

# Kết hợp giữa những Dấu hiệu Tình thái Nhận thức khác nhau trong Truyện trinh thám của Conan Doyle và bản dịch tiếng Việt tương ứng

## TÓM TẮT

Bài báo nghiên cứu về sự kết hợp của những dấu hiệu tình thái nhận thức khác nhau trong truyện trinh thám của Conan Doyle và bản dịch tiếng Việt tương ứng của chúng. Nghiên cứu được thực hiện bằng các phương pháp định tính, định lượng và đối chiếu nhằm kiểm tra các thiết bị ngữ pháp và từ vựng thể hiện tình thái nhận thức về đặc điểm cú pháp và ngữ nghĩa trong tiến trình suy luận. Phát hiện đáng chú ý nhất của nghiên cứu là sự tương đồng và khác biệt trong việc sử dụng kết hợp các dấu hiệu tình thái khác nhau giữa cách diễn đạt quy nạp và diễn dịch của tiếng Anh và tiếng Việt. Nghiên cứu này hy vọng sẽ giúp người Việt Nam học tiếng Anh có thể sử dụng tốt hơn các dấu hiệu của tình thái nhận thức trong suy luận, thảo luận và dịch thuật.

**Từ khóa:** *Sự kết hợp, dấu hiệu tình thái nhận thức, truyện trinh thám, Conan Doyle, bản dịch tiếng Việt tương ứng.*

# Combination of different Epistemic Markers in Conan Doyle's detective stories and in Vietnamese Translational Equivalents

## ABSTRACT

This paper examined combination of different epistemic markers in Conan Doyle's detective stories and their Vietnamese translational equivalents. The study was conducted with qualitative, quantitative and contrastive approaches to examine the grammatical and lexical devices showing epistemic modality in terms of syntactic and semantic features in process of inference. The most significant findings of the study are the similarities and differences in using different epistemic markers between English and Vietnamese ways of expressing induction and deduction. The study hopefully helps Vietnamese learners of English have better use of markers of epistemic modality in inference, discussion and in translation.

**Key words:** *Combination, epistemic markers, detective stories, Conan Doyle, Vietnamese translational equivalent.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Detective stories are one of types of popular literature in which a crime is introduced and investigated and the culprit is revealed. In order to achieve the purposes of detective stories, authors have to develop their ability of judgment, inference and speculation. Modality is particularly concerned with these abilities. Therefore, it is obvious that studying modality of sentences in detective stories is necessary for Vietnamese learners of English. To make clear the semantic values of the markers expressing modality of sentences in general and of English – Vietnamese epistemic markers (EM) in detective stories in particular is very useful.

As for detective stories, we all think immediately of the series of Sherlock Holmes, the most famous detective in literary history. Conan Doyle (CD), one of the greatest writers of humanity, spent much time and thinking to this outstanding and smart detective character. He got much great success with the character. In total, there are 56 short stories and four novels about Sherlock Holmes that Conan Doyle launched. In this article, we describe and analyse the combination of different Epistemic Markers in the novel “A Study in Scarlet”<sup>1</sup> (aSiS) and two short stories “Scandal in Bohemia”<sup>2</sup> (SiB)

and “The Blue Carbuncle”<sup>3</sup> (TBC) and their Vietnamese translational equivalents Chiếc nhẫn tình cờ<sup>4</sup> (CNTC), Vụ xì-căng-đan của xứ Bôhême<sup>5</sup> (VXcXB) and Cuộc phiêu lưu của viên kim cương<sup>6</sup> (CPLcVKC), respectively.

A very big difficulty Vietnamese learners of English and translators face with modality is its meanings. Each modal has more than one meaning and each meaning expresses its own modal aspect. Therefore, understanding the meaning of modals and how to use and translate them correctly requires not only knowledge of modality, but of pragmatic factors involving their use as well. When translating one modal, we have to pay attention not only to the surface position of that modal nor its wide range of meaning, but to find out the relation between the modal with its right meaning and put it in the appropriate context. Thus, it is not an easy task for learners and translators to learn how to express and translate epistemic modality as a second language.

For the above-mentioned reasons, **combination of different Epistemic Markers in Conan Doyle's detective stories (CD's DS) and Vietnamese translational equivalents (VTE)** is chosen as the title of the article. We hope that the research will provide some useful knowledge

of possibility of combination of epistemic markers for Vietnamese teachers and learners of English as well as for those who are interested in modality in general and epistemic modality in particular.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1. Epistemic Modality

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary<sup>7</sup>, 8th edition, deduction is the process of using information you have in order to understand a particular situation or to find the answer to a problem. Induction is a method of discovering general rules and principles from particular facts and examples. Prediction is a statement that says what you think will happen; the act of making such a statement.

Deduction, induction and prediction, which are being studied in this thesis, are parts of epistemic modality. They are directly influenced by the elements considered as characteristics of epistemic modality. Therefore, we will present what epistemic modality is and what its characteristics are; then we will base on this theoretical foundation to analyze EMs in CD's DS and their VTE.

In his study of the semantic function of modality, Lyons<sup>8</sup> defined epistemic modality as "any utterance in which the speaker explicitly qualifies his commitment to the truth of the proposition expressed by the sentence he utters, whether this qualification is made explicit in the verbal component... or in the prosodic or paralinguistic component".

According to Nuyts,<sup>9</sup> epistemic modality is defined "as (the linguistic expression of) an evaluation of the chances that a certain hypothetical state of affair under consideration (or some aspect of it) will occur, is occurring, or has occurred in a possible world which serves as the universe of interpretation for the evaluation process, and which, in the default case, is the real world (or rather, the evaluator's interpretation of it)".

Palmer<sup>10</sup> studied on the content of modality from documents of many different languages. For him, epistemic modality is divided into two main categories: judgment and evidence; and

evidentiality is a part of the epistemic modal system. Opinions and conclusions involve judgment by the speaker but evidence is indicated by reports. Judgments and evidentials can be seen as devices for the speaker to reveal that he wishes to modify his commitment to the truth of his speech utterance.

#### 2.1.1. *Kinds of epistemic modality*

There are two kinds of epistemic modality: subjective and objective. The differences between them are: Objectively modalized sentences are statements of fact and as such they can be denied and questioned. Subjective epistemic sentences, on the other hand, express the speaker's belief and not statement of fact; consequently they cannot be denied or questioned.

#### 2.1.2. *Categories of epistemic modality*

As presented in 2.1, epistemic modality is divided into two basic categories: judgments and evidentials. There are at least four ways in which a speaker may indicate that he is not presenting what he is saying as a fact:

- (i) that he is speculating about it
- (ii) that he is presenting it as a deduction
- (iii) that he has been told about it.
- (iv) that it is a matter only of appearance, based on the evidence of (possibly fallible) senses.

All four types are concerned with the indication by the speaker of his (lack of) commitment to the truth of the proposition being expressed. They can be appeared in the structures below:

- (i) It is possible that.../ I think that...
- (ii) It is to be concluded that .../ I conclude that...
- (iii) It is said that.... X said that...
- (iv) It appears that.....  
(Palmer, ibid: 51-54)

### 2.2. Linguistic devices of epistemic modality

Linguistic devices used to express modal meaning are various. It can be expressed through nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, particles, intonation... But in this article, the main devices

are usually of grammar and lexicology.

### 2.2.1. Grammatical devices in English and in Vietnamese

In this article, grammatical devices include two forms: mood and tense, and their equivalent meanings are modality and time (Huddleston<sup>11</sup>). We describe such modal auxiliaries as: *must*, *may*, *will*, *should*, *might*, *would*. *Can* is not considered as a modal auxiliary expressing epistemic modality because it shows dynamic meanings in many cases. Remote past and future tense may be regarded as modal markers of epistemic modality.

### 2.2.2. Lexical devices in English and in Vietnamese

In the both languages, we can consider five groups of words used especially to express epistemic modality:

- Epistemic adjectives in English: *possible*, *likely*, *certain*, *obvious*, *evident*..., and in Vietnamese: *chắc chắn*, *rõ ràng*, *có thể*... in the structure:

#### **It + Be + Adj**

(1) It is *impossible* that it should be a mere coincidence.<sup>1</sup>

Đây *không thể* là một chuyện ngẫu nhiên được.<sup>4</sup>

- Epistemic cognitive verbs in English: *know*, *think*, *believe*, *guess*, *reckon*... and in Vietnamese: *biết*, *nghĩ*, *(tiên) đoán*, *hy vọng*... in the structure:

#### **I + V (that) + P**

(2) Well, we *reckoned* we'd strike another river soon, d'ye see.<sup>1</sup>

Thé đấy! Lúc ấy chúng ta *tính* sẽ gặp được một con sông khác.<sup>4</sup>

- Epistemic adverbs in English: *probably*, *possibly*, *certainly*, *obviously*, *of course*, *in fact*, *no doubt*... and in Vietnamese: *chắc chắn*, *rõ ràng*, *dĩ nhiên*, *có lẽ*... in the structure: **Adverb + P**, for example:

(3) *No doubt* you *think* that you are complimenting me in comparing me to

Dupin.<sup>1</sup>

*Có lẽ* anh tưởng so sánh tôi với Dupin là khen tôi sao?<sup>4</sup>

- Epistemic nouns in English: *possibility*, *probability*, *likelihood*, *prediction*, *rumour*... and in Vietnamese: *thực tế*, *sự thực*, *điều chắc chắn*, *lời tiên đoán*... in the structures:

#### **There/ It + BE + N**

#### **the/ a N + BE that + P**

**I Have a N (that) P**, for example:

(4) The *prediction* of the Mormon was only too well fulfilled.<sup>1</sup>

*Lời tiên đoán* của Cu-po quả không sai.<sup>4</sup>

- Epistemic auxiliaries in English *must*, *should*, *will*, *would*, *may*, *might*..., and in Vietnamese: *phải*, *có lẽ*, *có thể*... in the structure: **S + Maux + Vinf**, for instance:

(5) My dread is, however, that in your eyes and in the eyes of others he *may* appear to be compromised.<sup>1</sup>

Tôi lo là lo rằng dưới con mắt ông và con mắt người khác, nó *có thể* bị coi là có liên can.<sup>4</sup>

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1. Research Procedures

The study is carried in the following steps:

First of all, we collected a large number of materials on grammar, mostly on epistemic modality and studied them to build up a theoretical background for our research.

The next step, we collected as many CD's DS as possible in English and their VTE, chose some conversations or judgments with EMs. This is the descriptive method. The EMs were described in turn in CD's DS and in VTE to find out their semantic and structural features.

After that, comparative and contrastive methods were used to find out the similarities and differences between the combinations in using EMs in the two languages, and the categories of these markers were analyzed in relation between the participants and social settings of each story.

And finally, some conclusions, necessary

comments and practical suggestions based on the result of the study for activities of learning, teaching and translating the EMs to the Vietnamese learners of English.

### **3.2. Data Collection and analysis**

#### *3.2.1. Data Collection*

The study was based on the examination of the data collected from the extracts of the conversations between the well-known detective Sherlock Holmes and his best friend, Dr. Watson. These data were collected from the samples of instances of the characters' inferences, deductions, speculations in detective stories in English, which were written by the very famous writer Conan Doyle and their equivalent translational versions in Vietnamese.

Therefore, in order to achieve the study, we collected the detective stories of Conan Doyle and their VTE from libraries, bookstores and internet. From this collection, we searched for combination in using different types of EM (modal nouns, modal verbs, modal adjectives, modal adverbs).

#### *3.2.2. Data Analysis*

Following the data collection, from all the rough data, we classified and put them in groups in accordance with each type of EMs that we focused on. At last, we analyzed, compared and contrasted them in terms of syntax, semantics and pragmatics. Based on the qualitative method, data analysis was carried out following these steps:

- Identifying the syntactic features of EMs in CD's DS and in VTE respectively.
- Making a comparison and contrast EMs between CD's DS and VTE in terms of syntactic features.
- Describing the semantic features of EMs in CD's DS and in VTE respectively.
- Making a comparison and contrast EMs between CD's DS and VTE in terms of semantic features.
- Uncovering the semantic and syntactic characteristics of EMs in CD's DS and VTE. In syntax, for example, EMs were investigated in the form of words, phrases, sentences under the

analysis and its occurrence. And in semantics, we paid attention to the property of the state of affairs mentioned in the proposition of the utterance.

### **4. COMBINATION OF DIFFERENT EMS IN CD'S DS AND IN VTE**

In English, evidential markers do not always appear singly. In contrast, they have got a special ability in which they can cluster together. This ability may be regarded as a harmonic combination. We found out in the data many instances in which EMs were combined together, it means that at least one kind of EMs co-occurs with one or many others.

#### **4.1. Modal Auxiliary (Maux) + Modal cognitive verb (Mcog)**

Maux and Mcog often accompany with each other. Their combination gives a result about changes in degree of commitment of reliability.

In CD's DS, many instances of the combination between one Maux and one Mcog were yielded, but the translators did not use both these modal words in their translation process. In some cases, they used only one modal word to translate, and in some others, they used two or more modal words in translating: at the beginning and at the middle of the utterance to emphasize the inference of the speaker, for example:

- (6) This last statement appeared to me to be so startling that I *could* hardly believe that he was in his sober senses.<sup>1</sup>  
Lời khẳng định này quá đỗi kỳ dị khiến tôi khó mà *tin rằng* bạn tôi còn đầy đủ lý trí.<sup>4</sup>
- (7) “I *should imagine* that they are soluble in water,” I remarked.<sup>1</sup>  
Tôi *nghĩ* nó dễ hòa tan trong nước.<sup>4</sup>
- (8) I *ought to have known* that before ever I saw the box at all.<sup>1</sup>  
*Lẽ ra* tôi phải hiểu điều đó ngay trước khi mở hộp.<sup>4</sup>
- (9) You *may know* the strict principles of her family.<sup>2</sup>  
*Chắc chắn* ông biết lẽ giáo khắc khe của gia đình này.<sup>5</sup>

#### 4.2. Modal adjective (Madj) (that) Maux + Mcog

In CD's DS, some Madjs are able to appear in the dependant clause and combine with one Maux and one Mcog in the independent clause; however, sometimes they were translated and sometimes not translated into Vietnamese, e.g.

(10) I was *sure* that I *might* rely on you.<sup>2</sup>

Tôi rất *tin* anh.<sup>5</sup>

(11) I am *sure* you *could* never *guess* how I employed my morning, or what I ended by doing.<sup>2</sup>

Tôi *chắc* là anh *sẽ* không bao giờ *đoán* được là tôi đã sử dụng buổi sáng như thế nào, và sau cùng tôi đã làm gì.<sup>5</sup>

#### 4.3. Mcog (that) Maux

Vice versa, in order to show the speaker's opinion, the author used many structures with one Mcog in the independant clause and one Maux in the dependant clause in both CD's DS and VTE, e.g.

(12) To do him justice, I *think* that he *would* take it himself with the same readiness.<sup>1</sup>

Công bằng mà nói, tôi *tin tưởng* bản thân anh ta cũng *có thể* *sẽ* dùng thử một cách sót sắng không kém.<sup>4</sup>

(13) I *know* that she *will* do it.<sup>2</sup>

Tôi *biết* *chắc* cô ta *sẽ* làm.<sup>5</sup>

However, in other cases, the translators omitted the modal value in the independant clause and only paid attention to modal words in the dependant clause, e.g.

(14) I *trust* that we *shall* soon have some good news for you.<sup>2</sup>

However, it is natural to get a combination between a Madv and a Mcog in both languages. Let us consider the examples below:

(20) *Maybe* you don't *know* us.<sup>1</sup>

Có lẽ ông không *biết* chúng tôi.<sup>4</sup>

(21) *No doubt* you *think* that you are complimenting me in comparing me to Vietnamese modal words: one Madv and one Madj, and sometimes by using only one modal

Tôi *sẽ* có ngay những tin tức tốt.<sup>5</sup>

(15) I *think* that I *could* be of assistance to you.<sup>3</sup>

Tôi *có thể* giúp anh.<sup>6</sup>

#### 4.4. Mcog + Mcog

Some Mcogs typically co-occurred with another Mcogs in CD's DS, but it seems that the translators forgot Mcogs in their process of translating in VTE:

(16) I *suppose* you *know* what you have got?<sup>3</sup>

Ông *có biết* trong tay ông có cái gì không?<sup>6</sup>

(17) Even after I became suspicious, I *found* it hard to *think* evil of such a dear, kind old clergymen.<sup>2</sup>

Thậm chí, sau khi bắt đầu ngờ vực, tôi cũng khó mà *nghĩ* xấu về ông mục sư tốt bụng.<sup>5</sup>

#### 4.5. Mcog + Modal adverb (Madv)

In some cases, Mcogs (in terms of parenthetical) and Madvs can appear together in CD's DS but it seems that this rule does not exist in VTE, e.g.

(18) That is excellent. I *think*, *perhaps*, it is almost time that I prepare for the new role I have to play.<sup>2</sup>

Tuyệt lâm.<sup>5</sup>

(19) I *suppose* that you have been watching the habits, and *perhaps* the house, of Miss Irene Adler.<sup>2</sup>

Có lẽ anh đã quan sát những thói quen và ngôi nhà của Iren.<sup>5</sup>

#### 4.6. Madv + Mcog

Dupin.<sup>1</sup>

Có lẽ anh *tưởng* so sánh tôi với Dupin là khen tôi sao?<sup>4</sup>

#### 4.7. Madv + Madj

In CD's DS, one Madv can combine with one Madj to emphasize that Madj. However, they were translated sometimes by using two word, e.g.

(22) That, however, is *surely impossible*.<sup>1</sup>

Dù sao, *chắc chắn là không thể* nào có chuyện đó.<sup>4</sup>

(23) That the man was highly intellectual is *of course obvious* upon the face of it, and also that he was fairly well-to-do within the last three years, although he has now fallen upon evil days.<sup>3</sup>

Người đàn ông này rất trí thức, ba năm trước đây ông ta khá già, bây giờ đã kém hơn xưa. Sự sa sút về tinh thần và sự sa sút về sự nghiệp, *dường như* đã có một ảnh hưởng xấu.<sup>6</sup>

#### 4.8. Madv + Maux

In CD's DS, some Madvs can also combine with Mauxs. In these cases, the Madvs take initial position of the utterance, but we can not find out any combinations like this one in VTE, e.g.

(24) *Surely* no man *would* work so hard or attain such precise information unless he

had some definite end in view.<sup>1</sup>

(No translational equivalent)

(25) By the way, in view of recent occurrences, *perhaps I ought to* ask Mrs. Hudson to examine its crop.<sup>1</sup>

(No translational equivalent)

#### 4.9. Maux + Madv

In my observation, Mauxs are able to combine with Madvs in CD's DS, but most of them seem not to be translated in VTE, e.g.

(26) There *will probably* be some small unpleasantness.<sup>2</sup>

(No translational equivalent)

(27) Your Majesty *will, of course*, stay in London for the present?<sup>2</sup>

Bệ hạ vẫn còn lưu lại Luân Đôn chứ?<sup>4</sup>

The table below shows the combinable ability of different EMs in CD's DS and in VTE:

**Table 1. Combination of different EMs in CD's DS and in VTE**

Combination	In CD's DS	In VTE
<b>Maux + Mcog</b>	+	+ / -
<b>Madj (that) Maux + Mcog</b>	+	+ / -
<b>Mcog (that) Maux</b>	+	+ / -
<b>Mcog + Mcog</b>	+	-
<b>Mcog + Madv</b>	+	-
<b>Madv + Mcog</b>	+	+
<b>Madv + Madj</b>	+	+/-
<b>Madv + Maux</b>	+	-
<b>Maux + Madv</b>	+	-

Notes: + with combination; - without combination

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Typologically, in both English and VTE, there is a variety of the lexical devices employed to express epistemic modality: Maux, Mcog, Madv, Madj and Mn. In general, English Maux

is the most predominant group because they can be used in the present form and the past form, modal adverbs and modal cognitive verbs are also used very widely. In addition, the phenomenon of changing lexical categories and

word derivation between lexical devices such as verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs occur rather frequently, for example, the change from structures of verbs to structures of nouns, from structures of nouns to structures of adjectives, from structures of adjectives to structures of adverbs.

In general, the Vietnamese speakers with habit of using language do not use epistemic markers as frequently as the English ones do in some semantic categories and in some positions, Vietnamese learners and translators may not use various types of modals in their utterance or modalized sentences. Besides Maux, epistemic modality can be marked by Mcog and Madv which are used formally in English discourses with distinctive functions. Vietnamese learners of English may actually ignore this linguistic fact and may only use some common epistemic markers. Therefore, negative transfer may occur as the result of this imbalance.

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