

Linguistic expressions of CHẾT in Vietnamese an Exploration into Modality

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Abstract: This study analyzes epistemic and deontic modalities regarding CHẾT (to die) in Vietnamese using Scopus texts to gain cultural insights on mortality conceptualizations. The linguistic theories of researchers like Nuyts, Bybee and Fleischman, and Vietnamese scholars inform the frameworks concerning epistemic factuality judgments and deontic necessity/possibility assessments. Methodologically, statistical and descriptive modal expression analysis combined with comparative, contextual and quality assessments elucidate patterns conveying evidential reasoning, social norms, obligations and existential perspectives tied to dying. Quantifying and detailing prevalent grammatical structures and semantic nuances of key modal terms used in death discussions reveals the hybrid interfacing of traditional morality and modern rationality markers. The results should enrich philosophical, anthropological and linguistic perspectives on this profound existential domain by uncovering enduring belief systems, values and symbolic meanings regarding Vietnamese interpretations of mortality's ontology. Findings elucidate how modal verbal processes linguistically embed cultural conceptualizations of the fundamental experience of human dying. Implications encompass enhanced scholarly views on Vietnamese thought across the spectrum from moral propriety to logical probability in the pivotal context of inevitable mortality. This investigation into modal linguistic forms represents an insightful conduit for expanding academic understandings of Vietnamese social psychology regarding mortality.

Keywords: Modality; Epistemic; Deontic; Mortality, Vietnamese linguistics

1. Introduction

The study of modality has expanded significantly in linguistics in recent decades, garnering substantial scholarly attention (Palmer, 2001; Nuyts, 2006). Modality refers to how languages encode concepts like possibility, necessity, probability, obligation, and certainty through grammar, vocabulary and other semantic means. It reveals speaker perspectives and attitudes towards situational content. Linguists analyze modality across languages to understand common patterns in expressing complex judgments and ideas.

Investigating modality holds great importance for elucidating the structure and usage of language. It provides insight into how abstract concepts relating to possibility and certainty are conveyed linguistically (Kratzer, 2012). Speakers use modal terms to qualify claims, indicate doubt or certainty, and convey necessity and obligation. Analyzing these linguistic markers of modality also reveals speaker beliefs, cultural outlooks and social norms. Across disciplines like philosophy, anthropology and intercultural studies, modality has become a pivotal construct for studying human judgment and reasoning.

There are eight central modalities (Nuyts, 2001). Dynamic modality conveys the ability to carry out actions based on intrinsic properties. Modalization denotes speaker judgments regarding the likelihood of propositions. The expressive modality communicates subjective speaker attitudes and emotions. The emphatic modality stresses the intensity of the speaker's commitment to ideas. The concessive modality acknowledges alternatives and possibilities contrary to the speaker's own position. The deontic modality relates to ethical norms and social obligations in the cultural context. The epistemic modality evaluates the factual status of propositions based on available knowledge and evidence. Lastly, the boulomaic modality focuses on the speaker's desires, wishes and needs.

In the study of CHẾT expressions in Vietnamese, two salient modalities are deontic and epistemic. Deontic modality conveys community ethics and expectations regarding appropriate behavior, social dignity, and moral standards, including for sensitive topics like death (Nuyts et al., 2010). Meanwhile, epistemic modality denotes logical reasoning about the factuality of events like mortality based on inferences from cultural knowledge and scientific evidence (Coates, 1983). It encodes rational judgments of likelihood rather than moral propriety.

Analyzing deontic and epistemic modal expressions regarding CHẾT can reveal deep insights into Vietnamese conceptual systems. Deontic modal verbs like *must* and *should* combined with notions of dignity/propriety demonstrate enduring cultural expectations that the deceased be shown respect (Nguyen 2012). However, contemporary science-based assessments of likelihood and probability also inform speech about mortality. Investigating how traditional morality interfaces with modern rationality can uncover profound existential worldviews on the ontology of CHẾT in Vietnamese thought and discourse (Lyons 1977). Linguistic devices like obligation modals and adverbs expressing possibility linguistically encode this philosophical spectrum from ethics to logic. Examining the factors enabling these interpretations - from grammar to social context - is illuminating (Van Dijk 1977). Ultimately, deontic and epistemic

death modalities represent pivotal intersecting dimensions - propriety and reason - within Vietnamese cosmology (Halliday 1985).

In summary, analyzing deontic statements of obligation and proper conduct regarding CHẾT, paired with epistemic modal inferences about evidentiary likelihood reveals deep insights into cross-cultural belief systems and values on mortality. This study leverages the interface between traditional and contemporary modal semantics to uncover how Vietnamese culture conceptualizes meaning and identity around the fundamental human experience of dying. Findings promise to enrich linguistic, philosophical and anthropological understandings of this profound existential domain.

2. Literature reviews

2.1. Historical background

During the 1970s, Givón (1982) and Lyons (1977) made significant contributions to the understanding of modality and its role in communicating the attitudes, skills, and evaluations of speakers. Lyons focused on the function of modality in communicating metaphysical meanings, whereas Givón studied the connection between evidentiality—the language used to identify the source of information—and modality. Palmer (1986) and Traugott (1989) made significant contributions to the categorization and description of various modality types, which included epistemic modality, pertaining to the speaker's knowledge and beliefs, and deontic modality, referring to social rules and obligations. Their research contributed to the development of a strong theoretical foundation for the linguistic study of modality.

Following these trends, Bybee and Fleischman (1995) conducted a thorough investigation of modality in grammar and speech during the 1990s. They looked at how modality expressions evolve and alter throughout time, as well as how they function to communicate opinions and subjective meanings. In the recent past, researchers like Nuyts (2001, 2006, 2016) have made a substantial contribution to the growth and development of modality theory. A thorough framework for examining many modalities was offered by Nuyts, who also introduced new classifications such as *asaboulomaic* modality, which is concerned with the speaker's hopes and aspirations.

In terms of research methods, these studies have used phonetic, pragmatic, and semantic analysis as study methodologies to examine the ways in which language expresses modality. They have examined the meanings and patterns of modal phrases in a variety of settings by using data from written texts, spoken speech, and language corpora.

In summary, linguists have made significant advances in the study of modality thanks to the work of eminent researchers like Lyons, Givón, Palmer, Traugott, Bybee, Fleischman, and Nuyts. Semantic, pragmatic, and phonetic analysis are the primary research methodologies that use information from written texts, spoken speech, and language corpora. These studies have contributed to a better understanding of the significance of modality in the communication of speaker attitudes, beliefs, and evaluations, as well as the relationships it has with ideas like evidentiality and subjectivity.

2.2. Theoretical framework

2.2.1. Nuyts' (2016) framework

A crucial aspect of language, modalities have attracted a lot of scholarly interest lately (Palmer, 2001; Nuyts, 2006). Fundamentally, it describes how grammatical constructions, lexical items, and semantic devices are used by languages to represent concepts such as possibility, necessity, probability, obligation, and certainty. Linguists can learn about speakers' viewpoints, attitudes, and qualifications regarding the topic being delivered by examining modal phrases. Modality offers a glimpse into the methodical way that language forms are used to communicate abstract evaluative notions. The definition of modality, as proposed by Nuyts (2016), is a linguistic category referring to the ephemeral, subjective and speaker-oriented qualification or modification of a state of affairs. This definition is significant, which highlights the fact that modality is based on personal opinions rather than objective factual truths.

The many cross-linguistic expressions of modality are framed by a number of fundamental kinds and aspects. Within a particular cultural setting, deontological modality pertains to ethical standards, duties, and social obligations. The logical evaluation of a proposition's possibility and factual status based on the data at hand is the focus of epistemic modality. Other noteworthy modalities include concessive (acknowledgment of options), expressive (attitudes/emotions), dynamic (abilities), emphatic (commitment intensity), and *boulomaic* (desires/wishes) (Nuyts, 2001). It is very instructive to examine deontic and epistemic modalities when examining a term such as *CHẾT* (to die) in Vietnamese. *Deontic modal* indicators provide insight on customs, moral standards, and appropriateness in relation to death. On the other hand, *epistemic modal* devices represent contemporary, reasonable estimates of the likelihood of mortality based on empirical variables such as age and health.

Methodologically speaking, studies of modality across languages have employed statistical analyses to measure trends in the frequencies and distributions of modal expressions utilizing information from transcribed speech and text corpora (Nuyts et al., 2010). Comprehensive descriptive and qualitative studies that look at the many grammatical structures encoding modality, the contextual elements affecting modal language usage, and the pragmatic and semantic roles of important modal words are added to this. Through the integration of empirical and interpretative methodologies,

a holistic viewpoint on modality is revealed, clarifying its systematic and context-specific features in many languages and cultural contexts.

Utilizing these methodologies for the examination of **CHẾT** in Vietnamese is anticipated to provide perceptive outcomes that shed light on the interplay between customary Vietnamese beliefs and modern rationality in understanding death. Long-standing cultural norms, values, and propriety ethics governing how one ought to see and relate to death and dying might be uncovered by closely examining deontic modal expressions. On the other hand, examining epistemic modal devices can show how Vietnamese estimates of the likelihood of death under different living conditions are influenced by contemporary life expectancy numbers, medical diagnoses, and scientific knowledge. In the end, a thorough analysis of the deontic and epistemic modalities related to **CHẾT** can provide distinctive insight into more general Vietnamese conceptions of life, death, and humanity. Modal language forms are a crucial, if little-studied, area for examining intricate belief systems on this deepest of existential issues.

2.2.2. Bybee & Fleischman's (1995) framework

Modality is defined as involving semantic domains that deal with the speaker's attitudes and opinions, even when lexical means develop further uses that background the speaker's involvement by Bybee & Fleischman (1995). This definition is fundamental, which is important because it emphasizes how subjective speaker postures and views are the foundation of modality. Modal verbs like "may" and "should" essentially qualify assertions based on personal opinions rather than factual information. The three main categories of modality are described by their framework as dynamic (subject capacities), deontic (societal obligations/permissions), and epistemic (judging likelihood based on evidence). It also acknowledges other categories, such as volitive modality in terms of wants.

One criticism is that, although their concept captures the subjective foundation of modality, it ignores its critical function in pragmatic interactions beyond speaker attitudes. Modals are tools for negotiating posture and attitudes in social situations. Theories on how modality manages social identities and connections might be added to the framework. Another finding is that the categories in the framework are still somewhat wide even if the types cover important semantic areas. To manage difficulties such as varying degrees of obligation strength (e.g., must vs. should) or *discrepancies* between ability and permission uses, more subtle distinctions could be required. Their classification offers a good starting point, but it may need more specificity about the pragmatic roles and fine-grained subtypes of each modality.

In terms of methodology, Bybee and Fleischman support corpus-based analysis, looking at modal forms and meanings in a variety of language corpora and speech data. Mapping the context-dependent functions of specific modal expressions and their diachronic semantic alterations throughout time requires in-depth analyses of such as expressions in context. Rich descriptions of how modality is grammatically and pragmatically used in reality are made possible by their empirically based approach, which emphasizes examining modals across real use circumstances. Diachronic trends in the evolution of meaning may also be identified by closely examining modal indicators in the context of their real-world usage.

Through the use of this contextualized corpus approach, a thorough examination of the meanings and grammatical distributions of modal terms surrounding the word **CHẾT** in Vietnamese could provide insight into how different cultures conceptualize mortality and its social acceptability within the framework of a general subjective modality system. Studies that compare epistemic, deontic, and other modal types may highlight similarities and conflicts between opposing viewpoints, such as morally sound positions on the certainty of death and cultural beliefs that support morally upright grieving customs. The seminal paradigm by Bybee and Fleischman, which is based on subjectivity yet sensitive to semantic shift, makes it possible to thoroughly examine how modality permeates and qualifies many states of affairs. When applied to Vietnamese **CHẾT** modalities, it offers insights into how speaker dispositions balancing propriety and certainty and contextual understandings are linguistically embedded into this deep experience.

2.2.3. Cultural modality framework

Drawing upon the frameworks of Nuyts (2016) and Bybee & Fleischman (1995), we put forth a novel and comprehensive framework named the *Cultural Modality Framework* to examine Vietnamese expressions of **CHẾT**. The goal of this paradigm is to depict how modern logical viewpoints and established cultural norms interact to shape our understanding of mortality.

Deontic normativity and *Epistemic rationality* are the two fundamental aspects acknowledged by this framework. Deontic normativity refers to the deeply ingrained moral standards, cultural norms, and societal expectations that influence how people see proper behavior in the wake of death. It investigates how traditional Vietnamese ideas about honor, dignity, and appropriateness in the face of mortality are encoded in deontic modal phrases (e.g., must, should). On the other hand, Epistemic Rationality studies how contemporary scientific thinking and evidence-based probability judgments impact conversations about mortality. It looks at the ways that epistemic modal devices (such

asasmay and likely) communicate logical conclusions about the probability of dying given information about age, health, and life expectancy.

This proposed framework is a research method that uses a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative corpus analysis with qualitative discourse analysis. Quantitative methods analyze the frequency and distribution patterns of deontic and epistemic modal expressions associated with **CHẾT** in Vietnamese text, while qualitative methods analyze the cultural conceptualizations, symbolic meanings, and social implications of these expressions. This approach draws from anthropological, philosophical, and literary perspectives to understand Vietnamese worldviews and belief systems.

Moreover, this framework provides a thorough understanding of how traditional morality and contemporary logic intersect and divide in Vietnamese conversations about death by combining empirical trends with in-depth cultural research. It clarifies the complex relationship that exists between deontic propriety and epistemic probability when building ontological interpretations of **CHẾT** in Vietnamese. The following table summarizes the key modality categories analyzed within this framework:

Table 1 Cultural modality framework

Modality Category	Description
Deontic normativity	Expressions reflecting cultural norms, moral codes, and societal expectations surrounding the propriety of death and dying.
Epistemic rationality	Expressions conveying rational judgments about the likelihood of mortality based on evidence and probability assessments.
Subjectivity markers	Linguistic devices encoding personal attitudes, emotions, and subjective stances towards death (e.g., grief, outrage, disbelief).
Evidential reporting	Qualifying language indicating the source or evidence behind reported death events (e.g., hearsay, rumors, unverified accounts).
Intersubjective negotiation	Modal usages appealing to shared understandings and negotiating perspectives between speakers regarding death's implications.
Intersubjective blending	Linguistic fusion of subjective viewpoints with appeals to mutually recognized values, beliefs, and cultural conceptualizations surrounding death.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research methods

Using a mixed-methods approach, this study thoroughly examines Vietnamese modal forms of **CHẾT** by integrating quantitative and qualitative analysis.

The quantitative component quantitatively analyzes the frequency and distribution patterns of various modal forms co-occurring with **CHẾT** across a large textual collection using corpus linguistics techniques. This offers empirical understanding of the common grammatical patterns and semantic subtleties associated with death-related modality.

The qualitative analysis uses a descriptive, context-sensitive method to complement these empirical findings. It entails extensively analyzing real-world instances from the corpus to painstakingly dissect the cultural ramifications, pragmatic purposes, and nuanced meanings expressed by **CHẾT** modal usages. This interpretative perspective clarifies the ways in which these language devices represent persistent values, belief systems, and social conventions while encoding complex conceptualizations of mortality.

3.2. Data collection

To obtain a representative corpus for analysis, data was systematically collected from 10 acclaimed contemporary Vietnamese short stories authored between 2010-2022. These narratives, coded from **STR01** to **STR10**, were purposefully selected to encompass diverse themes, genres, and authorial perspectives, ensuring a broad linguistic sample surrounding death discussions.

The chosen short tales address a variety of human experiences associated with death, such as bereavement, violence, sacrifice, terminal disease, and existential contemplation. It is possible to compile a large corpus of phrases connected to death that occur in a range of situations and story arcs by capturing this theme of diversity. The prose and dialogue from each short tale were digitally collected and formatted to create a corpus suitable for effective corpus analysis techniques.

With over 90,000 words collected over the course of 10 stories, this dataset offers a considerable amount of linguistic information to allow the rigorous identification and analysis of modal expressions related to **CHẾT**. With their wide range of character viewpoints, situations, exchanges, and emotional tones, the stories offer a complex, culturally-representative picture of how Vietnamese modal language understands the fundamental idea of death.

3.3. Data analysis

The study investigates the modal usages of **CHẾT** in Vietnamese, using a combination of corpus analytic tools, manual annotation, and interpretative methodologies. Corpus linguistics tools like AntConc are used to find all occurrences of **CHẾT** co-occurring with modal terms and grammatical structures in the dataset. Frequency measures are used to identify prevailing patterns in **CHẾT** mentions. Manual annotation is used to create subcategories based on subtle semantic responsibilities, using linguistic frameworks developed by researchers like Nuyts, Bybee, and Vietnamese Modal System theorists. Qualitative analysis interprets contextual factors, cultural conceptualizations, sociolinguistic norms, and symbolic associations encoded by these modal usages. Each annotated example is subjected to close reading and discourse analysis grounded in anthropological, philosophical, and literary perspectives. Findings are synthesized to highlight the interplay between empirical tendencies and culturally-inscribed meanings surrounding death. Overarching trajectories elucidate how grammatical representations of deontic propriety versus epistemic probability merge traditional axiology with modern logics in constructing Vietnamese interpretations of mortality's ontology.

4. Finding and discussion

4.1. Normativity for subjective expression

This section explores the relationship between subjective expression and normative perspectives on **CHẾT** in Vietnamese discourse. It uses data from ten short stories to quantify **Deontic Normativity (DN)** and **Subjectivity Markers (SM)**. DN expressions reflect cultural norms and moral codes, while SM devices encode personal emotions and attitudes towards death. Both categories are prominent but with varying distributions. The analysis aims to understand how Vietnamese speech balances individual emotionality with social expectations when conceptualizing this existential domain, highlighting the tension between subjective experiences and collective normative perspectives.

Table 2. Distribution of normativity for subjective expression

Story	STR01	STR02	STR03	STR04	STR05	STR06	STR07	STR08	STR09	STR10
DN	17	21	29	39	13	42	36	35	31	37
SM	33	26	36	13	41	24	19	26	28	32
Total	50	47	65	52	54	64	55	51	59	69

4.1.1. Deontic normativity (DN)

The expression of societal expectations, moral standards, and cultural norms that shape what is considered appropriate dying and death is known as deontic normativity. In a particular cultural context, it stands for the moral and customary norms that specify how people should regard and deal with death. Deontic modal phrases such as "must," "should," and "have to" are frequently employed in Vietnamese language when referring to **CHẾT**. The cultural expectations, obligations, and duties surrounding death are encoded in these terms. Because these assertions represent deeply rooted cultural norms and beliefs, they support the ongoing effect of conventional morality on perceptions of mortality.

Within the framework of cultural modality, the theory of deontic modality serves as the linguistic tool utilized in this study to investigate deontic normativity. This paradigm makes it easier to analyze how Vietnamese traditional morality and modern reason interact when it comes to how people conceptualize death. The study emphasizes the interaction between traditional propriety and contemporary logic in Vietnamese discourse about death by contrasting deontic modal phrases, which transmit moral standards, with epistemic modal devices, which express logical conclusions supported by evidence. The dialogue below is a case in point.

Loan: Cha ơi, con đây yêu một người không phải từ làng chúng ta và muốn kết hôn với anh ấy.
Father, I have fallen in love with a man not of our village and wish to marry him.

Father: Con biết rằng phong tục của chúng ta yêu cầu con phải kết hôn trong làng chúng ta. Là con gái của cha, con phải tuân theo điều này, ngay cả khi nó mang đến sự bất hạnh. Một người phụ nữ PHẢI CHẾT trước khi bỏ lại các nghi lễ và tột đỉnh của mình.

You know our custom requires you to marry within our village. As my daughter, you must uphold this, even if it means unhappiness. A woman PHẢI CHẾT (must die) before abandoning her ancestral duties.

In this dialogue, Vietnamese people use language allusions to mortality to impose social standards and cultural expectations. This is best illustrated by the father's assertion in this exchange, which uses the deontic modal phrase **PHẢI CHẾT**. The father purposely brings up death to convey the serious responsibility his daughter has to follow the village's customs around arranged marriages, even if he does not mean a literal reading. With the use of **PHẢI CHẾT**, the father forges a metaphorical intensifier that exaggerates the great sacrifice and moral obligation that his daughter, a woman in their culture, is supposed to perform. The allusion to death in rhetoric highlights how solemn it is for her to renounce individual interests in order to preserve social rules, even if doing so causes her great misery.

The way in which Vietnamese speech encodes and maintains deeply embedded cultural values—like the preference for collective traditions over individual agency, especially with regard to gender roles and household responsibilities—is reflected in this deliberate use of deontic modal language. The expectation of adhering to ancestral norms is non-negotiable due to the language invocation of mortality, which intensifies its commanding force. Furthermore, the father's assertion linguistically embeds the persistent impact of conventional morality and propriety norms on contemporary conceptions of life events such as marriage. In Vietnamese culture, the deontic modal term **PHẢI CHẾT** is a powerful language tool that preserves and reinforces hierarchical social structures and normative value systems by referencing the finality and seriousness of death.

The study's results show how frequently deontic normativity statements occur in each of the 10 short tales. The data demonstrates differences in the number of DN expressions in the tales. For example, STR04 has 39 occurrences, whereas STR05 has 13 instances. These variations show how different literary contexts emphasize different things when it comes to cultural conventions and societal expectations surrounding death. Higher DN frequency stories probably delve deeper into topics based on traditional Vietnamese morals and values, whilst lower DN frequency stories could concentrate more on other elements like firsthand accounts or modern viewpoints.

The examination of deontic normativity expressions associated with **CHẾT** in Vietnamese is in line with more general typological tendencies noted in a variety of cultures. For the transmission and maintenance of cultural precepts, moral principles, and social conventions pertaining to the intense experience of death and dying in many communities, deontic modality serves as a language mechanism. From Western emphasis on individual autonomy to honor-bound Japanese ideas like "giri" (duty), deontic modal phrases in many languages convey the ethical and cultural frameworks that dictate correct action in the face of mortality. The Vietnamese data adds even more depth to this cross-linguistic phenomenon by shedding light on the intricate ways that traditional morality and contemporary reasoning interact to shape existential worldviews.

4.1.2. Subjectivity markers (SM)

Encoding the speaker's subjective views, attitudes, and feelings about mortality is the fundamental purpose of subjectivity markers. These rhetorical strategies reveal the person's inner thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about dying. The cultural modality framework, which highlights the interaction between conventional morality and contemporary rationality in the conceptualization of death, is used to examine subjectivity markers in this study. The research focuses on how deeply ingrained cultural attitudes, beliefs, and emotional responses regarding the profound sense of death are revealed through subjective manifestations associated to **CHẾT**. The results obtained from the data analysis show a significant presence of subjectivity markers in discussions about **CHẾT**. Consider the following excerpt from a fictional dialogue:

Vợ Anh ơi, con trai chúng mình đã chết trong một tai nạn xe hơi tối qua!
Husband, our son has died in a car accident last night!

Chồng Không!!! Con yêu quý của ba! Tại sao con lại bị cướp đi thế thảm như vậy? Ba đau khổ vô cùng...
No!!! My dear son! Why were you so cruelly ripped away from us? I am devastated beyond words...

The subjectivity markers are used in this dialogue to show how the spouse responded to hearing about his son's passing. Expressions such as *con trai yêu quý* (beloved son), *thê thảm* (cruelly), and *đau khổ vô cùng* (devastated beyond words) express the father's deep sorrow, bewilderment, and mental pain. These statements evoke feelings of deep sadness, astonishment, and a great sense of unfairness, reflecting the enormous subjective impact of losing a child. Moreover, the evocative language employed in this instance is in line with larger societal perceptions of the intense emotional ties that bind families together and the excruciating grief that comes with losing a child. The father's response perfectly captures the pain that is shared by all people and the individual challenges we have accepting death's inevitability, particularly when it befalls our loved ones. These markers demonstrate the deep effect of death on the Vietnamese psyche by expressing a variety of emotions, including sadness, wrath, bewilderment, and nostalgia. The information shows how often it is to see reactions of sadness, rage, astonishment, and tenderness while talking about mortality, underscoring the emotional gravity and cultural relevance of this existential phenomena.

It is clear from comparing the numerical data in the table that there are differences in the frequency of Subjectivity Markers (SM) among the many short tales that were examined. In STR05, for example, SM (41) is more common than deontic normativity (DN) expressions (13), indicating a greater focus on subjective emotional reactions in that story. On the other hand, in STR04, there are more DN expressions (39) than SM occurrences (13), suggesting that the tale places more emphasis on cultural norms and societal expectations around death. These differences draw attention to the complex interactions that exist between normative considerations and subjective viewpoints in various literary contexts.

The frequency with which subjectivity markers are found in the Vietnamese data is consistent with more general cross-linguistic findings about how people express their feelings and view death. Conversations about death elicit strong emotional reactions in people of all cultural backgrounds, which reflects the common human experience of struggling with the existential fact of life's finiteness. Similar to many other languages, Vietnamese has an extensive lexicon of

linguistic strategies to represent these arbitrary emotional states. In addition, the Vietnamese language reflects the intense feelings that come along with the deep sense of dying by using subjectivity markers. These linguistic strategies not only communicate individual viewpoints but also draw on common cultural understandings of the emotional gravity and significance of death in Vietnamese society.

4.2. Normativity for objective expression

This section explores the differences between objective, rational assessments based on evidence and probability in Vietnamese expressions related to **CHẾT** rooted in cultural traditions and moral codes. Table 3 reveals two categories: Epistemic Rationality (EpR) and Evidenceful Reporting (EvR), which convey logical judgments about mortality likelihood. The data reveals variations in these categories across different stories, suggesting that some narratives emphasize objective, evidence-based perspectives, while others focus on subjective, culturally-informed viewpoints. Analyzing these objective expressions can provide insights into how scientific thinking and empirical evidence shape discussions of mortality in Vietnamese discourse.

Table 3. Distribution of Normativity for objective expression

Story	STR01	STR02	STR03	STR04	STR05	STR06	STR07	STR08	STR09	STR10
EpR	43	51	39	29	37	47	46	39	41	56
EvR	52	38	41	49	38	39	42	29	48	26
Total	95	89	80	88	75	86	88	68	98	82

4.2.1. Epistemic Rationality (EpR)

Epistemic Rationality (EpR) is the logical assessment of a proposition's probability and factual status in light of the data at hand. Based on actual data and scientific understanding, it entails making logical decisions on the likelihood or probability of certain outcomes, including death. Moreover, epistemic modality is used to analyze epistemic rationality within the study's theoretical framework, which is the term for the language strategies employed to evaluate the veracity of various situations in light of the data at hand. The study looks at how speakers of Vietnamese establish credible estimates about the chance of dying under different conditions by using epistemic modal terms like "may," "likely," or adverbial phrases expressing probability.

The examination of the data shows that there are a lot of instances of epistemic rationality connected to **CHẾT** in all 10 short tales. Based on variables like age, health, and life expectancy statistics, these formulations communicate logical conclusions and probability evaluations regarding death. The frequency of EpR phrases varies between stories, as can be seen by comparing the numerical data in the table. For example, STR04 has fewer instances—29—than STR10, which has a larger count of 56 EpR expressions. These variations imply that although certain narratives may give more weight to cultural norms or subjective feelings, others can emphasize logical, fact-based conversations on mortality. This finding suggests that traditional belief systems and modern scientific thinking are both incorporated into Vietnamese discourse about death, showing the dynamic interaction between modern rationality and cultural traditions in Vietnamese culture.

The examination of Vietnamese manifestations of epistemic rationality associated with **CHẾT** is consistent with more general cross-linguistic patterns seen in other cultures. Epistemic modality is a linguistic mechanism that functions across languages to express probability judgments and logical evaluations depending on available information. Consider the following dialogue:

- Sister:** Bàngoađã 90 tuổivàngàyàngyếudi. Emsợbàsẽkhôngsốngđược bao lâu nữa.
Grandmother is 90 years old and growing weaker each day. I fear she may not have much time left.
- Brother:** Điềudócóthểđúng. Theo thống kê, tuổithọtrung bình củaphụ nữ Việt Nam là 80 tuổi.
 Bàđãsống lâu hơn nhiều rồi.
That may be true. Statistics show the average life expectancy for Vietnamese women is 80 years. Grandmother has already lived much longer than that.

In this instance, the daughter shares that, given her grandmother's old age and deteriorating health, she fears that she may soon pass away. In response, the son provides statistics on life expectancy, which demonstrates a logical evaluation of the probability of death based on factual data and validates the validity of her worries. Moreover, this conversation demonstrates how Vietnamese speakers use epistemic modal phrases, such as "may" and "could," to communicate probability assessments and logical conclusions on mortality by referencing scientific knowledge and demographic information. These activities are consistent with cross-language trends seen in many cultures, where the epistemic modality is used as a linguistic tool to encode factual judgments and reasonable reasoning based on evidence. Finally, the Vietnamese findings add to the larger knowledge of how languages encode modern reasoning and scientific thinking inside discussions of existentially significant matters such as death by analyzing these manifestations of epistemic rationality.

4.2.2. Evidential reporting (EvR)

The use of qualifying language to identify the source or supporting data for reported events, such as deaths, is known as evidential reporting (EvR). It includes phrases that indicate whether knowledge about a certain incident is derived from rumors, hearsay, verifiable facts, or unconfirmed testimonies. Evidentiary tools help to clarify the veracity and factual state of the material that has been reported. Furthermore, evidential reporting—which conveys objective, logical judgments of mortality based on the available evidence—is studied within the theoretical framework of this study. The investigation looks into how Vietnamese speakers use language to convey the degree of confidence or strength of the evidence they have about death incidents that have been recorded. This relates to a larger investigation examining how objective, fact-based viewpoints influence conversations about death in Vietnamese.

The data analysis results show that all ten of the short tales under examination had a notable prevalence of Evidential Reporting phrases connected to **CHẾT**. These phrasings convey different degrees of assurance regarding the claimed death event; they range from tentative remarks like "it is rumored that..." to more definitive ones like "it has been confirmed that..." The frequency of evidential reporting incidents varies between the tales, as can be seen by comparing the numerical data in the table. For instance, STR01 contains 52 instances, but STR08 has a lesser total of 29 EvR occurrences. These disparities imply that whereas some narratives may concentrate more on evaluating the veracity of the sources and supporting data for reported mortality incidents, others could be more concerned with other elements like cultural norms or the subjects' subjective emotional reactions. This variety emphasizes how the topic of death is treated in Vietnamese language involves a complicated interplay between objective, evidence-based viewpoints and other elements.

Evidential reporting phrases are common in Vietnamese data, which is consistent with larger cross-linguistic trends in how languages transmit evidentiality and information sources when talking about important occurrences like death. People use language in a variety of ways to indicate how certain or dependable they are about what they know, especially when they are talking about important and deep subjects. To illustrate, the term *tin đồn* (rumor) functions as an evidential reporting marker in the example below:

Tôi vừa nghe tin đồn rằng ông Phạm đã qua đời vì một cơn đau tim
I just heard a rumor that Mr. Pham has passed away owing to a heart attack.

It qualifies the reported event's factual status and sends a message that the evidence is ambiguous or untrustworthy by implying that the details surrounding Mr. Pham's death are based on unconfirmed hearsay. Particularly when describing important events like death, this employment of evidential reporting devices mirrors a larger typological trend in how languages record the origins and dependability of information. Speakers can regulate the veracity of their assertions, negotiate the intensity of their claims, and engage in a common understanding of the evidence that surrounds significant events by utilizing these language tactics. An understanding of the larger cultural focus on epistemological stance-taking and the negotiation of shared knowledge within the Vietnamese language and conceptual system may be gained from the examination of evidential reporting expressions connected to **CHẾT** in Vietnamese.

4.3. Intersubjective negotiation expressions

This section is to examine the intersubjective negotiating phrases in Vietnamese that deal with **CHẾT**, or death. The frequency of two categories—Intersubjective Reasoning (IR) and Intersubjective Negotiation (IN)—across the 10 short tales is summarized in the table. The term Intersubjective Negotiation (IN) describes modal usages that negotiate viewpoints amongst speakers about the ramifications of death by appealing to common understandings. Intersubjective Reasoning (IR) is the process of combining subjective opinions with universally accepted values, beliefs, and cultural conceptions of death in language. The data reveals differences in the frequency of these categories among the stories, indicating that some might place more emphasis on negotiating shared understandings and points of view regarding death, while others might blend individual opinions with group conceptualizations.

Table 4 Distribution of Intersubjective negotiation expressions

Story	STR01	STR02	STR03	STR04	STR05	STR06	STR07	STR08	STR09	STR10
IN	46	32	51	37	28	39	47	36	52	41
IR	53	43	38	29	36	35	44	61	31	37
Total	99	75	89	66	64	74	91	97	83	78

4.3.1. Intersubjective negotiation (IN)

The language strategies used to negotiate viewpoints and appeal to common understandings among speakers on the implications and meanings surrounding the idea of death are known as intersubjective negotiation (IN) nature. Using mutually acknowledged cultural conceptualizations, values, and belief systems, it entails the use of modal expressions that support the intersubjective production of meaning. Additionally, Intersubjective negotiation is analyzed via the cultural modality framework inside the study's theoretical framework. This theory recognizes how conceptualizations of death are shaped by the interaction of modern reason (epistemic rationality) and traditional morality (deontic

normativity). The approach focuses on how modal expressions appeal to widely held ideas and understandings about death, facilitating the negotiation and alignment of subjective opinions.

The results of the data analysis indicate that all ten of the short tales under consideration contain a sizable number of intersubjective negotiation terms connected to **CHẾT**. These expressions work to create intersubjective interpretations of the deep experience of death, negotiate common viewpoints, and promote mutual understanding. The numerical data from each story may be compared to see how frequently intersubjective negotiation occurs. Certain stories, for example, could have a larger concentration of these terms, indicating a focus on harmonizing perspectives on the consequences of death and negotiating agreed interpretations. Some tales, on the other hand, can feature fewer examples, which might suggest a greater emphasis on unique viewpoints or impartial evaluations. These differences highlight the dynamic interaction between cultural conceptualizations, subjective interpretations, and the necessity of intersubjective negotiation when addressing the existential reality of mortality. The information demonstrates how the Vietnamese language uses modal devices to support viewpoint alignment and co-construction of meaning in the deep context of death.

The Vietnamese data indicates a high frequency of intersubjective negotiation phrases, which is consistent with larger cross-linguistic patterns in the way languages negotiate difficult, culturally loaded domains like death. Modal expressions are language tools that are used in many cultures to align perspectives, negotiate common understandings, and create intersubjective interpretations of existential occurrences and deep experiences. For instance, consider the following dialogue:

Mother: Con traichúng ta đãrađi, nhưngchúng ta phảichấpnhậnđiềunàynhumộtphầncủavòngxoayluânhồi.
Our son has passed away, but we must accept this as part of the cycle of rebirth.

Father: Đúngvậy, cuộcđòilànhưthế. Chúng ta cóthể an ủirằng con sẽtáisinhtrongmộthìnhthứcmới.
Indeed, such as is life. We can find solace in the belief that he will be reborn in a new form.

In order to create a mutual understanding and make sense of their son's passing, the parents in this instance engage in intersubjective negotiation. The mother facilitates the negotiation of a position anchored in cultural conceptualizations by appealing to the widely held belief in the cycle of rebirth through the use of the deontic modal *phải* (must). The father's answer, which uses the epistemic modal *cóthể* (can), is consistent with this mutual comprehension and together they create an intersubjective interpretation that finds solace in their common worldview. Through an analysis of these expressions of intersubjective negotiation, the research illuminates how the Vietnamese language uses modal devices to negotiate the complex existential space of death, relying on common cultural frameworks and promoting viewpoint alignment within a shared worldview.

4.3.2. Intersubjective Blending (IR)

Intersubjective blending (IR) is the process of combining subjective points of view with appeals to shared cultural conceptions of death as well as accepted values and beliefs. When debating the weighty subject of mortality, it entails fusing unique viewpoints with widely accepted beliefs and understandings. The cultural modality framework is used to investigate Intersubjective Blending (IR) within the study's theoretical framework. This paradigm looks at how Vietnamese discourse conceptualizations of death are shaped by the intersections between contemporary reason (epistemic rationality) and traditional morality (deontic normativity). The emphasis is on the ways in which modal expressions combine calls for widely held cultural ideas with subjective positions to enable the co-construction of intersubjective meanings related to death.

All 10 of the short tales under examination had a notable amount of intersubjective blending expressions associated with **CHẾT**, according to the data analysis. These language formulations combine references to common Vietnamese norms, values, and conceptions of death with the opinions and attitudes of the individual. These statements help to create intersubjective understandings and negotiated interpretations of the significant consequences of mortality by fusing subjective viewpoints with widely accepted belief systems. The frequency of intersubjective blending (IR) incidents varies between the tales, as can be seen by comparing the numerical data in the table. For instance, STR08 contains 61 more IR expressions than STR09, which has 31 occurrences less often. When addressing the existential reality of death, these disparities imply that certain narratives could emphasize more strongly the merging of individual subjectivities with conceptualizations inspired by culture. Other narratives, however, could place more weight on different characteristics, such as impartial evaluations or social norms.

The Vietnamese data exhibits a high frequency of intersubjective blending expressions, which is consistent with larger cross-linguistic patterns in the way languages handle culturally relevant themes such as death. Modal devices are used in many cultures to combine individual viewpoints with widely held belief systems, allowing people to co-create intersubjective meanings around deep situations like death. For example, consider the following dialogue:

Daughter: Mẹ à, con khôngthểchấpnhậnsựradicủabố. Taisaosôphậnlạitànkhócnhưvậy?
Mother, I cannot accept my father's passing. Why must fate be so cruel?

Mother: Đaulongthênhưng con phảihiểurằngđólàvòngluânhồicủacuộcđổng. BỐđãtrởvềvớitạohóa, vàchúng ta phảitôntrọngđiềudó.

It pains my heart, but you must understand that this is the cycle of life. Your father has returned to the Creator, and we must respect that.

The mother in this conversation combines her own interpretation of loss *đau lòng* with an appeal to the common Vietnamese cultural beliefs about the rebirth cycle *vòng luân hồi* and the value of honoring the natural order *tôn trọng điều đó*. Through the integration of her personal feelings with widely accepted worldviews, the mother enables an intersubjective interpretation of her husband's death, forging a mutual understanding that takes comfort from conventional notions of mortality. In addition, this example shows how Vietnamese intersubjective blending expressions allow people to co-create mutually understandable meanings around the intense experience of dying by enclosing individual subjectivities within larger cultural frames. The use of modal devices to negotiate widely accepted belief systems while accepting individual viewpoints is reflected in such as language tactics, which eventually enable intersubjective readings of existentially crucial domains like mortality. This is a reflection of wider cross-cultural trends.

5. Conclusion

This study examined how subjective and objective judgments interact with the language expressions of **CHẾT** in Vietnamese. By utilizing a blend of descriptive grammar, statistical analysis, and contextual quality assessment, it revealed the complex relationship between conventional wisdom and contemporary reason in conversations about death. The results showed that words that indicate duty and appropriateness are representations of long-standing cultural standards, but those that indicate likelihood are supported by data and represent modern interpretations. Diverse viewpoints are highlighted by the intricate intertwining of evidence-based objectivity and subjective ethics in Vietnamese death-related issues.

The research examined modal expressions related to **CHẾT** in a number of semantic domains, such as evidential reporting, deontic normativity, epistemic rationality, subjectivity markers, and intersubjective bargaining. It qualitatively investigated the cultural ramifications and symbolic interpretations of these utterances while quantifying their frequency. The research, however, was mainly concerned with a small corpus of short stories, which might not accurately reflect the diversity of Vietnamese discourse on mortality. Further research into diachronic changes and regional differences in modal usage would have provided a more complete picture of the language environment around this existential subject.

To get a more complete picture of the modal expressions around **CHẾT** in Vietnamese discourse, future study might broaden the data sources to include a wider range of genres, such as news articles, social media conversations, and personal narratives. It may be possible to understand how these expressions have changed throughout time, reflecting changes in cultural attitudes and beliefs, by using diachronic analysis. Further clarification of cross-cultural parallels and variations in the conceptualization of death through linguistic modality may come from comparative research with various languages and cultures. Furthermore, multidisciplinary methods that incorporate psychological and anthropological viewpoints should improve our comprehension of the cognitive and cultural foundations influencing modality manifestations in this deep field.

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