

MODAL GRAMMATICAL METAPHOR IN VIETNAMESE CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

ẨN DỤ NGỮ PHÁP TÌNH THÁI TRONG VĂN HỌC THIẾU NHI VIỆT NAM

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Abstract - This study examines modal grammatical metaphor in Vietnamese children's literature from a systemic functional linguistic perspective, highlighting its role in expressing viewpoints, shaping interpersonal relations, and creating aesthetic effects for young readers. Drawing on 277 samples from 94 representative works, the analysis identifies three types: (i) subjective modality, (ii) shared viewpoint, and (iii) objective modality. Findings reveal that, these metaphors are flexibly employed to emphasize personal stance, evoke agreement, or enhance credibility, making the text more vivid, engaging, and persuasive. The research argues that modal grammatical metaphor is not merely a syntactic phenomenon but also a key communicative strategy, contributing to the effective transmission of ideas and the emotional orientation of readers.

Key words - Modal grammatical metaphor; systemic functional linguistics; children's literature

1. Introduction

In children's literature, language does not merely transmit content; it also serves as a medium for emotional connection and cognitive orientation for young readers. One of the key expressive strategies contributing to the distinctive interpersonal effects of this genre is the modal grammatical metaphor - an interpersonal type of grammatical metaphor from the perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). Unlike congruent realizations, modal grammatical metaphors allow the writer to express stance, belief, or evaluation through projecting clauses such as "I think that", "everyone knows that", "it is clear that", etc., thereby shaping the interpersonal relationship between writer and reader. This article clarifies the types of modal grammatical metaphors employed in contemporary Vietnamese children's literature and analyzes their impact in construing authorial stance, eliciting empathy, and creating communicative effects aligned with children's reception characteristics.

2. Research Method

This study applies a qualitative approach combined with corpus-based analysis to elucidate the characteristics and functions of modal grammatical metaphor in children's literature. The data are drawn from representative works of Vietnamese children's literature. Within the scope of the article, we selected modern narrative prose written for Vietnamese child readers. The corpus consists of officially published works from the modern period of Vietnamese

Tóm tắt - Bài viết nghiên cứu hiện tượng ẩn dụ ngữ pháp tình thái trong văn học thiếu nhi Việt Nam từ góc nhìn ngôn ngữ học chức năng hệ thống, nhằm làm rõ vai trò của chúng trong việc thể hiện quan điểm, xây dựng quan hệ giao tiếp và tạo hiệu ứng thẩm mỹ cho độc giả nhỏ tuổi. Từ việc phân tích 277 mẫu ngữ liệu của 94 tác phẩm tiêu biểu, nghiên cứu xác định ba loại ẩn dụ tình thái: (i) biểu thị tình thái chủ quan, (ii) biểu thị tình thái đồng quan điểm, và (iii) biểu thị tình thái khách quan. Kết quả cho thấy, các ẩn dụ này được sử dụng linh hoạt để nhấn mạnh lập trường cá nhân, gợi sự đồng thuận hoặc tăng độ tin cậy, khiến văn bản sinh động, gần gũi và thuyết phục. Nghiên cứu khẳng định ẩn dụ ngữ pháp tình thái không chỉ là hiện tượng cú pháp mà còn là chiến lược giao tiếp quan trọng, góp phần nâng cao hiệu quả truyền đạt tư tưởng và định hướng cảm xúc độc giả.

Từ khóa - Ẩn dụ ngữ pháp tình thái; ngôn ngữ học chức năng hệ thống; văn học thiếu nhi

literature, chosen across different authors to ensure representativeness, coverage, reliability, and citability. According to the textbook "*Thi pháp văn học thiếu nhi Việt Nam*" [1], representative modern children's works include: *De Men phiêu lưu kỳ* (To Hoai) [2], *Dat rung phương Nam* (Doan Gioi) [3], etc. In addition, we included collections evaluated by the Vietnam Education Publishing House such as "*Tuyen tap Truyện viet cho thiếu nhi tu sau Cach mang thang Tam*" [4], Vietnam Education Publishing House, and works by authors devoted to children's literature with recognized achievements, for example the collection *Truyen dong thoai Vo Quang* [5]. The full list of texts is provided in the data source section of the article.

A total of 94 works were compiled, from which 277 instances of modal grammatical metaphor were identified. The analysis focused on determining the type of modal grammatical metaphor used, how it contributed to interpersonal meaning, and its effect on readers.

3. Theoretical framework

3.1. Grammatical metaphor in Systemic Functional Linguistics

Grammatical metaphor, in the SFL perspective of M. A. K. Halliday, constitutes a significant contribution to reconceptualizing how meanings are re-expressed in specific communicative situations. In *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* [6] Halliday states: "[...] Grammatical metaphor is a rearrangement between a pair of strata: it is a remapping of the semantic stratum onto the lexicogrammatical one; [...] no metaphor could exist

without stratification, and once the content plane is stratified, such shifts automatically become possible.”

Thus, grammatical metaphor is a variation in the way a given meaning is expressed. Halliday [7] distinguishes grammatical metaphor from lexical metaphor. Unlike the “bottom-up” view of metaphor as a change in meaning attached to a fixed expression (lexical metaphor), grammatical metaphor is seen “top-down” as a change in the expression of a given meaning. Accordingly, grammatical metaphor involves a change in form for the same semantic content, rather than a change in content for the same form of expression.

3.2. Modal grammatical metaphor

Regarding modality, Halliday [6] notes that modality reflects the speaker’s angle - either concerning the value of a proposition or the validity of a proposal. In the congruent form, modality is realized as a modal adjunct within the clause rather than as the main clause element. Modal grammatical metaphor is an interpersonal type of metaphor grounded in the semantic relationship of projection. The grammatical shift takes place through the logical–semantic relationship of projection. According to Halliday [6], in this type of metaphor, the speaker’s viewpoint regarding the probability of an observation being valid is encoded not by an intra-clausal modal element but by a separate projecting clause within a clause complex of an attributive relationship. In this way, modal grammatical metaphors are explicit realizations of modal meanings in which the speaker expresses viewpoint through separate clauses in different ways. Frequent clause types include: “I think that...”, “I believe that...”, “It is likely that...”, etc. The projected clause typically contains a word or clause signaling belief, possibility, likelihood, certainty, and so forth - i.e., modal assessment. Halliday [6] argues that modal grammatical metaphor serves to express modal meaning external to the clause. For example, in “I think it’s going to rain, isn’t it?”, the proposition is projected by the appended “I think.” In Vietnamese, modal grammatical metaphors in the functional grammar sense are realized through analogous projecting clauses such as “tôi nghĩ rằng”, “tôi tin rằng”, “tôi e rằng”, “rõ ràng là”, etc., where the speaker’s viewpoint is expressed in a separate clause as described above.

4. Findings and discussion

Based on the survey of children’s literary works, the study compiled frequency data on the occurrence of different types of modal grammatical metaphor. Results show that the three types are unevenly distributed across texts, reflecting authors’ linguistic strategies for creating communicative effects and rapport with young readers. Details are presented below.

Table 1. Frequency of modal grammatical metaphor types in Vietnamese children’s literature

Type of modal grammatical metaphor	Count	Percentage (%)
Subjective modality of the author	127	45.8
Shared-perspective modality of the author	59	21.2
Objective modality of the author	91	33
Total	277	100

The frequency distribution indicates a clear imbalance: subjective modal grammatical metaphors account for the highest proportion (45.8%, 127 instances), while shared-perspective metaphors appear least frequently (21.2%, 59 instances). The flexible combination of all three types enables authors not only to convey content vividly but also to establish tight interaction between character and reader.

4.1. Modal grammatical metaphors expressing the author’s subjective modality in Vietnamese children’s literature

Subjective modal grammatical metaphors in Vietnamese children’s literature are realized through what traditional grammar calls “clausal constructions with attitude verbs”, such as: “Tôi/chúng tôi nghĩ rằng X” (I/we think that X), “Tôi/chúng tôi tin rằng X” (I/we believe that X), “Tôi/chúng tôi cho rằng X” (I/we hold that X), “Tôi/chúng tôi e rằng X” (I/we fear that X), etc. In his published work [8], Nguyen Van Hiep argues that, in sentences such as “Tôi e rằng cô ta đã li dị” (I fear that she has divorced), “Tôi nghĩ rằng cô ấy không vui” (I think that she is not happy), the segments “Tôi e rằng...”, “Tôi nghĩ rằng...” function as modal markers and have undergone a relatively high degree of grammaticalization. In English, for constructions such as “I/we think that X”, “I/we believe that X”, “I/we doubt that X”, the underlined projecting clauses are treated by Halliday [6] as modal grammatical metaphors.

From the surveyed children’s literature, subjective modal grammatical metaphors primarily realize epistemic modality. Specifically, they encode a relatively high degree of commitment to the state of affairs through structures like: “Tôi/chúng tôi nghĩ X” (I/we think X), “Tôi/chúng tôi biết được rằng X” (I/we know that X), “Tôi/chúng tôi cho rằng X” (I/we hold that X), “Tôi/chúng tôi quan niệm rằng X” (I/we conceive that X), “Tôi/chúng tôi nhận thấy X” (I/we perceive X), “Tôi/chúng tôi thiết tưởng X” (I/we would suppose X), “Tôi/chúng tôi e rằng X” (I/we fear that X), “Tôi/chúng tôi nghiệm ra rằng X” (I/we have realized that X), etc. (Here X is the main clause, while the “I/we think/realize/perceive...” part is the supplementary projecting clause.) In such modal grammatical metaphors, the modal meaning resides not in the main clause but in the supplementary projecting clause.

We categorize subjective modal grammatical metaphors (encoding the author’s stance toward the proposition) into three groups: (1) stance-evaluations that are neutral; (2) stance-evaluations that are positive; (3) stance-evaluations that are negative. Illustrations:

- Group (1), examples:
- (1) *Tôi cho rằng súng dở lắm, động tới thì kêu ầm ỹ [3].*
‘I think the gun is defective; as soon as you touch it, it makes a loud clatter’ [3].
(1a) *Có thể (có lẽ, hình như...) súng dở lắm, động tới thì kêu ầm + tôi không đánh giá như vậy là một điều tốt hay không tốt. = (1)*
‘Perhaps (maybe, it seems...) the gun is really bad; touch it and it makes a loud racket + I do not evaluate this as something either good or bad. = (1)’

(2) Bởi vì tôi đã biết thường những anh tính hay khoe thì cái gì cũng ra miệng hết và chỉ có ở miệng chứ trong bụng nhiều khi chẳng có gì [2].

'Because I already knew that the boastful types let everything pour out of their mouths, and it stays only there - inside they often have nothing at all' [2].

(2a) Có thể (có lẽ, hình như...) thường những anh tính hay khoe thì cái gì cũng ra miệng hết và chỉ có ở miệng chứ trong bụng nhiều khi chẳng có gì + tôi không đánh giá như vậy là một điều tốt hay không tốt. = (2)

'Perhaps (maybe, it seems...) fellows who like to boast let everything spill out of their mouths and it remains only there, while inside they often have nothing at all + I do not judge this as either good or bad. = (2)'

(3) Tôi đoán rằng chú bạn nhỏ trên cây đã không chối món quà, cũng là những lời xin lỗi của tôi [4].

'I guess that the little friend up in the tree did not refuse the gift, which was also my apology' [4].

(3a) Có thể (có lẽ, hình như...) chú bạn nhỏ trên cây đã không chối món quà, cũng là những lời xin lỗi của tôi + tôi không đánh giá như vậy là một điều tốt hay không tốt. = (3)

'Perhaps (maybe, it seems...) the little friend up in the tree did not turn down the gift - which was also my apology + I do not assess that as something good or bad. = (3)'

In interaction, speakers are often uncertain because they lack decisive evidence or community validation. Hence, besides propositional content, they resort to formulaic expressions marking conjecture or assumption. Vietnamese possesses a large set of such subjective inferential markers: "có lẽ", "có thể là", "hình như", "có khi", "chừng như", "có vẻ", "tuồng như", "dường như", "chắc là", "hẳn là", "không lẽ", "chẳng lẽ", "hòng lẽ", "biết đâu", "không chừng", "chả biết chừng", etc.

In children's literature, alongside congruent modal expressions (non-metaphorical) in patterns like: QN (modal particle/expression) + Clause, Clause + QN, Subject + QN + Predicate - for example: "Có lẽ từ hôm bước lên xóm chợ này, mình đã bắt đầu cuộc sống lưu lạc rồi chẳng?"; "Có lẽ bà ta tưởng rằng thái độ lạnh nhạt và những lời mát mẻ của bà ta đã có hiệu quả trông thấy" [3] - authors also use modal metaphors as in (1) – (3). Besides conveying epistemic probability (paraphrasable by "có thể, có lẽ, dường như..."), (1) – (3) also encode a neutral evaluative stance ("neither good nor bad"). The stance is presented subjectively through an external projecting clause in a natural, logically coherent clause complex.

Group (2)

(4) Bây giờ tôi mới nghiệm ra rằng chẳng riêng gì bọn lau nhau chúng tôi, mà người lớn, người càng già lại càng thích được khen [3].

'Only now have I realized that it is not just we scruffy kids; grown-ups - the older they are - the more they like to be praised' [3].

(4a) Có thể (có lẽ, hình như...) chẳng riêng gì bọn lau nhau chúng tôi, mà người lớn, người càng già lại càng thích được khen + tôi đánh giá việc tôi nhận ra điều này là một điều tích cực. = (4)

'Perhaps (maybe, it seems...) it is not only we ragtag

children; adults, the older they get, the more they like being praised + I evaluate my realizing this as something positive. = (4)'

(5) Từ nay tôi hiểu rằng chán đời là tính xấu, kẻ chán đời nghĩ là ta cao thượng, nhưng thật không cao thượng mà chỉ là trốn việc và rong chơi [2].

'From now on I understand that being weary of life is a bad trait; the person who is world-weary thinks he is noble, but he is not noble at all - just shirking work and loafing' [2].

(5a) Có thể (có lẽ, hình như...) chán đời là tính xấu, kẻ chán đời nghĩ là ta cao thượng, nhưng thật không cao thượng mà chỉ là trốn việc và rong chơi + tôi đánh giá việc tôi nhận ra điều này là một điều tích cực. = (5)

'Perhaps (maybe, it seems...) being weary of life is a bad trait; the world-weary person thinks himself noble, but he is not noble - only avoiding work and idling + I view my realization of this as positive. = (5)'

(6) Nhưng bây giờ nhìn anh Trũi nhanh nhẹn này, tôi hiểu rằng không nên chỉ xem vẻ ngoài mà coi thường ai một cách hồ đồ như vậy [2].

'But now, looking at this quick, nimble fellow Trũi, I understand that one must not look only at appearances and rashly look down on someone like that' [2].

(6a) Có thể (có lẽ, hình như...) không nên chỉ xem vẻ ngoài mà coi thường ai một cách hồ đồ như vậy + tôi đánh giá việc tôi nhận ra điều này là một điều tích cực. = (6)

'Perhaps (maybe, it seems...) one should not judge only by outward looks and so rashly scorn someone like that + I regard my realizing this as something positive. = (6)'

In (4) – (6), the projecting clauses "tôi mới nghiệm ra rằng", "tôi hiểu rằng" not only convey epistemic possibility (paraphrasable by "có thể, có lẽ...") but also a positive stance. "Nghiệm ra" means "to realize through reflective experience that something is true" [9]. The metaphorical expression heightens subjectivity by foregrounding cognitive change and personal stance.

Group (3):

(7) Bởi tôi e rằng biết đâu con mụ lại chẳng hống hách suông bắt nạt chú Châu Châu Ma kia đấy, mà bây giờ lại hối lại, sợ quá, chạy trốn mất rồi [4]

'Because I fear that perhaps that woman was only bluffing when she bullied that Ghost Grasshopper fellow, and now she has regretted it, gotten frightened, and run away [4].

(7a) Có thể con mụ lại chẳng hống hách suông bắt nạt chú Châu Châu Ma kia đấy, mà bây giờ lại hối lại, sợ quá, chạy trốn mất rồi + tôi đánh giá như vậy là một điều không tốt. = (7)

'Perhaps the woman was merely putting on airs bullying that Ghost Grasshopper chap, and now she has repented, been too scared, and fled + I evaluate that as something negative. = (7)'

The projecting clause "tôi e rằng" signals apprehension, caution, and doubt about the unfolding situation. Its use adds a negatively tinged evaluative stance ("I judge the situation as undesirable"). Young readers thereby gain

insight into the character's psychology - natural, vivid, and relatable. Without the metaphor (as in 7a), the emotional nuance of anxiety would be lost.

Additionally, the corpus shows subjective modal grammatical metaphors of high commitment realized through: "Tôi/chúng tôi cam đoan X" (I/we assure that X), "Tôi/chúng tôi chắc chắn rằng X" (I/we am/are certain that X), "Tôi/chúng tôi chắc mềm rằng X" (I/we am/are absolutely sure that X), "Tôi/chúng tôi tin rằng X" (I/we believe that X), etc.

Example:

(8) Tôi chỉ dùng được có một mũi tên trong số hai mươi chiếc chủ đã trao cho tôi, nhưng tôi chắc chắn rằng dưới suối vàng chủ đã có thể ngậm cười mà yên nghĩ [3].

I was able to use only one of the twenty arrows you gave me, but I am certain that in the Yellow Springs you can now smile and rest in peace' [3].

(8a) Tôi chỉ dùng được có một mũi tên trong số hai mươi chiếc chủ đã trao cho tôi, chắc là dưới suối vàng chủ đã có thể ngậm cười mà yên nghĩ.

I used only one of the twenty arrows you handed me, surely in the Yellow Springs you can now smile and rest peacefully.'

Here, the modal grammatical metaphor (8) encodes a high degree of commitment - firm assertion and strong belief. The projecting clause "tôi chắc chắn rằng" conveys the narrator Ong Hai's deeply grounded conviction that Vo Tong can now rest content in the afterlife following his unjust death caused by the treacherous wife of Tu Mam. If only the congruent modal particle "chắc là" (as in 8a) were used, readers would not experience the same intensity of sincerity and respect - rooted in Ong Hai's fulfillment of a promise by avenging Vo Tong with the poison-tipped arrow entrusted to him.

4.2. Modal grammatical metaphors expressing shared-perspective modality in Vietnamese children's literature

In interaction, speakers sometimes wish to express a stance while emphasizing its reliability through a collective lens. They therefore employ constructions like: "Everyone admits that X", "Most would agree that X", "Nobody can deny that X". Halliday [6] treats such expressions as modal grammatical metaphors. The speaker aligns personal evaluation with that of an invoked collective including the listener/reader, thereby gently recruiting the addressee into concurrence while foregrounding the content. Vietnamese likewise uses projecting clauses such as: "Ai cũng biết X" (Everyone knows X), "Người ta nói rằng X" (People say that X), "Ai cũng thừa nhận rằng X" (Everyone acknowledges that X), "Mọi người đều rõ X" (Everyone is clearly aware that X), "Không ai nghi ngờ X" (No one doubts X), "Như các bạn thấy rõ X" (As you clearly see X), "Không ai lại không biết rằng X" (There is no one who does not know that X), "Tất cả bọn họ đều cho rằng X", etc. The corpus reveals frequent use of shared-perspective modal grammatical metaphors, adding vibrancy to the narrative.

Example:

(9) Duy chỉ có một điều mà ai cũng biết nhưng cũng

chẳng ai nói ra, là trong sự dễ dãi hào phóng của bà ta, dù thế nào thì thế, một đồng xu cũng không lọt qua được cánh tay nhòn nhây, bóng bẩy của bà, vì bà không để mình chịu thiệt với ai bao giờ [3].

'There was only one thing that everyone knew but no one ever said: in all her easygoing generosity, whatever happened, not a single coin could slip past her greasy, shiny arm, because she never let herself come out at a loss to anyone' [3].

Here, "ai cũng biết nhưng cũng chẳng ai nói ra" is a shared-perspective modal grammatical metaphor: the narrator refrains from direct assertion, instead invoking an indefinite pronoun "ai" (everyone) to attribute the proposition to a collective. This enhances plausibility; when information is collectivized, readers tend to accept it as self-evident. The contrastive segment "nhưng cũng chẳng ai nói ra" heightens emphasis and arouses curiosity. Through this shared-perspective metaphor, the speaker (the boy An) implicitly reveals his evaluation of Di Tu Beo's character without overt judgment, producing a lively, natural narrative voice.

(10) Ngày nay, như chúng ta thấy rõ, không thằng Hồ nào lại không mang khắp mình những vằn những sọc, mà nguyên nhân là vì trận cháy khủng khiếp thuở nọ [5].

'Nowadays, as we clearly see, there is no Tiger fellow who does not carry stripes all over his body, and the reason is that terrible fire long ago' [5].

In (10), the shared-perspective metaphor increases persuasive force and reader alignment. The projecting clause "như chúng ta thấy rõ" ("as we clearly see") functions as a strong evidential anchor, presupposing mutual perceptual access. It not only states the author's view but draws readers into co-observation, facilitating acceptance - especially useful in children's literature where fictional causal explanations (here, mythical origin of tiger stripes) require a foundation of shared "fact." Replacing it with "Tôi thấy rằng..." ("I see that...") would reduce objectivity. The inclusive "chúng ta" ("we") builds solidarity, making readers feel like participants in the narrative.

Thus, shared-perspective modal grammatical metaphors play a crucial role: (i) increasing persuasive force by channeling stance through a collectivized viewpoint; (ii) creating familiarity and colloquial naturalness appropriate to children's cognitive reception; and (iii) strengthening narrator-reader interpersonal bonding.

4.3. Modal grammatical metaphors expressing objective modality in Vietnamese children's literature

In interaction, to achieve tactful, modest yet credible expression, speakers employ objective modal grammatical metaphors that encode evaluation, judgment, or assessment through dummy subjects (in English) or subject omission (in Vietnamese) combined with modal expressions. In English, objective modality may be realized through projecting clauses with dummy "it": "It is clear that...", "It was obvious that...", "It can be said that...", "It must be remembered that..."

In the corpus, Vietnamese children's literature features subjectless initial elements conveying objective modality such as: “thiết nghĩ”, “thiết tưởng”, “hiển nhiên là”, “rõ ràng là”, “tất nhiên là”, etc.

Example:

(11) *Rõ ràng là chỉ có mỗi mình con mụ xuống thuyền* [3].

'It was clearly only the woman who went down to the boat' [3].

A core SFL principle is that clauses must be interpreted within context. The sentence appears in the passage: “Trong quán đã nghe tiếng thu dọn bát đĩa. Con mụ gián điệp chào dì Tư Béo, không biết nó nói gì mà bà chủ quán của tôi cười lên khắc khắc... Lát lâu sau, nghe nó rửa chân lạch xạch ngoài cầu nước, rồi tiếng chân nó giẫm lên sạp thuyền. Rõ ràng là chỉ có mỗi mình con mụ xuống thuyền”. The situational context: two spies disguised as a married couple selling fermented fish, upon realizing that the boy An (first-person narrator) could read French and had uncovered their treachery, plotted to eliminate him. An retreated to his sleeping place near the tavern and monitored their movements. The objective modal metaphor “rõ ràng là” (“it is clear that”) asserts the undeniable factuality of the event - only the female spy boarded the boat - while foregrounding the narrator's careful observation. This marks an investigative stance, heightening tension as readers infer: “If only she went to the boat, where is the other spy?” The effect is to build suspense and admiration for An's courage and acuity as the plot advances.

(12) *Thiết tưởng thánh thượng đã định kén chọn nhân tài thì tất phải giao việc ấy cho những bầy tôi xứng đáng. [Tôi sợ tiên sinh nghi ngờ oan cho quan chính chủ khảo chăng?]* [4].

'It is to be supposed that since His Majesty has decided to select men of talent, he must entrust that task to worthy subjects. [I fear, sir, that you may be unjustly suspecting the chief examiner?]' [4].

In context, the speaker rebuts the interlocutor's suspicion of the chief examiner. The objective modal metaphor “thiết tưởng” (roughly “one would reasonably suppose”) softens the assertion, signaling that the speaker is not imposing a personal view but inviting recognition of a broadly inferable rationale: If the emperor intends to select talent, he must entrust the task to worthy officials; therefore, doubting the chief examiner is unwarranted. The metaphor creates a polite, tactful rebuttal - persuasive without confrontation - modeling an interpersonal strategy that influences the listener's thinking while preserving rapport. This illustrates how objective modal grammatical metaphors function as effective communicative strategies in children's literature, implicitly teaching young readers refined, respectful argumentative conduct.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

Modal grammatical metaphor is an effective expressive resource enabling authors of children's literature to convey messages, articulate viewpoints, and build interpersonal rapport with readers in subtle and persuasive ways. From an SFL perspective, the deployment of modal grammatical metaphors reflects the writer's/speaker's stance and shapes expressions aligned with children's cognitive and affective reception. This article has analyzed three major groups of modal grammatical metaphors in Vietnamese children's literature: (i) those expressing subjective modality, (ii) those expressing shared-perspective modality, and (iii) those expressing objective modality. Examination of examples across multiple works shows that each type serves a distinct interpersonal function and produces different communicative effects. Subjective modal grammatical metaphors foreground personal opinion; shared-perspective metaphors build consensus through a collectivized lens; objective metaphors lend an impression of factuality and reliability to the information conveyed. Thus, modal grammatical metaphor is not merely a grammatical phenomenon but a significant linguistic strategy in crafting children's literary discourse. Flexible exploitation of modal structures enriches expressive value and creates a natural bridge between the story world and the reader's cognition. The harmonious integration of content and linguistic form contributes to the appeal, depth, and educational value of children's literature. Research into modal grammatical metaphor is meaningful not only for literary analysis but also for informing innovative approaches to language pedagogy, helping learners understand how language enacts interpersonal relations and encodes stance across contexts. This remains a promising topic meriting continued exploration in applied linguistics as well as in studies of contemporary literature.

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