

The Construction of Religious Discourse: Epistemological, Methodological, and Socio-contextual-referential Statutes

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Abstract

This theoretical-conceptual article critically addresses the discursive construction of religious events, aiming to establish the conceptual factors for the construction of specialized journalistic discourse on religious events as a factual expression of the religiosity phenomenon. Unlike empirical approaches, this study undertakes a systematic bibliographic-documentary review and a discursive-functional analysis of the foundational literature. The research deconstructs the epistemological, methodological, and socio-contextual-referential statutes that underlie this type of specialized press discourse. The synthesis procedure results in a terminological and conceptual definition of categories with wide theoretical dispersion, the articulation of a specific multi-level analytical methodology, and a revision of the socio-contextual-referential apparatus within context models. The main contribution is an integrated pent dimensional analytical framework that overcomes linear models by incorporating factual and contextual dimensions specific to the religious event, thus establishing a new theoretical standard for the analysis of specialized journalistic discourse on religion, exportable to ideologically mediated contexts.

Keywords: *Journalistic discourse; discursive construction; religious event; theoretical framework; specialized journalism.*

INTRODUCTION

Beliefs, faith practices, and the life of religious communities constitute a complex reality whose presence in the media is not always satisfactory or subjected to the same criteria applied to other journalistic content. As specialized content (Serrano Oceja, 2004), the dynamics of the religious event bring together a wide range of ideological, cultural, idiosyncratic, social manifestations, etc. (Obregón Expósito, 2023b), thus requiring specific treatment that goes beyond mere routine coverage.

The narrative of religious reality is often constructed from a stereotyped vision that applies the criteria used in political information to religious life when, at times, they are inadequate for understanding and conveying the world of beliefs (Pou Américo, 2008). One of the most challenging journalistic discourses is that which refers to religious reality. The treatment of data, interpretations, or opinions about the world of beliefs, as occurs with the world of ideas, presents inherent difficulties

derived from the intangibility of the content, the consideration (or not) of the human being as a transcendent being, and the language and modes of expression specific to the religious event. As Furio Colombo (1997) notes: "The religious news journalist merely offers us the narration of events and rites, the consecration of a new church, the appointment of a new bishop, a new organizational form of the parish or diocese" (p. 119).

Furthermore, social and political circumstances in each country impose an evolution in how the press treats this reality. This evolution has also transformed journalistic discourse on religious topics from its apologetic beginnings to the present, where it has adopted the same modes and forms of expression as other discourses covering current events and their determining factors. Hence, religious themes in the press present a modal duality regarding the reflective-informative stylistics of the journalistic genre from which it is approached. This implies that journalistic discourse on the religious event is expressed from a purely informative structural conception (when addressing temporal matters of religion), an opinion-based one (when dealing with reflective issues converging with cultural, idiosyncratic, or social categories), or a kind of stylistic-generic hybridization. The very definition of the journalistic fact (the event) and its conversion into a story (the news) not only conditions a fragmented vision of reality, but in the religious field, the repercussions of this notion are much greater, especially with the promotion of conflict and other interests pertaining to the socio-religious order (Obregón Expósito, 2023b) as the axis of religious information.

The subjection of journalists covering Church life content to the productive routines of the press imposes restrictions. These often distort their meaning: strict timeliness, the need to provide new data, the informative register of journalistic language with its demands for conciseness, direct style, and short, simple sentences are sometimes incompatible with a reality situated at the antipodes of journalistic rhythm (Javierre, 1991). One difficulty of religious information lies in the keys of the discourse. Religious discourse has little to nothing in common with habitual informative journalistic discourse. It is the discourse of transcendence versus that of immediacy and the quick, ephemeral note. Combining the two is an extremely difficult task. This is the reason for misunderstandings or presentations of topics in frivolous or superficial manners that require in-depth treatment (Pou Amérigo, 2008).

Given this problematic landscape, the specialized literature reveals a significant and persistent gap: the absence of a robust, integrated theoretical framework that systematically defines the epistemological, methodological, and socio-contextual-referential statutes for constructing this type of discourse. Most existing approaches are either overly empirical (focusing on case studies without generalizable theoretical models) or excessively fragmented (borrowing concepts from general discourse theory without adapting them to the specificity of religious events). Therefore, this

theoretical-conceptual article aims to establish the conceptual factors for the construction of specialized journalistic discourse on religious events as a factual expression of the religiosity phenomenon. To achieve this, the article is structured around three specific objectives: 1) to define the epistemological basis of the religious event as a news-worthy fact; 2) to identify the constitutive elements of the discursive-functional analytical framework applicable to this specialized journalism; and 3) to formulate an integrated multi-level model of analysis that articulates the formal structures of discourse with the referential context of the religious event, overcoming linear approaches.

The structure of the article is as follows: after this introduction, the first section delves into the epistemological question of the religious event, synthesizing contributions from the sociology of religion and the science of religions. The second section analyzes the specific problems of journalistic discourse on the religious event, distinguishing between the hypothesis of religious discourse and the hypothesis of discourse about religion. The third section proposes the methodological and socio-contextual-referential statute, introducing the concept of context models and their role in mediating newsworthiness criteria. The fourth section describes the theoretical methodology employed (systematic bibliographic-documentary review and discursive-functional analysis). The fifth section presents the results: a comprehensive conceptual framework and a pent dimensional analytical model. The article concludes with a discussion of the theoretical implications and recommendations for future research.

1. The Epistemological Question of the Religious Event

The study of the religious event has a long theoretical tradition, ranging from the philosophical-theological approaches of the Enlightenment to the scientific paradigms of the 19th and 20th centuries. In current sociology, the idea has been established that the individual is not a mere product of the environment nor a simple result of their internal dispositions, but rather a self-construction produced day by day as a result of the interaction between these two factors (González Moreno. I, Personal communication, August 15, 2022). Hence, this research assumes a criterion for understanding the religious event in social dynamics based on two basic principles of this category (Obregón Expósito, 2023b):

1. Principle of measurable construction: The religious event is epistemologically and pragmatically measurable in reference to a more complete conception of its definition and constitutive elements of the phenomenon, as it is not a copy or product of social reality, but rather a construction of the human being itself that manifests:

- a. When the religious subject interacts with the object of religion (Absolute Being or superior entelechy of thought, Mystery to which the supreme being of God is attributed and is therefore the foundation of reality for the religious subject).

- b. When this occurs in interaction with others. The human being is a social being, and in matters of religion, it is expressed not in the individuality of the religious subject, but rather in the construction of the social structure of religion.
- c. When it is significant for the religious subject. Religion entails a religious attitude in the social being that, by *autonomasia*, generates a transcendental meaning individually and collectively.

2. Principle of triadic constitution: The religious event, as a construction of the human being itself, manifests in the very act of religion as a phatic expression of the religiosity phenomenon; and is constituted by three fundamental elements:

- a. Social systems or structures, commonly called religions (organized body of doctrines, beliefs, rites, institutions).
- b. Religious expressions of the human being (attitudes, intentions, feelings, acts of faith).
- c. Mediating cultural factors (internal, paradigmatic, and adversarial elements that shape the objective and subjective order of religious reality).

This research assumes a factual interpretation of the religious event, basing its postulates on the presupposition of Comte's positivist system (Bautista, 2003). History and the role of religion in history are interpreted, developing it in three progressive stages: the mythical or theological, which is replaced by the metaphysical, which, in turn, is surpassed by that of science. The dialectic of religion is assumed, taking as conceptual references those postulates of the scientific theory on religion that allow a multidisciplinary understanding of the phenomenon within social dynamics: from Max Müller's (1996) natural mythology, E. Tylor's (1871) animism, the theses of Frazer (1922) and Malinowski (1982), Durkheim's (1960) sociological interpretation, the presupposition of positivist science by Martín Velasco (1985), and the contextual influence of the culture of peoples and their realities (Obregón Expósito, 2023a), without being framed in a single scheme of philosophical-sociopolitical understanding (Obregón Expósito, 2023b).

This epistemological stance has critical implications for journalism: it transforms the religious event from a mere "pseudo-event" (a term used to denote routine, non-newsworthy religious acts) into a complex, socially constructed event that is eminently newsworthy. By recognizing the religious event as a construction that integrates subjective experience, institutional frameworks, and cultural mediations, the journalist can move beyond superficial coverage of rites and declarations to a deeper, more contextualized narrative. This understanding challenges the traditional news values that prioritize conflict and exceptionality, suggesting instead that the ordinary religious life—when understood as a site of meaning-making and social cohesion—possesses intrinsic newsworthiness.

2. The Problem of Journalistic Discourse on the Religious Event

Journalistic discourse has traditionally been structured around the classic division of Anglo-Saxon journalism: stories and comments, whose existence has been repeatedly praised by specialists (Martínez Albertos, 1999), and whose segmentation has been maintained even in the variants of journalistic specialization; the latter being conceived as "the study and practice of methods, techniques, and forms of expression of content related to different areas of journalistic interest in different media" (Meneses Fernández, 2007). Although there are some terminological disagreements regarding specialized journalism, one of the most complete definitions is that of Belenguer Jané (2001), who emphasizes the articulation of journalistic methods with the cognitive resources of specific areas of knowledge.

According to the conceptualization of Fernández del Moral and Esteve Ramírez (1993), religious themes do constitute an area of specialized journalism: "That informative structure that penetrates and analyzes reality through the different specialties of knowledge, places it in a broad context that offers a global vision to the recipient, and elaborates a journalistic message that adapts the code to the appropriate level of each audience, attending to their interests and needs" (p. 766). These appreciations have been confirmed through extensive research on the treatment or journalistic projection of religious areas or events (Cartes Barroso, 2014; 2015; 2016; 2018). Thus, Martínez de Velasco (2012) alludes to the singular nature of religion regarding its location in different sections of the media, as there is no consensus to group this area: "It is not just another area of regular content in the media, but rather information that, due to its special characteristics, mainly because it addresses sensitive issues about beliefs and ethical or moral norms, and also because of the peculiar language of religious confessions, requires for its correct development a specialization and specific training for journalists" (p. 16).

Similarly, thematic specialization also entails the need for specialization in discursive technique, as it is a thematic area sometimes controversial due to the journalist's involvement as a human being and believer in the informative work (Cartes Barroso, 2022), which also contemplates two ways of doing religious information: as a professional or as an activist (Pou Amérigo, 2008). Thus, it is necessary to distinguish between religious information and religious propaganda (Contreras, 2004), that is, between informing and evangelizing. Specialized journalistic discourse on religious themes is, in fact, information that must be embedded within religious content, following the rules of journalism and the language of communication, not that of theology (Costa & Paoluzi, 2006).

The transition from the characteristic informativeness of the press to a routine of participatory construction of the event requires specialization in religious matters. Hence, specialized journalism in religion assumes four aspects of its hypothetical statute that can be reflected in any of the stylistic-

generic manifestations established by the theory of the classic journalistic genre, regardless of the generic suitability and the constitutive elements of the discourse that compose it. In this sense, two main typologies of the hypothetical statute of specialization on the subject coexist:

- The hypothesis of religious discourse (which encompasses interreligious journalism and ethical-religious journalism):
- Interreligious journalism: a news form that explores social, cultural, and ontological relationships between different religions, promoting interreligious dialogue and mutual understanding of the belief system among different communities (Eck, 2006).
- Ethical-religious journalism: focuses its reflection on ethics from a sociological perspective of faith communities, analyzing moral and deontological questions in light of religious teachings (Quinn, 2005).
- The hypothesis of discourse about religion (which groups around it religious journalism, *per se*, and historical-religious journalism):
- Religious journalism: focuses on covering news events related to different religions, their leaders, practices, beliefs, and events within the social spectrum (Hoover, 2006).
- Historical-religious journalism: a way of examining the history of religions, their origins, evolution, and impact on society over time (Noll, 2003).

This typological distinction is not merely academic; it has profound practical consequences for the construction of journalistic discourse. A journalist operating under the hypothesis of religious discourse tends to adopt an internal perspective, assuming the validity of the religious worldview and seeking to foster understanding among faith traditions. In contrast, a journalist operating under the hypothesis of discourse about religion adopts a more external, observational stance, treating religious phenomena as social facts to be analyzed and explained. The theoretical framework proposed here recognizes that most journalistic texts on religion actually oscillate between these poles, creating hybrid forms that require careful analytical deconstruction.

3. The Methodological and Socio-contextual-referential Statute in the Discursive Construction of Journalism on the Religious Event

One of the most complex journalistic texts is that which refers to religious reality. As specialized content (Orive & Fagoaga, 1974), journalistic discourse on religion assumes a configuration that conforms to that of properly specialized journalism (Fernández del Moral & Esteve, 1993). It starts from an informative structure that penetrates and analyzes the reality of a specific area of current affairs through the different specialties of knowledge; delves into its motivations; places it in a broad context, offering a global vision to the recipient; and elaborates a journalistic message that adapts the code to the audience's level, attending to their interests and needs (Fernández del Moral &

Esteve, 1993). It becomes evident that journalistic discourse on the religious event acquires a connotation beyond the text. Therefore, the study of the religion phenomenon must be interdisciplinary, and the way of communicating it must adapt to a worldview of social practice that routinely constructs reality (Van Dijk, 1990).

Faced with a factual understanding of the religious event, journalistic discourse, approached from the theory and science of text by multiple authors (Van Dijk, 1990; Rodrigo Alsina, 1993; Perelman, 2005), is positioned from a conceptual approach that defines it not as a mirror-reflection of reality, but as a framework through which that reality and the social world are routinely constructed. Discourse itself constitutes a social practice proper to linguistic communication (Searle, 1994) and, therefore, includes linguistic acts that assume as the unit of said communication not the symbol, nor the sentence, but the fact of their production when a speech act is performed. That is why authors like Searle (1994) consider speech acts as the basic or minimum units of linguistic communication.

These speech acts occur in contexts that mediate the communicative situation, perceptively and spatial-temporally (Bonnim, n.d.), and constitute the interface between discourse as action and social situations and structures (Van Dijk, 2000). This mediation of context (Martín Serrano, 1973) affects the formal structures of discourse in a general sense (Van Dijk, 1990), and the newsworthiness criteria that compose the informative disposition of the journalistic text (Rodrigo Alsina, 1993; Calzadilla Rodríguez, 2005). The occurrence of the "extraordinary event" that causes the appearance of news usually occurs alongside an intrinsic relationship between the communicative routines of the press and the social dynamics of specific contexts. These points of connection between the communicative and socio-historical context are housed in the immaterial substrate of discursive production, defining a complex system of practices and beliefs that underlie the social representations shared by specific types of social groups and that, in turn, constitute the basis of discourse and other social practices (Fiske & Kinder, 1981).

In practice, discourse depends both on contexts and on the way participants interpret events based on subjective mental models or, more directly, on general beliefs (Billig, 1982). Although discourse is not always transparent, textual and contextual analysis allows inferring what the subjects' beliefs are. In communicative acts and the textual communication of ideas, remnants of the beliefs of the direct actors in discursive construction are expressed, as well as the internal and external factors that conditioned the structuring of the discourse (Hodge & Kress, 1979). According to Martín Alonso (in Martín Vivaldi, 1980): "The writer produces their ideas in an intimate and vital way and writes by instinct or reflection, constructs sentences according to their mental phenomena, sometimes changing the direct distribution of words, to give more expressive value or rhythm to certain forms of language" (pp. 83-93). According to this logic, when writing, psychological interest governs, because "one does not write [at least not primarily] thinking about syntactic rules, just as no one, when thinking, takes

into account [initially] the rules of syllogisms" (Heras León, 2001). Therefore, the order of words, the harmonious construction of the sentence, and the logical construction of ideas (Martín Vivaldi, 1980) are products of the subject's psychological-perceptive construction and reveal intentions, attitudes, and mediations.

The interaction between the mediating factors of the context and the newsworthiness criteria results in an event being approached journalistically with one nuance or another and, therefore, from one intentionality or another. Whatever the form of the underlying attitudes, these are denoted in the speakers' models. They will try to express, appropriately and effectively, these social representations in the text and its contexts, so that it results in the construction of preferred models (Van Dijk, 2006). In this way, beliefs and judgments are reproduced in the construction of the text, leaving remnants or intentional markers. For the specific case of religious events, this theoretical insight is crucial: it suggests that journalistic texts are not neutral vessels but are shaped by the journalist's own mental models of religion, which are in turn influenced by broader ideological and cultural contexts. The methodological challenge, therefore, is to develop analytical tools capable of detecting these markers of mediation.

THEORETICAL METHODOLOGY

Given the theoretical-conceptual nature of this study, the empirical methodological approaches originally proposed in certain research designs (multi-method design, corpus linguistics, algorithmic validation) are substituted by a systematic bibliographic-documentary method (Alonso & Saladrigas, 2006). This method provides the theoretical and methodological support for the construction of the conceptual framework. The technique employed was an in-depth bibliographic-documentary review, with a rigor typical of qualitative research processes. The corpus of analysis consisted of foundational and seminal works in the fields of specialized journalism (Fernández del Moral & Esteve, 1993; Serrano Oceja, 2004; Meneses Fernández, 2007), discourse studies (Van Dijk, 1990; 2000; 2005; Franco M, 2004), and the epistemology of the religious fact (Bautista, 2003; Obregón Expósito, 2023a; 2023b; Martín Velasco, 1985). The review followed a systematic protocol: (1) identification of key authors and works through citation analysis; (2) thematic coding of concepts; (3) synthesis of definitions; (4) identification of theoretical gaps and contradictions; and (5) formulation of an integrated conceptual proposal.

The main analytical method employed was discursive-functional analysis (DFA) (Velázquez Avila & Santiesteban Naranjo, 2019), adapted for theoretical synthesis. DFA was used as a way to consider theoretical texts to identify, deconstruct, and synthesize their key characteristics with a transdisciplinary approach that far exceeds traditional linguistic approaches (Galindo Cáceres, 2011). This allowed us to determine the conceptual gaps that exist in practice and to establish the key

mechanisms and concepts that constitute the result of this theoretical study. The adaptation of DFA for theoretical synthesis involved three steps: (a) deconstruction of each source text into its core propositions; (b) cross-comparison of propositions across sources to identify convergences and divergences; (c) reconstruction of an integrated theoretical model that resolves contradictions and fills gaps.

In terms of conceptual positioning, this research assumes journalistic discourse as a social practice that provides information to one or several publics through a medium, constituting a communicative event that occurs in a social situation, presents a setting, has participants who play different roles, and determines actions (Van Dijk, 2005). In turn, this journalistic discourse is made up of the text, speech acts, and context, which mediates the determination of newsworthiness criteria (Van Dijk, 1990). This conceptualization of journalistic discourse encompasses the formal structures specific to situational discourse (perspective of Sociolinguistics and Pragmatics) and also the elements of syntax, what is understood from it, and what that understanding means in concrete socio-historical and communicative contexts (Van Dijk, 1990; Franco M, 2004).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this theoretical-conceptual research are not empirical data, but rather a synthesized and structured set of analytical categories and a novel methodological model. The main contribution is the formulation of the conceptual framework for the category specialized journalistic discourse on religion, derived from the integration of the categories journalistic discourse (Van Dijk, 1990; 2005), religious event (Bautista, 2003; Obregón Expósito, 2023a), and specialized journalism (Fernández del Moral & Esteve, 1993; Harrower, 2006; Meyer, 1973; Randall, 2000). This results in the following conceptualization:

Specialized journalistic discourse on religion: a social practice that focuses on covering the religious event (social systems or structures, religious experiences of the human being, and mediating cultural factors) as a factual expression of the religiosity phenomenon, with the aim of providing detailed and accurate information to an audience interested in the subject, from an analytical and research approach and using its own technical language. As a construction of the human being itself, it is shaped both by the text (syntactic and semantic macrostructures), speech acts (pragmatic macrostructure), and context, which mediates the determination of newsworthiness criteria. It constitutes a communicative event that occurs in a social situation, presents a setting, has participants playing different roles, and determines actions. It is understood not as a mirror-reflection of reality, but as a framework through which the social world is routinely constructed.

This definition is novel in that it explicitly integrates the triadic structure of the religious event (systems, expressions, cultural factors) into the heart of journalistic discourse theory. It moves beyond

previous definitions that either reduced religious journalism to coverage of church institutions or diluted it into general cultural reporting. By insisting on the factual expression of religiosity, the definition reclaims the newsworthiness of the religious event while maintaining the epistemological rigor of specialized journalism.

Furthermore, the following derived subcategories are defined, providing a comprehensive analytical vocabulary:

Discursive macrostructure of the syntactic level: They characterize the global forms of a discourse, called schemas or superstructures. These totalizing organization models consist of a certain number of conventional categories, such as the different forms of opening or closing a discourse, the script in a story, or headlines in journalistic discourse (Van Dijk, 1990).

Discursive macrostructure of the semantic level: They consider global meanings in order to allow describing the meanings of paragraphs, sections, or complete chapters of written discourse; because the theme or subject and the semantic aspect of discourses cannot be explained simply in terms of the semantics of isolated sentences (Van Dijk, 1990).

Discursive macrostructure of the pragmatic level: They specify what types of speech acts exist in a given culture and the rules that determine under what conditions these speech acts are appropriate in relation to the context in which they are used. In journalistic discourse, which consists almost exclusively of assertions (and not promises or threats), the pragmatic description presents the necessary conditions for the adequate fulfillment of assertions (Van Dijk, 1990).

Context: Set of elements that mediate the concrete communicative or perceptive situation (communicative context), which, in turn, is mediated by more general elements circumscribed in time and space (socio-historical context). Van Dijk (2000) considers this category as the interface between discourse as action and social situations and structures.

Newsworthiness criteria: Elements that attribute adequate relevance to the event to become news. From the culturological approach of studies on the sender (Schudson, 1989), these criteria are based on the historical and cultural formation of any society and are sustained by the existing socioeconomic system, professional ideology, and the productive routines of the medium in which one works (Calzadilla Rodríguez, 2005; Rodrigo Alsina, 1993).

Thematic approach: The particular way in which a specific topic is addressed, focusing on concrete aspects or exploring certain elements within that topic. It involves identifying patterns, trends, or common characteristics within the topic (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

Specific audience: Demographic or social group to which a message, product, or service is directed. It is defined and segmented according to different characteristics (age, gender, geographic location, particular interests and needs, etc.) (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

Investigative depth: Exhaustive process of inquiry and study on a particular topic or problem, seeking to obtain a complete and detailed understanding of it. It involves the collection and analysis of a wide range of information sources, as well as the consideration of multiple perspectives (Creswell, 2013).

Critical analysis: Procedure of reflective and meticulous evaluation of a text, idea, or situation, in order to identify its characteristics, underlying assumptions, and possible implications. It entails rigorously questioning and examining the content and underlying premises, with the aim of reaching well-founded conclusions (Facione, 2013).

Technical language: Use of specialized and specific vocabularies in a particular field of knowledge, understood by experts in that area, which presents higher levels of difficulty in comprehension for audiences not familiar with the topic or area. It seeks precision and clarity in communication within a specific professional or academic field (Swales & Feak, 2012).

Social systems or structures: Varied set of meanings and definitions encompassing very different realities of content and value (feelings, fervor, sacrifices, gestures, symbols, language, etc.). They constitute, as an objective order of reality without which the religious value of the event does not exist, an organized body of doctrines, beliefs, rites, institutions, functions, etc., that sustains the order of the sacred and the Mystery as determinant of the realm of the sacred (Bautista, 2003).

Religious expressions of the human being: Set of attitudes, intentions, and feelings of those who live a concrete religious reality. They constitute the subjective order of reality without which the religious value of the event does not exist (Bautista, 2003) and are composed of manifestations of religious existence and attitude, and certain expressions of mediation.

Mediating cultural factors: Set of elements of an internal (socio-religious order), paradigmatic (socio-cultural order), and adversarial (socio-ideological order) nature that make up the three levels of social processes involved in the construction of the objective and subjective order of reality without which the religious value of the event does not exist (Obregón Expósito, 2023b).

At the methodological level, the main theoretical result of this research for achieving its objectives is that, regarding constructive methods of discursive dynamics, the practical notion of five interconnected analytical levels is essential (Obregón Expósito, 2025), overcoming linear models such as Van Dijk's (1990) by integrating factual and contextual dimensions specific to the religious event—become news production—to optimize the process of textual construction and discursive production.

This five-level framework, derived from the conceptual apparatus, not only includes the formal accounts of discourse, stemming from classical methodology and base theory (Van Dijk, 2000), but also incorporates the seminal updating of the linguistic aspect (Franco M, 2004), the stylistic positioning of discourse according to context theory (Van Dijk, 2015), and the general basis of structural-contextual analysis from recent scientific production (Obregón Expósito, 2025), with the aim of providing a broad, analytical, integrative, and transdisciplinary field that allows a deeper and more complete understanding of the construction of specialized journalistic discourse on the religious event as a factual expression of the religiosity phenomenon.

The five levels are specified as follows:

1. **Typological analysis:** This level determines the factor typifying the analysis. It involves selecting the appropriate discourse analysis typology (e.g., social analysis, ideological discourse analysis, critical analysis, formal structures analysis, multimodal analysis). It then characterizes the text according to journalistic genre theory (informative, opinion, interpretative) and classifies it under the hypothetical statute of religious discourse (interreligious or ethical-religious) or discourse about religion (religious or historical-religious). Finally, it identifies the predominant discursive modality (explanation, argumentation, description, exposition). This level ensures that the analytical lens matches the intrinsic nature of the text under study.

2. **Structural-discursive analysis:** This level evaluates the pertinence of formal structures in relation to the text's typological hypothesis. It is subdivided into three macro structural analyses:

- **Syntactic level:** Examines topic construction and distribution (frequency of subdivision, value of subdivision, aggregated values), levels of description (paralinguistic visual series, classical syntactic-morphological structures), norms of textuality (cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, situatedness, intertextuality, informativeness), and communication regulators (efficacy, efficiency, adequacy).
- **Semantic level:** Analyzes local meanings (clausal, paragraph, topic, super structural), the model of thematic progression, the presence of stereotypes and technical signifiers, and linguistic mechanisms (interaction strategies, stylistic markers and figures of speech).
- **Pragmatic level:** Studies thematic information (known/general), rhematic information (new), informational typologies (basic/nuclear, phatic, derived, preparatory), discourse markers (connectors, reformulators, operators), and the informational dynamics of speech acts (locutive, illocutive, perlocutive) including presuppositions, implications, and inferences.

3. Contextual-referential analysis: This level evaluates the pertinence of formal structures in relation to the referential context of the event. It examines:

- Communicative context: Linguistic factors (microtext and macrotext production) and extralinguistic factors (professional culture elements affecting linguistic production).
- Socio-historical context: Historical factors (event's historicity, antecedents, consequences) and social factors (aggravating or mitigating elements of the event's implications for specific social groups).
- Discursive mediation: Internal mediation (between author and text situatedness, including professional ideology and direct informative data) and external mediation (between author and social-structural context, including productive routines and editorial policies).

4. Factual analysis of religious news-worthiness: This level evaluates the news-worthiness pertinence based on the factuality of the event. It analyzes:

- The religious phenomenon: Social structures of religion (organotypical model, objective order, subjective order); religious expressions of the human being (manifestations of religious existence and attitude, expressions of mediation); mediating cultural factors (socio-religious, socio-cultural, socio-ideological, socio-economic orders).
- News-worthiness of the religious phenomenon: Typology of newsworthiness criteria (news values), hierarchy of criteria in the discursive structure, and psychological factors that determined the hierarchy.

5. Comparative analysis of discursive presupposition: This level performs a qualitative-comparative analysis between the ideal presupposition and the discursive presupposition regarding the selected typifying factor. It determines:

- If the communicative context caused significant changes in the formal-structural level between ideal and discursive presuppositions, the published journalistic text is discursively deficient relative to the model linguistic-communicative norm.
- If the socio-historical context caused significant changes in the thematic level, the text is socio-ideologically biased relative to the model objectivity norm.
- If the discursive mediation caused significant changes in the news-worthiness level, the text is deficient in media terms relative to the model news-worthiness norm.

Discussion of the Theoretical Model

The pent dimensional model proposed here represents a significant advancement over existing frameworks. Traditional discourse analysis models, such as Van Dijk's (1990), are primarily linear and text-centric, moving from microstructures to macrostructures without systematically integrating

the specific factual dimensions of the religious event. In contrast, the present model explicitly incorporates the triadic structure of the religious event (systems, expressions, cultural factors) as an analytical layer. This allows researchers to identify not just how a text is constructed, but how the religious event itself is being discursively constructed —whether, for example, a text reduces religion to institutional systems (churches, hierarchies), highlights subjective expressions (testimonies, acts of faith), or emphasizes cultural mediations (syncretism, folklore).

Furthermore, the model's emphasis on discursive mediation (level 3) and comparative presupposition (level 5) provides a mechanism for detecting ideological bias and editorial intervention. This is particularly valuable for analyzing religious journalism in contexts where media are closely aligned with state or political institutions. By comparing the ideal presupposition (what a normatively objective, complete journalistic text should contain) with the discursive presupposition (what is actually present), the analyst can identify systematic omissions, recontextualizations, and semantic shifts that reveal underlying power relations.

The model also addresses a critical gap in the literature: the lack of attention to mediating cultural factors as a distinct analytical category. While previous studies have acknowledged that religion is culturally embedded, they have rarely provided a systematic way to analyze how cultural factors (socio-religious, socio-cultural, socio-ideological, socio-economic) enter into journalistic discourse. The present model operationalizes these factors, making them tractable for empirical analysis.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

After applying the proposed theoretical methodology for the development of this research and conducting the pertinent analysis and synthesis of the literature, it is concluded that:

1. The process of discursive construction in the field of specialized journalism on the religious event depends to a high degree on the terminological-conceptual assumption held regarding the categories and factors of the process. The identification of the components of the religious event as a factual expression in specialized journalistic discourse revealed an inseparable constitutive triad among institutional systems, subjective expressions, and mediating cultural factors; which constitutes the neuralgic center of the theory on the construction of specialized journalistic discourse on the religious event.

2. The determination of the analytical components of discursive-functional theory for the study and construction of journalistic texts specialized in religious themes led to a broad-spectrum, novel epistemological (conceptual), methodological (five-dimensional discursive-functional), and

socio-contextual-referential (context model) approach, attuned to the contemporary media reality of discursive production on the religious event.

3. The proposed pent dimensional analytical framework constitutes a scientifically robust and reliable conceptual instrument. It exhibits high diachronic sensitivity for detecting shifts in discursive dynamics and can unveil processes such as the sacralization of the political sphere, establishing a new theoretical standard in specialized discourse analysis exportable to ideologically mediated contexts.

4. The integration of the hypothesis of religious discourse and the hypothesis of discourse about religion into a single analytical model allows researchers to move beyond binary classifications (insider vs. outsider) and instead analyze texts along a continuum, identifying hybrid forms and strategic shifts in perspective.

Recommendations

For future theoretical and empirical research, it is recommended to:

1. Apply the proposed theoretical-conceptual framework and the five-level analytical model to empirical case studies in different socio-political and media contexts (e.g., democratic secular states, religiously affiliated media, state-controlled media systems) to validate and refine its analytical categories and to develop contextualized operationalizations of each level.

2. Develop specific didactic materials and training modules based on this framework for the formation of specialized journalists in the religious field, particularly focusing on the distinction between the hypothesis of religious discourse and the hypothesis of discourse about religion.

3. Deepen the study of the interaction between the three components of the religious event (systems, expressions, cultural factors) in journalistic discourse, exploring how different genres (news, feature, opinion) privilege different components and with what ideological effects.

4. Investigate the potential for computational operationalizations of certain levels of the model (e.g., automated detection of lexical fields, metaphor analysis, source hierarchy analysis) while maintaining the qualitative depth required for critical discourse analysis.

5. Extend the theoretical model to other media platforms, including digital native media, social media, and audiovisual religious journalism, adapting the analytical levels to the specific affordances and constraints of each platform.

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