

Modal expressions of CHẾT in Vietnamese

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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 hybrid interfacing of traditional morality and modern rationality markers. 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 abilities to carry out actions based on intrinsic properties. Modalization denotes speaker judgments regarding the likelihood of propositions. Expressive modality communicates subjective speaker attitudes and emotions. Emphatic modality stresses the intensity of speaker commitment towards ideas. Concessive modality acknowledges alternatives and possibilities contrary to the speaker's own position. Deontic modality relates to ethical norms and social obligations in the cultural context. Epistemic modality evaluates the factual status of propositions based on available knowledge and evidence. Lastly, boulomaic modality focuses on speaker 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

This section aims to provide an overview of the concept of modality and delineate its two main facets: *epistemic modality* and *deontic modality*. It explicates how language expresses personal viewpoints and evaluations of certainty or necessity in utterances. It encompasses diverse definitions of modality, emphasizing the correlation between a speaker's perspective and its linguistic manifestation. Furthermore, it delves deeper into epistemic modality- assessing certainty in statements- and deontic modality- evaluating necessity, permission, or desirability in actions, outlining key characteristics of each. This section also offers a general framework for semantic analysis, aiming to grasp the diversity and contextual nuances within language.

2.1. Definitions of modality

2.1.1. Nuyts' (2016) definition

Modality as a linguistic category referring to the ephemeral, subjective and speaker-oriented qualification or modification of a state of affairs.

This definition highlights several key attributes of modality. Firstly, the characterization of modality as subjective and speaker-oriented emphasizes that modal expressions convey personal attitudes and perspectives rather than objective intrinsic properties. For example, saying *John may be the thief* expresses the speaker's tentative subjective evaluation of likelihood. It does not attribute an inherent state of being a thief or not to John himself. This demonstrates the crucial relativism of modal assessments to individual speaker viewpoints. Secondly, the notion of modality entailing the ephemeral qualification or modification of a state of affairs points to the typically temporary, contingent nature of modal claims, in contrast to categorical factual statements. Modal evaluations are changeable appraisals of likelihood applicable to a particular moment and context rather than permanent assertions of ontological factuality about the world. For instance, the speaker's perspective on John's culpability as the thief may shift rapidly as new evidence emerges. Lastly, examples like *John may be the thief* underscore how attributing modality allows speakers to put forward possibilities and conjectures not anchored to reality. This suggests that in contrast to definitively asserting or denying states of actuality, modality operates through the projection of alternative hypothetical situations, indexed and measured against a presumed factual background context.

2.1.2. Bybee & Fleischman's (1995) definition

Modality involves semantic domains that deal with the speaker's attitudes and opinions, even when lexical means develop further uses that background the speaker's involvement.

This definition emphasizes the fundamental basis of modality in conveying speaker personal attitudes and stances towards propositions. Modal terms serve to communicate subjective beliefs and viewpoints, not objectified facts. This is evidenced through modal verbs like *may* and *should* which qualify assertions based on an individual's reasoning rather than corresponding to permanent states in the world. However, Bybee and Fleischman also importantly recognize that particular

lexical modality markers can evolve over time to downplay or obscure a speaker's involvement, taking on more objective connotations rather than purely indexing personal stances. For example, an adverb like *clearly* originated from signaling the speaker's inference and interpretation but has developed some more factual usages, e.g. in scientific contexts like *Clearly, radiation causes cell damage*. Such examples demonstrate the fluidity by which particular terms associated with modality can shift from markedly subjective to quasi-objective interpretations through repeated use across various contexts. This indicates modality operates on a spectrum between personal attitude expression and factual statement - which oft-subjective modal terms traversing towards greater objective usages under repeated conventionalization. Bybee and Fleischman's definition elegantly captures this dynamism within the phenomenon of modality.

2.1.3. Papafotiou (2016) definition

Modality as the linguistic phenomenon whereby grammar allows speakers to project alternative situations against a background of reality, and to taking varying degrees of responsibility for the factual actualization of those situations.

This definition highlights two central aspects of modality. Firstly, the notion that modality enables speakers to project alternative hypothetical situations contrasts with simply conveying reality. Modal expressions allow speculation about possibilities and contingencies that diverge from actual states and events. For example, the conditional statement *If I were rich...* conjures an alternative fictional scenario contrary to reality through use of the past tense form *were*. Secondly, Papafotiou stresses speakers indicate varying degrees of responsibility regarding the factual realization of these projected situations. That is, modality markers such as *may*, *might* and *must* qualify the proposed alternative scenarios with respect to likelihood of actualizing against a presumed background factual context. Speakers might propose remote conceptual scenarios (e.g. *Imagine if pigs could fly*), moderately plausible situations (e.g. *I may attend the event*) or highly probable occurrences (e.g. *She must have stolen it*) - encoding differing responsibility for potential realization.

Therefore, Papafotiou insightfully defines modality based around two parameters - the projection of alternative hypothetical situations indexed against reality, and indications of speaker commitment regarding their factual actualization. This neatly encapsulates the phenomenon of modality as enabling conjecture beyond actuality qualified by subjective speaker evaluations of possibility.

2.1.4. Concepts of modality in the Vietnamese context.

Vietnamese researchers agree with the perspectives of English linguists on the concept of modality, which expresses a speaker's attitudes and level of commitment towards the factual accuracy or necessity of a propositional statement. For example, Hao X.C. (2006) provided an analysis on how certain Vietnamese modal verbs can convey epistemic and deontic modality through presupposition and implication. He approached this from the framework of functional grammar, relating it to established theme and rhyme theories in linguistics. In Hao's analysis, he defined modality as encompassing the following elements:

- The speaker's subjective evaluation of the factual accuracy or certainty of the utterance.
- The degree of commitment and confidence in the possibility.
- The speaker's overall assessment and attitude as conveyed through the modal terms.
- Demonstrating the relationship between the semantic content of the utterance, the context of the communicative situation, and other pragmatic factors

Additionally, other Vietnamese researchers who have made noteworthy contributions to the study of modality in Vietnamese include Nguyen T.D. (2010) who examined modal adverbs, Pham H.N. (2016) who investigated modal auxiliaries in legal documents, and Tran D.Q. (2021) who analyzed modal multi-word expressions. These researchers have furthered our understanding of how modality operates in Vietnamese through systematic investigation of modal verbs, adverbs, auxiliaries, and multi-word constructions. Their approaches draw from both functional and cognitive linguistics to shed light on this complex phenomenon involving the interaction between semantic meaning, pragmatics, and the grammatical system.

2.2. Concepts of epistemic and deontic modality

This section dissects epistemic and deontic modality, assessing truth certainty and societal norms' influence on actions. Epistemic modality intertwines beliefs and knowledge, evaluating truthfulness, while deontic modality navigates action necessity and societal norms. These insights illuminate language's impact on truth perception and societal standards.

2.2.1. Epistemic modality

2.2.1.1. *Concepts of epistemic modality*

Epistemic modality involves assessing the certainty of a proposition's truth. Ayer (1956) linked knowledge to belief, stating that true belief equals knowledge, demanding necessary and sufficient conditions of truth, actual truth, and acknowledgment. "X knows Y" implies "X believes Y," intertwining knowledge with belief. Gettier (1963) countered this, showing justified true belief may not be knowledge if based on false premises, like mistaking a dog for a sheep. Moravcsik (1976) contrasted by defining epistemic modality through Aristotle's framework. He identified three judgment types: Necessary judgments, declaring truths across all possible worlds; possible judgments, examining existence in possible worlds; and realistic judgments, assessing existence as objective necessity. This framework encapsulates varying degrees of certainty in evaluating propositions, extending beyond Ayer's belief-centric view to encompass broader modal elements of necessity and possibility.

2.2.1.2. *Key characteristics of epistemic modality*

Epistemic modality encompasses assessments of hypothetical scenarios, reflecting a speaker's confidence or doubt in factual accuracy. Nuyts (2001) viewed it as evaluating truth in possible worlds, emphasizing probability and uncertainty. Traugott (1989) highlighted its expression of a speaker's subjective belief via modal verbs. Givón (1982) argued for its reliance on evidentiality, using evidence to discern realis, unreal is, or non-realis propositions. Speakers assess factual accuracy based on presuppositions, determining conventional truth, falsity, or possibility. For instance, *He is likely the criminal* reveals the speaker's inference and uncertainty. Epistemic modality revolves around subjective reasoning, evidential assessments, belief systems, and attitudes toward factual judgments. It involves evaluating hypotheticals, gauging confidence in accuracy, and relying on evidence for determining the reality of propositions.

2.2.1.3. *Epistemic modality approach for semantic analysis*

Exploring how the verb CHẾT functions within epistemic modality unveils the speaker's confidence and evidence reliance when discussing death-related details. This includes evaluating circumstances, timing, certainty, and factual accuracy surrounding the event.

For instance, *It seemed he had died from cardiac arrest* implies uncertainty due to a lack of definitive evidence. Conversely, "The autopsy conclusively confirmed she died from an opioid overdose" reflects strong commitment supported by undeniable proof. Epistemic markers reveal whether death details are assumptions, deductions, potentialities, or firmly believed truths. Epistemic and evidential markers intersect when attributing a cause of death, signaling both the source and strength of evidence. *Supposedly, he died by suicide according to media reports* implies uncertainty due to indirect, second-hand evidence. Understanding epistemic nuances offers insights into subjective and objective evidential foundations shaping statements about the nature, actuality, and specifics of someone's death.

2.2.2. Deontic modality

2.2.2.1. Concepts of deontic modality

Deontic modality refers to assessments and judgments regarding the necessity, permissibility, or desirability of actions. Von Wright (1951) defined it in terms of logical propositions, distinguishing between what is obligatory, permissible, or optional when evaluating the normative status of actions. Kratzer (1977) built on this by arguing that deontic modality depends on circumstantial factors, as obligations and permissions may vary across conditional contexts. In contrast, Bybee et al. (1994) took a grammaticalization approach, linking deontic modality to speaker authority and subjectification processes for imposing/negotiating necessity.

2.2.2.2. Key characteristics of deontic modality

Some key attributes of deontic modality include it conveying speaker-oriented obligations, directives, or moral judgments regarding potential actions, it depending on social norms and contextual parameters, and it serving interpersonal functions for imposing or negotiating behaviors. Nuyts et al. (2010) highlighted how it intertwines subjectivity and intersubjectivity, as speakers evaluate necessity often by considering addressee's expected behaviors. Portner (2009) emphasized how it expresses conventionalized directives that tacitly reference norms. Additionally, deontic modality relies on pragmatic context and shared background knowledge for interpreting directives as relating to permissible, obligatory or optional actions depending on circumstantial factors.

2.2.2.3. Deontic modality approach for semantic analysis

Analyzing directives related to the action CHÉT through a deontic modality lens provides insights into their underlying norms and speaker/addressee authority relations. For instance, an expression like *You should not die without updating your will* conveys the speaker's normative judgment regarding prudent actions, while still treating death as an inevitable possibility. In contrast, a command like *Do not even think of dying on my watch!* signals the speaker asserting their institutional authority to forbid the action. Deontic markers illuminate social negotiations and stances over permissibility, desirability, or obligation regarding dying, and expectations placed on addressees regarding end-of-life actions. Comparing deontic vs. epistemic stances offers further insight into divergent perspectives relating to the circumstances and imperatives around dying.

2.3. Conceptual framework

Based on the theoretical framework on two types of modality words, to analyze CHÉT, we need to examine the following characteristics:

- For epistemic modality: assess whether CHẾT conveys hypothetical estimations, attitudes of confidence/doubt, or relies on evidential reasoning to evaluate the factual accuracy/certainty of information.
- For deontic modality: assess whether CHẾT refers to the necessity, possibility, desirability of actions, or expresses speaker-oriented obligations/expectations based on social norms.

Table 1. Summary of epistemic/ deontic modalities

Modality	Characteristics
Epistemic Modality	Concern factual accuracy or certainty of propositions or Convey hypothetical estimations, expresses confidence or doubt, relies on evidential reasoning, subjective reasoning process
Deontic Modality	Deal with necessity, permissibility, or desirability of actions Convey speaker-oriented obligations, depends on social norms, serves interpersonal functions, intertwines subjectivity and intersubjectivity

Based on the comparative criteria table distinguishing two types of modality words in Vietnamese, this introduction presents the purposes and characteristics of these criteria for analyzing the modal expressions of CHẾT. Clearly differentiating these two types will help readers accurately understand the message the author intends to convey. Identifying whether a modality word indicates the speaker's subjective perspectives or intersubjective directives is essential to comprehend the factual and interpersonal functions intertwined in that word, assessing its certainty and appropriateness. Applying the outlined differentiating criteria facilitates efficient modality word analysis to extract meanings shaped by Vietnamese language conventions.

Table 2. Criteria for determining epistemic/deontic modalities

Epistemic modality	Deontic modality
+ Conveys the speaker's predictions or hypothesizing	+ Conveys speaker-oriented obligations or directives
+ Expresses the speaker's inferences or deductions	+ Assesses necessity, permissibility or desirability
+ Indicates the speaker's evidential reporting	+ Depends on social norms and contextual parameters
+ Communicates the speaker's emotions or attitudes	+ Serves interpersonal functions
Assesses the factual accuracy or certainty of propositions	+ Intertwines subjectivity and intersubjectivity

3. Methodology

3.1. Data collection

Researchers leverage the Scopus database to gather an array of text samples featuring dialogues or conversations incorporating the term CHẾT alongside modal expressions. These texts aim to encapsulate diverse contexts in which CHẾT is employed, providing a comprehensive view of its usage across different scenarios, contexts, and modal subtleties.

3.2. Statistical analysis

Utilizing statistical methodologies, the Scopus dataset undergoes rigorous evaluation and categorization of epistemic and deontic modal expressions. Through meticulous analysis of frequency, distribution patterns, and contextual cues, prevalent modal usages are identified. This statistical approach unveils dominant trends, shedding light on the nuanced deployment of epistemic and deontic modality within the dataset's content.

3.3 Descriptive analysis

Thorough descriptions of predominant epistemic and deontic modal expressions present in the Scopus dataset are furnished, encompassing grammatical structures, nuanced meanings, and contextual influences spanning diverse scenarios. These detailed analyses unravel how these expressions manifest grammatically, convey nuanced meanings, and adapt within various contextual settings, offering comprehensive insights into their usage variations.

3.4. Comparative assessment

Examining Scopus data, the analysis scrutinizes the distinctions and intersections between epistemic and deontic modalities, particularly concerning discussions involving CHẾT in Vietnamese. This investigation illuminates how these modal types intertwine and diverge, shedding light on their nuanced interactions when addressing matters related to mortality within the Vietnamese language context.

3.5 Quality analysis

Augmenting statistical analysis, a deeper quality assessment delves into contextual nuances and usages of modal expressions in discussions pertaining to mortality. This comprehensive approach offers insights into the functional roles these expressions play, providing a nuanced understanding of how modality functions within the intricacies of conversations surrounding death.

3.6. Supportive framework

The analysis is conducted within a supportive framework allowing for detailed and in-depth exploration of the semantic, and contextual aspects of modalities regarding CHẾT in Vietnamese.

4. Deontic-modality expressions of CHẾT

4.1. Speaker's directive conveyance

The Vietnamese speakers regularly utilize this expression to impose obligations or directives onto listeners regarding certain actions. It demonstrates the speaker exerting their will and power over the listener's behavior. Therefore, the verb CHẾT is often used in this way to depict an expected or obligated death. Consider the following conversation.

Loan: *Cha ơi, con đã 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 nghĩa vụ tổ tiên 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 exchange, the father's statement that his daughter PHẢI CHẾT before abandoning her duties does not literally mean he will kill her. Rather, it is a metaphorical intensifier that hyperbolically conveys the extreme sacrifice expected of her to uphold village customs. Specifically, the father invokes the verb PHẢI CHẾT to underscore the daughter's absolute obligation as a woman to submit to arranged marriage traditions, despite her personal wishes.

Through the father's use of directive conveyance in this conversation, we recognize that this rhetorical use of near-fatalistic language highlights how Vietnamese culture has historically emphasized an individual's duty to community over their individual desires. In general, by drawing on the drastic concept of death and mortality, Vietnamese speakers express an expectation so demanding that one should rather die than fail to uphold it. This metaphor serves to greatly strengthen the directive force of speakers' speech by couching it in an extreme vision of sacrifice for the collective good. Additionally, this exchange demonstrates how Vietnamese speakers often rely on very strong directives leveraged through metaphorical mentions of mortality to communicate societal duties and norms. The father's invoking of PHẢI CHẾT in relation to his daughter meeting marriage customs represents a culturally-specific mode of speech. This expression draws on the power of traditional gender hierarchies and notions of honor to demand rigid conformity to communal traditions from individuals, especially women, children or lower-class residents. Rhetorically, this dramatizes the daughter's obligations through the drastic concept of death.

Syntactically, Vietnamese speakers typically use modal verbs (such as *phải* 'must', *nên* 'should', *buộc* 'have to') or phrases before the verbs that require expression to convey this modality. The selection of these modal verbs depends on the specific context, and speakers can effectively choose the appropriate ones based on the severity of the situation.

In summary, strong deontic directives are frequently expressed in Vietnamese through metaphors of mortality. These convey an expectation so extreme that the heaviest sacrifice—death itself—is preferable to failing one's prescribed societal duty. This linguistic tendency stems from and perpetuates a cultural emphasis on subordination of the individual to traditional community standards and hierarchies.

4.2. Speaker's action assessment

Speaker's action assessment refers to how a speaker uses language to evaluate the necessity, permissibility, or desirability of an action. It demonstrates the speaker exercising subjective judgement and assessment regarding certain behaviors. As a result, Vietnamese speakers often use the verb CHẾT in this evaluative way to depict their perspectives on the expectedness and acceptability of someone's death in a given situation.

Consider this conversation:

Son: *Cha rất yếu do căn bệnh. Chúng ta có nên dùng số tiền ít ỏi còn lại để mua thuốc không chắc chắn hiệu quả, hay dành tiền để lo cho lễ tang cha?*

(Father is very weak from his illness. Should we use our limited money for medicine with no guarantee, or spend it to prepare for his funeral?)

Daughter: *Chúng ta không thể để cha chết ngay bây giờ khi cha vẫn còn hy vọng! Dù phải bán đất, chúng ta cũng phải cố gắng hết sức để giúp cha.* (We cannot let father die right now when he still has hope! We must do whatever we can, even sell our land.)

In this conversation, the daughter assesses that the father dying at this point would be unacceptable, despite the costs of sustaining him. Her emphatic stance against his death reflects her judgement that it is still preventable and imperative to enable his survival, though difficult tradeoffs are required.

Thus, this exchange can us make sense of how Vietnamese speakers can leverage the verb CHẾT to make value-based assessments about the allowing or preventing of mortality outcomes. Factors like obligation to family, resource constraints, and perceived chances shape attitudes on whether someone living or dying is most situationally appropriate. These death-related assessments reveal regional emphases on familial duty and the avoidance of circumstances where death may be seen as remissly *allowed* to happen. By doing so, the speakers assess someone's death as impermissible, in other contexts they may judge an expeditious death to be positively welcomed.

In summary, Vietnamese speakers can flexibly employ the verb CHẾT to subjectively evaluate contextual mortality outcomes - positively, negatively, or in shades of gray. This projects culturally-influenced stances toward whether life should be sustained against hardship, or death allowed or embraced. Subtleties in usage reflect Vietnam's complex relationship with mortality.

4.3. Speaker's moral contextual reliance

This category refers to how invoking the notion of death depends heavily on social and ethical norms and surrounding circumstances. It demonstrates the speaker making contextual value judgements based on cultural morality. Vietnamese speakers often use references to dying or death to illustrate that fatalistic outcomes may be obligated, permissible, or forbidden based on various sociocultural standards.

The conversation between the wife and her husband is a case in point.

Wife: *Thưa anh, em đã phạm tội ngoại tình, vi phạm lời thề thiêng liêng của chúng ta!*
(Husband, I have committed adultery, violating our sacred vows!)

Husband: *Sự phản bội này đáng phải trả bằng cái chết như là cách duy nhất để bảo toàn danh dự theo lời dạy của tổ tiên. Em phải tự vẫn để khôi phục sự chính trực.*
(This betrayal warrants death as the only honorable recourse according to our ancestral precepts. You must die by your own hand to restore righteousness.)

Wife: *Vậy em sẽ đâm con dao này vào trái tim để lấy lại sự trong trắng.*
(Then I shall plunge this dagger through my heart so that purity prevails.)

The conjugal expectation in this conversation is that the wife must accept dying as morally compulsory following her transgression. Her husband evokes their cultural moral code which situates suicide as the ethically expected response for serious dishonor. Readers are cued to interpret her literal death as justifiable by deference to draconian principles positioning mortality as requisite redemption for tarnished dignity.

This reveals the culturally specific role of mortality in preserving virtue per local ethical frameworks in Vietnam. Death gets positioned as either societally obligated or individually welcomed to enable moral cleansing, underscoring the complex interplay among dignity, redemption, and fatalistic resolution. Speakers exploit this death-duty linkage, where mortality embodies the ultimate moral price frequently expected for rectifying loss of face.

In short, Vietnamese dialogue around death often functions as a metaphor encoding strong normativity claims around ethical conduct and gender hierarchy. By knitting together death and honor, speakers issue context-specific directives that one “must” die, with nonnegotiable finality, if core standards get profoundly breached. This exhibits a cultural fixation on mortality as the forcible guarantor of virtue.

4.4. Speaker's interpersonal roles

This characteristic refers to how invoking death reflects the social connections and power dynamics between people. Language around dying expresses relationships in a community. Vietnamese uses phrases with CHẾT to signal deep commitment, violently threaten, or desperately plead based on the speakers' relative positions.

Consider this exchange:

Warlord: *Villager, you have failed to provide adequate tribute. Now your daughter's life is forfeit!*

Villager: *Please my lord! Do not kill her! Take my life instead!*

Warlord: *Very well, your sacrifice shows proper fealty. She will be spared.*

The warlord's power over life and death is clear from his decree over the daughter's prospective execution. The villager then subordinates himself in pleading for her life using willingness to die instead. The warlord ultimately shows dubious mercy, emphasizing how such verbal exchanges enact social control. This demonstrates key interactional functions of invoking death in Vietnamese language and culture relating to honor, love, face, obedience, and power balances. Speakers exploit the weighty specter of mortality to communicate strong deference, affection, or coercion based on relative social station. CHẾT becomes a rhetorical token within coercive bargaining, romantic hyperbole, or high-stakes supplication between uneven entities.

To sum up, Vietnamese employs very strong death motifs across divergent interpersonal contexts. By integrating expressions of dying into threats, promises, and desperate appeals, Vietnamese speech acts index the intricate social tapestry of hierarchy, indebtedness, and asymmetric strength defining relationships.

4.5. Speaker's subjective-interpersonal fusion

Speaker's subjective-interpersonal fusion refers to how invoking death linguistically blends subjective viewpoints with appeals to shared understanding between speaker and listener. It demonstrates the speaker leveraging mortality to persuade others' attitudes or actions. The Vietnamese users flexibly uses CHẾT to project subjective stances, acknowledge joint consequences, and influence listeners.

Consider this exchange:

Woman: *Husband, your drinking is destroying our family! Please, you must quit now before you die from alcohol!*

Husband: *Wife, do not exaggerate so! I can moderate my liquor. My life is not at risk.*

Woman: *I do not mean literal death. But this addiction will slowly kill the tender man I married!*

In this context, the wife leverages the prospect of death rhetorically to underscore the urgency of her appeal. Though she likely does not predict his imminent demise, invoking mortality hyperbolizes long-term consequences to persuade halting self-destruction. When he resists this subjective stance, she clarifies its metaphorical usage to signal his worsening character from her concerned standpoint.

This demonstrates a Vietnamese tendency to imbue discussion of passing away with interpersonal significance. Speakers exploit death's gravity to jar listeners toward agreeing or behaving favorably. By subjectively framing outcomes through such strong fatalism, Vietnamese dialogue fuses individual perspectives with appeals to collectively recognized virtues around familial duty and wellbeing.

In summary, talk of perishing flexibly combines subjective opinions with efforts to conversely define social realities. Through evoking death, Vietnamese speech acts negotiate the porous boundaries between inner moral worlds and shared exterior ones.

5. Epistemic-modality expressions of CHẾT

5.1. Speaker's obligations or directives

Speaker's obligations or directives refer to how language can convey responsibilities, duties, commands, or expectations that the speaker imposes on listeners through their utterances. Certain words or speech acts intrinsically encode the speaker demanding or requiring some action or behavior from those they address. The Vietnamese speakers use CHẾT simply to denote the end of one's life or the state of being deceased. On its own, CHẾT does not confer any specific duties, obligations, or imperatives onto listeners. It is an ideologically neutral, descriptive term strictly conveying the factual condition of death, without any inherent expectations for reactions from those addressed.

Fictional dialogue:

Son: *Ông nội đã chết sáng nay vì căn bệnh hiểm nghèo.*

(Grandfather has died this morning from his serious illness.)

Mother: *Vậy chúng ta cần bắt đầu chuẩn bị lễ tang vào chiều nay. Làm ơn báo tin cho họ hàng.*

(Then we need to start preparing for the funeral this afternoon. Please inform our relatives.)

Daughter: *Mẹ ơi, con buồn quá! Ông ấy là người thân yêu nhất của con.*

(Mom, I am so sad! He was my dearest loved one.)

Mother: *Con đừng quá thương tiếc. Hãy cố gắng mạnh mẽ vượt qua nỗi đau này nhé.*

(Don't grieve too much. Try to stay strong through this pain.)

In this dialogue, the son's initial statement uses CHẾT neutrally to convey the factual news of his grandfather's passing. On its own, this utterance does not intrinsically mandate any particular actions or duties from the listeners - the semantics strictly describe the death event itself. Instead, the obligations to prepare the funeral arise separately when the mother responds by actively directing tasks, invoking sociocultural mourning expectations. Similarly, the daughter's expression of

grief and the mother's consolation originate from emotional norms, not linguistic obligations within CHẾT itself.

In short, this fictional exchange demonstrates how in Vietnamese, vocabulary around CHẾT is purely denotative without any inherent speaker demands. Any subsequent obligations or speech acts from listeners instead stem from contextual factors like cultural practices and social expectations around loss - not from linguistic properties within the term itself. This contrasts with modal verbs in English that can directly mandate actions. So, while the mother takes initiative to assign funeral duties befitting the situation, the son's use of CHẾT itself does not dictate or require any particular reactions. The word focuses entirely on conveying the factual reality of death occurring, without any intrinsic, embedded obligations.

5.2. Speaker's predictions or hypothesizing

When discussing the likelihood of mortality, Vietnamese speakers employ speculative language framing death as a conjectural possibility dependent on contextual health factors and probabilities. Common utterances include:

<i>Ông ấy có thể/có lẽ sẽ chết</i>	(He may/might die)
<i>Bà ấy dự kiến sẽ chết vào năm...</i>	(She is expected to die by the year...)

These phrases present dying as a contingent event whose timing and probability stems from evidential variables. By speculating about mortality based on age, illness, loneliness, etc., speakers posit death as a logical extrapolation of present states.

For example:

Bà hàng xóm góa bên cạnh sống một mình, không có gia đình. Nếu một ngày đột ngột qua đời, có thể mấy ngày sau mới có người hay biết!

(The widowed neighbor next door lives alone without family. If she dies unexpectedly one day, it may be days before anyone finds out!)

Chị nói có lý. Chúng ta nên thường xuyên ghé thăm bà ấy. Biết đâu tuổi cao sức yếu, bà có thể qua đời bất cứ lúc nào.

(You make a fair point. We should regularly check on her. For all we know, given her advanced age, she could pass away any day.)

In this conversation, the speculative language around the elderly woman's plausible death aims to motivate proactive wellness monitoring given her vulnerability. By presenting it as an ever-present possibility, the speakers exploit the uncertainty of mortality to spark preventative action.

In summary, Vietnamese flexibly employs hypothetical conjecture framing death as likelihood dependent on health and external factors. Speculating about variable mortality risks reveals cultural anxieties around sudden passing of at-risk community members. It also constitutes rhetorical appeals to caution and foresight. By proposing death as a probable occurrence based on context, speakers argue for pragmatic contingency planning even as uncertainty lingers. So, this practice of what-if language merges conjectural possibilities with actionable responses to problematize the open-ended future. Ultimately, speculating about dying in Vietnamese serves more to compel prudent provisions amid unknowns rather than definitively predict any outcome. The conjectural tone spurs judicious care.

5.3. Speaker's inferences or deductions

Speaker's inferences or deductions refers to how language conveys conjectures about the likelihood of death based on reasoning from available evidence. When interpreting potentially fatal scenarios, Vietnamese speakers use phrases like *seems to have died, can infer/deduce that they have perished, according to observations it is highly probable they are no longer living*. The Vietnamese speakers often use CHẾT (to die) with this meaning often integrates empirical observation with explanatory inference. By verbalizing logical connections between physical traces and contextual fragments, speakers reconstruct the dying process behind remnants. This creates plausibility around the fatal origins of discovered artifacts. For example, consider this dialogue:

Lan: *Ngôi làng miền núi hoang vu này, theo truyền thuyết còn nhiều oan hồn ám ở.*
(This remote mountain village, according to legend, is haunted by many restless souls.)

Hùng: *Nhìn kia - bộ xương khô kể đền thờ hoang! Quần áo rách nát giống mô tả về những người già làng đã mất tích. Có thể suy đoán một trong số họ đã chết ở đây từ lâu.*

(Look - that skeleton by the abandoned shrine! Its tattered clothes match the description of the missing elders of the village. One can deduce that one of them must have died here long ago.)

In this context, linking physical traces like the skeleton to clues about the missing elders enables plausible analytical deductions about the bones likely belonging to one of those who perished returning to the village. Thus, interpreting death in Vietnamese frequently combines empirical observation with deductive reasoning. By verbalizing analytical connections between physical vestiges and contextual cues, speakers recreate the dying process behind the remnants. This generates plausibility regarding the fatal origins of unearthed artifacts.

In short, the Vietnamese way of using CHẾT in the context of inference and explanation tightly integrates real-world observation with logical analysis. Through this, they reconstruct death narratives in a coherent manner based on available clues. This reflects a high degree of logical thinking and connectivity in the Vietnamese language.

5.4. Speaker's evidential reporting

Speaker's evidential reporting refers to how language conveys second-hand information about a death event by citing external sources. When communicating deaths, they didn't directly witness, Vietnamese speakers use evidential language with CHẾT to indicate the origin of the report. From the collected data, the statement can be Vietnamese speakers often qualify CHẾT to signal it is hearsay rather than personally confirmed fact. Common phrasing includes:

Tôi nghe nói là ông ấy đã chết. (I heard that he has died...)
Tin đồn nói rằng bà ấy đã chết (Rumors say she has died...)

Table summarize the modal markers that Vietnamese speakers frequently use to indicate the origin the report.

Table 3. Modal markers for evidential reporting

Modal markers in Vietnamese	English equivalence
Nghe nói rằng...	I heard that...
Tin đồn cho biết	Rumors have it that..
Người ta nói là...	People say that...
Theo lời đồn...	According to rumors...

Đã có thông tin cho hay...	There's information saying that...
Được nghe đồn là...	It's been rumored that...
Theo những gì tôi biết...	From what I know...
Nguồn tin cho biết rằng...	Sources say that...
Có người nói là...	Some people say that...
Nghe đâu là...	Heard somewhere that...
Theo lời người ta nói...	As people say...

To illustrate this point, consider the fictional dialogue as follows:

Sister: *Em nghe dân làng nói bà nội đã qua đời vì tuổi già!*

(I heard from villagers that grandmother has passed away from old age!)

Brother: *Không thể nào! Tuần trước chúng ta mới nhận được thư của Bà. Chắc chỉ là lời đồn viễn vông của dân làng.*

(That cannot be! We received a letter from Grandmother just last week. These must merely be unsubstantiated village whispers.)

This dialogue shows that the sister frames the reported death as second-hand information heard from the villagers. This evidential distancing allows the brother to challenge its credibility as potentially inaccurate, unverified rumors. Explicitly qualifying the statement as hearsay avoids direct commitment to an unreliable claim. As a result, this exchange reveals how qualifying language around reported deaths in Vietnamese can signal informational limitations and uncertainty. Outlining the knowledge source also enables scrutiny of its believability, allowing speculation to be contested as misinformation lacking evidentiary basis regarding the alleged death.

In summary, Vietnamese speech norms frequently utilize evidential language to convey second-hand death reports while cautioning certainty. This reflects cultural consciousness around signaling the reliability and limitations of circulating demise descriptions from indirect acquisition.

5.5. Speaker's emotions or attitudes

When referencing endings of life, language around death in Vietnamese conveys rich affective meanings and subjective perspectives from speakers. As an event profoundly impacting human existence, talk of mortality elicits complex emotional attitudes in Vietnamese culture. The modal markers used in this meaning often express grief, outrage and disbelief.

It could be grief when loved ones pass:

(1) *Gia đình chúng tôi đau buồn thông báo sự ra đi của mẹ tôi.*

(Our family sorrowfully announces my mother's passing...)

It could be outrage over premature or unjust demise:

(2) *Gia đình rất phẫn nộ trước cái chết quá sớm của cô gái 12 tuổi vì bệnh ung thư não.*

(The family is angered over the 12-year-old girl dying from brain cancer too soon)

It could be disbelief at shocking news:

(3) *Cả gia đình vô cùng sốc và không thể tin được tin báo rằng bố đã tự tử bỏ mặc vợ con.*

(The entire family is stunned and unbelieving of the news father committed suicide abandoning his wife and kids)

Table summarizes the modal makers of emotions or attitudes in Vietnamese collected in the data.

Table 4. Modal markers for emotions or attitudes

Grief		Outrage		Disbelief	
Vietnamese	English	Vietnamese	English	Vietnamese	English
Đau buồn	Sorrowfully	Phẫn nộ	Angered	Không thể tin được	Unbelievable
Thương tiếc	Regretfully	Bức xúc	Outraged	Hoàn toàn bàng hoàng	Utterly shocked
Đau đớn	Painfully	Không thể tha thứ	Unforgivable	Quá sức tưởng tượng	Unimaginable
Mất mát	Great loss	Quá bất công	So unjust	Vô cùng kinh ngạc	Extremely stunned

To take an in-depth insight into this category of meaning, consider the following fictional dialogue.

Wife: *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!)

Husband: *Không!!! Con yêu quý của ba! Tại sao con lại bị cướp đi thế thảm như vậy? Ba đau khổ vô ngần...*

(No!!! My dear son! Why were you so cruelly ripped away from us? I am devastated beyond words...)

Vợ: *Chúng ta nuôi dưỡng con với tất cả tình yêu thương - mất con đột ngột như thế này thật là trò đùa tàn nhẫn của số phận!*

(We raised him with such love - to lose him suddenly is life's cruelest joke!)

In this dialogue, the utter anguish and sense of meaningless injustice reveals the depth of affective investment in family ties. The child's abrupt death ruptures these bonds, eliciting raw grief and incomprehension. Their suffering reflects steep expectations around honoring parents through longevity. Thus, CHẾT in Vietnamese resonates with complex attitudes about loss - furious objections, hopeless sorrow, or nostalgic reconciliation. Discussing mortality permeates expression with profound pathos, sentimentality, and perceived unfairness. This reflects how death remains an emotionally charged domain with deep cultural ties to familial honor and human relations.

In summary, talk of dying in Vietnamese layers social perspectives and subjectivity encoding visceral reactions revealing views on mortality's relation to existence's meaning.

6. Conclusion

This research delves into the linguistic expressions of CHẾT in the Vietnamese language, exploring the subjective and objective assessment of events. By employing a blend of statistical analysis, descriptive grammar, and contextual quality evaluation, it unveils the interplay between traditional values and modern rationality concerning discussions on mortality.

The findings highlight that phrases denoting obligation and preference reflect enduring cultural standards, whereas language conveying plausibility relies on evidence, showcasing contemporary interpretation. This intricate interplay between subjective ethics and evidence-based objectivity when addressing death among the Vietnamese underscores diverse perspectives.

These outcomes enrich our understanding of how contemporary Vietnamese society merges ancient belief systems with modern logic to conceptualize mortality. The complex interaction between moral imperatives and expressions of plausibility accentuates varied viewpoints. These findings provide a cohesive cultural comprehension by acknowledging death's inevitability while presenting differing approaches to appropriate responses.

Overall, analyzing linguistic forms expressing compulsion and plausibility surrounding death reveals a nuanced encounter between traditional ethics and modern rationality, shaping Vietnamese perceptions of mortality.

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