

Some rhetorical devices combined with parallelism in English-Vietnamese proverbs

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Abstract: This study examines fundamental rhetorical devices in English and Vietnamese proverbs, with a particular focus on parallelism. It analyzes how these devices function and their effectiveness in conveying meaning and cultural values. Through a comparative approach, the research highlights similarities and differences between the two cultures, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of linguistic diversity. The findings provide valuable resources for teachers, students, and anyone interested in language and culture while also fostering knowledge exchange between communities.

Keywords: Culture, parallelism, Proverbs, Rhetoric, Rhetorical devices.

1. Introduction

Proverbs, fragments of wisdom accumulated over generations, reflect the cultural values, customs, and philosophies of each community. From Vietnam to English-speaking cultures, proverbs play a vital role in shaping and transmitting collective understanding. Their simple structures carry profound messages, making them powerful tools for education and cultural preservation.

This study explores key rhetorical devices in proverbs, particularly parallelism, asyndeton, and other linguistic techniques that enrich content and enhance message delivery. Parallel structure in proverbs not only creates harmony but also emphasizes deep spiritual values. Meanwhile, asyndeton—by omitting conjunctions—makes sentences more concise and rhythmic, strengthening their emotional impact.

This research aims to compare and analyze common and distinctive features in the use of rhetorical devices in Vietnamese and English proverbs, shedding light on the relationship between language, culture, and communication. Rhetorical devices are not merely linguistic tools; they also embody cultural values, offering deeper insights into how each culture conveys life lessons over time.

2. Theoretical Review

2.1. Proverbs

Proverbs encapsulate the principles and values of life. The term “proverb” is defined as a short, well-known saying that states a general truth or piece of advice [1]. Thus, proverbs are not merely concise expressions; they also convey practical philosophies that guide human behavior and thought. By combining satire and social critique, proverbs encourage people to avoid wrongdoing and embrace positive values.

Similarly, the word “proverb” is described as a brief popular saying that gives advice about how people should live or expresses a belief that is generally thought to be true [2] emphasizing its instructive nature. Proverbs not only help individuals distinguish between right and wrong but also serve as a bridge for preserving cultural wisdom and connecting generations.

According to *Cambridge Dictionary*, “proverb” refers to a short sentence, etc., usually known by many people, stating something commonly experienced or giving advice” [3]. This highlights its traditional role in transmitting collective knowledge across generations. In today’s rapidly evolving world, proverbs remain essential for maintaining national cultural identity and preserving core values. Their use in communication fosters connections between individuals, creating an environment for shared experiences and mutual learning.

Moreover, proverbs help individuals find empathy during difficult times, thereby strengthening community solidarity. They hold not only linguistic value but also play a crucial role in education, inspiring wisdom and emotion while providing deeper insights into life. The proverbs offer guidance on how to live, which explains why they have long served as guiding principles for those striving for a better life. In today’s fast-paced society, applying proverbs in daily life not only aids in personal growth but also enriches national culture [2].

Thus, despite variations in expression, reputable dictionaries consistently define proverbs as concise, widely recognized sayings that impart valuable life lessons. With their enduring significance and profound influence, proverbs represent a cultural heritage that must be preserved and promoted to continue guiding future generations.

2.2. Rhetoric

Rhetoric has evolved over centuries, shaped by significant theoretical contributions. Aristotle laid the foundation with the rhetorical triangle, consisting of Ethos, Pathos, and Logos. Later, Roman rhetoricians such as Cicero and Quintilian expanded upon these ideas, introducing five key principles: *Inventio*, *Dispositio*, *Elocutio*, *Memoria*, and *Actio*.

In the 20th century, Kenneth Burke introduced *Dramatism*, viewing communication as a performance structured around five elements: Act, Scene, Agent, Agency, and Purpose. Stephen Toulmin developed a model of argumentation comprising Claim, Grounds, and Warrant, along with supporting and rebuttal components.

In postmodern rhetoric, Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida emphasized the interplay of power and discourse, introducing concepts such as **deconstruction** and **power discourse**. In the field of cognitive rhetoric, Lakoff and Johnson [4] argued that metaphors are not merely linguistic devices but fundamental mechanisms of thought, enabling individuals to understand abstract concepts through concrete experiences [4].

These theories continue to exert a profound influence on contemporary studies in language, politics, media, and psychology.

2.3. Common Rhetorical Devices in English and Vietnamese Proverbs

Both English and Vietnamese proverbs employ notable rhetorical devices that enrich expression and enhance their uniqueness. These devices also highlight interesting commonalities between the cultural traditions of Asia and Europe. Rhetorical techniques such as asyndeton, epistrophe, anaphora, isocolon, bicolon, tricolon, and tetracolon play a significant role in proverb construction, adding aesthetic value and creating a lasting impact on the audience.

Below are definitions of seven rhetorical devices commonly found in English and Vietnamese proverbs:

Asyndeton – According to the *Cambridge Dictionary* “asyndeton” refers to a rhetorical device in which conjunctions are deliberately omitted from a series of related clauses, creating a faster pace and emphasizing key ideas” [3].

Epistrophe – The word “epistrophe” is described as the repetition of a word or expression at the end of successive clauses, sentences, or verses for rhetorical effect [2].

Anaphora – According to the *Cambridge Dictionary* “anaphora” refers to the repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses or sentences, used for emphasis or effect [3].

Isocolon – The word “isocolon” is described as a rhetorical device involving parallel structure in which successive clauses or phrases are of equal length and similar structure, contributing to rhythm and balance [2].

Bicolon – According to the *Cambridge Dictionary* “bicolon” refers to a rhetorical device consisting of two parallel clauses or phrases of equal length and structure, often used to emphasize a point [3].

Tricolon – According to the *Cambridge Dictionary* “tricolon” refers to a rhetorical device that involves a series of three parallel clauses or phrases, often used for emphasis or to create a rhythmic effect [3].

Tetracolon – The word “tetracolon” is described as a rhetorical device that involves a series of four parallel clauses or phrases, used to create a sense of balance and completeness [2].

2.4. Parallelism

Kövecses emphasizes the importance of parallelism as a rhetorical device in organizing and structuring texts. This device not only establishes a connection between elements within the same sentence or across multiple sentences but also enhances the persuasiveness and appeal of the text. When elements follow a similar structure, they become easier for readers or listeners to process and remember. Additionally, parallelism contributes to a consistent rhythm in speech or writing, making the content more comprehensible and compelling. He writes: “Parallelism is one of the most important organizational devices at a writer’s or speaker’s disposal. It consists of using the same general structure for multiple parts of a sentence, or for multiple sentences, in order to link them all...” [5].

In the article “*Parallelism of Syntax and Semantics in English-Vietnamese Proverbs*”, published in *Edektweiss Applied Science and Technology* on January 6, 2025, Pham and Pham [6] state: “Parallelism is a prominent feature in proverbs across languages. In English proverbs, parallelism and antithesis are common syntactic characteristics.” [6].

Furthermore, Quirk and his associates, in Quirk, et al. [7] define parallelism as the repetition of the same grammatical structure within a sentence or across multiple sentences to create balance and rhythm. This technique not only enhances clarity but also improves a text’s overall appeal. They illustrate this concept with the following quote: “Parallelism refers to the repetition of the same grammatical structure in a sentence or a series of sentences to create balance and rhythm.” [7].

The deliberate repetition of grammatical structures fosters uniformity and smoothness in writing, allowing readers to absorb information seamlessly without disruption.

In Lakoff and Johnson [4] extend the concept of parallelism beyond grammar to thought and metaphor. They argue that parallel structures in language are not merely a syntactic feature but also reflect cognitive processes, particularly in how metaphors help express abstract concepts. They write: “Metaphor is not just a matter of language but also of thought. Parallel structures in language reflect parallel structures in our conceptual system.” [4].

Thus, parallel structures in language not only aid in organizing information but also mirror how we perceive and conceptualize the world.

Finally, in Kinneavy [8] highlights the crucial role of parallelism in structuring effective speeches. He argues that parallel structures enhance clarity and rhythm, making messages more engaging and easier for audiences to absorb. He emphasizes: “The use of parallel structures is essential to the effective organization of discourse, providing clarity and rhythm that enhance the message.” [8].

Through parallelism, speakers and writers can present information coherently, emphasize key points, and create engaging communication. From the above perspectives, it is evident that parallelism is not merely a grammatical technique but a fundamental tool for structuring discourse, reinforcing messages, and improving comprehension.

2.5. Characteristics of Parallel Structure in Proverbs

Parallel structure is a fundamental element in both Vietnamese and English proverbs, enhancing their semantic value and enriching their messages. This structure not only increases appeal but also

highlights contrasting concepts that share a common nature. The repetition of syntactic and semantic patterns allows listeners to easily recognize, remember, and internalize profound messages. It also serves as an effective tool for conveying moral values such as honesty, patience, and respect, while emphasizing contrasts between good and evil, fairness and injustice.

By combining syntactic and semantic parallelism, this structure helps preserve and develop linguistic heritage while deepening the meaning of messages. Proverbs seamlessly embed themselves in the minds of listeners, transforming into simple yet profound life principles and ensuring the sustainability of cultural heritage across generations.

Additionally, parallel structure reflects a community's customs, traditions, and way of life, connecting generations through distilled life experiences. Particularly for younger generations, this structure facilitates the absorption of life lessons, fostering respect for national traditions. Proverbs, with their parallel construction, become powerful tools for education and moral guidance within the community.

3. Research Methods and Materials

3.1. Research Methods

To examine rhetorical devices in English and Vietnamese proverbs, we apply the following research methods:

3.2. Comparative Method

As a core approach, this method clarifies the differences and similarities between rhetorical devices in English and Vietnamese proverbs. By analyzing structures, rhetorical forms, and their usage, we highlight the influence of cultural, historical, and social factors on the formation and evolution of proverbs.

3.3. Content Analysis Method

This method allows for an in-depth exploration of rhetorical devices in proverbs. By examining how these devices emphasize meaning and reflect cultural values, we gain insights into the expressive and communicative functions of proverbs in both languages.

3.4. Documentary Survey Method

By reviewing existing literature, including books, articles, theses, and previous studies on rhetorical devices in English and Vietnamese proverbs, this method provides a strong theoretical foundation for the study.

3.5. Comparative Analysis Method

By integrating analysis and comparison, this method clarifies the similarities and differences in rhetorical devices and their role in reflecting the worldview and cultural values of each nation.

3.6. Qualitative Method

This method focuses on examining and analyzing rhetorical devices within their actual usage contexts, enhancing our understanding of the creativity and adaptability of language across different cultures.

By combining these methods, we gain a comprehensive and profound insight into rhetorical devices in English and Vietnamese proverbs, elucidating the intricate linguistic characteristics and cultural nuances of each language.

3.7. Research Materials

To analyze rhetorical devices in English and Vietnamese proverbs, we have consulted the following research materials:

- Pham and Pham [6].
- De Ley [9].
- Le [10].

These resources provide a strong theoretical foundation and illustrative examples, enabling a comprehensive exploration of rhetorical devices in English and Vietnamese proverbs.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. The Rhetorical Device *Asyndeton* in English and Vietnamese Proverbs

Table 1.

The results of the survey on the rhetorical device *Asyndeton* in English and Vietnamese proverbs.

| Ordinal | Rhetorical Device | Frequency of Occurrence (%) | | | |
|---------|-------------------|-----------------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|
| | | English Proverbs | | Vietnamese Proverbs | |
| 1 | Asyndeton | 309/1250 | 24.8% | 408/1250 | 32.6% |

We surveyed 2,500 proverbs, and the results indicate that 717 of them utilize the rhetorical device *Asyndeton*. Among these, English proverbs account for 309 out of 1,250, approximately 24.8%, while Vietnamese proverbs account for 408 out of 1,250, about 32.6%.

This data highlights a notable difference in the use of *Asyndeton* between the two languages, with Vietnamese proverbs exhibiting a higher frequency. Specifically, while English proverbs employ this device less often, Vietnamese proverbs demonstrate a stronger tendency toward this rhetorical strategy. This comparison suggests that *Asyndeton* may play a more significant role in conveying meaning and enhancing expressiveness in Vietnamese proverbs compared to English ones.

4.1.1. *Asyndeton* Between Words/Phrases

Example:

“*Out of sight, out of mind.*” (1)

The proverb (1) exemplifies the rhetorical device of *asyndeton*, where conjunctions are deliberately omitted to create conciseness and enhance expressive impact. Specifically, no conjunctions link the two parts—“*out of sight*” and “*out of mind*”—resulting in a direct and powerful message.

By removing conjunctions, the proverb conveys a sense of urgency and emphasizes the contrast between two states: when something is no longer visible, it also fades from memory. The use of *asyndeton* here not only strengthens expressiveness but also prompts the listener to reflect on the close relationship between visual perception and memory.

This structure ensures the message is conveyed clearly and is easily understood while also deepening its impact on the listener. The phrase’s expressive power is heightened by the direct connection between the two concepts, contributing to the aesthetic quality of the language.

There is a Vietnamese proverb that says, “*Out of sight, out of mind.*” (2)

Proverb (2) can be analyzed through the lens of *asyndeton*, similar to proverb (1). In proverb (2), the absence of a conjunction between the two phrases “*out of sight*” and “*out of mind*” highlights their close connection. The omission of a conjunction not only creates an implicit meaning but also enhances the significance of these two states. When a person or object becomes physically distant, emotional connections often fade.

This structure not only makes the message easier to understand but also encourages the listener to reflect on the impact of physical distance on emotional attachment. As a result, the proverb’s meaning is conveyed clearly and effectively, emphasizing the close relationship between visual perception and

human emotions. In summary, the use of *asyndeton* in “*Out of sight, out of mind*” creates a powerful effect, making it easier for listeners to recognize the profound influence of distance on human relationships.

Now, let’s examine another proverb: “*Selling distant relatives and buying close neighbors.*” (3)

Proverb (3) carries multiple layers of meaning. In this sentence, the absence of conjunctions between “*Selling distant relatives*” and “*buying close neighbors*” creates a concise yet impactful expression. The omission of a connector like “*and*” emphasizes the contrast between the two concepts: severing ties with distant relatives and fostering close relationships with nearby neighbors.

The proverb conveys the importance of social and familial relationships. When circumstances change or geographical distance creates barriers, people often need to establish or strengthen connections with those physically closer to them.

In short, the *asyndeton* structure in proverb (3) not only enhances the aesthetic appeal of the phrase but also emphasizes the importance of relationships in life. This rhetorical device creates a powerful effect, making it easier for the listener to recognize and deeply appreciate the proverb’s meaning.

Consider the following example: “*Play stupid games, win stupid prizes.*” (4)

Proverb (4) can be analyzed through the device of *asyndeton*, as there is no conjunction between the parts “*play stupid games*” and “*win stupid prizes.*” This omission creates a concise and impactful expression while clearly highlighting the cause-and-effect relationship. When people engage in thoughtless or meaningless actions, they receive consequences that reflect that lack of wisdom. The absence of a conjunction not only makes the sentence more succinct and definitive but also strengthens the impression of the message it conveys.

Clearly, the *asyndeton* structure in this sentence not only enhances its brevity but also reinforces the proverb’s profound meaning. It encourages individuals to think carefully before acting in order to avoid undesirable consequences.

In summary, the *asyndeton* structure in proverb (4) not only creates conciseness but also effectively emphasizes its message.

4.1.2. *Asyndeton Between Sentences*

Consider the example: “*Man proposes, God disposes.*” (1)

Proverb (1) uses *asyndeton* to create a strong and concise message. Specifically, the absence of a conjunction between the two parts—“*Man proposes*” and “*God disposes*”—makes the sentence more succinct. The lack of connecting words not only enhances brevity and memorability but also helps the listener grasp the core meaning quickly, without distraction. This highlights the idea that although humans can make plans and set intentions, the ultimate outcome is determined by a higher power. The message encourages people to recognize their limitations in the face of life’s uncertainties.

There is a Vietnamese proverb: “*Beautiful women come from silk, good rice comes from fertilizer.*” (2)

Proverb (2) is not merely a saying but also exemplifies the art of *asyndeton*, emphasizing meaning without relying on conjunctions. Its structure consists of two parallel parts: “*Beautiful women come from silk*” and “*Good rice comes from fertilizer.*” The absence of a conjunction between these parts makes the statement more concise and memorable while creating coherence in expression.

The brevity, along with the repetition of structure in the proverb, makes the message prominent and easy to absorb. As a result, the listener can quickly grasp and reflect on the valuable lesson it conveys.

4.2. *Six Rhetorical Devices in English and Vietnamese Proverbs*

We analyzed six rhetorical devices in English and Vietnamese proverbs using a database of 717 proverbs from the results in Table 1. The findings of this survey are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.
Results of the Survey on Six Rhetorical Devices in English and Vietnamese Proverbs.

| Ordinal | Rhetorical Devices | Frequency of Occurrence (%) | | | |
|---------|--------------------|-----------------------------|--------|---------------------|--------|
| | | English Proverbs | | Vietnamese Proverbs | |
| 1 | Epistrophe | 45 | 14.60% | 0 | 0% |
| 2 | Anaphora | 39 | 15.60% | 62 | 15.20% |
| 3 | Isocolon | 83 | 26.90% | 102 | 25% |
| 4 | Bicolon | 95 | 30.70% | 124 | 30.40% |
| 5 | Tricolon | 45 | 14.60% | 75 | 18.40% |
| 6 | Tetracolon | 2 | 0.60% | 45 | 11% |
| | | 309 | | 408 | |

Table 2 presents the results of the survey on the frequency of six rhetorical devices in English and Vietnamese proverbs. Below are some key highlights

4.3. Overview

The total number of proverbs surveyed is 1,250 for each language. Among them, 309 English proverbs incorporate rhetorical devices, while 408 Vietnamese proverbs do so. This suggests that Vietnamese proverbs make greater use of rhetorical devices overall.

Epistrophe: English proverbs contain 45 instances (14.6%) of Epistrophe, whereas Vietnamese proverbs do not use this device at all. This indicates that Epistrophe is either uncommon or entirely absent in Vietnamese proverbs.

Anaphora: Vietnamese proverbs exhibit a relatively high frequency of Anaphora, with 62 instances (15.2%), compared to 39 instances (15.6%) in English. This similarity suggests that both languages utilize this device, though Vietnamese employs it slightly more frequently.

Isocolon: The use of Isocolon is comparable in both languages, with 83 instances (26.9%) in English and 102 instances (25%) in Vietnamese.

Bicolon: Similar to Isocolon, Bicolon is widely used in both languages, appearing in 95 English proverbs (30.7%) and 124 Vietnamese proverbs (30.4%).

Tricolon: Vietnamese proverbs demonstrate a richer use of Tricolon, with 75 instances (18.4%), compared to 45 instances (14.6%) in English.

Tetracolon: This rhetorical device is the least common, with only 2 instances (0.6%) in English, whereas Vietnamese proverbs contain 45 instances (11%). This suggests that Tetracolon may play a significant role in enhancing the expressiveness of Vietnamese proverbs.

4.3.1. Epistrophe

Epistrophe is a rhetorical device commonly found in proverbs, where a word or phrase is repeated at the end of sentences or clauses.

For example:

“For want of a nail, the shoe was lost; for want of a shoe, the horse was lost; and for want of a horse, the man was lost.” (1)

The proverb (1) clearly demonstrates the art of repetition through the phrase *“was lost,”* which appears at the end of each clause. This repetition not only enhances the rhythmic quality of the sentence but also reinforces the meaning of each part. The recurring phrase helps make the message more memorable, allowing listeners to quickly grasp the valuable lesson conveyed: the significance of small details and their far-reaching consequences in life.

Another example:

“Grasp all, lose all.” (2)

The proverb (2) is divided into two distinct parts: *“Grasp all”* and *“lose all”*. The repetition of the word *“all”* at the end of each phrase not only creates a sense of balance and harmony but also

strengthens the proverb's meaning. This parallel structure makes it easier for listeners to recognize the intended message—a warning about the dangers of excessive greed. As a result, the proverb encourages individuals to practice moderation and carefully consider their actions before attempting to take on too much.

Vietnamese proverbs are inherently rich and diverse, but the rhetorical device of epistrophe is not commonly used, particularly in parallel structures. This may be due to the tonal nature of the Vietnamese language, which incorporates six distinct tones that naturally create rhythm and tonal variation. Instead of relying on repetition, Vietnamese proverbs often emphasize rhyme, rhythm, and the balance of tones and word types. Consequently, epistrophe is nearly absent from the vast collection of Vietnamese proverbs.

4.3.2. Anaphora

Anaphora is a rhetorical device in which a word or phrase is repeated at the beginning of sentences, clauses, or paragraphs to create emphasis and rhythm. This technique enhances the impact and memorability of the content, while also evoking emotions in the listener and reinforcing the power of the message.

Consider the following example:

“He who knows does not speak. He who speaks does not know.” (1)

The proverb (1) exemplifies the anaphora structure through the repetition of the phrase “*He who*” at the beginning of both clauses. Although the sentence consists of two independent clauses, their shared opening phrase establishes a strong connection between them, emphasizing the proverb's meaning.

Anaphora is more than just repetition; it strengthens the binary structure of the message, making it easier for the listener to understand and internalize. Additionally, it encourages the audience to reflect on the way they engage with and perceive knowledge in their lives.

This proverb subtly employs anaphora to convey a profound message about the relationship between knowledge and communication. The repetition of “*He who*” not only highlights the contrast between “*knowing and speaking*” but also prompts the listener to reconsider how they communicate in their relationships and daily interactions.

Let's examine another example:

“Kindness in words creates confidence. Kindness in thinking creates profoundness. Kindness in giving creates love.” (2)

Proverb (2) clearly illustrates the power of repetition through the phrase “*Kindness in*”. This technique not only establishes a rhythmic flow throughout the sentence but also builds a cohesive structure, making it easier for the listener to remember and grasp the core message. Each statement serves as a progressive step that expands upon the previous one, emphasizing the connection between kindness and its positive effects on life.

This repetition is not only artistic but also evokes positive emotions in the reader or listener. It serves as a reminder of the importance of kindness in communication, thought, and action, encouraging individuals to reflect on the profound impact kindness can have on both themselves and their communities.

A Vietnamese proverb states:

“The money that goes ahead is wise money; the money that comes later is foolish money.” (3)

Proverb (3) demonstrates the art of repetition through the phrase “*Đông tiền*.” This repetition not only creates a harmonious rhythm but also reinforces the proverb's meaning, making it more memorable for the listener. The structured repetition naturally captures attention and emphasizes the significance of timing in financial decisions. Each part of the sentence delivers a clear message, reminding individuals to seize opportunities wisely and consider the best ways to manage their money according to circumstances.

Another example:

“If parents are rich, their children will inherit their wealth. If parents are poor, their children will inherit nothing.” (4)

Proverb (4) clearly exemplifies the use of anaphora. The sentence begins with the phrase “*If parents are*,” which is repeated in both clauses (“*rich parents*” and “*poor parents*”). This repetition creates a strong connection between the two parts of the sentence and reinforces the central message. The parallel structure effectively compares two contrasting conditions, where both clauses follow a similar pattern: “*parents [status] → children [result]*.” This balanced structure enhances clarity and makes it easier for the listener to follow and internalize the proverb’s meaning.

4.3.3. Isocolon

Isocolon is a distinctive rhetorical device that emphasizes uniformity in grammatical structure. It consists of two or more parts of similar length and form, creating a harmonious and memorable rhythm. In both English and Vietnamese proverbs, isocolon often appears with an equal number of syllables, enhancing the strength and eloquence of the statement. The use of isocolon not only makes the phrase more impactful but also helps the listener grasp the message more quickly.

Example:

“Spare the rod, spoil the child.” (1)

Proverb (1) is a classic example of isocolon structure, where the two parts of the sentence are equal in length. This phrase consists of two clauses: “*Spare the rod*” and “*spoil the child*.” Both clauses contain four syllables each, creating balance and rhythm, which enhances the phrase’s appeal. Additionally, both parts follow a similar grammatical structure, beginning with a verb followed by a noun or noun phrase.

The isocolon structure not only ensures linguistic consistency but also enhances emphasis and memorability. By employing this form, the proverb delivers its message in a concise yet powerful manner, making it easier for the listener to absorb and recall.

4.3.4. Bicolon

Bicolon is a rhetorical device in which two parts of a sentence or two sentences with similar structures are repeated to emphasize meaning through contrast. In Vietnamese, bicolon often expresses both similarity and distinction between different aspects of an idea.

Example:

“A tiger leaves its skin when it dies; a person leaves their reputation.” (1)

Proverb (1) is divided into two symmetrical parts, each following a similar grammatical structure. This balance not only creates rhythm but also enhances the proverb’s profound meaning. The imagery of a tiger leaving behind its skin and a human leaving behind their reputation establishes a powerful metaphor: while animals may leave behind tangible remains, humans are remembered for their intangible legacy—honor, reputation, and the impact they leave on others. The proverb, therefore, conveys a lesson about the significance of one’s legacy and the values they cultivate in life.

English Example:

“A honey tongue, a heart of gall.” (2)

Proverb (2) employs bicolon with two contrasting elements: “*honey tongue*” and “*heart of gall*.” This structure not only creates a rhythmic and memorable expression but also highlights the stark contrast between an appealing outward appearance and a deceitful inner nature.

Syntactically, both parts of the bicolon follow a parallel structure. “*Honey tongue*” describes sweet and persuasive speech that pleases the listener, whereas “*heart of gall*” evokes an image of a heart filled with bitterness and malice, symbolizing deceit and ill intent. This contrast strengthens the proverb’s

message: appearances can be deceiving, and a person's true character is not always reflected in their words.

Through this bicolon, the proverb advises caution and deeper insight into human nature, reminding the audience that sincerity is not always expressed through speech.

- *Structural Uniqueness of Bicolon*

An interesting characteristic of these two proverbs is the variation in length and syllable count between their parts, which distinguishes bicolon from isocolon. Unlike isocolon, where parts typically maintain equal length, bicola often feature an asymmetrical structure. Specifically, in "*A honey tongue, a heart of gall*," the first part contains three words, while the second part contains four. This slight imbalance contributes to the phrase's distinct rhythm and appeal.

Despite the unevenness in word count, the effectiveness of the proverbs remains intact. The contrast between the two parts remains strong, reinforcing the message and making it more striking and memorable to the listener.

4.3.5. Tricolon

Tricolon is a rhetorical device in which three consecutive parts (or phrases) share the same grammatical structure, creating rhythm and emphasis. The use of tricolon not only enhances the musicality of a proverb but also makes it more memorable and impactful for the listener.

Example:

"See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil." (1)

Proverb (1) is a classic example of tricolon, where three parallel phrases are used to convey a clear and profound message. Each part of the sentence—"*see no evil*," "*hear no evil*," and "*speak no evil*"—begins with a verb followed by an abstract noun, reinforcing the idea of avoiding evil in all aspects of life.

This parallel structure makes the phrase easy to remember and enhances its rhythmic quality, allowing the listener to quickly grasp its meaning. The proverb is often interpreted as a moral guideline, encouraging individuals to lead ethical lives by avoiding exposure to negativity. By choosing not to see, hear, or speak evil, one can maintain purity of thought and contribute to a more positive environment. This reflects a noble philosophy of life: distancing oneself from wrongdoing fosters personal integrity and moral clarity.

Vietnamese Example:

"Rotten wood is hard to burn, a good husband is easy to create, a wise husband is hard to please."(2)

Proverb (2) is a strong example of tricolon, employing three distinct yet interconnected parts to emphasize its message. Each segment conveys a specific idea:

"Rotten wood is hard to burn"—Symbolizing something useless or ineffective.

"A good husband is easy to create"—Implying that being a decent spouse requires minimal effort.

"A wise husband is hard to please"—Suggesting that wisdom often comes with higher expectations.

By combining these three elements, the proverb presents a vivid commentary on relationships, particularly within marriage. It highlights the challenges of maintaining a harmonious partnership, underscoring the importance of patience, understanding, and mutual effort.

In summary, both examples demonstrate how tricolon enhances the expressiveness of proverbs. By structuring phrases in sets of three, these sayings achieve greater rhetorical impact, making their messages more persuasive, rhythmic, and memorable. The Vietnamese proverb, in particular, not only reflects family dynamics but also imparts valuable lessons about relationship-building and resilience.

4.3.6. Tetracolon

Tetracolon is a rhetorical device consisting of four parts or clauses with a similar structure, designed to create a rhythmic and memorable expression that captures the audience's attention. The use of tetracolon not only enhances persuasiveness but also effectively emphasizes the core message.

This repetitive structure adds artistic value to language while significantly enhancing the power and effectiveness of communication. By utilizing tetracolon, speakers can present ideas in a compelling and memorable way, helping the audience retain important information. In speeches or literary works, tetracolon can evoke excitement, empathy, and a lasting impression of the conveyed message. Thus, it serves as a valuable tool for developing effective communication skills.

Example:

“Learning to eat, learning to speak, learning to wrap, learning to unwrap.” (1)

Proverb (1) is a classic example of tetracolon in Vietnamese. The sentence's repetitive structure, consisting of four parallel parts, not only establishes a rhythmic flow but also reinforces the message about the fundamental role of learning in life.

The repetition helps listeners easily remember and internalize the powerful message of lifelong learning. Each phrase carries its own meaning, yet together they form a comprehensive perspective on personal development. Thanks to the tetracolon structure, this proverb transcends mere advice—it becomes a guiding philosophy that encourages continuous self-improvement and adaptability throughout life.

In Vietnamese culture, proverbs often utilize rhetorical devices like tetracolon to enhance expressiveness and memorability, making them a common feature of the language. In contrast, while English proverbs sometimes follow similar structures, the use of tetracolon is less prevalent. English proverbs tend to be shorter, typically consisting of only two or three elements, such as *“Waste not, want not”* or *“See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil.”* This difference may stem from the ways in which each culture has developed its language and conveyed knowledge over time.

Example:

*“Monday’s child is fair of face,
Tuesday’s child is full of grace,
Wednesday’s child is full of woe,
Thursday’s child has far to go,
Friday’s child is loving and giving,
Saturday’s child works hard for its living,
And a child that is born on the Sabbath day*

Is fair and wise and good and gay.” (2)

Although proverb (2) does not fully adhere to the tetracolon structure, its first four clauses demonstrate key characteristics of this rhetorical device. The lines *“Monday’s child is fair of face, Tuesday’s child is full of grace, Wednesday’s child is full of woe, Thursday’s child has far to go”* exhibit a consistent structure, featuring the verb “is” or “has” followed by descriptive adjectives such as “fair,” “full,” and “far.” This repetition creates a sense of rhythm and harmony, reinforcing the message and making it easier to remember. It also highlights the perceived connection between a child's birth day and their personality traits.

5. Discussion

The survey results indicate that English and Vietnamese proverbs share many similarities, highlighting the cultural interplay between the two civilizations. Both cultures utilize diverse rhetorical devices to craft lively, concise, and memorable proverbs that can be applied in daily life. These proverbs convey messages about morality and the values each culture upholds. Furthermore, the aesthetic aspect

is also evident, as proverbs not only provide valuable lessons but also enhance the beauty of language and evoke emotions in the reader. This similarity exists not only in form but also in content and meaning, reflecting the richness of human thought and communication.

Despite these similarities, notable differences exist in the way English and Vietnamese proverbs employ rhetorical devices. Specifically, Vietnamese proverbs often favor asyndeton, meaning they omit conjunctions between parts of a sentence. This creates a stronger, more rhythmic flow, leaving a lasting impression on the listener.

In contrast, English proverbs tend to employ syndeton. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, “*syndeton is a rhetorical device in which conjunctions (such as 'and,' 'or,' 'but')* are deliberately used between words or parts of a sentence to create a sense of connection and flow.” This structure not only makes sentences smoother but also enhances clarity in conveying messages. Notably, in some cases, both syndeton and asyndeton can be combined within the same proverb, adding variety and richness to the expression of ideas. This stylistic choice is not only common in proverbs but also reflects the distinct nature of English linguistic culture, emphasizing depth of thought and creativity in communication.

Another key difference is the use of tetracolon, a rhetorical device that features four parallel parts within a sentence. This structure is highly prevalent in Vietnamese proverbs, possibly due to the emphasis on rhythm and melody in the Vietnamese language, resulting in proverbs that are both profound and vivid. In contrast, English proverbs rarely employ tetracolon, which may stem from differences in cultural characteristics and communication styles. The absence of tetracolon in English proverbs suggests a preference for conciseness and clarity, prioritizing direct message delivery over complex structures. This contrast demonstrates how cultural values, lifestyles, and aesthetic preferences influence patterns of communication and expression in each language.

5.1. Discussion Questions

1. Do you think proverbs still play an important role in modern society? Why?
2. How do proverbs reflect the values and beliefs of a culture?
3. How can rhetorical devices be applied in modern writing or poetry?
4. Do you think understanding proverbs can improve communication with people from different cultures?

6. Recommendation

Beyond the rhetorical devices commonly found in proverbs, we believe that a deeper exploration of rhythm and melody could offer valuable insights for those passionate about literature and language. The author of this study encourages further research on resonance and rhyme, as this would not only enhance our understanding of how proverbs are created and developed but also contribute to the field of comparative linguistics.

Researchers can investigate how different cultures formulate and utilize proverbs, leading to unique and valuable cross-cultural comparisons. This exploration not only deepens our appreciation of language but also helps connect generations through timeless sayings. In doing so, we not only preserve cultural values but also encourage contemporary creativity, allowing proverbs to evolve and remain relevant in modern society. Proverbs serve as reflections of our own culture as well as those of other societies around the world. Their richness and beauty lie not only in their content but also in their structure and form. Delving into these aspects allows us to fully appreciate their immense significance in everyday life. Proverbs are more than just sayings—they are a treasure trove of wisdom, encapsulating the experiences and cultural essence of past generations. Each proverb conveys a profound message, offering insights into the beliefs and values of our ancestors.

This depth provides us with an opportunity to explore their relevance and apply their wisdom in modern life. Additionally, the tone and rhythm of proverbs play a crucial role in making them more engaging and memorable. Proverbs are not merely a means of communication; they also serve as a way to express emotions and convey deeper meanings. The interplay between language and culture in

proverbs highlights the power of words in bridging generations and connecting people across different societies. Ultimately, studying proverbs not only broadens an individual's linguistic knowledge but also provides a deeper understanding of a nation's cultural identity and values. By enriching our own understanding and sharing it with others, we ensure that proverbs are preserved and celebrated, serving as a bridge between generations. This pursuit benefits not just individuals but also the broader community, contributing to a more unified and culturally enriched society.

7. Conclusion

This article explores the syntactic and semantic structure of proverbs in English and Vietnamese, with a focus on the use of rhetorical devices and parallel structures. The study not only identifies similarities between the two cultures but also highlights key differences in how each society conveys thoughts and emotions through proverbs.

One of the central findings is the prominence of parallel structure, a defining characteristic of folklore. To illustrate this, the article examines several notable rhetorical devices, including asyndeton, bicolon, isocolon, tricolon, tetracolon, epistrophe, and anaphora. These devices enhance the expressive power of proverbs, contributing to their rhythm, harmony, and memorability within the community.

Additionally, the study underscores how historical, social, and psychological factors shape the content and form of proverbs. Each culture's unique values influence the messages conveyed, reflecting differences in worldviews and lifestyles. These variations are evident in the word choices and phrasing found in proverbs from different cultures.

Beyond analyzing cultural characteristics, this study also paves the way for future research. The author suggests exploring social and historical contexts to gain deeper insights into the origins of proverbs and how they have evolved over time. This approach would be valuable not only for researchers in linguistics and cultural studies but also for those interested in the relationship between language and human thought.

The findings of this research are both theoretically significant and practically applicable. They can serve as references for scholars studying language, culture, and communication, as well as those working in education, media, or comparative cultural studies.

In summary, this article provides a comprehensive analysis of the structure and meaning of proverbs in English and Vietnamese, emphasizing the importance of exploring cultural nuances through language. For those looking to expand their research in this field, this study will undoubtedly serve as a valuable and insightful resource.

Transparency:

The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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