Nghiên cứu đối chiếu về sự thể hiện cú pháp của tình thái nhận thức trong *Kho báu* và bản dịch tiếng Việt

TÓM TẮT

Bài viết trình bày kết quả nghiên cứu về sự thể hiện các đặc điểm cú pháp của các loại từ tình thái trong tác phẩm *Kho Báu* phiên bản tiếng Anh so với bản dịch tiếng Việt tương ứng. Mục tiêu nghiên cứu của công trình là nhận dạng các loại từ tình thái xuất hiện trong hai phiên bản và xác định tần suất mức độ sử dụng của từng loại thông qua các phương pháp nguyên cứu như: mô tả, định lượng, định tính và so sánh. Công trình có ý nghĩa khoa học, đóng góp dữ liệu cho lý luận nghiên cứu các đặc trưng ngôn ngữ của tình thái nhận thức trong tiếng Anh và trong tiếng Việt; công trình cũng có ý nghĩa thực tiễn đối với lĩnh vực dạy và học tiếng Anh như một ngoại ngữ. Nghiên cứu cũng giúp người học tiếng Anh có cái nhìn đầy đủ hơn và có khả năng sử dụng tốt hơn những đặc tính cú pháp của các lớp từ tình thái trong giao tiếp và trong dịch thuật.

Từ khóa: *đặc điểm cú pháp, tình thái nhận thức, Kho Báu, bản dịch tiếng Việt tương ứng.*

A Comparative Study of the Syntactic Realizations of Epistemic Modality in *The Treasure* and Its Vietnamese Translation

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the syntactic features of epistemic modality in *The Treasure* (English version) and its Vietnamese translation. Using descriptive, quantitative, quality and comparative methods, the research identifies major patterns of modal expressions across five grammatical categories: adverbs, auxiliaries, cognitive verbs, adjectives, and nouns. The findings reveal that English modal auxiliaries and cognitive verbs dominate in frequency and show greater positional flexibility, whereas Vietnamese equivalents tend to occur in fixed initial or medial positions. The study contributes to a clearer understanding of cross-linguistic modality and provides pedagogical implications for translation and EFL instruction.

Keywords: *syntactic features, epistemic modality, The Treasure, Vietnamese translation*

1. INTRODUCTION

Modality has long been recognized as a crucial component of linguistic meaning because it conveys the speaker's stance toward the proposition. However, the syntactic realization of epistemic modality (EM) across languages, particularly in literary translation, has received rather limited attention. In fact, in everyday verbal communication and in written works, both speakers and writers do not simply describe some event, process or state of affairs, but they also reveal their attitude or their evaluation to the content of the statement and to hearers or readers. For example, when we communicate, we convey to others not only messages describing the natural world, but we also send to each other the messages assessing the exactitude to what we are talking about, to what is happening around us and even evaluate the hearers' responses. Sometimes, we talk about true facts, certain things and even about what we think or speculate. Therefore, modality is a very necessary semantic part which cannot be absent in utterances. Modality is particularly concerned with the abilities of judgment, inference and speculation. Vietnamese English foreign language (EFL) learners and translators often face challenges in identifying equivalent modal structures due to structural and functional asymmetries between English and Vietnamese. Therefore, making clear the semantic values of the markers expressing modality of sentences in general and of English – Vietnamese epistemic markers in particular is very useful.

"*Herr Arnes penningar*", written in Swedish first of all, which was translated into English and published in 1923 under the title "*The Treasure*",[1] is a novel by Swedish female writer Selma Lagerlöf. Then, it went on being translated into Vietnamese with the title "Kho Báu". [2] The work is set in the 16th century in Bohuslän, Sweden, about a group of Scottish mercenaries who escape from prison; they go on to murder a family to steal a treasure chest, but after that, one of the thieves falls in love with the family's sole survivor. In order to convince readers to believe in the story, the writer must clearly state the evidential basis of the arguments as well as the reasons. We analyse these arguments and these reasons with the hope that the research will provide some useful knowledge of possibility of recognizing epistemic markers and help our learners in learning and translating English more easily

and quickly.

How to help the Vietnamese EFL learners acquire all this in a better way? From all the reasons above, we decide to choose *"**A Comparative Study of the Syntactic Realizations of Epistemic Modality in *The Treasure* and Its Vietnamese Translation**"*. This study aims to explore the syntactic characteristics of EM in *The Treasure* and its Vietnamese translation to provide insights into cross-linguistic modality and translation pedagogy. The research questions are: (1) What are the most common modal words patterns used in the two versions? And (2) What positions and frequency of the modal words patterns? What are their similarities and differences in both languages?

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. The definitions of Modality

There are a variety of definitions of modality given by English and Vietnamese linguists.

Lyons[3] says that modality is the speaker's opinion or attitude towards "the propositions that the sentence expresses or the situation that the proposition describes".

Palmer[4] studied on the content of modality from documents of many different languages. For him, modality is a semantic phenomenon and mood is a grammatical phenomenon. The difference between the two phenomena is similar to the difference between time and tense, or between sex and gender. He defines modality as semantic information associated with the speaker's attitude or opinion about what is said.

According to Halliday,[5] "Modality represents the speaker's angle, either on the validity of the assertion, or on the rights and wrongs of the proposals".

In Vietnam, modality is acquiring the attention of many linguists and they give similar notions about it. Hoàng Trọng Phiến[6] considers "modality as a grammatical category which appears in all kinds of sentence".

Nguyễn Hòa[7] states that "Modality is the non-propositional part of the sentence which concerns its factual status. Modality helps speakers to qualify their statements with respect to possibility and necessity."

From the mentioned above definitions, obviously the notion of modality of English and Vietnamese linguists does not diverge much from each other. As such, modality can be considered as a semantic category. Thanks to means of modal expressions, speakers can evaluate a particular situation in terms of possibility, probability, permission, volition, obligation and necessity. We can also recognize that some linguists in discussing on modality, at a certain level, indicate their pragmatic viewpoint that modality concerns the factual status of state-of-affair, modality presents the speaker's attitude or judgment towards the proposition.

2.2. Epistemic modality

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 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 research, 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 *The Treasure* and its Vietnamese translational equivalent (VTE).

According to Nuyts,[8] 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)".

Thus we can generalise that modality expresses a speaker's attitude toward the truth value of a proposition (Lyons;[3] Palmer).[4] Within this category, epistemic modality reflects degrees of certainty, probability, or belief (Nuyts). [8]

2.3. Categories of epistemic modality

There are two kinds of modality: deontic and epistemic. Parmer[4] claims that epistemic modality is divided into two main categories: judgment and evidence; and evidentiality is a part of the epistemic modal system. Deontic modality contains all notions of consciousness, possibility and necessity, particularly with regard to speculation and deduction on the part of the speaker as subject or perceiver of the information. 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. 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…..

Based on Palmer'[4]s distinction between deontic and epistemic modality and Nuyts'[8]s notion of evaluative stance, this study adopts a syntactic-functional framework to classify epistemic modal markers according to their grammatical realization (adverb, auxiliary, cognitive verb, adjective, noun) and positional variation (initial, medial, final). This framework provides the basis for cross-linguistic comparison between English and Vietnamese data.

2.4. Language units realizing modal functions

A wide variety of grammatical and lexical means may be used in English and Vietnamese. We can consider five groups of words used especially to express EM: epistemic adjectives, epistemic cognitive verbs, epistemic adverbs, epistemic nouns and epistemic auxiliaries.

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

It + Be + Adj

- 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

- 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.

- 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 following:

There/ It + BE + N

The/ A N + BE that + P

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

- Epistemic auxiliaries in English: *must, should, will, would, may, might…*, and in Vietnamese: *phải, có lẽ, có thể…* in the structure:

S + Maux + Vinf.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was aimed at investigating into the syntactic realizations of epistemic modality in *The Trea*sure and its VTE, so we used four main methods to achieve the aim of this research: descriptive, quantitative, qualitative and comparative. The descriptive analysis makes information received become specifc and vivid. The quantitative one provides us with concrete figures of the modal words patterns and also gives statistics in terms of frequencies of occurrence in percentages of syntactic characteristics. The qualitative one will illustrate these figures. And the comparative one is used to discover the similarities and the differences in the process of translating EMs from English into Vietnamese. As a result, the study will be concrete, persuasive and have a high reliability.

3.1. Data Collection

The study was based on the examination of the data collected from the extracts of the conversations between the characters in *The Treasure* and its VTE. These data were collected from the samples of instances of the epistemic modality, so we particularly paid attention to the characters' inferences, deductions, speculations in English version and its equivalent translational version in Vietnamese. Therefore, in order to achieve the study, we collected two versions of the story "*Herr Arnes penningar*"of Selma Lagerlöf from bookstores and internet.

3.2. Data Analysis

From this collection, we searched for different types of EM which were investigated in the form of words, phrases, sentences under the analysis and their occurrence. All the modal words patterns were identifed, classifed, and statistically analyzed. The process of analyzing the data was as follows: we picked out all the modal words patterns in which modal nouns, modal cognitive verbs, modal adjectives, modal adverbs, and modal auxiliaries are used; then we calculated the overall number of different patterns and put the results in the statistical tables, and then we compared and contrasted them in terms of syntactic features.

3.3. Coding Procedure

Each clause containing an epistemic marker was coded according to five grammatical types (Madv, Maux, Mcog, Madj, Mn) and four syntactic positions (I, M1, M2, F). Coding reliability was checked manually to ensure consistency in classification.

4. SYNTACTIC REALIZATIONS OF EM IN *THE TREASURE* AND IN ITS VTE

In terms of syntax, the study focuses on EMs as statements (declarative), commands (imperative), and questions (interrogative), and then they were investigated in comparison between *The Treasure* and its VTE.

4.1. Syntactic positions of EMs in *The Treasure* and in its VTE

This section shows how EMs behave syntactically in the clausal structure. EMs were analyzed in reference to the compositional structure of themselves and how their actual positions in the structure of clause reflect their syntactic roles in the utterance. The syntactic analysis is closely associated to the identification of the location of EMs in the structure of functional layers of an utterance.

EMs are distinguished in three positions for the declarative form of the clause of a simple sentence as follows:

Initial position (I-position): before the subject

Medial position (M-position):

M1-position immediately before auxiliary

M2- position after auxiliary

Final position (F-position):

after an intransitive verb, an object or a complement

These alternative positions of EMs can be taken in each grammatical class such as modal auxiliaries, modal cognitive verbs, modal adverbs, modal adjectives and modal nouns.

4.1.1. Modal Adverbs (Madvs)

Madvs in *The Treasure* and in its VTE were found to be realized in a wide range of syntactic forms: single adverbs, adverbial phrases, and prepositional phrases which would be dealt with respectively.

According to Quirk,[9] modal adverbs present a comment on the truth of what is said, expressing the extent to which the speakers believe that what he is saying is true. They can express conviction or some degree of doubt.

EMs in term of adverbials in English are: *evidentially, obviously, surely, certainly, no doubt, perhaps, probably, presumably, of course, assuredly*, etc. These EMs can be translated into Vietnamese such as: *rõ ràng là, chắc chắn là, có lẽ là, có khả năng là, quả nhiên là, quả thực là* and so on. English Madvs can appear in almost any positions, but the normal position for most Madvs is I-position of the clausal structure in the both languages. Let us observe the following example extracted from *The Treasure* and its VTE:

(1) *Mayhap* he has a service to ask of you.[1]

Có lẽ ông có việc cần nhờ mày.[2]

However, Madvs can also occur at M-position in the both versions, M2 in the English one and M1 in the Vietnamese one like in (2) and (3), or in contrast, take M1-position in English version and M2-position in its VTE like in the example (4) below:

(2) "I should *surely* bring their punishment upon them."[1]

"Tôi *chắn chắn* sẽ khiến chúng bị trừng trị thích đáng."[2]

(3) "You shall *assuredly* go," said Herr Arne.[1]

"Con *chắc chắn* sẽ làm được," ông Arne bảo.[2]

(4) I *surely* think her heart is disposed toward me," said Sir Archie; "but there is something watching over her, so that I cannot win her.[1]

Tôi tin *chắc* trái tim cô ta hướng về tôi," Archie nói, "nhưng có gì đó cứ theo sát cô ta, khiến tôi không thể tiến tới được.[2]

However, Madv in the example (5) following also appears in the M2-position but it is translated without using any Madvs in the Vietnamese version:

(5) You can *surely* show that you are not too homely to speak to a noble gentleman, Elsalill![1]

Mi đâu xấu xí đến mức không dám trò chuyện với một quý tộc, Elsalill![2]

(No equivalent)

Semantically, Madvs in the both languages are used to mark degree of certainty in an assertion and at the same time encode the speaker's commitment to the information. Let us compare other examples of the position of Madv:

(6) "I found it rolling before me in the street," said Elsalill. "One of the murderers has *surely* dropped it there."[1]

"Tôi thấy nó lăn trên đường trước chân mình," Elsalill nói. "*chắc chắn là* một tên sát nhân đã đánh rơi nó."[2]

Sometimes Madvs can appear in the M2-position in *The Treasure*, but it is very interesting to find out that Madvs was used at the I-position in its VTE like in the example (6) above.

In addition, we hardly found out any Madvs taking F-position in *The Treasure* as well as in its VTE. It means that they are used neither in English version nor in Vietnamese one in this position.

Similarly, we found out some cases where there is no appearance of any Madvs in

The Treasure but the translator added them in her translating to help readers understand deductive process easilier and they can occur at the M1- or F-position like in the examples (7) and (8) following:

(7) I shall tell him this when he comes."[1]

(No Madv)

Khi chàng đến, mình *nhất định* sẽ nói cho chàng biết."[2]

(8) "It is a perilous thing to follow a soldier of fortune," she said. "For none can tell whether such a man will keep his plighted troth."[1]

(No Madv)

"Đi theo một người lính đánh thuê không an toàn chút nào," nàng nói. "vì không ai dám *chắc* anh ta sẽ giữ lời hứa hôn ước."[2]

To sum up, in general, Madvs can appear in almost any positions in the traditional grammar of both English and Vietnamese. However, the most normal position is I-position, sometimes they are found at Medial and hardly at F-position in *The Treasure* and its Vietnamese translation. Many Madvs appear in I-position to demonstrate separation and independence on the propositional structure despite their influence on the semantic structure of the whole clause. The Madvs often make judgments or subjective attitudes of the speakers to their utterances.

Table 1. Syntactic positions of Madvs in *The Treasure* and in its VTE

The Treasure	VTE
I	I
M1	M2
M2	I/ M1/ -
-	M1/ F

- not appear at that position

4.1.2. Modal Auxiliaries (Mauxs)

In English system, Mauxs encoding necessity or deduction are *should, have to, ought to, must…* and markers encoding possibility or speculation are *shall, will, would, can, could, may, might*. In Vietnamese, among seven members in the system *phải, có thể, muốn, toan, cần, định, dám,* there are only two members *phải, có thể* having these modal meanings.

In addition, English system has Mauxs such as *can, could, may, might, shall, should, will, would* to indicate possibility or speculation compared with *có thể* and *sẽ* as a marker for the future tense.

Mauxs in *The Treasure* and in its VTE were frequently found at M-position, and it can be said to be the typical position for members of this grammatical class, e.g.

(9) "I have done it for my dear foster sister's sake, that she *might* have peace in her grave," said Elsalill.[1]

"Em làm điều này vì người em nuôi yêu quý, để em ấy *có thể* thanh thản mà về với Chúa," Elsalill nói.[2]

In addition, we also found out some examples containing Mauxs at M-position in the Vietnamese version, but in fact, no modal words appeared in the English writing, like in (10) or they were put at the beginning of the sentence to emphasize the speaker's deduction, like in the example (11) following:

(10) God knows what it has cost me to do it.[1]

(No equivalent)

Chúa biết rõ làm thế này em *sẽ* phải trả giá.[2]

(11) "If we were strangers here, Grim, my dog," said Torarin, "we *might* well ask ourselves what sort of heath this was, where they set up such marks as we use at sea.[1]

"Grim à, nếu là người mới đến đây lần đầu," Torarin nói, "*có thể* chúng ta sẽ tự hỏi vùng đất quái quỷ gì mà người ta lại dựng lên những cột dấu kiểu như ngoài biển thế kia."[2]

Although some Mauxs often appear at M-position in declarative clauses and I-position in interogative clauses in *The Treasure*, they were sometimes translated into

Vietnamese without any equivalent modal auxiliaries, e.g.

(12) - "*Will* you be very quiet and silent in here, Elsalill, so that the hostess *may not* know that I have found help?"

- "Yes, dear sister," said Elsalill; "you *may* be sure I *will*."[1]

"Chị giữ im lặng để bà chủ không biết là chị giúp em, được không Elsalill?"

- "Ừ," Elsalill nói, "em yên tâm.
(No equivalent)

In short, despite the same form in realization, there is a difference between Mauxs in *The Treasure* and modal expressions in its VTE. English Mauxs have only one position in declarative sentences: they follow right after their subjects (M-position) and another only position in interrogative clauses is right before their subjects (I-position). On the contrary, Vietnamese modal expressions can take different positions: sometimes in front of the subject (I-position) or sometimes between the subject and the predicate (M-position). Nevertheless, in some cases, this difference is so subtle that it is difficult for us to recognize it easily, and maybe this is the reason why the translator ignored them in her translation.

The syntactic position of English Maux in *The Treasure* and its Vietnamese translation can be shown in the table below:

Table 2. Syntactic positions of Maux in *The Treasure* and in VTE

The Treasure	VTE
I	-
M	M/ I
-	M
M	-

4.1.3. Modal Cognitive Verbs (Mcogs)

English and Vietnamese systems have a class of verbs denoting various degrees of knowledge and belief. The evidence from an inference can be marked by these cognitive verbs in the epistemically qualified assertion.

Such English verbs as *appear, reckon, guess, imagine, believe, think, confess, suppose, hope, perceive, suspect, understand, recognize, foretell, wager* and so on… can be employed in terms of Mcog in our corpus. These verbs tend to function as epistemic quantifiers on the subsequent proposition. *Tin tưởng, đoán, ngờ, hiểu, mong…* are considered as Mcogs in Vietnamese. Mcog constructions were found to appear in the clause structure **I + Mcog (that) P** in English, and **Tôi + Mcog (rằng) P** in VTE.

This sort of verbs has to obey the grammatical rule: their subject has to be the first person and the verb conjugated in the present or past tense, e.g. *I think, I guess, I suppose...*in English and *Tôi biết, Tôi ngờ, Tôi nghĩ…*in Vietnamese, and they take normally I-position in both languages, e.g.

(13) But *I know* that you are a God-fearing man.[1]

Tôi biết ông là một người biết kính sợ Chúa.[2]

Mcogs can also take M-position in *The Treasure* and in its Vietnamese equivalent, e.g.

(14) "You wolf's cub!" said Sir Archie. "When first I saw you on the quay *I thought* I ought to kill you."[1]

"Cô là đồ lòng lang dạ sói!" Archie hằm hè. "Lần đầu tiên gặp cô ngoài cảng *ta đã tính* đến chuyện giết phứt cô cho rồi."[2]

In some cases, Mcog verbs can take F-position in *The Treasure*, which was regarded rare in comparison with those in Initial and M-position. However, Vietnamese corpus yield only instances with Mcog construction most frequently taking I-position, in other cases they were sometimes ignored:

(15) "Oh, yes, I hear it," said Sir Archie; "there has been some alehouse brawl, *I doubt not*."[1]

"Ồ, nghe chứ," Archie nói, "có vụ xô xát trong tửu quán ấy mà."[2]

(No equivalent)

In short, Mcogs in *The Treasure* normally take Initial-, or M-position and they can also be found at these two positions in its VTE. Nevertheless, Mcogs rarely appear in Final position in the English version and hardly in the Vietnamese one.

The positions of Mcogs in the English version and its Vietnamese equivalent can be shown in the table below:

Table 3. Syntactic positions of Mcogs in *The Treasure* and in its VTE

The Treasure	VTE
I	I
M	M
F (rare)	-

4.1.4. Modal Adjectives (Madjs)

Both English Madj constructions and Vietnamese lexical phrasal constructions often appear in M-position. English Madj construction is characteristically realized in the syntactic structures: ***It is + Madj + to/ that P; That P is Madj*** and ***verb + Madj + complement***

The structure is usually used to convey the level of personal certainty. With a first personal pronoun subject, it shows the speaker'/writer's strong belief about the information.

In English, Madjs are *(I am) certain, sure, aware, (it's) evident, obvious, possible, clear, improbable,…* and in VTE, they are *rõ ràng, chắc chắn, không thể, có thể, có lẽ,...* The Vietnamese counterpart is typically characterized by the pattern: ***Adj (là) P***, and they may be translated: *rõ ràng (là), chắc chắn (là), chắc (là)…* They can only be found in Medial position in the both languages. Let us consider the examples below:

(16) "Now at last I see that it is *impossible* for me to go with Sir Archie and join my life to his. I shall tell him this when he comes."[1]

"Cuối cùng mình cũng nhận ra rằng mình *không thể* đi cùng Archie và sống phần đời còn lại bên chàng được. Khi chàng đến, mình nhất định sẽ nói cho chàng biết."[2]

In some other cases, Madj constructions can be found in M2-position in *The Treasure*, but in I-position in its VTE. The equivalent expression in Vietnamese can be found at the beginning of the utterance to boost the certainty of the proposition, e.g.

(17) "Since you have seen the murderers so well, mistress," said he, "you would *doubtless* know them again if you met them?"[1]

"Cô nhìn thấy bọn giết người rõ như vậy," anh ta nói, "*chắc* cô sẽ nhận ra ngay nếu gặp chúng chứ?"[2]

But sometimes they take F-position in *The Treasure* and were not translated into Vietnamese in the Vietnamese version, e.g.

(18) "Yes, dear sister," said Elsalill; "you may be *sure* I will."[1]

"Ừ," Elsalill nói, "em yên tâm."[2]

The positions of Madj construction and Vietnamese translated expression can be shown in table below:

Table 4. Syntactic positions of Mcogs in *The Treasure* and in its VTE

The Treasure	VTE
M	M
M2	I
F	-

4.1.5. Modal Nouns (Mns)

In order to avoid repetition of using the same Madv or Madj, speakers may use some other markers as the variants. Here, they can use some Mns instead of some Madvs or Madjs in correspondence structures with the same modal meaning.

Mns which are used in terms of EMs in English are *(have no) doubt, (be in) hopes, possibility, probability, prediction, certainty, (according to my) notion, (I was of the) opinion (that)…*or in such pattern as "***My Mn is that P***". In Vietnamese, some nouns can be

used to express these modal functions such as *niềm hy vọng, sự tin chắc, lời tiên đoán, ý kiến, khả năng...*

The common position for Mn constructions is F-position in *The Treasure* like in the example (19), but they were ignored in Vietnamese translated expressions. It is popular, by contrast, to appear in I-position in the Vietnamese version like in (20) and (21) while there were not any modal signs used in the source language, e.g.

(19) He looked and looked and rubbed his eyes, but there was *no doubt* of it, the parsonage stood there unharmed, with thatch and snow upon its roof.[1]

Torarin trân trối nhìn rồi dụi mắt, nhưng cảnh tưởng trước mắt không hề thay đổi, căn nhà vẫn như xưa, với mái rạ tuyết phủ đầy.[2]

(No equivalent)

(20) Her face had not yet reached its fullness, but had a promise of beauty in it.[1]

(No equivalent)

Khuôn mặt còn phảng phất nét trẻ con nhưng *hứa hẹn sẽ* là một giai nhân khi đến tuổi trưởng thành.[2]

(21) It might well be that before daybreak they would have open water and could sail for Scotland.[1]

(No equivalent)

Có khả năng trước rạng sáng ngày mai băng sẽ tan hết, và họ có thể khởi hành đến Scotland.[2]

In our observation, it is not easy to find out Mn structures in the speakers' deduction and speculation in *The Treasure*. Therefore, we were excited to discover that Vietnamese speakers are inclined to use the Mn *khả năng, hứa hẹn* … in their inference even though in the source language did not use these modal nouns in the same utterances, and they were put in I-position in its VTE.

The syntactic positions of Mns in the English version and in Vietnamese translation are shown in table below.

Table 5. Syntactic positions of Mns in *The Treasure* and in its VTE

The Treasure	VTE
F	-
-	I

4.1.6. Summary

In summary, from the five tables mentioned above, so as to make learners better understand the positions of the modal words, this section has generalized syntactic features of EMs in *The Treasure* and in its VTE. Actual syntactic positions of EMs have been sorted into patterns. Table 6 below shows their syntactic features in two versions.

Table 6. Syntactic positions of EM in *The Treasure* and in VTE

Category　　　Position	In The Treasure				In VTE			
	I	M1	M2	F	I	M1	M2	F
Madv	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+
Maux	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	-
Mcog	-	+	+	+ (rare)	+	+/-	+	-
Madj	-	-	+	+	+/-	+	+	-
Mn	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-

Notes:　+　appear at that position

　　　　-　not appear at that position

4.2. Quantitative Results of Distribution of EM and Discussion

4.2.1. The distribution of EM in syntactic aspects

The results of the quantitative analysis of the data of the frequency of EM in terms of the syntactic categories are arranged in table 7 below consisting occurences in raw numbers and in percentage.

Table 7. Relative frequency of syntactic aspects of EM in *The Treasure* and in VTE

	Madv	Maux	Mcog	Madj	Mn	TOTAL
In The Treasure	23	436	214	31	13	717
in percentage	3.21%	60.81%	29.85%	4.32%	1.81%	100%
In VTE	48	160	159	19	5	391
in percentage	12.28%	40.92%	40.66%	4.86%	1.28%	100%

The analysis of EM markers, focusing on modal words, provides valuable insights into the linguistic choices made in both versions. Let us look at the total column of table 7, it is obvious that English speakers, in general, employ EMs more frequently than Vietnamese ones. There are totally 717 occurences of EMs in the English version, and it obtains nearly double with the Vietnamese corpus of the same size which gets only 391 occurences.

The predominant modal words pattern in English version observed is the Maux, with 436 occurrences, constituting a signifcant 60.81% of the total. Following closely but only nearly a half is the Mcog, which appears 214 times, making up 29.85% of the modal occurrences in the dataset. The Madj and the Madv patterns, with 31 and 23 instances respectively, accounts for 4.32% and 3.21% of the total. The Mn pattern, observed 13 times and considered as the least frequency, makes up 1.81% of the occurrences. The low frequency of Mns can be explained by the formality of the stylistic aspect of the patterns in which these lexical devices are used. Such pattern as *"My Mn is that P"* is rare in everyday conversation. As for Maux, *will* and *may* are most frequently used whereas *shall* and *could* also get a rather big sum. As for Mcog, *think* and *believe* are the most frequent. As far as Madv are concerned, *maybe* and *surely* are leading, whereas *mayhap* is considered rare in use.

Like the English version, the Vietnamese corpus also shows the predominant use of the Maux and the Mcog groups rather rich in numbers and in occurences, with 160 and 159 times in that order, accounting for 40.92% and 40.66% of the total. The markers *sẽ* and *có thể* serving as signals for future prediction or deduction are found the most frequently. As for Mcog, lexical devices *nghĩ* and *tin rằng* outnumber *nhận ra* while *cược là* and *mong* are rarely found in our corpus. This imbalance can also be seen in the use of *"I think"* as boosters to increase the effective meaning of the utterance. Madv in Vietnamese version are used twice as much as those in English one. In comparision with 13 occurences of the Mns in *The Treasure*, Mns in VTE contribute much lower proportion, only 5 occurences, making up 1.28%. *Chắc chắn* is most commonly used Madv. *Có lẽ* also appears, but rare.

4.2.2. The distribution of EM in syntactic positions

Table 8. Relative frequency of syntactic positions of EM in *The Treasure* and in VTE

Position	in The Treasure		in VTE	
	Occurences	In percentage	Occurences	In percentage

I	78	52.7%	37	46.84%
M1	2	1.35%	22	27.85%
M2	47	31.76%	20	25.31%
F	21	14.19%	0	0%
TOTAL	148	100%	79	100%

From table 8, we can see that modal words in the English version are fully distributed in the three positions: 52.7% at I-position, 33.11% at M-position (including 1.35% at M1 and 31.76% at M2), and 14.19% at F-position. Whereas modal words in Vietnamese equivalent are only restricted to two positions: initial and medial, with 46.84% and 53.16% respectively, and no instances at F-position were found.

The analysis indicates that there is a difference in syntactic position of EMs in *The Treasure* and in its VTE. The difference is that English modal words prefer I-position while the Vietnamese ones tend to occupy M-position more often. English people often use EM at the point of departure of utterances to express their degree of certainty of the knowledge before imparting information. The percentage of English modal words which can be found in M2-position is much higher than in Vietnamese translation (31.76% for the former and 25.31% for the latter), and they can also appear in F-position (at 14.19%) meanwhile there is no Vietnamese EMs existed in this place. Especially, English Madvs and Mcogs can occupy different positions in the utterances. It means that English modal words are more flexible in the syntactic position and this is a typical characteristic of parentheticals in which Madvs and Mcogs were mostly used. In VTE, most utterances with epistemic markers such as *rõ ràng, có lẽ, chắc chắn* … often take I-position.

4.2.3. Summary

The preference for initial position in Vietnamese EMs reflects the language's topic–comment structure, where the epistemic stance precedes the proposition to frame the speaker's attitude. In contrast, English EMs display greater mobility, consistent with their use as parenthetical devices that modulate the truth value within the clause (Halliday).[5] This syntactic flexibility may account for the richer variety of modal auxiliaries in English compared to Vietnamese.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study has identified both syntactic similarities and differences in the realization of epistemic modality between *The Treasure* and its Vietnamese translation. English EMs, particularly modal auxiliaries and cognitive verbs, show higher frequency and positional flexibility, while Vietnamese counterparts are restricted mainly to initial and medial slots. These findings highlight the syntactic economy and pragmatic explicitness of English compared with Vietnamese implicitness.

Pedagogically, the study offers insights for EFL learners and translators to recognize and render epistemic meanings more accurately. Future research should extend this work by including a larger corpus and exploring pragmatic shifts in modality translation using computational tools.

The main limitation of this study lies in the fact that it analyses two translated versions rather than the original English text. As a result, the research cannot fully capture the speaker's epistemic meanings or the inferential reasoning process embedded in the original discourse. Certain nuances of modality may have been lost or altered through translation, leading to partial interpretation of the speaker's intention. Future studies should therefore extend the scope to include a comparative analysis between the source text and its translations, which would allow for a more comprehensive

understanding of how epistemic modality and pragmatic inference are conveyed across languages.

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