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**AN INVESTIGATION INTO STYLISTIC
DEVICES COMMONLY USED IN RIDDLES:
ENGLISH vs VIETNAMESE**

**Field: The English Language
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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. RATIONALE

It can be said that riddles are not strange to us. People often invent or have riddles in their daily conversations, on television programs, or at work. The importance of riddles can not be denied. Riddles help us enhance our knowledge, relax our minds, defeat depression, and even build group solidarity. They also serve as valuable resources for academic studies.

However, a riddle is not only a bit of entertainment which is commonly supposed to be. In fact, it is a complex linguistic and aesthetic structure. Therefore, there are a very great number of riddles containing stylistic devices. This can be explainable because of the reason that there exists a need to make riddles mysterious and challenging as much as possible to readers or listeners. As a result, knowing about the stylistic devices used in riddles in English and Vietnamese becomes essential and helpful to riddle comprehension and more to English teaching especially to teach grammar, vocabulary and so on. For these reasons, the researcher would like to choose this topic “*An investigation into stylistic devices commonly used in riddles: English vs Vietnamese*” for the thesis.

1.2. JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

This is a feasible thesis thanks to the fact that riddles are popular in English and Vietnamese. There are not, however, any thorough research to draw out the comparison between the two languages when creating and using riddles. With available and various riddles there are, this study is believed to be worth reading for teachers, students, as well as those who really take interest in aspects of the English and Vietnamese languages.

1.3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.3.1. Aims

- To understand more about the way English and Vietnamese riddles are created, and how they work in each culture.

- To help teachers deal with a rather straightforward use of riddles for free -practice and other activities in teaching English.

1.3.2. Objectives

- To identify stylistic devices used to create riddles in English-speaking countries and Viet Nam.

- To analyze in details stylistic devices used in numerous English and Vietnamese riddles.

- To give the comparison between English and Vietnamese riddles in terms of stylistic devices used.

- To suggest some implications of the findings for riddle comprehension and riddle solving in teaching and learning English as a foreign language.

1.4. RESEARCH SCOPE

As shown in the title of the study, stylistic devices listed are among those which English and Vietnamese-speaking people use on a large scale. Also, the majority of nearly 300 riddles chosen must have art as well as get short and witty answers. By doing so, data analysis is easier and more systematic.

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

(1) What are stylistic devices commonly used in English and Vietnamese riddles?

(2) What are similarities and differences of stylistic devices commonly used in English and Vietnamese riddles?

(3) What are applications of riddles to English teaching?

1.6. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 is Introduction. Chapter 2 is Literature Review and Theoretical Background. Chapter 3 is Research Methodology. Chapter 4 is Findings and Discussion. Chapter 5 is Conclusions, Teaching Implications and Suggestions for further research beyond the limits of the study.

CHAPTER 2: . LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1.1. About Riddles

Riddles have become the main content in many studies; for example, about English riddles, there are “*The language of riddles*” by Pepicello and Green (1982), “*English Riddles from Oral Tradition*” by Taylor (1951), “*A linguistic look at riddles*” by Dienhart (1987), and “*Development of Appreciation of Riddles*” by Shultz (1974). About Vietnamese riddles, there are “*Vietnamese Riddles*” by Nguyen Dinh Hoa (1960), “*Versification of Vietnamese riddles*” by Cong Huyen Ton Nu Nha Trang (2001), “*Câu đố dân gian của người Việt nhìn từ góc độ ngôn ngữ học*” by Bui Thi Thanh Huyen (2009), and so on.

2.1.2. About Stylistic Devices

There are theories about stylistic devices in the two languages: “*Stylistics*” by Galperin (1977), “*A handbook of Rhetorical Devices*” by Harris (2003), “*Linguistic Stylistics*” by Gabriela (2009). In Vietnamese, we have “*Phong cách học và đặc điểm tu từ tiếng Việt*” by Cu Dinh Tu (1983), “*99 phương tiện và biện pháp tu từ tiếng Việt*” by Dinh Trong Lac (2003).

2.2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.2.1. Riddles

2.2.1.1. Definition of Riddles

There exist many definitions of what riddles are such as: “a riddle is a question that is difficult to understand, and that has a surprising answer, that you ask somebody as a game” (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, p.1306). Marina Warner defined “a riddle comes in the form of a snap joke, playing with similitude and incongruity in order to spark laughter...Like nonsense verse and nursery rhymes, they are as ancient as anything ever told, and they occur in every culture” [41, p.26-27]

2.2.1.2. Puzzles, Conundrum, Quiz

“A puzzle is a game that you have to think about carefully in order to answer it or do it” [33]. A puzzle is often a crossword or a jigsaw. “Conundrum is a question usually involving a trick with words, which you ask for fun” [33]. In this sense, conundrum is synonymous with riddle. *Quiz is a competition or game in which people try to answer questions to test their knowledge* [33]. You need to get much general knowledge to take part in a quiz, while a riddle usually requires wit and thoughts.

2.2.1.3. Function of Riddles

Riddles have important functions like socialization and recreation. They are useful not only to adults but also children.

2.2.1.4. Structure of Riddles

A riddle consists of five elements: the *given term* (the core of the riddle image), the *constant* premises, the *hidden variable*, the *given variable*, the *hidden term* (the answer).

2.2.2. Stylistic Devices

2.2.2.1. Definition of Stylistic Devices

Stylistic devices are also called **rhetorical devices** or **figures of speech**. It is “A stylistic use of a language unit acquires what we call a stylistic meaning, and a stylistic device is the realization of an already well-known abstract scheme designed to achieve a particular artistic effect” [43].

2.2.2.2. Function of Stylistic Devices

Stylistic devices are used in writing to make it more effective and persuasive.

2.2.2.3. Classification of Stylistic Devices

Three main levels of stylistic devices are distinguished: phonetic, lexical and syntactical stylistic devices.

2.2.3. Common Stylistic Devices in English and Vietnamese

2.2.3.1. Simile: An explicit comparison between two things using words such as *like* or *as*.

2.2.3.2. Metaphor: two different things compared in a figurative sense.

2.2.3.3. Antithesis: emphasizes the contrast between two ideas.

2.2.3.4. Pun: an idea or expression which has two meanings implied at the same time.

2.2.3.5. Rhyme: the use of words which end with the same sounds, usually at the end of lines.

2.2.3.6. Paradox: a statement that seems to be self-contradictory or opposed to common sense.

2.2.3.7. Repetition: the repetition of the initial, middle or final word or word-group in a sentence or clause at the beginning of the next with the adjunct idea

2.2.4. Ambiguity

According to McKay, linguistic ambiguity can be divided into *phonological-ambiguity* (ambiguity concerning the sounds of words), *morphological ambiguity* (ambiguity concerning word formation), and *syntactic ambiguity* (ambiguity concerning the rule of syntax) [32].

2.2.5. Primary Logical Meaning vs Derivational Logical Meaning

Primary logical meaning is the one most frequently used, the precise meaning of a feature of the idea, phenomenon or object [43]. It is also called the direct, basic, literal meaning.

Secondary logical meaning (derivative meaning) is the meaning that was born in the context. It is derived from primary logical meaning and more abstract than the primary logical meaning.

2.2.6. Riddlers, Riddlees

In “*The language of riddles*”, these two terms are used repeatedly. *Riddlers* refer to those people who create or make a question. *Riddlees* refer to people who try to answer that question.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

3.1. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1.1. Approach

This is a descriptive and qualitative study executed with a contrastive

analysis. English and Vietnamese are source languages and as a means for comparison respectively in order to highlight the similarities and differences of the stylistic devices in the two languages concerned.

3.1.2. Data Collection

The data of this thesis are mainly collected from hundreds of books. In English, they are “*Old Groaners*” by Watkin, “*101 American English riddles*” by Collis, “*Riddles, Riddles, Riddles*” by Hindman, “*Howard's book of conundrums and riddles*” by Howard. In Vietnamese, they are “*666 câu đố Việt Nam*” by Mai Chi, “*Kho tàng câu đố Việt Nam*” by SSDG, “*277 câu đố Việt Nam*”, “*999 câu đố Việt Nam*” by Duc Anh, “*Cười và học*” by Nguyen Quoc Hung, and so on. Besides, data are selected from magazines, the Internet, prior studies and related materials.

3.1.3. Data Analysis

After being selected for ready reference, riddles are then categorized and tabulated in accordance with particular types of stylistic devices.

3.2. RESEARCH PROCEDURE

- ◆ Collecting data
- ◆ Making sample selection
- ◆ Classifying stylistic devices of English and Vietnamese riddles and making groups
- ◆ Describing and analyzing each group
- ◆ Draw out similarities and differences in terms of stylistic devices used in English and Vietnamese riddles
- ◆ Giving conclusion and suggesting riddle application in teaching English

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. PHONETIC STYLISTIC DEVICES COMMONLY USED IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE RIDDLES.

4.1.1. Phonetic Stylistic Devices Commonly Used in English Riddles

There are two common cases of rhyme in English riddles. They

are *full rhyme* and *incomplete rhyme*.

4.1.1.1. Full rhyme

Rhyme can appear in different lines and in a line as well.

- (1) *As soft as silk, as white as milk,*
As bitter as gall, a thick green wall,
And a green coat covers me all.
 - A walnut

A special thing about full rhyme in English riddles is the use of Hink-Pink, Hinky-Pinky, and Hinkity-Pinkity.

- (2) *What do you call a chubby dog? - A round hound*
What's a glove for a small cat? - A kitten mitten

4.1.1.2. Incomplete rhyme

- (3) *What is the difference between a coat and a baby?*
 - *One you wear, one you were.*

4.1.2. Phonetic Stylistic Devices Commonly Used in Vietnamese Riddles

4.1.2.1. Full rhyme in “noi loi”

a. The final word of preceding line rhymes with the initial word of the following line

- (4) *Không có tui*
Đui cả nhà
 - *Cái đèn*

b. The final word of preceding line rhymes with the medial word of the following line

- (5) *Vừa bằng hột đỗ*
Ăn giỗ cả làng
 - *Con ruồi*

c. The last word of preceding line rhymes with the final word of the following line

- (6) *Xuống tắm ao hồ*

Mình wót đuôi khô

- *Cái gáo*

d. Others

4.1.2.2. Full rhyme in “luc bat”

- (7) *Một cây mà có năm cành,*
Giúng nước thì héo, để dành thì tươi.
 - *Bàn tay*

There are variations. For example, this riddle comprises two lines, and the sixth word of the first line rhymes with the fourth word of the second line.

- (8) *Để yên thì nằm thin thút,*
Hễ động liếm dứt, là chạy tứ tung
 - *Cái bào.*

4.1.3. Discussion

4.1.3.1. Similarities of Phonetic Stylistic Devices Commonly Used in English and Vietnamese Riddles

Rhyme is wonderful way to show art and riddle forming in both English and Vietnamese although not paying any role in the meaning of riddles. Specially, full rhyme in two languages are both found in verse, and rhyme is formed within a sentence or a set of sentences.

4.1.3.2. Differences of Phonetic Stylistic Devices Commonly Used in English and Vietnamese Riddles

In English riddles, full rhyme appears in a compound word, which is also called Hink-Pink, Hinky-Pinky, or Hinkity-Pinkity. In Vietnamese riddles, full rhyme appears in “noi loi” and “luc bat” with different positions together with variations in length of line, tonal arrangement and rhyming positions. While Vietnamese only has full rhyme, English has both full rhyme and incomplete rhyme. Incomplete rhyme in English is *consonant rhyme*.

Table 4.1. The summary of Rhyme in English and Vietnamese riddles

Rhyme	English	Vietnamese
Full rhyme	+	+
Incomplete rhyme	+	-
Internal rhyme (rhyme within the line)	+	+
Masculine rhyme (rhyme in one syllable)	+	+
Feminine rhyme (rhyme in two or more syllables)	+	-
Hink-Pink (rhyme in an 1-syllable compound word)	+	-

4.2. LEXICAL STYLISTIC DEVICES COMMONLY USED IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE RIDDLES.

4.2.1. Lexical Stylistic Devices Commonly Used In English Riddles

The researcher is going to analyze pun, metaphor, polysemy, personification and simile.

4.2.1.1. Pun in English Riddles

a. Homophones as Pun

(i) Adjective- Noun Homophones

(9) *Who is closer to you, your mom or your dad?*
- Mom is closer because dad is **farther**.

(ii) Adjective- Verb Homophones

(10) *What's black and white and red all over?*
- Newspaper.

(iii) Noun- Noun Homophones

(11) *What people are like the end of a book?*
- The **Finnish**

In noun homophones, there is a special case : *homonym riddles*.

(12) *What is rabbit fur?*

- Hare hair

(iv) Homophones between Acronyms of Alphabetical Letters and Words

(13) *Which four letters would frighten the thief?*
- **O I C U**

(v) Homophones between Alphabetical Letter and Roman Numerals

(14) *What must you add to nine to make it six?*
- **S (IX)**

b. Full Homonyms as Pun

(i) Nouns as Full Homonyms

(15) *Why do history books taste good?*
- Because they're full of **dates**.

(ii) Verbs as Full Homonyms

(16) *How do we know the ocean is friendly?*
- It **waves**.

(iii) Noun- Verb as Full Homonyms

(17) *Why is coffee like the soil?*
- It is **ground**.

(iv) Full Homonyms between Noun Phrases

(18) *I am a fish. My first half is made of metal. What am I?*
- The **goldfish**.

(v) Full Homonyms between Derivational Nouns and Noun Phrases

- + *The Initial Part of a Word*
- + *The Medial Part of a Word*
- + *The Final Part of a Word*
- + *Miscellenea*

c. Metathesis as Pun

(23) *What is the difference between a teacher and a conductor?*

- *One trains the mind and the other minds the train.*

d. Spoonerism as Pun

(24) *What is the difference between a cow with a sore throat and an angry crowd? - One moos badly, the other boos madly.*

- *One moos badly, the other boos madly.*

Besides, the reversal can be more complicated.

e. Synonymy as Pun.

f. Palindrome as Pun

(i) Noun as Palindrome

(26) *What are three-letter words for mother, father, and a young child? - Mum, dad, tot*

(ii) Verbs as Palindrome

(27) *What verb is the same when being read upwards and backwards? - Refer/ pop/ repaper*

g. Polysemy as Pun

4.2.1.2. *Metaphor in English Riddles*

a. Nouns Used as Metaphor

(i) Trees Used as Metaphor

(29) *What grows without roots?*

- *Human being*

(ii) Human Parts Used as Metaphor

(30) *What has two hands and a face, but no arms or legs?*

- *A clock*

(iii). Other Nouns Used as Metaphor

b. Verbs Used as Metaphor

c. Adjectives Used as Metaphor

4.2.1.3. *Personification in English Riddles*

a. Nature Personified

b. Body Parts Personified

c. Animals Personified

d. Everyday Objects Personified

e. Abstract Things Personified

f. Personification in Funny Riddles

(42) *What did the old chimney say to the young chimney?*

- *You are too young to smoke.*

4.2.1.4. *Simile in English Riddles*

a. Equal Comparison

(i) **Like**

(ii) **As...as**

b. Differentiating Comparison

(i) **Comparatives**

(ii) **Superlatives**

(iii) **Parallel increase**

4.2.1.5. *Decomposition of Set Phrases in English Riddles*

a. Decomposition of Noun Phrases

(48) *What do singers always want to hit?*

- *Songs. They very much wish to have **hit songs**.*

b. Decomposition of Verb Phrases

(49) *Which travels at greater speed, heat or cold?*

- *Heat, because you can **catch cold**.*

c. Decomposition of Adjective Phrases

(50) *When can a man be six feet tall and be short at the same time? - When he is **short of money**.*

d. Decomposition of Prepositional Phrases

(51) *What do you give a football player **with big feet**?*

- *Large shoes*

e. Decomposition of Clauses

(52) *Who will be your real friend, a poor friend or a rich one? - A poor friend, because **a friend in need is a friend indeed**.*

4.2.1.6. *Paradox in English Riddles*

a. Nature in Paradox**b. Things in Paradox****c. Abstract Things in Paradox****4.2.2. Lexical Stylistic Devices Commonly Used in Vietnamese Riddles****4.2.2.1. Pun in Vietnamese Riddles****a. Homonyms as Pun****(i) Noun Homonyms****(ii) Verb Homonyms****(iii) Noun - Verb Homonyms****(iv) Noun - Adjective Homonyms****(v) Quantifier Homonyms****b. Spoonerism as Pun****(i) Keep the Tone, Change the Rhyme**

(61) *Trên trời rớt xuống mau co, là gì?*

- *Mo cau*

(ii) Change the Tone, Keep the Rhyme

(62) *Cây xanh xanh, lá xanh xanh*

Bông ở trên cành, trái ở mé sông

- *Me sồng*

(iii) Micellanua

(64) *Một bà già đi chợ, đi giữa đường gặp một con cò
đi thụt lùi, lập tức bà già quay về. Vì sao mà bà già quay về?*

- *Tiền không có*

c. Synonymy as Pun**4.2.2.2. Metaphor in Vietnamese Riddles****a. Nouns Used as Metaphor****(i) Trees Used as Metaphor****(ii) Human Parts Used as Metaphor****(iii) Other Nouns Used as Metaphor****b. Verbs Used as Metaphor****4.2.2.3. Personification in Vietnamese Riddles****a. Nature Personified****b. Body Parts Personified****c. Animals personified****d. Everyday Objects Personified****e. Fruit Personified****4.2.2.4. Simile in Vietnamese Riddles****a. Equal Comparison****b. Differentiating Comparison****(i) Comparatives****(ii) Parallel Comparison****4.2.2.5. Paradox in Vietnamese Riddles****a. Nature in Paradox****b. Things in Paradox****c. Fruit in Paradox****d. Animals in Paradox****4.2.2.6. Hyperbole in Vietnamese Riddles****a. Activities Hyperbolized**

(82) *Trên trời mang toi mà xuống,*

Âm phủ đội mũ mà lên

- *Cây đậu này mầm*

b. Body Parts Hyperbolized

(83) *Năm con, năm đầu*

Chung nhau hai mắt

Gan nằm sát đất

Đi đâu cũng đi

- *Bàn chân*

c. Animals Hyperbolized

(84) *Tám người khiêng một mâm xương*

Đẻ hai ông xã nghênh ngang đi đâu

4.2.3. Discussion

There are various lexical stylistic devices used in English and Vietnamese riddles. Here is the summary of those stylistic devices. In the table, the researcher found that *hyperbole* is not commonly used in English riddles, and in Vietnamese it is *decomposition of set phrases* that is less common.

Table 4.2. The Summary of Lexical Stylistic Devices in English and Vietnamese Riddles

Lexical Stylistic Devices	English	Vietnamese
Pun	+	+
Metaphor	+	+
Personification	+	+
Simile	+	+
Decomposition of Set Phrases	+	-
Paradox	+	+
Hyperbole	-	+

4.2.3.1. Similarities of Lexical Stylistic Devices Commonly Used in English and Vietnamese Riddles

Pun is a noticeable stylistic device. The sameness of words and phrases are taken advantage of. Homonyms and Spoonerism are two common kinds appear in both English and Vietnamese.

With the use of *comparative words* such as *like*, *as* (như), *more* (hơn), *simile* is an effective way to use in both languages. Sub-types of simile such as *similar comparison*, *comparatives*, *parallel increase* all appear in the two languages, the way to use abstract things in comparison is alike and there are no noticeable differences.

Metaphor is another interesting stylistic devices used in the two languages. Nouns and verbs are mostly used as metaphor in English and

Vietnamese riddles.

Personification is a dominant way in English and Vietnamese riddles. With this kind of riddles, things are put closer to our life.

Paradox is another effective stylistic device used in English and Vietnamese riddles. It is the contradiction found in a riddle of this kind that really challenges riddlees.

4.2.3.2. Differences of Lexical Stylistic Devices Commonly Used in English and Vietnamese Riddles

a. **Pun:** only in English we found homophones appearing in special positions. Because Vietnamese is a *phonologically monosyllabic* language, that means all words are read in just one syllable, which often consists a vowel sound and a consonant sound. Also, it is *phonologically consistent*, which means vowels are read the same [3]. In contrast, English changed pronunciation of the same letter in different words, and when speaking English, one can link words, which is rare in Vietnamese. Besides, metathesis (reversal of words) does not appear in Vietnamese riddles.

Table 4.3. The Summary of Pun in English and Vietnamese Riddles

Pun	English	Vietnamese
Homophone (same pronunciation, different spelling)	+	-
Full Homonym (same pronunciation, same spelling)	+	+
Synonymy	+	+
Metathesis	+	-
Spoonerism	+	+
	(words only)	(words and tone)

b. **Metaphor:** It is a good way to be used in English and Vietnamese. However, there are differences between the image and the answer. In English, metaphor examples in adjective is not usually found in

Vietnamese.

Table 4.4. The Summary of Metaphor in English and Vietnamese Riddles

Metaphor	English	Vietnamese
Metaphor in Noun	+	+
Metaphor in Verb	+	+
Metaphor in Adjective	+	-

c. Personification: The subjects personified are slightly different. While Vietnamese riddles have many examples about everyday objects personified, and fruit is among a popular topic, English riddles base much on funny and body parts personified.

Table 4.5. The Summary of Personification in English and Vietnamese Riddles

Personification	English	Vietnamese
Nature Personified	+	+
Body Parts Personified	+	+
Animals Personified	+	+
Everyday Objects Personified	+	+
Fruit Personified	-	+
Personification in Funny Riddles	+	-

d. Decompositions of Set Phrases: In English, there is the stylistic device called decompositions of set phrases, in which the whole meaning of the set phrase is understood literally.

Table 4.6. The Summary of Decomposition of Set Phrases in English and Vietnamese Riddles

Decomposition of Set Phrases	English	Vietnamese
Noun Phrase	+	-
Verb Phrase	+	-
Adjective Phrase	+	-
Prepositional Phrase	+	-
Clauses	+	-

e. Simile: Superlatives are not commonly used in Vietnamese riddles, as shown in table 4.7.

Table 4.7. The Summary of Simile in English and Vietnamese Riddles

Simile	English	Vietnamese
Equational Comparison	+	+
Comparatives	+	+
Superlatives	+	-
Parallel Increase	+	+

f. Paradox: Topics used in paradox are different. In detail, Vietnamese has paradox in fruit and animals, while English has paradox in abstract things. Here is the summary on table 4.8.

Table 4.8. The Summary of Paradox in English and Vietnamese Riddles

Paradox	English	Vietnamese
Nature in Paradox	+	+
Fruit in Paradox	-	+
Animals in Paradox	-	+
Things in Paradox	+	+
Abstract things in Paradox	+	-

g. Hyperbole: In Vietnamese, hyperbole is a specific way of creating riddles in order to make fun and difficulty.

Table 4.9. The Summary of Hyperbole in English and Vietnamese Riddles

Hyperbole	English	Vietnamese
Activities Hyperbolized	-	+
Body Parts Hyperbolized	-	+
Animals Hyperbolized	-	+

4.3. SYNTACTICAL STYLISTIC DEVICES COMMONLY USED IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE RIDDLES

In English and Vietnamese riddles, syntactical devices are mostly based on peculiar syntactical arrangement. Namely, it is parallel construction.

4.3.1. Syntactical Stylistic Devices Commonly Used in English Riddles

4.3.1.1. Repetition in Parallel Construction

4.3.1.2. Antithesis in Parallel Construction

4.3.2. Syntactical Stylistic Devices Commonly Used in Vietnamese Riddles

4.3.2.1. Repetition in Parallel Construction

4.3.2.2. Antithesis in Parallel Construction

4.3.3. Discussion

4.3.3.1. Similarities of Syntactical Stylistic Device Commonly Used in English and Vietnamese Riddles: Parallel construction together with repetition and antithesis used in riddles as devices of words and structures can help to memorise riddles longer and more easily. In both languages, *reduplication* is an interesting way, when the last word in an utterance is repeated right at the beginning of the next one.

4.3.3.2. Differences of Syntactical Stylistic Device Commonly Used in English and Vietnamese Riddles In Vietnamese, parallel construction can appear in the form of singing “hát đối đáp” or “hò già gạo”. Besides, there are numerous riddle examples which have the negative word “không” in Vietnamese riddles.

4.4. SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES OF THE STYLISTIC DEVICES USED IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE RIDDLES

4.4.1. Similarities of Stylistic Devices Used in English and Vietnamese Riddles

Firstly, three kinds of stylistic devices all appear in English and Vietnamese. All the stylistic devices used in English and Vietnamese have

high artistic effect, and results in creating interesting and challenging riddles.

Secondly, many riddles fall into the domain of two or three stylistic devices at the same time. Such combination provides the maximum desired effect on readers or listeners.

Thirdly, there is a case when many different riddles refer to just one thing. That means that we can use different stylistic devices to ask about a thing.

Different questions about different things in English and Vietnamese riddles can begin with the same structure. That means the same stylistic device is used for different things. For example:

English	Vietnamese
1. What's the difference...	1. Chân chẳng đến đất, cật chẳng đến trời...
2. An old woman sits in the corner...	2. Sừng sững mà đứng giữa...
3. A man goes into the forest...	3. Bằng cái nôi rang...
	4. Vừa bằng...

Lastly, not only do English and Vietnamese riddles pass down wisdom from generation to generation, a primary purpose of using stylistic devices riddles in both languages is to relax riddlees and teach students how to train their minds.

4. 4. 2. Differences of the Stylistic Devices Used in English and Vietnamese Riddles

While English has both full rhyme and incomplete rhyme, Vietnamese only has full rhyme.

Homophones and *homonyms* appear both in two languages; however, only in English we found them in special positions such as in a compound or a derivational phrase.

Spoonerism in English is just the reversal of initial sounds or words, spoonerism in Vietnamese is found to be more complicated when there is the combination of both the reversal of initial sounds and tone.

In English, there is a common stylistic device called *decompositions of set phrases*. Examples can be found in noun, verb, and prepositional phrase. In Vietnamese it is very hard to find such examples. Meanwhile, many of Vietnamese riddles use *hyperbole*. In Vietnamese, hyperbole is a specific way of creating riddles in order to make fun and difficulty.

Metaphor is a good way to be used in English and Vietnamese. However, metaphor in adjective is not found in Vietnamese.

Both languages have *personification*; nevertheless, the subjects personified are slightly different.

Paradox is a stylistic device used in English and Vietnamese to show the illogic of riddles, and confuse readers. However, topics used in paradox are different.

In short, with the similarities and differences, English and Vietnamese riddles share the common things and also hold special things for themselves.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION- IMPLICATIONS- LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. CONCLUSION

'*Language is the dress of thought*'. Imagine a person's feelings, emotions or views on a subject, stated plainly without the aid of a literary device, it would be a dull task [60]. Asking and answering is one of a wonderful way to communicate, especially riddles which are real nice serious questions, and the answers can be funny and make not much serious sense, yet they sound right. The riddle employs quite ordinary language in conventional ways to satisfy the demands placed upon it as the art form; that is the reason why riddles conform to a model of communication which

is made up of a code and an encoded message that is first transmitted and then decoded, and as "*a licensed artful communication*" according to Pepicello and Green.

It is the reason why this thesis focuses on stylistic devices used in English and Vietnamese riddles, which is meaningful and useful not only to teachers and students but also to those who have interests. This thesis shows that English and Vietnamese are both expressive languages, so stylistic devices used are various and almost the same. Three main kinds of stylistic devices (phonetic, lexical, and syntactical stylistic devices) help to make riddles more attracting and appealing. Of three kinds, lexical stylistic devices are the most popular one, with pun, metaphor, simile, decompositions of set phrases, hyperbole and so on.

All the examples are selected from a large number of riddles, which are short, interesting, and highly artistic. The explanation goes together with each example fit together and helps to clarify the division of a stylistic device by the researcher.

After reading the thesis, the researcher wants to show the variety of riddles and imagination of English and Vietnamese people. Riddles can give many thoughts about culture of a specific country and the way that they choose a stylistic device. For example, while the English seem to like wordplay, which appear in word formation and pronunciation, the Vietnamese like rhyme, and description and hyperbole. There is also noticeable difference about subjects. To Vietnamese riddles, they are the labourers' product, which is often made when they are working to relax. Therefore, Vietnamese people seem to take everyday things such as: the shirt, the leaf-hat, the broom, the pipe, the house, the wooden bed, the drum, the around scenery, and animals as their friends like buffalos, cocks, pigs, ducks and so on. The agricultural method also affects on their interest in natural phenomena, and in fact there are many riddles about the sun, the

moon, and others of this kind. All the subjects seem to be common; however, it is not really easy to solve it to citizens.

5.2. IMPLICATIONS

5.2.1. Implications to Use Riddles in Teaching

Riddles can be used as icebreakers, warm-up activities, as a lesson plan for small groups, or even as bonus questions on tests. There are many ways to integrate riddles into an ESL curriculum, and the method and difficulty of the riddle will certainly differ depending on the age, language level and number of students. Here are some ideas:

- a. **Dictation:** Dictate the riddle to students.
- b. **20 Questions:** Encourage them to ask yes or no questions that will lead to the answer.
- c. **Who is quicker?** Have students work together in small groups to solve the riddle.
- d. **Discussion:** Use the riddle as way to launch a discussion.
- e. **Picture:** Have some pictures containing the answers. Read riddles and ask students to guess what picture is right and give explanation.

5.2.2. Implications to Solve a Riddle

Riddles are a challenge and have passed the test of time by virtue of how imaginative and fun they can be. Therefore, when solving riddles, it is suggested to look for any words that could have multiple meanings or pun. Solving a riddles sometimes depends on the cultural aspect; therefore, understanding about culture is necessary and important to solve a riddle.

5.3. LIMITATION

The large number of riddles in English and Vietnamese somehow results in the limitations of the thesis. That makes main data taken are just widely-accepted and easy-to-understand ones. When other kinds of riddles were considered, there would be more findings. Besides, there are normally more than one stylistic device used in a riddle, however, the researcher just

analyzes a riddle in one stylistic device, and the analysis is just as detailed as possible. Furthermore, the thesis just focuses on stylistic devices used in riddles, and riddles are of great interest to be taken into consideration. Riddles can be analyzed to find out its pragmatic features or its classification.

5.4. RECOMMENDATION

Future research on riddles can focus on these areas:

1. The most popular subjects in English and Vietnamese riddles
2. Other stylistic devices used in English and Vietnamese riddles
3. Wordplay in English and Vietnamese riddles
4. Letter riddles in English and Vietnamese
5. Common kinds of riddles in English and Vietnamese

BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDIX