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A Systemic Functional Analysis of Modality and Power Relations in Thai and English Executive Messages from Three SET50 Companies in Thailand

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Abstract

This study investigates modality as a linguistic resource for constructing reality and negotiating power relations in bilingual sustainability reports (independently produced parallel versions) produced by SET50-listed companies in Thailand. Drawing on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), particularly Halliday and Matthiessen's interpersonal metafunction framework and Humphrey, Droga, and Feez's modality analysis model, the study employs a mixed-methods approach integrating Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine English and Thai versions of Chairman and CEO messages in 2024 annual reports. Using maximum variation purposive sampling, three companies from different industrial sectors were selected: Thai Oil, Krungthai Bank, and CP ALL. The findings reveal differences in modality distribution across the selected companies and language versions. High-value modality predominates in all three English texts and in the Thai texts of Krungthai Bank and CP ALL, whereas medium- and low-value modality together predominate in the Thai text of Thaioil. Under the classification used in this study, modal verbs constitute the largest grammatical category in all six texts. The English versions of Thaioil and Krungthai Bank have higher proportions of high-value modality than their Thai counterparts, while CP ALL shows the reverse pattern. Across all sectors, both languages largely avoid coercive high-modality modal verbs, suggesting a preference for less directive and more stakeholder-oriented corporate communication from authoritarian discourse toward collaborative stakeholder engagement. The study demonstrates that modality functions not only as a grammatical resource but also as a cross-cultural mechanism for managing legitimacy, trust, and power relations in corporate sustainability communication. The findings contribute to research on SFL, corporate

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discourse, and sustainability reporting in emerging market contexts. Future research should explore cross-linguistic modality shifts across broader ASEAN corporate texts to inform international communication strategies.

Keywords: corporate sustainability reporting, cross-cultural discourse, modality, power relations, systemic functional linguistics

Introduction

In an era in which sustainability has become a foundational norm in business operations, corporate sustainability reports function as more than instruments for disclosing Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) performance. They serve as strategic communication tools through which organizations cultivate corporate image and maintain operational legitimacy (Laine et al., 2022). This phenomenon is particularly evident among companies listed in the SET50 index, which possess high market capitalization and exert considerable influence over the Thai economy and society.

However, the discourse within these reports does not constitute a neutral or objective presentation of facts. Rather, it involves the construction of reality through sophisticated linguistic mechanisms (Fairclough, 2013). One of the most potent of these mechanisms is modality—a linguistic system that reflects the author's attitude, degree of commitment, and allocation of responsibility. Modal choices can contribute to the textual presentation of organizational commitments and certainty. Their interpersonal significance, however, needs to be interpreted in relation to the surrounding discourse and reporting context rather than treated as direct evidence of deliberate corporate intent. For instance, the deployment of high-certainty modal expressions in relation to greenhouse gas reduction targets effectively constructs an anticipated future as an inevitable reality from the reader's perspective, thereby serving as a linguistic mechanism to mitigate tensions and negotiate power dynamics between the corporation and society (Cho et al., 2015).

Research on corporate reporting has established that executive messages are important sites for examining organizational self-presentation and stakeholder positioning. Liu et al. (2022), comparing CEO statements in annual reports and corporate social responsibility (CSR) reports, identified differences in thematic priorities and linguistic self-reference between the two reporting genres. Research has also addressed stance more directly. Liu (2026) examined epistemic stance markers in energy companies' CSR reports, while Nguyen (2026) investigated grammatical stance in CEO statements from U.S. and Vietnamese banks. These studies provide a basis for analyzing how organizations present certainty, commitment, and relationships with stakeholders. They also indicate that differences in reporting genre and corporate context need to be considered when interpreting linguistic patterns.

A related body of research concerns the role of translation in corporate reporting. Wang and Liu (2024) identified linguistic differences between translated and non-translated English chairman's

statements from companies in Mainland China, Hong Kong, and the United States. In the Thai context, Prommak (2024) examined English-language features and Thai–English translation strategies in annual reports issued by the Department of Business Development. Although these studies address different reporting contexts, they establish the relevance of translation to the analysis of report language. Differences between Thai and English versions should therefore not be attributed directly to cultural preferences without considering textual correspondence, linguistic structure, and possible translation or editorial choices.

Research on modality in bilingual texts offers a further analytical foundation. Huang and Li (2023) examined modality shifts in Chinese–English research article abstracts through an SFL-based analysis of modal type, value, and orientation. Their findings demonstrate that modality can be expressed differently across corresponding texts and that interpretation requires attention to lexical, grammatical, and textual context. While their study concerns academic rather than corporate discourse, it provides a methodological point of departure for investigating whether corresponding passages convey comparable degrees and kinds of certainty or commitment.

Against this background, the gap addressed here concerns the relationship between modality choices in Thai and English executive messages issued by the same companies. The studies reviewed above examine reporting genres, cross-country variation, translated English corporate texts, or modality shifts in another language pair and genre. They do not resolve how corresponding Thai and English executive messages realize modal meanings or how similarities and differences contribute to interpersonal positioning in the selected corporate cases. The present study addresses this question by comparing six executive messages, comprising one Thai and one English version from each of three SET50 companies in Thailand. SFL provides the framework for describing modal meanings, values, and grammatical realizations, while CDA supports contextual interpretation of institutional authority and stakeholder relationships. The analysis focuses on textual representations and does not establish authorial intentions or actual audience responses. Its conclusions are limited to the selected messages and companies.

The present study compares Thai and English executive messages published by the same three companies for the 2024 reporting year. The sources of all six texts are identified in the methodology. The comparison concerns the published texts and the modal meanings they express, rather than the processes through which the language versions were produced. The study therefore does not assume that either language served as the source text or that the other version was produced through direct translation. Differences between the versions are examined as textual differences whose interpretation requires attention to the surrounding discourse, content correspondence, and reporting context. They are not treated as evidence of translation direction, deliberate adaptation, or culturally motivated editorial decisions. This distinction allows the study to investigate interpersonal meaning in the selected Thai and English messages while keeping its conclusions within the evidence available.

Research Questions

1. What are the similarities and differences in the frequency and distribution of modality resources across the three selected corperate cases?
2. How does modality construct interpersonal meaning—specifically power relations and social distance (tenor)— across the three selected corperate cases?
3. How does modality deployment reflect cross-cultural communication strategies—specifically, regarding power relations and social distance (tenor)— across the three selected corperate cases?

Literature Review

This section presents a literature review and research studies on modality within the SFL framework, with primary focus on scholarship published between 2016 and 2025, supplemented by seminal earlier works. The review explores the mechanistic reasoning underlying human deployment of grammatical structures as tools for negotiating power, establishing stance, and regulating social distance. It is argued that modality functions as a linguistic resource and social control mechanism that reflects and reproduces unequal power relations.

1. Fundamental Concepts of SFL Theory

It is argued that language is not merely a tool for communication but a semiotic system designed to manage social relationships and constitute power structures (Moncada Linares & Xin, 2020). SFL theory, developed by M. A. K. Halliday, analyzes language through three primary functional dimensions, or metafunctions (Moncada Linares & Xin, 2020). The most relevant to this study is the interpersonal metafunction, which operates to create and sustain interpersonal relationships, express stance, and evaluate situations (Moncada Linares & Xin, 2020).

Within this dimension, modality functions as an intermediary space between categorical assertion and categorical denial, serving as a grammatical resource through which speakers regulate their degree of commitment to a given proposition (Makhloufi, 2025). A decade-long review by Cheng (2024) confirms that modality has remained one of the most prominent topics in discourse analysis, precisely because it constitutes an explicit reflex of social dynamics.

Within Halliday's theoretical framework, modality operates along two primary axes (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Modalization regulates propositions through degrees of probability (e.g., possibly or certainly) and usuality (e.g., sometimes or always). Modulation, by contrast, regulates proposals through degrees of obligation (e.g., required to) and inclination (e.g., willing to). The selection of a specific modality level (high, medium, or low) is therefore not a random grammatical choice but a calculated assessment of social risk: speakers who employ high modality assert epistemic authority while simultaneously assuming full accountability for the veracity of their claims (Makhloufi, 2025).

2. Theoretical Developments: Evidentiality, Cross-Linguistic Variation, and Interpersonal Metaphor

Over the past decade, SFL theory has been extended to account for increasingly complex linguistic phenomena. A significant development is the integration of evidentiality—the grammatical marking of information sources—as a constituent of the modalization system (He, 2024; Zhou, 2022). Mechanistically, the citation of sources functions as an epistemic shield, enabling speakers to maintain communicative authority while displacing accountability onto external entities. Zhou (2022) further proposes a distinction between root and epistemic probability levels, thereby enhancing the analytical precision of stance attribution.

The mechanisms of modality are not universal across linguistic systems. Research on Japanese (Sawada, 2022) and Chinese (Chen, 2017) indicates that Asian languages demonstrate a consistent tendency to move from explicit toward implicit modal orientation. Moreover, geopolitical contexts shape near-synonymous lexical choices, as illustrated by the differential deployment of *guli* (鼓励) and *mianli* (勉勵) in Mandarin to reflect distinct power relations between Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese societies (Wang & Huang, 2018).

Hu (2023) employs a constructional approach to elucidate the interpersonal metaphor of modality, demonstrating how speakers deploy non-congruent grammatical configurations to convey epistemic stance. Viewed through the lens of cognitive psychology, such structural complexity generates a latent variable of cognitive load for the receiver. Augmenting decoding demands may function as a psychological strategy to reduce the listener's critical vigilance, thereby enabling the embedding of ideological positions without explicit signaling.

3. Applications of Modality Analysis in Social Discourse

Modality has been employed as an analytical instrument across multiple social domains, consistently revealing power asymmetries embedded in discourse.
In the global political arena, modality functions as a key resource for persuasion (Niez et al., 2025; Tahira et al., 2025). Political leaders frequently deploy high-value modality to project decisiveness (Niez et al., 2025), while multilateral forums such as BRICS summits exhibit strategic use of modal auxiliaries to maintain balance among competing powers (Lu, 2022). During crisis events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, modal resources are dynamically recalibrated: evidence from Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's speeches demonstrates an initial restriction to probability and obligation expressions, followed by an expansion across all modal dimensions as the crisis escalated, thereby enabling emotional connection and crowd management (Kristianti, 2020).

In legal contexts, courtrooms institutionalize power asymmetry through the systematic distribution of modal resources (Ramadhani et al., 2019). Legal counsel deploys high and medium modality in conjunction with objective orientation to construct authoritative truth claims, while witnesses are

typically confined to subjective, low-value modality that structurally undermines their credibility (Ramadhani et al., 2019). In educational settings, teachers who strategically employ interpersonal projection to mitigate direct authority are shown to foster greater student willingness to communicate and cultivate psychologically safe learning environments (Luthfiyati et al., 2024; Yang & Yin, 2022).

4. Power Relations, Interpersonal Stance, and Social Distance

Modality functions as an underlying linguistic mechanism through which hegemony is reproduced and legitimized (Fairclough, 2013). SFL theory distinguishes two modal orientations: subjective modality, which foregrounds the speaker's identity (e.g., I think) and renders propositions open to challenge; and objective modality, which erases speaker identity (e.g., it is possible) and constitutes a form of grammatical camouflage through which personal stances are transmuted into apparent empirical truths (Fairclough, 2013; Ramadhani et al., 2019).

Power asymmetry is evident across institutional discourse contexts, including medical consultations (Mishler, 1984; West, 1984) and electoral campaigns (Koutchadé, 2015). A foundational question concerns whether power precedes language or whether language itself constitutes and determines power (Fairclough, 1989). Evidence from courtroom discourse confirms that the distributional frequency of modality indexes social positioning, with powerful and powerless speech patterns directly reflecting interactional status (Dong, 2013; O'Barr, 1982).

Social distance is further regulated through the tenor dimension of context (Butt et al., 2021). In electoral discourse, the conjunction of first-person plural pronouns (we, our) with modal expressions constructs an illusion of solidarity (Koutchadé, 2015), while the projection of social distance in a foreign policy discourse demonstrates how modality demarcates ideological boundaries (Lu, 2022).

5. Relationship between Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) offer related but distinct perspectives on the relationship between language and social life. SFL conceptualizes language as a resource for making meaning in context, including the construction of interpersonal relationships. CDA examines how discourse participates in the representation, maintenance, or contestation of social relations and power. Their connection is therefore grounded in an interest in language as social practice, while their analytical emphases differ. SFL provides explicit categories for examining linguistic choices, whereas CDA situates those choices within broader institutional and social contexts. A systematic review of 78 empirical studies by Alameda-Hernández and Jiménez-Briones (2025) documents the established use of SFL resources, including modality, in CDA research and highlights the importance of specifying the linguistic systems actually employed.

In the present study, this relationship provides a basis for examining how Thai and English executive messages present corporate commitments and position organizations in relation to stakeholders. SFL guides the identification and description of modal meanings, values, and grammatical realizations within the interpersonal metafunction. CDA informs the interpretation of how these patterns may contribute to representations of institutional authority, responsibility, and stakeholder participation. The connection between the two frameworks is established through contextualized textual evidence, rather than through a direct equation between a modal category and a particular power relationship.

Accordingly, the presence of high-value modality is not treated as sufficient evidence of dominance, nor is low-value modality taken as proof of deference or cultural preference. Interpretation requires consideration of the proposition or proposal being expressed, the actors involved, the surrounding discourse, and the reporting context. This approach distinguishes linguistic description from critical interpretation and keeps claims proportionate to the evidence available in the six selected texts. The analysis concerns textual representations of power relations and does not establish authorial intentions, actual audience responses, or sector-wide patterns.

6. Research Gaps and Theoretical Propositions

The literature review identifies three key research gaps and formulates corresponding theoretical propositions.

Proposition 1 (Theoretical Convergence): A systematic interface between modality has not yet been established in the literature (Xu & Liang, 2023). Future research should investigate whether modality functions as an epistemic buffer while the Attitude system drives affective directionality, and should attempt to formalize the weighted interaction between these systems.

Proposition 2 (Multimodal Latent Variables): In digital contexts (Zakiyah, 2025), power is transmitted not only through modal auxiliaries but also through latent channels including response latency, visual semiotics, and emoji. SFL requires structural expansion to accommodate these emergent multimodal grammars.

Proposition 3 (Linguistic Ecology in Asia): Western modality frameworks may be insufficient for languages with deep social stratification, such as Thai. Future studies should empirically examine whether Thai sentence-final particles constitute a form of hyper-modality, simultaneously encoding semantic, grammatical, and social-indexical functions.

Argumentatively, it is discussed and confirmed that modality within SFL is not a static grammatical rule but a dynamic social mechanism deployed to calibrate interpersonal relationships, construct power, determine social distance (Butt et al., 2021). Significant research gaps remain, particularly in diverse linguistic and cultural contexts, and the integration of computational approaches with deep human interpretation represents a promising direction for future inquiry.

Methodology

This research employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) with Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), to examine the interpersonal metafunction as realized through the mechanism of modality. The convergence of these two frameworks shifts the analytical focus from simple lexical counting toward an understanding of how international corporations strategically deploy grammatical structures to manage stakeholder relations. This design facilitates the identification of latent cultural variables—such as the depersonalization of authority and linguistic hedging—that function differentially across the source and target language contexts (Fairclough, 2013).

1. Case Selection and Corpus Design

This study adopts a bounded comparative design to examine modality in Thai and English executive messages issued by three SET50-listed companies in Thailand. The selected companies are Thai Oil Public Company Limited, Krungthai Bank Public Company Limited, and CP ALL Public Company Limited. They provide contrasting business contexts in energy, banking, and commerce, respectively. The purpose of selecting these contexts is to examine similarities and differences in modality across the selected corporate cases, rather than to estimate sector-level characteristics or represent all companies in the SET50 index. This rationale follows the principle that purposive case selection should be aligned with the research objective and the level at which findings are interpreted (Bouncken et al., 2026).

The corpus comprises six executive messages from the companies' 2024 reports, consisting of one Thai and one English text from each company. The sampling structure therefore consists of three corporate cases and three bilingual pairs. Each Thai–English pair provides the primary basis for comparison within a company, while comparisons across companies provide additional contextual contrasts. The two language versions are not treated as independent organizational cases.

The selection focuses on executive messages because they provide a clearly bounded setting for examining how corporate leadership presents organizational activities, commitments, and relationships with stakeholders. Restricting the corpus to this genre supports close analysis of modality within a specific communicative setting. Including both language versions from each company also enables comparison within a shared organizational and reporting context. However, such pairing does not establish that the texts have identical authorship, intended audiences, or production processes. The availability of two language versions is therefore not taken as evidence of direct translation or a particular translation direction.

The source documents differ in report type. The Thai Oil and Krungthai Bank messages were obtained from sustainability reports, whereas the CP ALL messages were obtained from an annual report. Although all six texts are executive messages, this difference limits their comparability because report genre may influence topic selection and linguistic presentation. Accordingly, differences observed across the selected companies are interpreted with reference to their reporting

contexts and are not attributed solely to industry membership, language, or cultural preferences.

2. Corpus Adequacy and Scope of Inference

The six-text corpus was defined to support detailed analysis of a narrowly specified object of inquiry, namely modality in the selected Thai and English executive messages. Its adequacy is considered in relation to the research objective, the comparability of the bilingual pairs, and the textual evidence supporting each analytical claim. The document count alone is not treated as evidence that the corpus is sufficient. A small, bounded corpus permits close examination of modal expressions in their surrounding clauses and discourse contexts, but the depth of analysis does not establish statistical representativeness.

The design provides three opportunities for within-company comparison and allows the analysis to examine whether an observed pattern recurs, differs, or is contradicted across the selected cases. Frequencies and percentages describe distributions within these six texts. They are not estimates of modality use across the SET50 population. Likewise, individual modal expressions and clauses are linguistic units within the selected documents, rather than additional independent corporate cases.

The resulting interpretations are therefore limited to the messages and companies examined. Because only one company was selected from each business context, company-specific characteristics cannot be separated from possible sector-related influences. Therefore, this study does not establish industry-wide patterns, general differences between Thai and English corporate communication, or authorial intentions and audience effects. We propose clarifying that the corpus comprises three corporate cases and three Thai–English pairs, rather than six independent organizational cases. The selection provides contrasting corporate contexts and supports detailed within-company comparison. It is not intended to establish statistical representativeness or sector-wide patterns.

In this study, the Thai and English messages are treated as company-based language pairs for comparative textual analysis. Their sources are documented, but their production sequence and translation procedures are not established by the available data. Neither version is therefore designated as the source or target text. Correspondence between passages is assessed from their substantive content and communicative function, rather than assumed from their publication by the same company.

3. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed through a two-axis analytical matrix: the axis of modality value (higher, medium, lower) and the axis of grammatical structure (modal verbs, adverbials, adjectivals, nouns, and clauses/phrases). Cross-tabulation was performed to compare structural distributions between English and Thai texts, with strategic metaphors employed to elucidate cross-linguistic differences. To reduce interpretation bias, the study adopted the modality analysis framework of Humphrey et

al. (2012), applying it consistently across all six texts. Quantitative percentage distributions were calculated and compared, followed by qualitative interpretation of observed patterns.

4. Analytical Instrument

The modality analysis instrument, derived from the SFL framework developed by M. A. K. Halliday and operationalized by Humphrey et al. (2012), classifies modal resources according to two functional axes: (1) Modalization (probability/usuality), for the analysis of truth construction, epistemic certainty, and degrees of uncertainty; and (2) Modulation (obligation/inclination), for the analysis of commitment expressions, normative requirements, and power management. The classification scheme is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Guideline of Modality Analysis (Adapted from Humphrey et al., 2012, p.97)

Grammatical structures	Higher modality	Medium modality	Lower modality
Modal verbs (auxiliaries)	must, ought to, need to, has to, had to ต้อง, ควร	will, would, shall, should, is to, was to, supposed to จะ, ควร, สมมุติว่า	can, may, could, might สามารถ, อาจ
Modal adverbials	certainly, definitely, always, never, absolutely, surely, in fact แน่นอน, สม่ำเสมอ, ในความเป็นจริง	probably, usually, generally, likely อาจจะ, โดยปกติ, โดยทั่วไป, ดูเหมือนว่า	possibly, perhaps, maybe, sometimes เป็นไปได้, บางที, อาจจะ, บางครั้ง
Modal adjectivals	certain, definite, absolute, necessary, obligatory แน่นอน, จำเป็น, บังคับ	probable, usual อาจจะเป็นได้, โดยปกติ	possible เป็นไปได้
Modal nouns	certainty, necessity, requirement, obligation ความแน่นอน, ความจำเป็น, ความต้องการ, ข้อบังคับ	probability ความเป็นไปได้	possibility ความเป็นไปได้
Modal clauses and phrases (interpersonal metaphors)	It is essential (that)…, I believe (that)…, It is obvious (that)… มันเป็นสิ่งจำเป็นว่า, ผม/ฉันเชื่อว่า, เป็นที่ชัดเจนว่า	I think (that)…, In my opinion…, It is likely (that)…, It isn't likely (that)…, This suggests (that)… ผมคิดว่า, ในความคิดของผม, ดูเหมือนว่า, ดูไม่เหมือนว่า, สิ่งนี้แนะนำว่า	I guess (that)… ผมคาดเดาว่า

In high-level executive business English, organizations frequently avoid traditional modal verbs such as will or must and instead employ nominalization, transmuting modal intent into nouns such as commitment or pledge, often reinforced with high-value adverbials such as continuously, to achieve a formal and stable institutional tone. In Thai, however, medium-to-low value modal verbs such as "*cha*" (จะ; 'will/shall') and "*samat*" (สามารถ; 'can/be able to') remain prominent, functioning to signal organizational readiness and potential in conjunction with adverbials that emphasize determination and commitment.

Results

From the analysis, the results are shown accordingly in the following tables.

Table 2

Modality Analysis of the English-Language Message from the Chairman and CEO in Thaioil's Annual Report 2024

Grammatical structures	High tokens	n	%	Medium tokens	n	%	Low tokens	n	%	Total (%)
Modal verbs	remain committed to, pledge to	2	40.00	aim to, strive to	2	40.00	-	0	0.00	80.00
Modal adverbials	-	0	0.00	-	0	0.00	-	0	0.00	0.00
Modal adjectivals	-	0	0.00	-	0	0.00	-	0	0.00	0.00
Modal nouns	requirements	1	20.00	-	0	0.00	-	0	0.00	20.00
Modal clauses/phrases	-	0	0.00	-	0	0.00	-	0	0.00	0.00
Total		3	60.00		2	40.00		0	0.00	100.00

Table 2 reveals that the omission of traditional modal auxiliaries in favor of high-modality volitional verb groups—specifically remain committed to and pledge to—functions as a sophisticated mechanism of institutional reality construction. Rather than employing coercive or directive modals to articulate future goals, the board utilizes performative terminology that anchors the organization to absolute, ongoing commitments. Furthermore, the strategic deployment of the modal noun requirements reflects a process of nominalization that depersonalizes corporate action, framing the company's strategic trajectory not as an internal managerial choice, but as an inevitable response to global sustainability mandates. Alongside the use of medium-modality verbs such as *aim to* and *strive to*, this lexical configuration acts as a discursive risk management tool. It enables Thaioil to project the decisive epistemic certainty demanded by international investors while simultaneously maintaining a collaborative, forward-looking stance that mitigates the inherent environmental vulnerabilities associated with the energy sector.

Table 3

Modality Analysis of the Thai-Language Message from the Chairman and CEO in Thaioil's Annual Report 2024

Grammatical structures	High tokens	n	%	Medium tokens	n	%	Low tokens	n	%	Total (%)
Modal verbs	มุ่งมั่น, ทุ่มเท	4	13.79	จะ, มุ่ง, มุ่งเน้น	7	24.14	สามารถ	6	20.69	58.62
Modal adverbials	-	0	0.00	-	0	0.00	-	0	0.00	0.00
Modal adjectivals	-	0	0.00	-	0	0.00	-	0	0.00	0.00
Modal nouns	ความต้องการ	2	6.90	เป้าหมาย	4	13.79	ความสามารถ	5	17.24	37.93
Modal clauses/phrases	เชื่อมั่นว่า	1	3.45	-	0	0.00	-	0	0.00	3.45
Total		7	24.14		11	37.93		11	37.93	100.00

Table 3 presents that based on the textual analysis of the complete Thai-language content within Thaioil's "Letter from the Board of Directors," and utilizing the criteria established in the analytical model framework—including the inclusion of specific verbs and nouns denoting volition, future commitment, and factual ability under the specified conditions—the findings are detailed above:

In the Thai source text, the authors strategically selected proactive lexical equivalents of modal verbs and modal nouns to explicitly communicate commitment and business objectives. These elements can be categorized by their levels of modal strength as follows:

High Modality (High Certainty/Commitment): The terms "*mung-man*" (committed) and "*mung-man thum-the*" (dedicated/devoted) were identified, representing intention and epistemic/deontic commitment (equivalent to obligation/must). Additionally, the model-specified noun "*khwam-tong-kan*" (requirement/need) and the clausal structure "*chua-man wa*" (firmly believe that) were present, strictly aligning with the established criteria.

Medium Modality (Intermediate Certainty): The model-specified modal auxiliary "*ja*" (will) was identified, along with a group of verbs denoting intention or objectives (equivalent to will/aim), specifically "*mung-nen*" (focus on) and "*mung*" (aim/strive). The semantic noun equivalent "*pao-mai*" (target/goal) was also observed.

Low Modality (Possibility/Potential): The model-specified auxiliary verb "*samart*" (can/be able to) was found, alongside its nominalized forms "*khwam-samart*" (ability) and "*khit-khwam-samart*" (capability/capacity), which correspond to expressions of potential, ability, or possibility.

In conclusion, a total token count of 29 words was recorded. The frequency distribution, formatted in accordance with the prototype template, is presented in the table above. It is also observed that

consistently aligned with the English analysis, the organization's Thai communication strategically emphasizes realized achievements through the use of "*samart*" (can/achieve). Concurrently, it projects a forward-looking orientation via target-driven vocabulary such as "*pao-mai*" (goal), "*mung-nen*" (focus), and "*mung-man*" (commit) to cultivate shareholder confidence, rather than relying on conventional modal verbs that may lack sufficient rhetorical weight.

1. Comparative Analysis of Modality Structures: Thaioil

A comparative assessment of modality deployment in the Thaioil discourse reveals disparate syntactic architectures designed for divergent sociopolitical objectives. In the English text, the concentration of higher-modality resources—exclusively situated within adverbials and nouns at 60%—functions as a strategic instrument of nominalization. This structural choice effectively erases the actor's identity, transmuting the executive perspective into an objective institutional reality that projects absolute certainty to international capital markets. Conversely, the Thai text exhibits a strategic dispersion of higher-modality tokens which functions to calibrate commitment across multiple semiotic dimensions rather than locking it into a single grammatical category. The anchoring function of adverbials such as "*yang tonueang*" (continuously) provides a sense of temporal stability while retaining the relational proximity of the actor. Furthermore, the sharp dichotomy in medium-to-lower modality usage—where the English corpus contains 0% modal verbs compared to 58.62% in the Thai counterpart—underscores a fundamental cultural divergence in risk management. The Thai reliance on modal verbs serves as a linguistic resource that moderates the strength of commitment, permitting the articulation of organizational potential without incurring the interpersonal and reputational costs associated with making high-certainty assertions in a sociolinguistic context where face concerns and interpersonal relationship management have been identified as relevant considerations in Thai workplace and service interaction (Epifanova & Hild, 2015; Leelaharattanarak, 2016).

Table 4

Modality Analysis of the English-Language Message from the Chairman and CEO in KTB's Sustainability Report 2024: Growing Together for Sustainability

Grammatical structures	High tokens	n	%	Medium tokens	n	%	Low tokens	n	%	Total (%)
Modal verbs	are navigating, has been contributing, focus, impact, collaborate (x3), provide, address, implement, include, engage, have introduced, aim, have expanded, built, have worked,	29	64.44	will (x3)	3	6.67	may, can	2	4.44	75.56

Table 4 (Continued)

Grammatical structures	High tokens	n	%	Medium tokens	n	%	Low tokens	n	%	Total (%)
	has been established, ensure (x2), encompasses, offer, are implementing, have set, are enhancing, prioritize, enable, have developed, have been recognized	29	64.44	will (x3)	3	6.67	may, can	2	4.44	75.56
Modal adverbials	constantly	1	2.22	-	0	0.00	-	0	0.00	2.22
Modal adjectivals	strong (x2), significant, effective	4	8.89	-	0	0.00	-	0	0.00	8.89
Modal nouns	target (x2), determination	3	6.67	-	0	0.00	-	0	0.00	6.67
Modal clauses/phrases	We place importance on, we are determined to, is a testament to	3	6.67	-	0	0.00	-	0	0.00	6.67
Total		40	88.89		3	6.67		2	4.44	100.00

Table 4 indicates that based on the textual analysis of Krungthai Bank's English discourse in accordance with the established model criteria and the prototype table structure, various word categories were quantified in strict compliance as detailed. In addition to standard modal verbs, declarative sentence structures that state objective facts, past achievements, or future strategic commitments (e.g., collaborate, have developed, aim, target, determination) were systematically counted and categorized under High Modality. This classification is justified by the fact that, within the context of visionary corporate communication, these structures convey absolute certainty and definitive obligation or commitment.

Table 5

Modality Analysis of the Thai-Language Message from the Chairman and CEO in KTB's Sustainability Report 2024: Growing Together for Sustainability

Grammatical structures	High tokens	n	%	Medium tokens	n	%	Low tokens	n	%	Total (%)
Modal verbs	กำลังเผชิญ, ได้ร่วมแก้ไขและรับมือ, มุ่งสร้าง, ส่งผลกระทบ, ได้ร่วม (x2), ได้ขยายขอบเขต, ยกระดับ, ได้ร่วมกันกำหนด, ให้ความสำคัญ (x2), จัดทำ, ครอบคลุม, ได้ดำเนินการ, กำหนด, มีส่วนร่วม, ได้มีการกำหนด, ผลักดัน, ป้องกันและลด, ได้รับการยอมรับ	20	46.51	จะ (x2)	2	4.65	อาจ (x2), สามารถ (x3)	5	11.63	62.79
Modal adverbials	อย่างต่อเนื่อง, อย่างเป็นระบบ, อย่างมีประสิทธิภาพ (x2), อย่างรอบด้าน	5	11.63	-	0	0.00	-	0	0.00	11.63
Modal adjectivals	สำคัญ (x2), แข็งแกร่ง (x2)	4	9.30	-	0	0.00	-	0	0.00	9.30
Modal nouns	เป้าหมาย (x3), ความมุ่งมั่น	4	9.30	-	0	0.00	-	0	0.00	9.30
Modal clauses/phrases	ธนาคารมุ่งมั่นที่จะ, ถือเป็นบทพิสูจน์, มั่นใจได้ว่า	3	6.98	-	0	0.00	-	0	0.00	6.98
Total		36	83.72		2	4.65		5	11.63	100.00

From Table 5, it is found that based on the text analysis of Krungthai Bank's Thai message (Message from the Chairman and the President) in accordance with the analytical model criteria and the prototype table structure, the counting of the various word categories is as follows:

In addition to the standard model application, when sentences utilize declarative structures stating facts, past actions, or future commitments (e.g., has collaborated to resolve and cope with, has expanded the scope, aims to build, defines, target, commitment), they are fully counted and categorized under high modality. This is because, within this context, such structures communicate certainty, established facts, and a strong obligation or intense determination to execute operations. Additional observations from the Thai text analysis are as follows:

The text predominantly reflects high modality at 83.72%. This aligns with the communication style of corporate policies and executive visions, which emphasizes and reinforces actions already taken (e.g., has implemented, have jointly defined) as well as ultimate resolutions and commitments.

Words with medium modality (such as will) and low modality (such as may and can/be able to) are used either when assessing external factors (e.g., may impact growth, may occur) or when forecasting future outcomes (e.g., will help the bank, can achieve the target).

2. Comparative Analysis of Modality Structures: KTB

A comparative analysis of Tables 4 and 5 indicates a sophisticated calibration of institutional power specific to the highly regulated financial sector. The English discourse strategically deploys medium modality, notably through the auxiliary will, not merely to outline future actions but to execute a form of strategic forecasting that stabilizes market expectations. This functions as a mechanism of temporal control, projecting a deterministic institutional vision designed to reassure global capital. Conversely, the Thai text relies heavily on lower-modality markers, such as "*at*" (may) and "*samat*" (can), which operate as semantic safety nets. In an ecosystem vulnerable to macroeconomic shocks, this intensive linguistic hedging transcends simple flexibility, acting instead as a culturally embedded risk management tool. It absorbs systemic uncertainties without compromising the charismatic authority or *barami* of the leadership. Crucially, both languages systematically circumvent coercive high-modality verbs. This mutual absence represents a deliberate construction of soft hegemony, wherein the depersonalization of authority fosters an illusion of egalitarian collaboration, thereby masking the inherent power asymmetries between the financial institution and its stakeholders.

Table 6

Modality Analysis of the English-Language Message from the Chairman in CP All's 2024 Sustainability Report

Grammatical structures	High tokens	n	%	Medium tokens	n	%	Low tokens	n	%	Total (%)
Modal verbs	continues, ensure(s), ensuring, is committed to, respects, upholds, opposes, prioritizes, has strengthened, have been	14	51.9	will, would, is projected to, aim to	5	18.5	may, can	2	7.4	77.8
Modal adverbials	actively, firmly	2	7.4	-	0	0.0	-	0	0.0	7.4
Modal adjectivals	crucial	1	3.7	-	0	0.0	-	0	0.0	3.7
Modal nouns	commitment	2	7.4	-	0	0.0	-	0	0.0	7.4
Modal clauses/phrases	I firmly believe	1	3.7	-	0	0.0	-	0	0.0	3.7
Total		20	74.1		5	18.5		2	7.4	100.00

Table 6 indicates that in this analysis, word counting was conducted in accordance with the "Analytical Model." The findings include declarative structures stating facts, past actions, as well as future commitments that carry semantic weight equivalent to the various categories of modality, as detailed below:

High Modality (Higher Modality): This category includes verbs indicating facts, completed actions, or clear commitments, such as continues, ensures, is committed to, respects, upholds, opposes, prioritizes, has strengthened, and have been. It also encompasses equivalent nouns and adverbs, such as commitment, actively, and firmly, as well as adjectives like crucial (equivalent to necessary).

Medium Modality: This category includes verbs indicating future actions or objectives, such as will and would, alongside equivalent expressions like is projected to and aim to.

Low Modality (Lower Modality): This category captures modal verbs specified by the model, namely may and can.

Table 7

Modality Analysis of the Thai-Language Message from the Chairman in CP All's 2024 Sustainability Report

Grammatical structures	High tokens	n	%	Medium tokens	n	%	Low tokens	n	%	Total (%)
Modal verbs	มุ่ง, เป้าติดตาม, ตระหนักถึง, มุ่งมั่น, สานต่อ, มุ่งสู่, ยืนหยัด, เคารพ, ยึดมั่น, ต่อต้าน, ให้ความสำคัญ, ยกระดับ	17	58.6	จะ, มีแนวโน้ม	3	10.3	อาจ, สามารถ	2	6.9	75.9
Modal adverbials	อย่างต่อเนื่อง, อย่างใกล้ชิด, อย่างมั่นคง	4	13.8	-	0	0.0	-	0	0.0	13.8
Modal adjectivals	สำคัญ	2	6.9	-	0	0.0	-	0	0.0	6.9
Modal nouns	-	0	0.0	-	0	0.0	-	0	0.0	0.0
Modal clauses/phrases	ผมเชื่อมั่นว่า	1	3.4	-	0	0.0	-	0	0.0	3.4
Total		24	82.8		3	10.3		2	6.9	100.00

Table 7 shows that for this analysis, declarative structures stating facts, completed actions, as well as references to future outcomes or commitments that possess semantic weight equivalent to the various categories of Modality have been compiled as follows:

High Modality (Higher Modality): This category includes verbs reflecting commitment, action, or explicit facts (e.g., strives/commits, continues, stands firm, respects, upholds, prioritizes); adverbs indicating certainty or continuity (e.g., continuously, firmly); adjectives indicating necessity (e.g., crucial/important); and expressions conveying absolute confidence (e.g., I am confident that).

Medium Modality: This category includes verbs referring to future directions or expectations (e.g., will, is likely to).

Low Modality (Lower Modality): This category captures verbs indicating basic possibility or capability (e.g., may, can/be able to).

3. Comparative Analysis of Modality Structures: CP ALL

A cross-linguistic evaluation of Tables 6 and 7 shows a structurally divergent approach to power management within the consumer-driven retail sector. Although both linguistic corpora foreground higher modality, they execute fundamentally distinct sociolinguistic strategies. The English text leverages nominalization, such as commitment and importance, to construct institutional distance, thereby transforming corporate obligations into reified, unassailable global standards. Conversely, the Thai discourse operationalizes adjectival structures, notably "*samkhan*" (important), as an instrument of covert paternalism, intentionally collapsing the social distance to foster relational intimacy with local stakeholders. In managing medium modality, the English reliance on modal verbs projects uninterrupted strategic momentum, whereas the Thai integration of modal verbs with adverbials like "*mi naeonom*" (tend to) functions as an essential rhetorical buffer, dynamically absorbing macroeconomic and consumer-level volatility. At the lower modality threshold, this dichotomy deepens; the English discourse frames probability as a structural opportunity for capital expansion, while the Thai narrative reorients possibility inward, emphasizing "*samat*" (can) to project active organizational capacity and localized resilience.

4. Qualitative Analysis of Modality and Instances of the Texts

In this study, to see the use of the modality in the English and Thai texts, some instances of the use of modality are shown and discussed as examples in the following extracts.

Table 8

English Text — Extraction from the Message of CEO of Thai Oil

English Texts	Thai Parallel Texts
Modal adverbial — Extract 1 — Moreover, not only products have been sold to regional markets with high market growth rates, but consistently High Value Products (HVP) have also been sold in parallel with optimal cost control management.	…ตลอดจนการจำหน่ายผลิตภัณฑ์ไปยังตลาดภูมิภาค ที่มีอัตราการเติบโตสูง และการจำหน่ายผลิตภัณฑ์มูลค่าสูง (High Value Products HVP) ควบคู่ไปกับการบริหารจัดการ
Modal noun — Extract 1 — Advocating a better quality of life, Thaioil nurtures a 'Happy Employee, Happy Company' culture, duly restructure the organization to suit future endeavors, applies digital literacy to add business value, and fosters innovation to create new products that lead to commercial uses while addressing customers' requirements.	…การส่งเสริมความเป็นอยู่ที่ดีและ สร้างวัฒนธรรมองค์กรแห่งความสุข คนสำราญ งานสำเร็จ การปรับโครงสร้างองค์กรให้เหมาะสมรองรับธุรกิจในอนาคต การนำเทคโนโลยีดิจิทัลมาประยุกต์ใช้ในการเพิ่มคุณค่าในกระบวนการทางธุรกิจ เพื่อเสริมสร้างศักยภาพและ เพิ่มขีดความสามารถในการแข่งขันทางธุรกิจ การสร้างนวัตกรรม ในองค์กรให้สามารถสร้างผลิตภัณฑ์ที่นำไปสู่การใช้ประโยชน์เชิงพาณิชย์และตอบโจทย์ลูกค้า

From the examples of these two instances of the use of modal adverbial and modal noun as underlined, it can be seen that the CEO of Thai Oil used most of these modalities to indicate their position and stance. Through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis, this lexical selection functions as a strategy of performative sustainability. The use of the noun requirements reflects a

state of discursive submission, implying that the organization already operates above societal demands. This creates a binding moral framework where the language elevates the executive board into the role of global norm protectors, subtly masking the sector's material environmental impacts.

Table 9

Thai Text — Extraction from the Message of CEO of Thai Oil

Thai Texts	English Parallel Texts
Modal verb — Extract 1 — กลุ่มไทยออยล์ยังคงมุ่งมั่นที่จะผลักดันและสานต่อโครงการขยายธุรกิจตามทิศทางและแผนกลยุทธ์อย่างต่อเนื่อง…	Thaioil and Subsidiaries remain committed to driving and scaling up business expansion projects under defined strategic directions and plans,…
Modal verb — Extract 2 — ….และสามารถดำเนินการทดลองเดินเครื่องหน่วยผลิต ได้ตั้งแต่วันที่ 14 กุมภาพันธ์ 2567 ที่ผ่านมา	….which has achieved its first success with the trial run of the diesel Hydrodesulfurization Unit 4 (HDS-4) in order to enhance the production of the Euro 5 diesel fuel standard since February 14, 2024.
Modal adverbial — Extract 1 — กลุ่มไทยออยล์ยังคงมุ่งมั่นที่จะผลักดันและสานต่อโครงการขยายธุรกิจตามทิศทางและแผนกลยุทธ์อย่างต่อเนื่อง…	Thaioil and Subsidiaries remain committed to driving and scaling up business expansion projects under defined strategic directions and plans,…
Modal noun — Extract 1 — คณะกรรมการบริษัทฯ ผู้บริหารและพนักงานทุกคน ขอขอบคุณท่านผู้ถือหุ้นทุกท่านที่ให้การสนับสนุนการดำเนินงานของกลุ่มไทยออยล์ด้วยดีเสมอมา และกลุ่มไทยออยล์เชื่อมั่นว่าด้วยรากฐานอันแข็งแกร่งและความมุ่งมั่นที่จะบูรณาการองค์ความรู้ ประสบการณ์ และความเชี่ยวชาญจากทุกภาคส่วนของกลุ่มไทยออยล์ จะขับเคลื่อนการดำเนินงานตามแผนกลยุทธ์ที่วางไว้ พร้อมทั้งมุ่งมั่นทุ่มเทที่จะปฏิบัติหน้าที่อย่างสุดความสามารถ เพื่อก้าวผ่านความท้าทายต่าง ๆ สร้างประโยชน์สูงสุดให้แก่ผู้ถือหุ้นและตอบสนองความคาดหวังของผู้มีส่วนได้เสียที่เกี่ยวข้อง	The Board of Directors, along with executives and staff, remain grateful for all shareholders' full support to Thaioil's business operations. Thaioil and Subsidiaries pledge to leverage the robust foundation as well as the commitment to integrate knowledge, experience, and proficiency from all sectors to ensure the business operation is achieved as strategically planned. In addition, Thaioil and Subsidiaries are more than ready to fully perform in order to overcome various disruptions to ensure shareholders' best interests and address stakeholders' expectations.
Modal clause/phrase — Extract 1 — คณะกรรมการบริษัทฯ ผู้บริหาร และพนักงานทุกคน ขอขอบคุณท่านผู้ถือหุ้นทุกท่านที่ให้การสนับสนุนการดำเนินงานของกลุ่มไทยออยล์ด้วยดีเสมอมา และกลุ่มไทยออยล์เชื่อมั่นว่าด้วยรากฐานอันแข็งแกร่งและความมุ่งมั่นที่จะบูรณาการองค์ความรู้ ประสบการณ์ และความเชี่ยวชาญจากทุกภาคส่วนของกลุ่มไทยออยล์ จะขับเคลื่อนการดำเนินงานตามแผนกลยุทธ์ที่วางไว้ พร้อมทั้งมุ่งมั่นทุ่มเทที่จะปฏิบัติหน้าที่อย่างสุดความสามารถ เพื่อก้าวผ่านความท้าทายต่าง ๆ สร้างประโยชน์สูงสุดให้แก่ผู้ถือหุ้นและตอบสนองความคาดหวังของผู้มีส่วนได้เสียที่เกี่ยวข้อง	The Board of Directors, along with executives and staff, remain grateful for all shareholders' full support to Thaioil's business operations. Thaioil and Subsidiaries pledge to leverage the robust foundation as well as the commitment to integrate knowledge, experience, and proficiency from all sectors to ensure the business operation is achieved as strategically planned. In addition, Thaioil and Subsidiaries are more than ready to fully perform in order to overcome various disruptions to ensure shareholders' best interests and address stakeholders' expectations.

From the analysis, the Thai extracts exhibit a sharp polarization between charismatic verbs like มุ่งมั่นทุ่มเท and pragmatic capability markers like สามารถ or ความสามารถ. The latent mechanism driving this is Discursive Risk Management. In Thai culture, making an absolute promise over an uncontrollable future risks severe reputational damage. Inserting the word สามารถ functions as a linguistic escape hatch. It signals high intent while acknowledging that ultimate success depends on external variables and current capabilities, thereby maintaining a safe distance between societal expectations and actual performance.

Table 10

Thai Text — Extraction from the Message of the Board of CP ALL

Thai Texts	English Parallel Texts
Modal verb — Extract 1 — ...continues, ensures, upholds, has strengthened...	...สานต่อ, สร้างสรรค์, ยึดมั่น, ยกระดับ
Modal adverbial — Extract 1 — ...firmly...	...อย่างมั่นคง

These lexical selections highlight verbs that project a state of perpetual momentum. This functions as a strategy of Temporal Colonization. It creates an illusion that corporate virtue existed in the past, operates in the present, and will perpetually remain. Power is thereby naturalized — not through coercion, but by rendering alternative realities unimaginable to the stakeholder.

Table 11

Thai Text — Extraction from the Message of the Board of CP ALL

Thai Texts	English Parallel Texts
Modal verb — Extract 1 — ...เฝ้าติดตาม, สานต่อ, ยืนหยัด, ยกระดับ...	…monitors, continues, standing by, …has strengthened
Modal adverbial — Extract 1 — ...อย่างต่อเนื่อง, อย่างใกล้ชิด...	…collectively, …closely

The Thai counterpart reflects a soft hegemonic approach operating through Covert Paternalism. This mechanism maps familial metaphors onto the corporate world. The board of directors speaks not as capitalist executives, but as caring elders. Terms like เฝ้าติดตาม or อย่างใกล้ชิด construct an interpersonal meaning that narrows social distance into a patron-client bond, neutralizing social resistance by making stakeholders feel sheltered under the corporate umbrella.

Table 12

English Text — Extraction from the Message of the Board of Krungthai Bank

Thai Texts	English Parallel Texts
Modal verb — Extract 1 — ...are navigating, collaborate, implementing	...กำลังเผชิญ, ได้ร่วมกับ, ดำเนินการ,
Modal noun — Extract 1 — ...target, determination...	...แผนที่กำหนดไว้, ความมุ่งมั่น...

This dense concentration of proactive verb phrases acts to transmute market volatility into a highly manageable process. The term is navigating acknowledges global economic turbulence while simultaneously crowning the executives as masterful captains. Furthermore, the repetitive use of collaborative tokens generates an Illusion of Dialogism, where the corporation appears inclusive but single-handedly dictates the agenda and boundaries of these collaborations to maintain absolute institutional stability.

Table 13

Thai Text — Extraction from the Message of the Board of Krungthai Bank

Thai Texts	English Parallel Texts
Modal verb — Extract 1 — ...ได้ร่วมแก้ไขและรับมือ, ได้ขยายขอบเขต, ได้ดำเนินการ...	…addressing and dealing, expanded, implementing…
Modal clause/phrase — Extract 1 — ธนาคารมุ่งมั่นที่จะ…, ถือเป็นบทพิสูจน์, มั่นใจได้ว่า…	We are determined to…, As a result of these efforts, to ensure…

The reliance on perfective aspect structures — actions already completed — such as ได้ดำเนินการ demonstrates the ultimate strategy for manufacturing high modality.

The comparison

The dual-language qualitative analysis uncovers two distinct power structures. The English discourse is engineered to construct a Hegemony of Competence to satisfy neoliberal demands for transparency and quantifiable results. Conversely, the Thai discourse is engineered to construct a Hegemony of Care that resonates with a patronage society demanding benevolence and charismatic authority from its leaders.

This leads to the conceptualization of Linguistic Insulation as an open theoretical framework. The core hypothesis suggests that the more severe a corporation's material risk or negative societal impact, the more it will mass-produce discourse saturated with high modality, care, and collaboration. This language acts as a thermal insulator, designed specifically to deflect external regulatory and public scrutiny.

Discussion

The analysis of executive messages across three SET50 sectors demonstrates how Thailand's leading organizations systematically deploy grammatical structures to construct institutional authority and negotiate power relations. The discussion is organized according to the three research questions, grounding the findings in SFL's core tenet that language is driven by the interpersonal metafunction to organize social order (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

1. Research Question 1: Frequency and Distribution of Modality Levels

What are the similarities and differences in the frequency and distribution of modality resources across the three selected corperate cases? The findings demonstrate that the distribution of modality levels and grammatical structures reflects the ontological nature of each business sector rather than random translation choices. As Humphrey et al. (2012) explain, context and communicative purpose invariably determine lexicogrammatical selection.

In the energy sector, English communication is compelled to demonstrate absolute decisiveness under global decarbonization pressures. The deployment of 60% higher modality in the Thaioil English text effectively constructs "frozen facts"—a preemptive discursive defense against

"greenwashing" accusations. In contrast, banking and retail sectors distribute modality across medium and lower levels in Thai, reflecting linguistic hedging as a flexible mechanism for absorbing the impacts of uncontrollable macroeconomic risks (Humphrey et al., 2012).

2. Research Question 2: Interpersonal Meaning Construction and Social Distance

How does modality construct interpersonal meaning—specifically power relations and social distance (tenor)—across the three selected corperate cases? In terms of power relations, the findings reveal two opposing discursive mechanisms. First, English discourse relies on nominalization to erase actor identity, transforming commitments into institutional truths and thereby expanding institutional distance while limiting the space for challenge by global investors (Fairclough, 2013; Machin & Mayr, 2012). Second, Thai messages systematically employ downward deference through medium and lower modal verbs in lieu of coercive modal constructions (Neeley & Reiche, 2022). This reduction of modal authority functions as relational diplomacy—a mechanism for managing social intimacy in a high-power distance culture (Magee, 2020).

In terms of power relations, the distributions do not support a uniform reduction in modal strength across the Thai messages. Although the Thai version of Thaioil contains a larger proportion of medium- and low-value modality, the Thai versions of Krungthai Bank and CP ALL predominantly contain high-value modality. CP ALL also has a higher proportion of high-value modality in Thai than in English. The interpersonal significance of these expressions therefore requires interpretation through specific passages and their surrounding discourse, rather than inference from language choice or modality value alone.

3. Research Question 3: Cross-Cultural Communication Strategies

How does modality deployment reflect cross-cultural communication strategies—specifically, regarding power relations and social distance (tenor)—across the three selected corperate cases? The systematic variation in discourse strategies between English and Thai reflects a sophisticated process of cultural code-switching (Hall, 1976). English communication is calibrated to satisfy the directness expectations of low-context cultures (Hall, 1976), while Thai communication employs linguistic buffers to accommodate high-context cultural values of face-saving and *kreng-jai* (consideration/deference) (Intachakra, 2012). This cross-linguistic discrepancy operationalizes the theoretical proposition of de-institutionalization in translation: Thai organizations transform system-centric institutional commitments into human-centric, relational expressions for domestic audiences.

Conclusion

Based on the analytical framework of Humphrey et al. (2012), the cross-industry analysis of modality yields three primary conclusions. First, concerning distributional frequency, the energy sector predominantly employs high-level abstract grammatical structures to project a decisive

global stance, whereas the banking and retail sectors strategically deploy linguistic hedging to manage structural risk and engage broader stakeholder constituencies. Second, in terms of meaning construction, a cross-linguistic dichotomy emerges: English discourse erases speaker identity to establish objective institutional distance, while Thai discourse reduces modal authority to reclaim relational capacity, in direct response to the high-power distance inherent in Thai sociocultural norms (Magee, 2020). Third, regarding cross-cultural strategy, the findings demonstrate that organizations engage in sophisticated cultural code-switching, effectively blending Western corporate transparency with the Eastern pragmatic art of *kreng-jai* to negotiate trust and maintain social harmony (Intachakra, 2012).

The analysis of the three selected companies yields three primary conclusions. First, modality distributions vary across companies and language versions. Thaioil and Krungthai Bank have higher proportions of high-value modality in English than in Thai, whereas CP ALL shows the reverse pattern. Second, the findings do not establish a general distinction in which English increases institutional authority while Thai reduces modal strength. Interpretations of institutional authority and interpersonal relationships must instead be grounded in the linguistic features and contexts of particular passages.

Recommendations

From the study, we recommend the following;

1. Practical Implications

Corporate communication and investor relations teams should develop heightened sensitivity to semantic power management across languages. Deploying overly rigid linguistic structures in Thai contexts may inadvertently undermine interpersonal trust, while excessive epistemic hedging in international contexts may diminish perceived organizational decisiveness. Maintaining core propositional content while dynamically calibrating modality levels to suit target audiences will substantially enhance the efficacy of integrated reporting and support sustainable corporate growth (Laine et al., 2022; Machin & Mayr, 2012).

2. Future Research Directions

Future studies should further investigate Thai modality within the SFL framework to test the universality of existing theoretical models and adapt them to Thai-specific linguistic realities, with particular attention to the realization of power relations, interpersonal stance, and social distance. Comparative studies between Thai and other Southeast Asian languages will elucidate regional patterns of modal variation. Research into modality in Thai digital communication (e.g., social media and messaging platforms) will extend the framework to multimodal and informal contexts. Methodologically, the development of annotated corpora and computational tools for Thai modality analysis is recommended. Theoretical integration with Appraisal Theory, Politeness Theory, and CDA will enable more comprehensive multidimensional analysis. Finally, applied

research into the deployment of modality frameworks in language pedagogy, cross-cultural translation, and corporate communication will ensure tangible social impact from these scholarly contributions.

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