

LINGUISTICS AND VIETNAMESE LINGUISTICS

**MODALITY IN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE TOURISM
PROMOTIONAL TEXTS IN VIETNAM:
FROM SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS
PERSPECTIVE****NGUYEN THI QUYNH HOA***

ABSTRACT: Based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) proposed by M. A. K. Halliday, this study investigates the use of modality in English-language tourism promotional texts in Vietnam. Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative-dominant text analysis with supporting frequency counts. Thirty texts from travel guidebooks and promotional publications across three provinces in Vietnam are collected and analyzed to explore how modality is employed (ten texts selected from each province). The study also takes into consideration evaluative lexical resources found in the corpus because they relate to Halliday's notion of attitudinal meanings within the interpersonal metafunction. The findings reveal key communicative strategies identified through modalization and modulation, together with complementary evaluative lexical items. These above elements contribute to portraying the unique and hidden beauty of tourist destinations, thereby opening up opportunities for readers to interpret and imagine the destinations for themselves. Modalization is primarily realized through median and low modal operators, as well as adjuncts of usuality, degree, intensity, time, and presumption, which help construct an open and inviting tone while also creating emphatic and intensified expressions. High-degree modulation is mainly used in instructional, procedural, and cultural practice contexts, which leads to the diversification of expressions in tourism promotional texts. Overall, linguistic resources of modality and evaluative lexical items play a central role in engaging readers in the interpretation of the historical significance and cultural values of tourist destinations, creating a sense of experiential involvement.

KEY WORDS: Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL); interpersonal metafunction; mood and modality; modalization; modulation.

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1. Introduction

In the context of increasingly economic, cultural, and social development, tourism has become an important sector in many countries, including Vietnam. It plays a crucial role in enhancing economic performance and improving people's quality of life, as well as promoting a country's image to the international community. Through tourism practices, a nation can present its cultural heritage, distinctive identity and natural landscapes, which help strengthen its global appeal and attractiveness. In recognition of this role, the Party and State of Vietnam have identified tourism as one of the key economic sectors, with the aim of encouraging investment and fostering its long-term development. Alongside tourism resources and infrastructure, effective communication in tourism promotional texts is essential for promoting Vietnam's tourism market. To achieve this goal, tourism promotional texts should be strategically shaped by writers' judgement and evaluative expressions toward tourist destinations in order to attract readers and encourage them to experience the destinations themselves. In this regard, modality is considered an important linguistic resource that enhances the persuasive and interpersonal effects of tourism promotional texts. In practice, although modality plays a

**University of Mining and Geology; Email: hoanq1972@yahoo.com*

significant role in enhancing the communicative effectiveness of tourism discourse, it has received relatively little attention in studies of tourism promotional texts. Given this research gap, an examination of modality in English-language tourism promotional texts in Vietnam can provide valuable insights into “How are modality resources used in the selected English-language tourism promotional texts in Vietnam to construct persuasive and engaging meanings?”. The study also takes into consideration evaluative lexical resources because they relate to Halliday’s notion of attitudinal meanings within the interpersonal metafunction. These resources are regarded as complementary elements that support the interpretation of evaluative meanings and positive destination portrayals in the texts. It is expected that the study will contribute to the development of more effective tourism promotional texts, particularly by raising Vietnamese writers’ awareness of the strategic use of modality to enhance communicative effectiveness.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Modality in Systemic Functional Linguistics

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), developed by M.A.K. Halliday (1985), is an approach to language that emphasizes the relationship between language and its social context. Within this framework, language is seen as a social semiotic system through which meanings are created and communicated. This view highlights the functional role of language in making meanings within particular social contexts. Matthiessen (1995) argues that a distinguishing feature of SFL lies in its effectiveness in examining lexico-grammatical resources such as modality, since the notion of choice is central to the theory. In line with this view, Butt et al. (2000) define a text as a unified network of meanings appropriate to its context. From this perspective, modality is particularly relevant to the present study as an important resource for expressing interpersonal meanings. The main grammatical systems associated with the interpersonal metafunction are mood and modality. These two systems are closely interconnected to create a two-way communicative world. Mood is the grammaticalization of speech metafunction. Meanwhile, modality is used to express the speaker’s/writer’s attitude towards the entity being discussed. According to Halliday (1994, p. 75), *modality* is “the speaker’s judgement of the probabilities, or the obligations, involved in what he is saying”. He describes modality as representing those choices in language which lie between two polarities “yes” and “no”, thus covering all “intermediate degrees” as well as the “various kinds of indeterminacy” that fall in between two extremes. The author distinguishes two major areas of meaning associated with modality: propositions and proposals. Propositions involve the exchange of information and are realized through modalization, whereas proposals concern the exchange of goods-and-services or actions and are realized through modulation. This distinction is grounded in Halliday’s classification of fundamental speech roles as “giving” and “demanding.” When information is exchanged, the speech function is enacted through propositions; when an action or object is required, the speech function is enacted through proposals. Halliday (1994, p76) indicates that that modalization is typically realized by (i) finite modal operators in the verbal group such as *might, will*) and/ or (ii) modal adjuncts of probability and usuality such as *certain, probably* and other subtypes. He classifies finite modal operators based on two criteria as degree of modality and polarity. In terms of degree, he points out three levels as high, median, and low. In terms of popularity, he points out two poles that are positive and negative (see Figure 1).

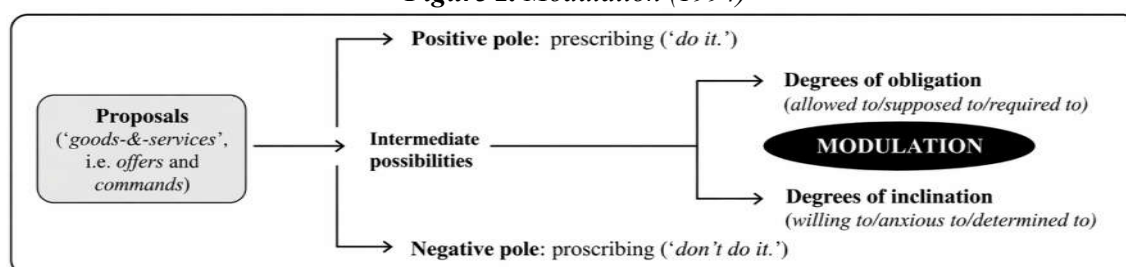
Figure 1. Modal operators (Halliday 1994, tr.76)

	Low	Median	High
Positive	<i>can, may, could, might, (dare)</i>	<i>will, would, should, is/was to</i>	<i>must, ought to, need, has/had to</i>
Negative	<i>needn’t, doesn’t/didn’t + need to, have to</i>	<i>won’t, wouldn’t, shouldn’t, (isn’t/wasn’t to)</i>	<i>mustn’t, oughtn’t to, can’t, couldn’t, (mayn’t, mightn’t, hasn’t/hadn’t to)</i>

In Halliday's point of view (1994, p. 49, 82), modal adjuncts are defined as elements that encode the speaker's judgement concerning the relevance of the message. The author classifies modal adjuncts into two categories, namely mood adjuncts and comment adjuncts. Mood adjuncts are most closely associated with the meanings constructed in the mood system. They occur within a clause in close relation to the finite verbal operator. In contrast, comment adjuncts are less tightly integrated into the grammar of mood; "they express the speaker's attitude to the proposition as a whole" (p.83). Specifically, mood adjuncts are realized through the following types: probability (how likely?), usuality (how often?), typically (how typically?), obviously (how obvious?), intensity (how intense?), degree (what degree?), opinion (I think), admission (I admit), persuasion (I assure you), entreaty (I request you). Meanwhile, comment adjuncts comprise the following types: presumption (I presume), desirability (how desirable?), reservation (how reliable?), validation (How valid?), evaluation (how sensible?), prediction (how expected?) (see Halliday, 1994 for further details).

The second main subcategory of modality is modulation, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Modulation (1994)



Modulation deals with the meaning of proposals, that is, the exchange of goods and services, and can be subdivided into two types: degree of obligation on other person to carry out the command and the degree of *inclination* or willingness of speaker to fulfill the offer. The scale associated with demanded goods and services, namely the degree of obligation, includes "allowed to" (permission), "supposed to" (advice), and "required to" (obligation). The degree of inclination involves "anxious to" (desire), "willing to" (willingness), and "determined to" (determination). Halliday (1994) also argues that modulation is identified through finite modal operators or through passive verb predicators or adjective predicators. Lyons (1977, p.331) shares certain perspectives with Halliday, stating that some languages encode modality by means of modal verbs, modal adjectives, modal adverbs, and modal participles. This view highlights the range of grammatical and lexical resources used to express modality meanings in discourse. Martin and White's Appraisal Theory (2005) further extends the analysis of interpersonal meaning in discourse through the examination of how writers express attitudes, adopt stances, and negotiate interpersonal positioning. This theory is categorized into three subsystems, namely *Attitude*, *Graduation*, and *Engagement*. Within this framework, the subsystem of attitude accounts for evaluative meanings realized through lexical choices, particularly evaluative adjectives. Such evaluative resources are related to Halliday's notion of attitudinal meaning within the interpersonal metafunction, but these resources are realized through lexical rather than grammatical means. Overall, the present study primarily adopts Halliday's systemic functional linguistics (1994) as the main theoretical framework for the analysis of modality. In addition, evaluative lexical items derived from Martin and White's Appraisal Theory are only incorporated as supplementary resources for the interpretation of attitudinal meaning in tourism promotional texts.

2.2. Tourism promotional texts/discourses

Discourse plays a significant role in constructing, transmitting, and reinforcing social ideologies, values, and perceptions through language use. Brown and Yule (1983) emphasize that discourse is a system that tells us how to use and understand language in specific contexts or situations. In the field of tourism, Dann (1996) argues that tourism discourse refers to the content and communicative modalities through which nations, destinations, and cultures promote themselves or are promoted to

potential visitors. Within tourism discourse, Gilbert (1999) notes that the development of the modern guidebook is closely associated with the growth of mass tourism. The significance of guidebooks in tourism discourse should not be underestimated. As Jack and Phipps (2005) state, travel guides are produced and consumed with the intention of enabling modern subjects to travel, thus possessing emancipatory potential. In addition, Bhattacharya (1997) points out that the guidebook constitutes a crucial element of the touristic process because it mediates the relationship between tourists and destinations, as well as between hosts and guests. Overall, tourism discourse can be seen as a persuasive communicative tool that shapes tourists' perceptions, experiences, and interactions with destinations, ultimately transforming potential visitors into actual tourists. Through various communicative forms, it not only promotes places and cultures but also mediates social and cultural relationships within the tourism process.

3. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative-dominant text analysis with supporting frequency counts to investigate the modality in English-language tourism promotional texts in Vietnam. To ensure reliability, the corpus is compiled from official and publicly accessible sources, comprising thirty texts selected from travel guidebooks and promotional publications across three provinces in Vietnam: Dong Nai, Bac Ninh, and Thai Binh, with ten texts drawn from each province. These provinces are chosen to represent regional diversity in Vietnam, covering the southern, northern, and Red River Delta areas. All the chosen texts target international readers for tourism promotion purposes. The analysis focuses on identifying, classifying and examining how modality resources contribute to the construction of persuasive and engaging meanings in tourism promotional texts. These texts are chosen according to several criteria, including linguistic and functional criteria, as well as corpus design considerations. Linguistically and functionally, they are written in English by Vietnamese authors and used for tourism promotional purposes. From a corpus design aspect, they are similar in length, were published within recent years, and are officially issued by the Provincial People's Committees and the provincial Tourism Promotion Centres of the respective provinces.

4. Findings and Discussion

The findings are analyzed in relation to the research question: "How are modality resources used in the selected English-language tourism promotional texts in Vietnam to construct persuasive and engaging meanings?" The analysis focuses on modality, specifically modalization and modulation, while evaluative lexical items are incorporated as a complementary resource for interpreting attitudinal meanings. The quantitative distribution of modality resources identified in the corpus is presented in the following tables.

Table 1. *Modality adjuncts and evaluative lexical items in the chosen English-language tourism promotional texts*

No	Types of adjuncts and evaluative lexical resources	Total	Percentage
1	Evaluative lexical items	193	32.7%
2	Usuality	94	15.9%
3	Degree	88	14.9%
4	Intensity	85	14.4%
5	Time	79	13.4%
6	Presumption	52	8.8%
Total		591	100%

Table Note: Modal adjunct categories are based on Halliday (1994), while evaluative lexical items are drawn from Martin & White (2005) and are included as a complementary resource for the analysis of attitudinal meaning.

As can be seen from Table 1, the distribution of modal adjuncts and evaluative lexical items is relatively diverse, with noticeable variation across categories. Evaluative lexical items account for the

largest proportion, with 193 occurrences (32.7%), demonstrating a strong tendency towards the construction of positive attitudinal meanings and the enhancement of the promotional appeal of destinations. However, when considered within the overall system of modal adjuncts, this category remains lower than the combined frequency of other modal adjunct categories. The most frequent category among modal adjuncts is usuality, with 94 instances (15.9%), which shows how often actions or events occur. Degree and intensity also show comparable frequencies, with 88 (14.9%) and 85 (14.4%) occurrences respectively, suggesting a relatively balanced employment across the texts. Meanwhile, *time* adjunct, recorded at 79 instances (13.4%), is employed to express temporal progression. Finally, *presumption* accounts for 52 instances (8.8%), the smallest share, illustrating that assumptive meanings are less frequently used in tourism texts, where the tourism texts designers tend to put priority on explicit evaluative and descriptive strategies for clearer and more persuasive communication. From the above analysis, three significant insights can be identified.

Firstly, evaluative lexical items form a distinct category in Table 1 and show a notable presence in the corpus. Clearly, evaluative expressions in reader/visitor-oriented tourism texts help highlight the unique charm and distinctive identity of a destination, turning ‘dry’ information into engaging and appealing messages that attract readers/visitors. As a saying goes, “*small details make a big difference*,” it is these carefully chosen evaluative items that bring a tourist destination to life in the minds of readers/visitors. These expressions do more than interpret - they create feelings, impressions, and are often referred to as “teaser advertisement”, for they are designed to whet the readers/ potential visitors’ curiosity. The following examples illustrate the use of evaluative items in the promotional tourism texts selected for analysis.

1. Currently, Bac Ninh province houses 1.589 historical and cultural relic, including the **renowned** Dau pagoda and the Tu Phap (Four Dharma Pillars) pagoda complex in Thuan Thanh District, as the first **significant** Buddhist center in Vietnam (English-language tourism promotional text from Bac Ninh).

2. At Dong Bang Temple, there is a great number of “hát văn” artists. When the mediums come there to serve the deity, they usually ask the local artists at the temple because those artists have a **distinctive** way of singing imbued deeply by the **ancient** singing techniques of “Chèo” art - a type of **traditional** folk theatre performance in Vietnam with **special** techniques such as “hat xuyen tam”, rhythm loosening, inverting the beats, cracking the melodies, bending the tunes as well as different singing techniques, including: “hat bi”, “hat mieu”, “hat thong”, “hat phu binh”, “hat phu chenh”, “hat phu rau”, “hat phu kieu duong”, “hat dua tho”, “hat van”, “hat doc”, “hat con”, “hat ham”, “hat don” together with the rhymed prose (lối phủ nói) and “hat xa thuong”, “xa bang”, “xa lech”, “xa bac”, “xa nam”, creating level of emotions that are fluttering and **nostalgic** as well as helping listeners feel like they are immersing themselves in a **mysterious** and **magical** world (English-language tourism promotional text from Thai Binh).

3. Chua Chan Mountain is one of **majestic rare** mountains of the South, a Dong Nai’s **charming beauty** spot. The mountain position is very high with blue mountain in the sunlight on **brightening** days, **superb** and **gloomy** mountain on grey sky at glow of sunset, **ethereal** mountain with **sluggish** white cloudy part skirting ways (English-language tourism promotional text from Dong Nai).

From the examples presented, the observations can be drawn concerning how evaluative lexical items are employed in each context. The adjectives “renowned” and “significant” in example (1) function as positive evaluative resources, highlighting the cultural and historical value of Bac Ninh’s heritage sites. Another observation is that the example (2) employs a variety of positive evaluative expressions such as “distinctive,” “traditional,” “nostalgic,” and “magical” to enhance the uniqueness and emotionally engaging public attention to the temple. Finally, example (3) successfully employs a rich set of evaluative language to create a highly visual tourism image that allows readers/visitors easily imagine the landscape changing with light, clouds, weather and different times of the day.

Secondly, *usuality*, *degree*, *intensity*, and *time* are relatively evenly distributed indicating that *English-language tourism promotional texts* combine historical, cultural and heritage interpretation, degree of emphasis, and temporal framing to provide information in a balanced way. These modal adjuncts can be found in the following examples:

4. When the Đùng dancing festival occurs at the temple's yard, villagers **usually** surround closely to prostrate themselves and pray the Salt Lady to grant them blessing and good fortune. When dancing, the Đùng **usually** wobble from all directions **sometimes** turning to the left and other times to the right in order to create joyful atmosphere as well as communicating with the villagers better (English-language tourism promotional text from Thai Binh).

5. Long house lies near Sa Mach stream, according to Choro people custom, they **always** live near the water supply. Traditional long house is concentration place to guide villagers how to play gong, leaf-horn, lip-horn, weaving of brocade and rattan papoose, singing, dancing (English-language tourism promotional text from Dong Nai).

6. The two villages honored their ancestors and built temples and shrines to worship to commemorate their merits. The people of Vo village also have a close relationship with the neighboring village and every year **often** come to celebrate and attend festivals at Pha Lai temple (Que Vo), which worships Nguyen Minh Khong and Duong Khong Lo - Zen masters of the Ly Dynasty and considered the ancestors of Dai Viet bronze casting (English-language tourism promotional text from Bac Ninh).

The three examples (4, 5, and 6) above illustrate the use of usuality adjunct, including high-frequency and medium-frequency expressions. These adjuncts play a crucial role in tourism promotional texts because they are used to present ritual behaviors as habitual and reliable practices and a high degree of consistent and long-established living pattern and the close relationship between residents and the community. This helps construct a sense of tradition and collective participation, reinforcing the cultural authenticity of the event.

In terms of *degree* and *intensity* adjuncts, the former range from low to high levels, functioning to either grading/scaling or maximize the description in order to give the statement a more objective tone. In contrast, the latter serve to intensify emphasis, restrict scope, and highlight unexpectedness. The followings are examples of each type.

7. Đình Bảng is **extremely** (*degree*) impressive with its elaborate wooden architecture and richly decorated interior. Visitors are **almost** (*degree*) overwhelmed by its beauty (English-language tourism promotional text from Bac Ninh).

8. All details are carved **very** (*degree*) finely as the patterns, the horizontal pillars, the wing or the patterns of chamber door (English-language tourism promotional text from Dong Nai).

9. With 3 big stones (Three Superimposed Stones), piled up each other, **quite** (*degree*) tottering, over 36m high above the ground on the side of No. 20 National Highway toward the North-East (English-language tourism promotional text from Dong Nai).

10. Living in the Imperial Palace, Nguyệt Ánh often got sad because she was **really** (*intensity*) missing her parents, family, villagers and friends dearly. To make his beloved consort happy, the King commanded his people to create some dummy figures of men and women in giant shapes to dance for the Great Third Imperial Consort (Đệ Tam Cung phi) (English-language tourism promotional text from Thai Binh).

11. Due to the wartime destruction, the entire pagoda was completely demolished in 1947, leaving **only** (*intensity*) the stone statue of Amitabha, a masterpiece of Ly Dynasty stone sculpture (English-language tourism promotional text from Bac Ninh).

In terms of *time* adjuncts, they are realized in different language situations as in the following sentences:

12. *All three worship rooms located at the next door and **still** have all things, including bronzy worshipping objects, candlesticks and vases (English-language tourism promotional text from Bac Ninh).*

13. ***Once** the preparation steps are complete, the fish will be packed in a neat order as well as being put into a wooden wattle to avoid any damage of the fish such as the skin, the nail..., then heating up the water to a proper temperature before boiling the fish” (English-language tourism promotional text from Thai Binh).*

As illustrated by the examples above, the adjunct ‘still’ in example (12) illustrates that all the three worship rooms in Tran temple remain its original worship items and can be well-preserved over the years.

Thirdly, *presumption* has the lowest proportion, as tourism promotional texts prefer explicit and concrete statements rather than speculative or assumptive meanings.

14. *There is **no doubt that** a visit to Phat Tich pagoda offers a profound cultural experience, with its ancient architecture and peaceful mountain setting leaving a lasting impression on visitors (English-language tourism promotional text from Bac Ninh)*

15. ***Evidently**, Cat Tien National Park stands out as a biodiversity hotspot, offering visitors a rare experience to explore pristine forests and encounter diverse wildlife in their natural habitat (English-language tourism promotional text from Dong Nai).*

As demonstrated in example (14) and (15), both “no doubt that” “evidently,” can be categorized under presumption in Halliday’s framework. The adjunct “no doubt that” in this case serves as a marker of presumption in Halliday’s sense, suggesting that the information is as an assumed fact shared between the writer and readers. In this way, the writer encodes a very high degree of certainty by presupposing agreement, rather than explicitly arguing for it. While the adjunct “evidently” signals that the presumption is referred to observable evidence. It presents the statement as evident rather than assumed shared knowledge.

Overall, the findings from Table 1 indicate that Modal adjunct resources reveal a multi-layered organization of interpersonal meaning in tourism promotional texts, where habitual, scalar, temporal, and presumptive dimensions jointly construct persuasive destination representations. Cultural practices are framed as habitual and socially sustained (usuality-related), reinforcing authenticity and continuity in tourism experiences. Scalar resources (degree and intensity) regulate the force of attitudinal meanings through scaling of extent and emphasis, with degree expressing approximation (e.g. *absolutely, almost, nearly, quite,*) and intensity reinforcing evaluative force (e.g. *really, very, simply, only*), contributing to the persuasive and promotional effect of tourism discourse. Time resources (*still, once, just*) situate heritage within a historical continuum that connects past and present experiences. Meanwhile, presumptive resources express epistemic stance, projecting interpretative certainty and strengthening the authority of descriptions. In addition, the evaluative items contribute to aesthetically pleasing and emotionally engaging images by highlighting desirable qualities such as beauty, uniqueness, majesty, and a sense of mystery associated with local landscapes and cultural practices. It is evident that the absence of these resources would considerably reduce the communicative effectiveness of tourism promotional discourse, thereby weakening its promotional function as a form of advertising discourse.

Table 2. *Modal operators of modality in the selected English-language tourism promotional texts*

Modal operator degrees	Frequency	Percentage
Low	89	34.5%
Median	137	53.1%
High	32	12.4%
Total	258	100%

Table 2 represents the frequency of modal operator degrees in the selected English-language tourism promotional texts, showing a clear preference for median modal operators (e.g., *will, would*),

with the largest proportion (53.1%). Low-level modal operators appear less frequently, accounting for 89 instances (around 34.5%), while high-level degree is relatively limited (12.4%). The following examples demonstrate the use of modal operators across different degrees:

16. *The Head of the Sao Den Temple **will** beat three long drums to signal to heaven, earth, trees, flowers and all the things that the people's sincerity has been witnessed, and the wind **will** rise (English-language tourism promotional text from Thai Binh).*

17. *When coming there (Ancient house of Dao family), visitors **will** be surprised by the ages of all inside items such as the table, the cabinet or the pillars which are made by ironwood – the solid and the well-known timber (English-language tourism promotional text from Dong Nai).*

18. *After taking the bamboo lath successfully, people who join Quang Lang festival **can** take it and leave at their bedhead, hoping they would be healthy; people in the reproductive age **can** get pregnant as soon as they wish (English-language tourism promotional text from Thai Binh).*

19. *Coming to Ding Bang, visitors **can not** only return to the Thai temple of the Ly Dynasty, admire the ancient communal house, a masterpiece of the ancients but also have the opportunity to enjoy an ancient cake (English-language tourism promotional text from Bac Ninh).*

In general, the realization of modal operator degrees reveals a strategic pattern in how these items are employed in the chosen English-language tourism promotional texts. This, in turn, helps attract readers and potential visitors by conveying a sense of engagement with the tourist destinations.

The following section outlines the results of the analytical process of modulation. Unlike modality, modulation resources tend to be employed less frequently, but they still contribute to the effectiveness of the tourism promotional texts.

Table 3. *Modulation resources in the selected English-language tourism promotional texts*

Modulation resource	Frequency	Degree	Function
must	15	high	strong obligation
need	6	high	necessity
have/has to	4	high	external obligation
Total	25		

As shown in the table, high-degree modulation is realized through three main resources, with a total of 25 occurrences in the corpus. Among these, “must” is the most frequently used item (15 occurrences), expressing obligation, requirement and responsibility. However, its meaning may vary depending on the context. In some other cases, ‘must’ functions as a weaker form with no implication of the writer’s authority, being used to characterize things or entities. While the modulation item “need” (6 instances) conveys necessity, “have/has to” (4 instances) reflects external obligation. The examples below illustrate how these modulation resources function in different contexts:

20. *Depending on the product at Tan Van ceramics village, indoor square small pots that **need** detailed patterns **must** be made using molds, while other items can be handmade (English-language tourism promotional text from Dong Nai).*

21. *One day before the festival, the mistress **has to** go out to the communal house, bringing the incense to her home and worshipping beforehand (English-language tourism promotional text from Thai Binh).*

22. *The ingredients to make Bui meat rolls **must** be black pigs with broken backs shaped like saddles and short snouts fed with rice bran and duckweed, or banana vegetables (English-language tourism promotional text from Bac Ninh).*

In general, high-degree modulation in the chosen tourism promotional texts is often employed to serve instructive, descriptive or promotional purposes. Expressions such as “tourists have to overcome nearly 800 meters of mountain climbing” provide practical guidance for readers/visitors,

while other instances are used to promote traditional cuisine or to emphasize essential characteristics of communal houses and cultural sites.

5. Conclusion

The results of the study reveal that modality in the selected English-language tourism promotional texts in Vietnam primarily functions as a persuasive and appealing resource rather than merely as a means of conveying information. The dominance of modalization resources, including adjuncts and modal operators, alongside evaluative lexical items functioning as complementary resources, suggests that tourism promotional texts tend to construct an engaging and reader-friendly tone rather than convey a fixed perspective. Through such linguistic choices, tourism promotional texts are able to strengthen and intensify tourism interpretations, making destinations appear more distinctive and memorable to readers. In addition, the use of modalization in tourism promotional texts contributes to highlighting cultural identity, historical significance, ritual practices, and experiential values, while also stimulating readers' curiosity and imagination. In contrast, modulation occurs less frequently; however, it still supports the effectiveness of tourism promotional texts. High-degree modulation is particularly common in texts that provide guidance, describe procedures, or explain local cuisine, as such linguistic choices serve to enhance clarity rather than impose authority in a strict sense. In other cases, high-degree modulation (e.g., *have to*, *must*) is used to indicate necessary actions within cultural practices. For example, "One day before the festival, the mistress has to go to the communal house, bringing the incense to her home and worshipping beforehand." Although used less frequently than modalization, modulation indicates functional diversity in tourism promotional texts, particularly in supporting the clarity and expressing culturally necessary actions. Taken together, these findings contribute to modality research by demonstrating how modality resources are strategically employed to construct persuasive and inviting meanings in Vietnamese tourism promotional texts. In this way, the study extends Halliday's framework of modality to the analysis of tourism promotional texts and further provides evidence of the relationship between modality and engaging communication. The study also offers practical implications for Vietnamese tourism writers by highlighting the usefulness of modality types and degrees, together with evaluative meanings, in tourism promotional text design. The strategic selection of these linguistic resources allows writers to vary tone and emphasis according to different tourism themes and communicative purposes. For instance, the use of low, median, and high degrees of modalization enables tourism promotional texts to create anticipation and openness of interpretation throughout destination narratives. Evaluative adjectives such as *rare*, *ancient*, and *mysterious* help foreground architectural features, the long-standing cultural value of pagodas, and the mysterious atmosphere associated with caves. In contrast, modulation resources better support tourism discourse that requires guidance, instruction, and cultural accuracy. Overall, modality serves as a semantic resource contributing to both information delivery and the construction of more distinctive tourism representations.

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Tình thái trong các văn bản quảng bá du lịch bằng tiếng Anh tại Việt Nam:

Từ bình diện Ngôn ngữ học chức năng hệ thống

Tóm tắt: Dựa trên Ngôn ngữ học chức năng hệ thống của M. A. K. Halliday, bài viết đi sâu nghiên cứu việc sử dụng tình thái trong các văn bản quảng bá du lịch bằng tiếng Anh tại Việt Nam. Nghiên cứu sử dụng phương pháp phân tích văn bản định tính kết hợp thống kê tần suất. Dữ liệu gồm 30 văn bản quảng bá du lịch được thu thập từ các sách hướng dẫn và ấn phẩm quảng bá du lịch của ba tỉnh tại Việt Nam, nhằm phân tích việc sử dụng tình thái trong các văn bản quảng bá du lịch này (10 văn bản được lựa chọn từ sách hướng dẫn/ấn phẩm du lịch của mỗi tỉnh). Nghiên cứu cũng phân tích các nguồn từ vựng có chức năng đánh giá xuất hiện trong ngữ liệu vì chúng liên quan tới khái niệm về nghĩa biểu hiện thái độ của Halliday trong siêu chức năng liên nhân. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy các chiến lược giao tiếp chính được xác định thông qua hai tiểu loại của tình thái, gồm tình thái hóa và đạo nghĩa hóa, cùng với các từ vựng có chức năng đánh giá đóng vai trò là nguồn bổ trợ. Những yếu tố trên góp phần khắc họa vẻ đẹp độc đáo và tiềm ẩn của các điểm đến du lịch, qua đó mở ra cơ hội cho độc giả tự diễn giải và tưởng tượng về điểm đến. Tình thái hóa chủ yếu được thể hiện thông qua các tác từ tình thái ở mức trung bình và thấp, cùng với các phụ ngữ chỉ tính thường xuyên, mức độ, cường độ, thời gian và sự suy đoán giả định, góp phần kiến tạo sắc thái văn bản theo hướng mở, lôi cuốn, đồng thời tăng cường tính nhấn mạnh, gia tăng cường độ biểu đạt, từ đó nâng cao sự hấp dẫn của văn bản. Đạo nghĩa hóa ở cấp độ cao chủ yếu được sử dụng trong các ngữ cảnh mang tính hướng dẫn, quy trình thủ tục tại các điểm du lịch cũng như trong các hoạt động thực hành văn hóa, điều này làm đa dạng hóa cách diễn đạt trong các văn bản quảng bá du lịch. Tóm lại, tình thái và các nguồn từ vựng có chức năng đánh giá trong các văn bản quảng bá du lịch đóng vai trò quan trọng trong việc lôi cuốn người đọc cùng tham gia vào quá trình diễn giải các ý nghĩa lịch sử và giá trị văn hóa của các điểm đến, từ đó tạo cho người đọc cảm giác như đang trực tiếp trải nghiệm tại các điểm du lịch.

Từ khóa: Ngôn ngữ học chức năng hệ thống; siêu chức năng liên nhân; thức và tình thái; tình thái hóa; đạo nghĩa hóa.