



Interpersonal Metaphors in Eka Kurniawan's "Kitchen Curse: Stories"

Ade Novira Aswani¹, Nurlela^{2*}, T. Thyrhaya Zein³

^{1,2,3}English Postgraduate Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan 20155, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: nurlelamajrul@usu.ac.id

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 24 July 2026

Revised 30 August 2026

Accepted 12 September 2026

Available online

<https://talenta.usu.ac.id/lingpoet/>

E-ISSN: 2745-8296

How to cite:

Aswani, A. N., Nurlela., & Zein, T.T. (2026). Interpersonal Metaphors in Eka Kurniawan's "Kitchen Curse: Stories". *LingPoet: Journal of Linguistics and Literary Research*, 7(3), 293-302.

ABSTRACT

This study analyzes interpersonal metaphors—mood and modality transformations—in three stories from Eka Kurniawan's *Kitchen Curse: Stories* using a qualitative data condensation method. The results show that mood metaphors make up (30%) of the total, while modality metaphors account for (70%). Among mood metaphors, questions expressed as declaratives are the most common at (33.3%), followed by statements expressed as interrogatives at (30%). Modality metaphors are divided into modalization (68.6%) and modulation (31.4%). Within modalization, probability is the most frequent at (65.7%), and usuality is rare at (2.9%). In modulation, obligation and inclination each occur at (15.7%). Text 3 (Auntie) has the highest proportion of modality metaphors (40%), Text 2 (Caronang) follows with (32.9%), and Text 1 (Easing into a Long Sleep) has the least at (27.1%). Text 1 shows the highest use of mood metaphors (53.4%), linked to its focus on family interactions. These findings demonstrate how interpersonal metaphors influence narrative meaning and character relationships through shifts in mood and modality.

Keywords: Interpersonal metaphors, Mood metaphors, Modality metaphors, Short stories, Eka Kurniawan



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International

<http://doi.org/10.26594/register.v6i1.idarticle>

1. Introduction

Literature conveys human experiences by using language to express nuanced feelings and perspectives that draw readers into the narrative. Researchers increasingly explore how interpersonal metaphors—especially mood and modality—help writers articulate emotions, attitudes, and social relationships, as explained through Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1994; Zein, 2015). This study focuses on three stories from Eka Kurniawan's *Kitchen Curse: Stories* to analyze how interpersonal metaphors contribute to deeper engagement and meaning in the texts.

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) offers analytical tools to explore how meaning is built both at the clause and text levels, emphasizing the clause as the core unit where meaning choices are made (Halliday, 1985). A key concept within this framework is grammatical metaphor (GM), which looks at how complex ideas and abstract processes are expressed through less typical, metaphorical language rather than standard forms (Halliday, 1985; Gerot & Wignell, 1994). According to Halliday (2006), these metaphorical shifts, shaped by lexical and grammatical choices, enable communication to be more abstract and indirect, adding layers of subtlety and depth (Simon-Vandenberg, Ravelli, & Taverniers, 2003). Specifically, interpersonal metaphor—introduced by Halliday (1970) and later expanded by Halliday & Hasan (1976)—demonstrates how speakers use mood, modality, deixis, and attitudinal choices to express stance and manage social

interactions, which in narratives helps shape character dynamics and advance the plot, as seen in the following examples of incongruent coding described by Halliday (1985).

Table 1. The Example of Interpersonal Metaphors of Mood

No.	Clause	Incongruent Coding
1	May I (we) assure you that	Statement realized by interrogative
2	I (we) must ask you whether	Question realized by statement
3	I (we) would like to advise you to	Command realized by declarative
4	May I (we) advise you to	Command realized by interrogative

The examples above show that expressions become metaphorical when the usual mood linked to a speech function shifts into a different form, creating incongruence. For instance, statements can be phrased as questions to sound more polite, while commands might appear as declaratives or interrogatives to soften their tone and show respect. These shifts illustrate how incongruent coding changes tone and intent, adding nuance and subtlety to communication. In addition to mood transference, interpersonal metaphors also involve shifts in how modality is expressed, such as replacing a direct modal verb with a nominalized form or modal adjunct to make certainty, obligation, or inclination less direct yet still clear. Here is an example of modality metaphors:

Table 2. The Example of Interpersonal Metaphors of Modality

No.	Clause	Type of Modality
1	<i>I don't believe that</i> pudding ever will be cooked.	Probability
2	<i>It's usual for</i> Fred to sit quite quiet.	Usuality
3	<i>It's expected that</i> John goes.	Obligation
4	Jane's <i>keen to</i> help.	Inclination

As shown by the examples above, interpersonal metaphor of modality happens when mental or relational clauses are used to convey meanings like probability, usuality, obligation, or inclination that would normally rely on modal verbs or modal adjuncts. For instance, probability may appear as a mental clause rather than a modal verb, habituality is shown through relational clauses instead of adverbs like *usually* or *often*, and obligation or inclination are realized through relational or attributive clauses rather than direct modal expressions like *should*, *must*, *will*, or *would*.

Liardét & Black (2020) showed how grammatical metaphor (GM), especially nominalizations, can make academic writing more cohesive, formal, and concise, though students sometimes over-condensed their texts. Similarly, Ngongo and Benu (2020) found that undergraduate theses favored ideational metaphors like nominalization over interpersonal metaphors, which mostly appeared as declarative clauses, and they recommended incorporating metaphor analysis into teaching and exploring cross-linguistic studies. Cheng (2021) revealed that in political texts, GM closely aligns with lexical density, shaping the complexity, structure, and ideological functions across reports, speeches, and interviews. Afifi (2021) observed that Indonesian EFL students—particularly those in their third year—used more grammatical metaphors, highlighting the benefit of explicit instruction to improve academic literacy. Guo & Gao (2023) discovered that interpersonal metaphors of modulation are mode-sensitive, with fiction favoring explicit orientations while academic and technical texts leaned toward more objective ones, emphasizing their subjective nature compared to ideational metaphors. Shekhani & Jaff (2023) examined political discourse in Central Kurdish and found that two opposing speakers used 133 nominalized processes—mostly material—and 53 mood metaphors to convey ideologies and interpersonal meanings. Similarly, Wang (2024) analyzed 150 counseling interactions on Yixinli, showing that interrogative mood metaphors like rhetorical and open-ended questions helped counselors build rapport, reduce confrontation, and guide clients toward self-reflection.

Most research on grammatical metaphors has concentrated on formal contexts like academic, psychological, and political discourse, emphasizing their role in enhancing cohesiveness, formality, complexity, and persuasion (Liardét & Black, 2020; Ngongo & Benu, 2020; Afifi, 2021; Shekhani & Jaff, 2023; Cheng, 2021; Wang, 2024). However, there has been relatively little exploration of how grammatical metaphors function within literary discourse. One exception is AL-Zubaidy (2022), who applied Halliday's

(1994) GM theory to study ideational metaphors in two twentieth-century short stories, finding very low frequencies of nominalization that support the idea that GM is more common in academic texts. To address the lack of research on interpersonal grammatical metaphors in fiction, this study analyzes their use in “Kitchen Curse: Stories” by Eka Kurniawan.

Interpersonal metaphors shape the generic structure of narrative texts by influencing how characters interact, express intentions, and convey relationships, especially through mood and modality that frame events as statements, commands, or questions—thus affecting stages like orientation, complication, and resolution. By defining characters’ roles and emotional states, these metaphors enrich the narrative’s expressiveness and help drive the plot forward, deepening reader engagement. Grammatical metaphor is central in systemic functional linguistics because it reveals deeper meanings by expressing ideas in varied ways; as Halliday (1985) notes, context helps language combine syntax, vocabulary, and meaning to convey complex ideas, which enhances literary fiction through characters, emotions, and themes.

Eka Kurniawan’s “Kitchen Curse: Stories”, a collection of sixteen short stories portraying diverse human experiences and social issues, provides a rich source of interpersonal metaphor through its varied character interactions, narrative voices, and expressions of mood and modality. These linguistic features make the collection particularly suitable for investigating how interpersonal metaphor functions within literary discourse and contributes to the development of narrative meaning.

Therefore, the novelty of this study lies in its examination of interpersonal metaphor in a contemporary Indonesian literary work by relating Halliday’s theory of interpersonal grammatical metaphor to the generic structure of narrative texts. Unlike previous studies that primarily investigate interpersonal metaphor in non-literary discourse or focus solely on identifying metaphorical realizations, this study explores both the types of interpersonal metaphors employed in the stories and their functions in shaping narrative development and interpersonal meaning.

Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. What types of interpersonal metaphors are realized in Eka Kurniawan’s *Kitchen Curse: Stories* based on Halliday’s theory of grammatical metaphor?
2. How do interpersonal metaphors function in expressing interpersonal meanings in Eka Kurniawan’s *Kitchen Curse: Stories*?

2. Method

This study applies a qualitative Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) approach to analyze interpersonal grammatical metaphors in literary texts. The analysis focuses on mood and modality metaphors in Eka Kurniawan’s *Kitchen Curse: Stories* to examine how these linguistic resources construct interpersonal meaning and character interaction within narrative discourse.

The data consist of clauses extracted from three purposively selected short stories from *Kitchen Curse: Stories*. These texts were chosen because each contains more than twenty instances of interpersonal grammatical metaphors, ensuring sufficient data for in-depth qualitative analysis. Clauses were treated as the unit of analysis and were identified through close reading of the selected texts.

Data analysis followed the qualitative data condensation procedures proposed by Miles et., al. (2014), including data selection, categorization, and interpretation. Identified clauses were classified into mood metaphors and modality metaphors, with modality further divided into modalization and modulation. The analysis emphasized interpretive depth rather than quantification, focusing on how interpersonal grammatical metaphors contribute to narrative stance, characterization, and reader engagement.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

This section outlines the results drawn from an analysis of selected short stories, interpreted through established theories and supported by concrete examples. The research focused on three stories from Eka Kurniawan’s *Kitchen Curse: Stories*, chosen specifically for containing a high number of interpersonal grammatical metaphors. By examining their linguistic features and narrative structure, the study explored how mood and modality metaphors contribute to richer storytelling and more complex character relationships. According to Halliday (1994), interpersonal metaphor occurs when the usual link between mood and clause type becomes incongruent, such as framing statements as questions or commands as declaratives. Additionally, modality can be expressed in non-standard ways—using modal adjuncts, nouns, adjectives, or conditional

clauses instead of typical modal verbs—and the analysis identified a total of 100 such interpersonal metaphors across the three stories, detailed in the following table.

Table 3. The Percentage of Interpersonal Metaphors

	Mood Transformations	Modality Transformations	TOTAL
Text 1	16%	19%	35%
Text 2	4%	23%	27%
Text 3	10%	28%	38%
TOTAL	30%	70%	100%

Table 3 shows that modality transformations make up the majority of metaphorical clauses found in the analyzed stories. This reflects Eka Kurniawan's storytelling approach, which leans more toward descriptive narration than dialogue between characters. As Halliday (1994) explains, mood metaphors often come from direct conversational exchanges, so in Kurniawan's texts—where dialogue is limited—modality metaphors become more prominent, highlighting how narration rather than character interaction drives meaning and theme.

3.1.1 Mood Transformations in Interpersonal Metaphors

Interpersonal metaphors arise when typical mood–clause pairings shift, resulting in incongruent realizations—such as expressing statements as interrogatives or presenting commands as declaratives. Halliday (1994) notes that while statements usually appear in declaratives, questions in interrogatives, and commands in imperatives, these patterns can be deliberately altered; offers are particularly flexible because they have no fixed congruent form. In total, the analysis found 30 mood transformations across the texts, each contributing extra nuance and narrative depth, as detailed in the following table.

Table 4. Mood Transformation in Interpersonal Metaphor

Mood Transformations	Text 1	Text 2	Text 3	TOTAL
Statements realized by interrogative	13.3%	6.7%	10%	30%
Statements realized by imperative	6.7%	0%	10%	16.7%
Questions realized by declarative	16.7%	6.6%	10%	33.3%
Questions realized by imperative	0%	0%	0%	0%
Commands realized by declarative	16.7%	0%	3.3%	20%
Commands realized by interrogative	0%	0%	0%	0%
TOTAL	53.4%	13.3%	33.3%	100%

Table 4 shows how the 30 mood transformations are distributed across the three stories, with Text 1 having the largest share (53.4%), followed by Text 3 (33.3%) and Text 2 (13.3%). The most frequent pattern was turning questions into declaratives (33.3%), alongside statements recast as interrogatives (30%) and commands framed as declaratives (20%), while statements expressed as imperatives were rare (16.7%) and other combinations did not appear. Text 1, *Easing into a Long Sleep*, had the most mood metaphors because of its narrator's frequent reflections and family interactions; a similar though smaller pattern appeared in Text 3, *Auntie*, while Text 2, *Caronang*, contained fewer mood metaphors overall but more modality metaphors due to its reflective, narration-focused style.

The following examples illustrate one clause from each type of mood transformation identified in the three stories.

3.1.1.1 Statement Realized by Interrogative

This category of mood transformation is the second most common in the data, accounting for 30% of the cases. It appeared in data entries numbered 6, 20, 26, 27, 36, 46, 66, 83, and 87. The analysis example illustrating this type of transformation is drawn from data 6.

Data 6

"How could you attempt a sermon, you can't even pray properly!" my mother would have said.

This is taken from the evaluation stage of Text 1, where the clause functions as a statement realized through an interrogative mood, representing an interpersonal metaphor of mood. The linguistic feature indicating this metaphor is the use of the interrogative structure *"How could you..."* which does not seek information but expresses criticism and disbelief. Statements are typically realized by declarative clauses (Halliday, 1994). Therefore, this incongruent realization represents a mood transformation. Instead of genuinely asking a question, the mother employs sarcasm toward the main character, and although the direct form *"You will never attempt a sermon as you can't even pray properly"* would be more explicit, the metaphorical phrasing creates tension and implicitly conveys the character's evaluative attitude.

3.1.1.2 Statement Realized by Imperative

This mood transformation is the least common variation identified in the data, accounting for just 16.7%. It appeared in data items numbered 8, 25, 90, 95, and 97. The analysis illustrating this transformation is based on data 8.

Data 8

"Look, your son has become a communist!"

This data is taken from the evaluation stage of Text 1, where the clause functions as a statement realized through an imperative mood, representing an interpersonal metaphor of mood. The linguistic feature indicating this metaphor is the use of the verb *"Look,"* which does not demand a service or action from the addressee but instead serves to draw attention to the information that follows. According to Halliday (1994), statements are congruently expressed through declarative clauses. Therefore, this incongruent realization represents a mood transformation. A congruent realization would be *"Your son has become a communist,"* but the metaphorical imperative construction intensifies the mother's anger or emotional stance in the dialogue line.

3.1.1.3 Question Realized by Declarative

This mood transformation represents the most frequent type identified in the data, making up 33.3% of all cases. It appears in data items 5, 14, 15, 16, 18, 44, 56, 64, 93, and 94. To illustrate this category, the analysis focuses on the example taken from data 18.

Data 18

I wasn't sure whether I should be thankful.

This data is taken from the evaluation stage of Text 1, where the clause functions as a question realized through a declarative mood, representing an interpersonal metaphor of mood. The linguistic feature indicating this metaphor is the use of the clause *"I wasn't sure"*, which does not give information but presents uncertainty. Questions are typically realized by interrogative clauses (Halliday, 1994). Therefore, this incongruent realization represents a mood transformation. The congruent realization would be *"Should I be thankful?"*, but the metaphorical form appears as reported, reflective narration, creating a more indirect and internal contemplation.

3.1.1.4 Command Realized by Declarative

This mood transformation is the second least common in the data set, accounting for 20% of cases. It appeared in data entries 11, 17, 24, 30, 32, and 70. The example chosen to illustrate this transformation comes from data 30.

Data 30

"There's no need," he said.

This data is taken from the evaluation stage of Text 1, where the clause functions as a command realized through a declarative form, representing an interpersonal metaphor of mood. The linguistic feature indicating this metaphor is the use of a declarative structure *"There's no need"* which does not give information but prohibits an action. Commands are normally realized by imperative clauses (Halliday, 1994).

Therefore, this incongruent realization represents a mood transformation. Instead of using a direct negative imperative such as “*No need to pay*,” the bus conductor’s instruction is presented in declarative mood, resulting in a mood transformation. This incongruent realization softens the command and produces a brief, efficient exchange while still conveying the intended directive.

3.1.2 Modality Transformations in Interpersonal Metaphors

Halliday (1994) explains that interpersonal metaphor involves conveying modality through non-standard clause forms instead of relying only on common modal verbs like *will*, *might*, or *must*. Writers may use alternatives such as modal adjuncts, nouns, adjectives, lexical verbs, or conditional clauses to express similar meanings with greater subtlety and depth. Modality itself reflects varying levels of certainty and distinguishes between modalization, which relates to stating or questioning facts (propositions), and modulation, which deals with requests or commands (proposals); both can be realized metaphorically to add richer nuance to a text.

The analysis found numerous instances where typical modality expressions were replaced with incongruent clause forms. According to Halliday (1994) and Eggins (2004), modality divides into two main types: modalization—which includes probability and usuality—and modulation, which covers obligation and inclination. Altogether, the study recorded 70 modality transformations across the three stories, as shown in the following table.

Table 5. Modality Transformation in Interpersonal Metaphor					
TEXT	Modalization		Modulation		TOTAL
	Probability	Usuality	Obligation	Inclination	
Text 1	12.9%	0%	5.7%	8.5%	27.1%
Text 2	25.7%	0%	4.3%	2.9%	32.9%
Text 3	27.1%	2.9%	5.7%	4.3%	40%
TOTAL	65.7%	2.9%	15.7%	15.7%	100%
	68.6%		31.4%		

Table 5 shows that out of the 70 identified modality transformations, Text 3 accounted for the highest share at 40%, followed by Text 2 with 32.9%, and Text 1 with 27.1%. The most frequent transformation type was modalization of probability (65.7%), while modulation of obligation and inclination each comprised 15.7%, and modalization of usuality appeared least often at 2.9%. Across the three first-person narratives, *Auntie* (Text 3) had the most modality transformations largely due to the narrator’s frequent reflections on family life, highlighting how, as Halliday (1994) explains, modality choices reveal attitude and shape interpersonal meaning.

A similar pattern appears in Text 2, one of the longest stories in the collection with many clauses, where most modality metaphors arise from the narrator’s reflective commentary directed at readers—particularly when describing the fictional animal, the caronang, imagined as part bear, small dog, and cat. The narrator also includes backstories about Don Jarot, his close friend who helped search for the creature, which adds to the frequent use of modality metaphors. In contrast, even though Text 1 is the longest story in *Kitchen Curse: Stories*, it contains the fewest modality transformations among the three. This difference is because Text 3 combines conditional clauses as probability metaphors with usuality metaphors, and Text 2 leans on direct narration to readers, whereas Text 1 centers more on character-to-character interaction and lacks probability metaphors, leading to fewer modality metaphors overall.

The following examples illustrate a single clause that represents each type of modality transformation found in the three stories.

3.1.2.1 Modalization

Halliday (1994) explains that modalization describes how meaning is placed between certainty and denial, reflecting the narrator’s or speaker’s judgment about the truth or likelihood of a statement. It includes two subcategories: probability, which expresses how likely something is, and usuality, which indicates how frequently it occurs. In this study, modalization made up 68.6% of all identified modality transformations, with each subtype examined in more detail in the following analysis.

3.1.2.1.1 Probability

This type of modality transformation turned out to be the most common form of modality metaphor identified in the data, making up 65.7% of all cases. Realizations of this transformation appeared in data 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 13, 19, 21, 29, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 45, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 53, 54, 59, 60, 61, 65, 67, 68, 72, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 80, 81, 82, 85, 88, 89, 91, 92, 98, and 100. For detailed analysis, the example used to illustrate modalization: probability was taken from data 29.

Data 29

*He **seemed** startled, and after a moment greeted me, “How are you?”*

This data comes from the re-orientation part of Text 1. The interpersonal metaphor of modality is indicated by the use of the relational mental process “*seemed*”, which realizes probability without employing a modal adjunct (e.g., *probably*) or a modal verb (e.g., *might*, *could*). According to Halliday (1994) and Thompson (1996), realizing modality through mental or relational clauses instead of congruent modal markers constitutes a metaphorical form that encodes the speaker’s judgment within the clause and makes the evaluation less explicit.

3.1.2.1.2 Usuality

This kind of modality transformation was the least common among the identified modality metaphors, making up just 2.9% of the total and appearing only in text 3. It was found specifically in data 69 and 86. To illustrate the modalization: usuality transformation, the analysis focuses on data 69.

Data 69

*If I snuck into Auntie’s room and lay down beside her, we **would** spend the night telling each other silly stories.*

This data comes from the orientation section of Text 3. The interpersonal metaphor is realized through the use of the modal verb *would* to express usuality, which is typically conveyed congruently through modal adjuncts such as *usually* or *often* (Halliday, 1994). Instead of using an adverbial expression of habituality, the clause encodes the meaning of usuality within a conditional verbal structure, resulting in a metaphorical realization of modality. This linguistic choice presents the habitual past action as part of a narrative scenario, enhancing the subtlety and vividness to the depiction of shared routines.

3.1.2.2 Modulation

Modulation concerns how proposals are positioned between the poles of affirmation and denial, focusing on what ought to be done or avoided (Halliday, 1994). It has two subtypes: obligation, which shows necessity or duty, and inclination, which reflects willingness or desire to act, depending on whether the clause serves as a command or an offer. Altogether, modulation made up 31.4% of the modality metaphors found in the analysis, with details for each subtype explained in the following sections.

3.1.2.2.1 Obligation

This type of modulation transformation is the second most common form of modality metaphor identified in the data, matching the frequency of inclination, and accounts for 15.7% of cases. Realizations of this transformation appeared in data 1, 28, 31, 33, 57, 58, 62, 71, 84, 96, and 99. The analysis highlighting modulation of obligation is based on data 58.

Data 58

*Don Jarot just laughed, explaining that a motorboat **would only be necessary** on rough water.*

This data comes from the evaluation part of Text 2. The interpersonal metaphor is indicated by the expression “... *would only be necessary*...” which realizes obligation through a relational construction rather than through congruent modal verbs such as *must* or *have to* (Halliday, 1994; Thompson, 1996). Instead of expressing obligation explicitly via a modal operator, the clause encodes necessity within a relational process, resulting in a metaphorical realization of modulation. This indirect expression softens the force of obligation and presents it as a situational condition rather than a direct command.

3.1.2.2.2 Inclination

This category of modulation transformation ranks as the second most common type of modality metaphor identified in the data, matching the frequency of obligation, each accounting for 15.7%. This type appeared in data items numbered 10, 12, 22, 23, 34, 35, 52, 55, 63, 73, and 79. The example used to illustrate the modulation: inclination transformation was taken specifically from data 55.

Data 55

*I had brought camping gear and hunting equipment in a large expedition pack, though I **had no intention of doing** any hunting and had brought the weapons only for self-defense—in case we encountered any dangerous animals.*

The data comes from the evaluation part of text 2. The interpersonal metaphor is indicated by the expression “... *had no intention of doing*...” which realizes inclination through a mental relational construction rather than through congruent modal verbs such as *won't* or *don't want to* (Halliday, 1994). Instead of encoding inclination explicitly via a modal operator, the clause represents the narrator's willingness as an internal mental state. This indirect realization softens the stance and functions as a metaphorical realization of modality.

3.2 Discussion

This section interprets the findings of the study by examining how interpersonal grammatical metaphors of mood and modality operate in Eka Kurniawan's *Kitchen Curse: Stories*. Guided by Halliday's (1994) framework, the discussion explores how these metaphorical realizations shape narrative voice, characterization, and reader involvement. The analysis indicates that Eka Kurniawan consistently employs mood and modality shifts to enhance narrative depth and construct interpersonal relationships among characters. The findings further show that modality metaphors (70%) occur more frequently than mood metaphors (30%), supporting Halliday's (1994) claim that narratives characterized by first-person reflection tend to favor modality over direct interpersonal exchange. This tendency suggests that modality metaphors function as a subtle means of expressing attitudes, judgments, and emotional positioning, allowing subjective meanings to be woven into the narration rather than stated explicitly through dialogue.

The analysis of interpersonal metaphors in *Kitchen Curse: Stories* reveals how Eka Kurniawan strategically uses mood and modality transformations to deepen narrative complexity and shape character relationships. The results show that modality metaphors (70%) appear more frequently than mood metaphors (30%), aligning with Halliday's (1994) observation that narrative texts dominated by first-person reflection often privilege modality over direct dialogue. This pattern demonstrates how modality metaphors allow narrators to convey attitudes, judgments, and emotional distances subtly, embedding subjective evaluations into narration rather than overtly through character speech.

The high frequency of modalization, particularly of probability (65.7%), suggests that narrators often frame events and thoughts with uncertainty or tentativeness rather than certainty, which adds depth to the storytelling. This tendency is especially visible in *Auntie* (Text 3) and *Caronang* (Text 2), where narrators reflect on family life or mythical creatures, using probability metaphors to capture doubt, speculation, and wonder. By contrast, *Easing into a Long Sleep* (Text 1), despite being the longest story, shows fewer modality metaphors, likely because its narrative structure relies more on character dialogue and direct interactions, reducing the need for reflective modal expressions.

Mood metaphors, though less common, play an equally important narrative role by softening statements, adding irony, or expressing politeness and sarcasm. The frequent transformation of questions into declaratives (33.3%) and statements into interrogatives (30%) illustrates how characters' internal reflections and external dialogues become layered with indirectness and emotional nuance. For instance, rhetorical questions voiced as statements blur the boundary between thought and speech, inviting readers into the narrator's internal conflict or hesitation.

These findings resonate with Halliday's (1994) claim that interpersonal grammatical metaphors help authors present meaning incongruently, thus adding subtlety to character dynamics and thematic layers. The narrative mode of *Kitchen Curse: Stories*, which often combines first-person introspection with moments of dialogue, appears to encourage modality metaphors that embed judgment within narration and mood metaphors that enrich dialogue with indirectness. This stylistic choice contributes to a more immersive narrative experience, as readers are guided not only by what is said but also by how it is expressed.

The study shows that interpersonal metaphors in Kurniawan's stories do more than merely vary sentence structures—they help construct narrative voice, signal emotional stance, and shape how readers perceive relationships among characters. By shifting between congruent and incongruent forms, the texts

become more layered, supporting the argument that grammatical metaphors serve both as stylistic tools and as means to convey deeper social and psychological dimensions within literary narratives.

4. Conclusion

This study examined the realization of interpersonal grammatical metaphors in narrative texts from Eka Kurniawan's *Kitchen Curse: Stories*, focusing on mood and modality transformations based on Halliday's (1994) Systemic Functional Linguistics framework. An analysis of three selected short stories revealed 100 instances of interpersonal metaphor, with modality metaphors (70%) occurring more frequently than mood metaphors (30%). Among these, modalization of probability was especially prominent, functioning to convey narrators' judgments, uncertainty, and speculative reflection, thereby subtly guiding readers' interpretations of events and character perspectives.

The findings show that modality metaphors, particularly modalization of probability, are predominantly used to express narrators' judgments, uncertainty, and speculative reflections, enabling subjective evaluations to be subtly realized into the narrative. Mood metaphors, although less frequent, contribute to interpersonal meaning by transforming statements, questions, and commands in incongruent forms, thereby enhancing irony, politeness, emotional tension, and character dynamics. In this sense, these metaphorical realizations reveal how Kurniawan's narrative style relies on grammatical incongruity to enrich thematic complexity and enhance reader engagement beyond congruent grammatical expressions can achieve.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the analysis is limited to three short stories from a single literary collection, which restricts the extent to which the findings can be generalized to other works or authors. Second, the study focuses exclusively on interpersonal grammatical metaphors, without exploring their interaction with ideational or textual metaphors. In addition, the analysis is qualitative in nature, relying on clause-level interpretation, which may involve a degree of interpretative subjectivity.

Future studies may expand the corpus by examining a wider range of literary texts or conducting comparative analyses across different authors, genres, or cultural contexts. Further research could also explore the interaction between interpersonal metaphors and other metafunctions, or combine qualitative analysis with corpus-based methods to provide a more comprehensive understanding of grammatical metaphor in narrative discourse.

References

- Afifi, N. (2021). Exploring the use of grammatical metaphor in Indonesian EFL learners' academic writing. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 10(3), 719–731. e-ISSN 2502-6747; p-ISSN 2301-9468.
- AL-Zubaidy, B. A. G. (2022). Applying the theory of grammatical metaphor to two English short stories. *Al-Adab Journal*, 2(143), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.31973/aj.v2i143.3765>
- Cambridge. (2009). *Cambridge academic content dictionary*. Cambridge University Press.
- Cheng, X. (2021). A functional perspective on the relationship between grammatical metaphor mode in English political discourse. *Journal of English Language and Literature*, 15(1), 1300–1318. <https://doi.org/10.17722/jell.v15i1.1230>
- Eggs, S. (2004). *An introduction to systemic functional linguistics* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Continuum.
- Gerot, L., & Wignell, P. (1995). *Making sense of functional grammar: An introductory workbook*. Sydney, Australia: Antipodean Educational Enterprises.
- Guo, M., & Gao, N. (2023). A corpus-based study of interpersonal metaphors of modulation in academic English. *International Journal of English Language Studies*, 5(3), 8–21. <https://doi.org/10.32996/ijels.2023.5.3.2>
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1970). Functional diversity in language as seen from a consideration of modality and mood in English. *Foundations of Language*, 6(3), 322–361.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Hasan, R. (1976). *Cohesion in English* (1st ed.). London, UK: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315836010>
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1985). *An introduction to functional grammar* (1st ed.). London, UK: Edward Arnold.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1994). *An introduction to functional grammar* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Edward Arnold.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2006). *Construing experience through meaning: A language-based approach to cognition*. London, UK: Continuum.
- Liardét, C. L., & Black, S. (2020). Trump vs. Trudeau: Exploring the power of grammatical metaphor for academic communication. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 45, 100843. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2020.100843>

- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Ngongo, M., & Benu, N. (2020). Interpersonal and ideational metaphors in the writing of thesis texts of undergraduate students of English study program: A systemic functional linguistic approach. *RETORIKA: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa*, 6(2), 113–120. <https://doi.org/10.22225/jr.6.2.2320.113-120>
- Shekhani, H. A., & Jaff, D. Q. (2023). Grammatical metaphor in political discourse in the Central Kurdish language. *Journal of University of Human Development*, 9(3), 131–141. <https://doi.org/10.21928/juhd.v9n3y2023.pp131-141>
- Simon-Vandenberghe, A.-M., Ravelli, L. J., & Taverniers, M. (2003). *Grammatical metaphor*. Amsterdam, Netherlands: John Benjamins.
- Thompson, G. (1996). *Introducing functional grammar*. London, UK: Edward Arnold.
- Wang, S. (2024). A study on the persuasion strategies of online psychological counseling from the perspective of interpersonal grammatical metaphor. In *Proceedings of the 2024 10th International Conference on Humanities and Social Science Research (ICHSSR 2024)* (pp. 1711–1717). Atlantis Press. https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-277-4_192
- Zein, T. T. (2015). North Sumatran Malay folktales: Its structure, social function, and meaning. *Malay Literature*, 28(2), 167–199. [http://dx.doi.org/10.37052/ml.28\(2\)no1](http://dx.doi.org/10.37052/ml.28(2)no1)