recommended in discourse-analytic work (Vaughn et al., 2016).

### 2.5. Validity and limitations

Construct validity was pursued by grounding mood labels in established descriptions of English clause types (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014; Departure and Reed, 2020). Ecological validity is supported by sampling authentic slogans from agencies' live promotional environments. Limitations include (i) the exclusion of phrase-level taglines, which may under-represent non-finite persuasive styles; (ii) the absence of response-side metrics (click-throughs, enquiries, bookings), which constrains conclusions to textual potential rather than realized effect; and (iii) possible

genre/platform effects (website vs. social bio) that are not disaggregated here. These issues are addressed in the Discussion and Conclusion as avenues for refinement.

**2.6. Mood Classification**

**Table 1** Slogans’ classification table

Imperative	Declarative	Interrogative	Subjunctive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Discover the magic of Marrakech</li> <li>-Set off to discover the hidden treasures of the medina</li> <li>-Find the next place to visit</li> <li>-Start your adventure</li> <li>-Let us show you Morocco</li> <li>-Let us travel</li> <li>-Let's go now</li> <li>-Find your next visit</li> <li>-Let us show you the magic of Morocco</li> <li>-Discover the country, meet new people</li> <li>-Embark on a Saharan sojourn</li> <li>-Discover Morocco from the inside</li> <li>-Organize your sports group voyage discovery to Morocco</li> <li>-Optimize your business trips with asset voyages solutions</li> <li>-Excel travel Morocco</li> <li>-Organize your life journey</li> <li>-Find the perfect vacation</li> <li>-Dream. Explore. Discover</li> <li>-Travel and make it into a storyteller</li> <li>-Find the perfect tour</li> <li>-Live your dreams at the best price</li> <li>-Travel the world</li> <li>-Explore the world without worrying about your budget</li> <li>-Discover the magic of morocco</li> <li>-Clean your soul</li> <li>-Reveal the beauty of the Sahara</li> <li>-Discover the most attractive places</li> <li>-Discover a multitude of destinations</li> <li>-Discover morocco and its hidden gems</li> <li>-Discover the hidden gems of morocco</li> <li>-Discover your next adventure: explore, experience, enjoy!</li> <li>-Enjoy your tours in morocco</li> <li>-Discover the secrets of morocco</li> <li>-Find your best luxury tour in morocco</li> <li>-Dare to adventure with Sahara holidays</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Our small group and larger group tours will satisfy your taste for discovery.</li> <li>-Where the journey begins</li> <li>-The adventure starts here</li> <li>-Our main see you satisfied</li> <li>-It's time to get away</li> <li>-It is time to travel</li> <li>-Our customers love us</li> <li>-Creativity and innovation is to event, what the heart and soul is to living</li> <li>-You are ready for new adventures</li> <li>-We create the event you dream of from scratch</li> <li>-We think, create and plan together</li> <li>-We put together packages for all tastes and budgets</li> <li>-The world is in your hands</li> <li>-We design your tailor-made trip according to your expectations</li> <li>-Your most beautiful journey starts here!</li> <li>-Sahara Morocco tours: is your way to discover the best of Morocco</li> <li>-We touch minds and hearts</li> <li>-We put our expertise at your service to better meet your expectations</li> <li>-Better to see something once than hear about it a thousand times</li> <li>-Here begins your happiness</li> <li>-With our expertise, knowledge and understanding, we create a distinct and unrivalled experience of our beautiful Morocco.</li> <li>-We believe in the power of shared, inspiring experiences that drive organizational change</li> <li>-Life is too short not to travel.</li> <li>-We will take you to the heart of the Sahara desert</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Set off <u>to discover</u> the hidden treasures of the medina</li> <li>-Dare <u>to adventure</u> with sahara holidays</li> <li>-It's time <u>to get away</u></li> <li>-It is time <u>to travel</u></li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Discover the epic morocco with us</li> <li>-Ditch the tourist trails and go deeper with wildly unique tours of morocco</li> <li>-Dream your trip to morocco</li> <li>-Elevate your event experience with tailor-made excellence</li> <li>-Give meaning to your corporate travel</li> <li>-Discover the essence of Morocco</li> <li>-Enter Morocco's embraces: let's explore, create unforgettable moments together</li> <li>-Organize your sports group voyage discovery to Morocco</li> <li>-Discover and explore our hidden destinations filled with picturesque sights, exclusive accommodations and highly relaxing atmospheres.</li> <li>-See a side of Morocco you never knew existed and create real connections.</li> </ul>			
<b>45</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>

### 3. Analysis and Findings

The data shows a clear dominance of the imperative mood (45/73), followed by declaratives (24/73), with subjunctives/optatives marginal (4/73) and interrogatives absent (0/73). Proportionally, imperatives constitute 61.64% of sentence-level slogans ( $45 \div 73 \times 100$ ), declaratives 32.88% ( $24 \div 73 \times 100$ ), and subjunctives 5.48% ( $4 \div 73 \times 100$ ). The zero incidence of interrogatives is itself a marked distributional choice.

#### 3.1. Imperative realizations and promotional discourse

Imperatives overwhelmingly implement the campaign's call-to-action layer. Canonical base-form directives (Discover the magic of Marrakech / Explore the world... / Find the perfect tour) are frequently intensified by (i) urgency adverbials (now, today), (ii) list structures that sequence actions (Explore, Experience, Enjoy!), and (iii) inclusive forms (Let us show you Morocco / Let's go now), which redistribute agency from a unilateral command to a collaborative invitation. Lexical repertoires cluster around journey verbs (discover, explore, embark, find, start, enjoy), a set that condenses the promise of mobility and novelty. In Hallidayan terms, these imperatives foreground the interpersonal metafunction (enacting a directive speech role) while leaving the ideational content deliberately schematic, allowing the imperative to carry persuasive force with minimal propositional commitment (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014). From a discourse-practice perspective, this pattern aligns with directive promotional discourse that privileges actionability and brand-led movement through the customer journey (Dyer, 2008; Van Leeuwen, 2008).

#### 3.2. Declaratives as credibility and value propositions

Declarative slogans constitute roughly one-third of the data and perform a complementary function: credentialing the provider (We put our expertise at your service), promising customization (We design your tailor-made trip according to your expectations), and anchoring affect (Here begins your happiness). These clauses frequently exploit first-person plural (we) to construe collective expertise and relational processes (is/are) to stabilize brand attributes (Our customers love us; The adventure starts here). The declarative mode thus contributes to trust-building and brand identity, operating as assurance statements that underwrite the imperative calls with claims of competence, reliability, and value (Crystal, 2008; Francesconi, 2014).

#### 3.3. Subjunctive/optative residue and aspirational stance

The small set of subjunctive/optative constructions (e.g., It's time to get away / It is time to travel) encodes desiderative stance, inviting identification with a desired state rather than issuing a direct command. Although rare, this mood provides aspirational framing consistent with tourism's imaginative pull (Quirk et al., 1985; Bergs and Heine, 2010). Its

under-representation suggests a strategic preference for immediate action over contemplative desire in the Moroccan sample.

### 3.4. The absence of interrogatives

No interrogatives were observed. Interrogatives are a recognized device for engagement and elicitation in global tourism discourse (Where will your next adventure take you?), leveraging audience participation and scenario projection (Cook, 1992). Their absence in this dataset indicates a non-dialogic stance, with agencies predominantly telling rather than asking, directing rather than co-constructing imagined travel futures.

### 3.5. Mood-function alignment and co-selection

- Across the data, mood choices co-select with recurrent persuasive functions:
- Imperatives → calls to action, momentum building, and itinerary initiation.
- Declaratives → competence claims, social proof, and value propositions (e.g., best price, tailor-made).
- Subjunctives → aspirational time-framing (it's time...).
- This alignment indicates a relatively tight coupling between grammatical resources and promotional roles: directives move audiences toward action; statements underwrite trust; optatives sketch desire.

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## 4. Discussion

### 4.1. Imperative dominance as a product-centered orientation

The preponderance of imperatives foregrounds an action-first promotional logic. In critical-discourse terms, this enacts an asymmetrical producer-consumer command dynamic (Fairclough, 1992, 2003), where the brand authorizes movement and the audience is positioned as the compliant actor. While such a stance can be effective for immediate calls to action, it risks attenuating dialogue and under-representing customer voice, especially at earlier stages of the decision journey where exploration and evaluation benefit from questions and conditional framings.

### 4.2. Customer-oriented influence and the mood repertoire

From a marketing-communication perspective, influence that translates into travel decisions and purchase behavior typically arises from a repertoire, not a single mood: attention/interest can be cultivated by interrogatives (eliciting self-projection), credibility consolidated by declaratives, aspiration cued by optatives, and action triggered by imperatives. The present distribution suggests an over-reliance on the final step (action) at the expense of consideration-stage engagement. Incorporating interrogatives (e.g., What story will you tell next?) and optatives (e.g., May your next journey begin here) could reposition agencies toward customer-oriented influence—influence that converts visibility into booking-relevant commitment by aligning with consumer deliberation rather than merely directing it (cf. Cook, 1992; Dyer, 2008).

### 4.3. Stylistic economies and multilingual mediation

Where slogans are multilingual (Arabic/French/English), mood selection may reflect stylistic economies associated with each code: English lends itself to concise imperatives with globally legible CTAs; French declaratives may foreground service craft and detail; Arabic can encode hospitality ethos through formulaic assurance. While the present study does not disaggregate by language, qualitative inspection hints that code choice mediates mood choice, an avenue for further contrastive analysis within Morocco's multilingual promotional discourse.

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## 5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Moroccan travel-agency slogans, when restricted to sentence-level units, display a highly uneven distribution of grammatical mood: imperatives dominate (61.64%), declaratives provide a secondary stratum (32.88%), subjunctives are marginal (5.48%), and interrogatives are absent. Functionally, imperatives do most of the directive work—projecting movement and urging action—while declaratives credentialize providers and stabilize value claims; optatives lightly inflect aspiration. The absence of interrogatives points to a non-dialogic orientation in the corpus, with implications for how audiences are positioned within promotional discourse.

Theoretically, the findings corroborate functional accounts of mood as a key interpersonal resource in advertising (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014; departure and Reed, 2020) and align with critical-discourse observations about the directive texture of promotional language (Fairclough, 1992, 2003; Van Leeuwen, 2008). Practically, the analysis argues

for broadening the mood repertoire to achieve customer-oriented influence capable of shaping travel decisions and driving purchase behavior. Future research should (i) incorporate phrase-level taglines to capture non-finite persuasive styles, (ii) disaggregate by platform and language to model code–mood interactions, (iii) introduce inter-rater reliability metrics for mood coding, and (iv) triangulate textual findings with behavioral data (e.g., engagement and booking metrics) to link linguistic form to measurable outcomes.

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## Compliance with ethical standards

### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper to be disclosed.

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