

# STYLISTIC DEVICES USED IN TEXTS DESCRIBING PEOPLE IN THE NOVEL *THE SUN ALSO RISES* BY ERNEST HEMINGWAY

## CÁC BIỆN PHÁP TU TỪ SỬ DỤNG TRONG CÁC ĐOẠN VĂN MIÊU TẢ NGƯỜI TỪ TÁC PHẨM *MẶT TRỜI VẪN MỘC* CỦA ERNEST HEMINGWAY

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**Abstract** - Stylistic devices (SDs) with their characteristics and functions have attracted much attention of many linguists and researchers. Discovering the marvel of the stylistic devices and applying them in literature is always a matter of endlessness. Thanks to the stylistic devices used in texts describing people (TDPs), writers can draw vivid pictures for readers without describing what exactly happen. This article attempts to identify and analyze the stylistic devices used in English texts describing people in the novel *The Sun Also Rises*, which is one of the famous novels by Ernest Hemingway. The article is aimed at identifying the two types of stylistic devices: lexical ones and syntactical ones. These findings can help language learners understand more clearly about SDs often employed in TDPs as well as Hemingway's writing style so as to apply them with confidence in their own writing.

**Key words** - stylistic device; *The Sun Also Rises*; text describing people; Ernest Hemingway; iceberg theory

### 1. Rationale

Ernest Hemingway is a famous writer in both the American literature and the literature of the world. With his unique style, he made an outstanding contribution through many novels and short stories which had a strong influence on the 20<sup>th</sup> century fiction, whereas his life of adventure and his public image influenced the later generations. Hemingway had a style of writing that he referred to as the *iceberg theory*, also known as the *theory of omission*. An iceberg is observed to float in the Arctic Ocean with only one - eighth of its mass whereas the greater, more potential devastating portion hides beneath the surface and attracts readers' concern because it is hidden. In the same way, Hemingway reasoned, the drama of a story can attract readers' concern if they glimpse only a fragment of visible action that implies an unseen expression of far greater magnitude and emotional significance. In other words, by omitting certain parts of a story, the writer actually strengthens that story. The writer must be conscious of these omissions and write in such a proper way that helps the reader to sense the omitted parts. When the reader senses the omitted parts, he can understand the story and achieve a greater perception. In chapter 16 of his book entitled *Death in the Afternoon*, published in 1932, Hemingway summarized his theory as follows: "*The dignity of movement of an ice-berg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water. A writer who omits things because he does not know them only makes hollow places in his writing.*" As a matter of fact, it is the iceberg theory that makes Hemingway's work become individually unique.

Among Hemingway's works, his first novel *The Sun*

**Tóm tắt** - Đặc điểm và chức năng của các biện pháp tu từ đã thu hút sự quan tâm của nhiều nhà ngôn ngữ và nghiên cứu. Việc nghiên cứu sự đa dạng cũng như ứng dụng chúng vào văn học là một vấn đề không có hồi kết. Nhờ việc sử dụng các biện pháp tu từ trong các đoạn văn miêu tả người, tác giả có thể vẽ nên bức tranh sống động về nhân vật và truyền tải ý tưởng của mình đến người đọc mà không cần phải miêu tả trực tiếp nhân vật. Mục tiêu của bài viết này là nhận diện các biện pháp tu từ sử dụng trong các đoạn văn miêu tả người từ tác phẩm nổi tiếng *Mặt Trời Vẫn Mộc* của Ernest Hemingway theo hai loại: biện pháp tu từ từ vựng và biện pháp tu từ cú pháp. Kết quả của nghiên cứu này có thể giúp người học hiểu rõ hơn về các biện pháp tu từ thường dùng trong miêu tả người của Hemingway cũng như phong cách viết của nhà văn để họ có thể tự tin áp dụng vào việc viết các đoạn văn miêu tả người.

**Từ khóa** - biện pháp tu từ; *Mặt Trời Vẫn Mộc*; đoạn văn miêu tả người; Ernest Hemingway; thuyết tảng băng trôi

*Also Rises*, which was first published in the United States in October 1926 by the Publishing House Scribner's, quickly became well-known and won millions of hearts all over the world. A year later, the London Publishing House Jonathan Cape published the novel with the title *Fiesta*. Since then it has been continuously in print. The attraction of this novel may be brought from not only the love, the friendship and entertainment but also the characters of a whole generation in particular. They are the men who lost their belief in the ideals, structures, and nationalism driving self-identity in the time before World War I. When reading this novel, it is not difficult to realize that its success can be partly attributed to texts describing people (TDPs) where the stylistic devices (SDs) are skillfully and effectively employed. Therefore, this research is conducted with a view to clarifying the SDs used in English TDPs in the novel *The Sun Also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway. From this novel, the examples of TDPs using SDs such as metaphor, repetition, simile, irony, climax, polysyndeton which cover most of the cases employing SDs used in TDPs will be carefully taken into consideration. Moreover, it is hoped that the result of the study can, to some extent, help us to better deal with this aspect of the English language in order to make a small contribution to the learning and teaching of the English writing skill as well as the American literature.

### 2. Theoretical Background

#### 2.1. Texts Describing People (TDPs)

Description is used in all forms of writing to create a vivid impression of a person, place, object or event, etc. Descriptive writing about people is usually used to help writers develop an aspect of their work, create a particular

circumstance or atmosphere in which their characters live, or describe feelings, characters' mood and activities, etc. Actually, readers can easily recognize TDPs in any literary work.

Thanks to the SDs used in TDPs, readers can imagine lively images of a person, understand or predict some details about the characters or the authors' implication, have an insight of what they are reading. In addition, describing a person means describing not only his appearance but also his feelings, his character, his occupation or his activities in order to make the readers understand more about what the author intends to imply.

In short, TDPs can be found everywhere in any literary works, e.g. in a sentence describing a person's appearance, in a text expressing writer's thinking about the character; or in a dialogue between characters. TDPs show their own functions: describing people and help readers imagine clearly about the people's character and thinking; helping readers get some prediction about the characters' future or even allowing readers to have their own viewpoints about what the literary work is about through what writer is implying.

### 2.2. Definition of Stylistic Devices

Up to now, there have been a number of studies relating to SDs used in language done by many English and Vietnamese researchers. Stylistic devices, also called rhetorical devices, are considered as distinctive linguistic expressions which make writings more effective, persuasive and successful for various purposes. In Galperin's famous book entitled *Stylistics* [2, p. 57], he wrote, "Stylistics is a domain where meaning assumes paramount importance. This is so because the term 'meaning' is applied not only to words, word-combination, sentences but also to the manner of expression into which the writer is cast". According to Bazerman [1, p. 24], "The basic function of rhetoric is the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or to include actions in other human agents" and "It is rooted in the essential function of language itself, a function which is wholly realistic and continually born anew".

Galperin [2, p.89] states that there are three main levels of stylistic devices: phonetic, lexical and syntactical ones. In detail, some SDs often used are simile, metaphor, metonymy, hyperbole, repetition, climax, irony, personification, etc.

In brief, SDs in language can be defined as distinctive linguistic expressions that serve their own purposes and effects with their own inventory of tools, make the language in use become colourful and mysterious. There are many SDs often employed in writing texts, but based on Galperin's theory presented in his famous book *Stylistics*, this article focuses on two types of SDs according to their specific features and functions: lexical stylistic devices and syntactical ones.

### 2.3. Research Methods

The study makes use of the descriptive method as the main method for the analysis of SDs in TDPs in the novel *The Sun Also Rises*. The descriptive method is used through

the examples of TDPs which are chosen, described and sorted into different categories of SDs. The analysis of common SDs under investigation is based on Galperin's theory.

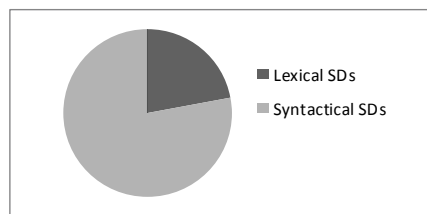
## 3. Findings and Discussion

### 3.1. Frequency of SDs Used in TDP in *The Sun Also Rises*

It can be realized from the analysis of the data collected from the novel *The Sun Also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway that there are 8 SDs used in TDPs and they belong to two types: lexical ones and syntactical ones namely simile, metaphor, personification, irony, climax, polysyndeton, enumeration and comparative structures. These SDs are employed for describing people's appearance, character, behaviour and feelings.

**Table 1.** Frequency of Two Types of SDs Used in the Novel *The Sun Also Rises*

Type	Percentage
Lexical SDs	22.1%
Syntactical SDs	77.95%



**Figure 1.** Frequency of Two Types of SDs Used in the Novel *The Sun Also Rises*

**Table 2.** Frequency of SDs Used in TDPs in the Novel *The Sun Also Rises*

No.	Type	<i>The Sun Also Rises</i>	
		Occurrence	Percentage
1	Simile	3	3.5%
2	Metaphor	11	12.8%
3	Personification	2	2.3%
4	Irony	3	3.5%
5	Climax	31	36.0%
6	Polysyndeton	22	25.6%
7	Enumeration	10	11.6%
8	Comparative structure	4	4.7%

From the tables above, it can be seen that the highest percentage for the SDs used in TDPs in *The Sun Also Rises* is climax (36%). This is followed by polysyndeton, which accounts for 25.6%. Metaphor is the SD used in TDPs with 12.8%, followed by simile, irony and personification. In short, from the data collected it is discovered that compared to the lexical SDs, the occurrences of the syntactical SDs in TDPs in the novel such as climax, polysyndeton, enumeration and comparative structures occur more frequently with the percentage of over 70% in total.

*Table 3. SDs Used in TDP in The Sun Also Rises*

No.	Purpose of Describing Type	Appearance	Character	Behaviour	Feeling
1	Simile			x	x
2	Metaphor		x		
3	Personification			x	x
4	Irony		x	x	
5	Climax	x	x	x	
6	Polysyndeton			x	
7	Enumeration	x		x	
8	Comparative structure		x		

Table 3 shows that in TDPs in the novel *The Sun Also Rises*, the writer focuses mainly on describing people's character, behaviour and feeling more than the characters' appearance. Especially, climax is the stylistic device most often used in describing people. This SD seems to make TDPs simple and clear but it also makes readers work harder to understand what the writer implies. It can be said that describing people without directly describing their appearance will attract readers to think more and discover people through their character and behaviour. This descriptive way can help writers to transfer his implication about characters indirectly, deeply and effectively. It also proves Hemingway's tip of the iceberg showed in fiction - readers will see only what is above the water- but the hidden knowledge that writer has about characters acts as the bulk of the iceberg. It is this feature that brings the story weight and gravitas.

### 3.2. SDs Used in TDP in the Novel *The Sun Also Rises*

#### 3.2.1. Human Appearance

##### a. Climax

###### Via Word Repetition:

"I don't know. He was never here before. He was **very** large. **Very, very** large. She was **very** nice. **Very, very** nice." [3, p.22]

The continuous repetition of the word "very" creates an impression on readers that the old woman keeping mails for Jake was strongly impressed with the strangeness and beauty of the man and woman who came to visit Jake when he was out.

###### Via Enumeration:

"They came in. As they went in, under the light I saw **white hands, wavy hair, white faces, grimacing, gesturing, talking.**" [3, p.8]

In the text above, the writer uses the enumerative structure to express climax in order to clarify and illustrate the two men coming into the bar with Brett. He enumerates white hands, wavy hair, white faces with grimacing, gesturing and talking, which can make readers imagine the

ludicrous appearance of the newcomers.

Here is another example:

"Get any?" he asked. He had **his rod and his bag and his net all in one hand, and he was sweating.**" [3, p.60]

The readers can feel Robert's tiredness after his fishing through enumerating objects that Robert was holding. Here, the enumeration used makes a more strongly impressive reason why he was sweating.

###### Via Clause Repetition:

The climax created by using clause repetition and conjunction "and" in the following example makes us imagine the most dreamed man who was born with all the best things in the world.

"Oh, yes. **He's got children, and he's got money, and he's got a rich mother, and he's written a book, and nobody will publish my stuff, nobody at all.**" [3, p.22]

#### 3.2.2. Human Character

##### a. Metaphor

"I got up and walked over toward the dancing-floor. Mrs. Braddocks followed me. "Don't be cross with Robert," she said. "**He's still only a child, you know.**"

[3, p.8]

The readers can recognize that the metaphor through the clause "**He's still only a child**" shows some typical action and attitude: Robert was a new-popular novelist so he just pretended and tried to pretend to be polite through his action like a child who did not think much.

Below is another example:

"It was a warm spring night and I sat at a table on the terrace of the Napolitain after Robert had gone, watching it get dark and the electric signs come on, and the red and green stop-and-go traffic-signal, and the crowd going by, and the horse-cabs clippety-clopping along at the edge of the solid taxi traffic, and **the poules going by, singly and in pairs, looking for the evening meal**" [3, p.5]

When Jake was sitting on the terrace of the Napolitain and watching surroundings, a lot of things passed and he

saw *the-poules-going by*. Here, metaphor is used through the word *poules* to describe one type of women. These are the women who live on the men who have money. At night, they went singly or in pairs to look for the meal. They did not make the meal by themselves but looked for the meal from any man they thought to have potential. In the text above, the metaphor used shows Jake's negative attitude towards this type of women.

#### b. Irony

"He had a nice, boyish sort of cheerfulness that had never been trained out of him, and I probably have not brought it out. He loved to win at tennis. He probably loved to win as much as Lenglen, for instance. On the other hand, he was not angry at being beaten. When he fell in love with Brett his tennis game went all to pieces. **People beat him who had never had a chance with him. He was very nice about it**" [3, p.21]

Ironically, although Robert was a good and well - trained tennis player and although he loved to win as much as Lenglen, who was the Wimbledon champion during the season 1919-1923, falling in love with Brett meant that he was nice about being beaten by people who had never had a chance with him. The irony employed proves that any person who was related to Brett seems to lose their mind somewhere.

#### c. Comparative Structures

In the following contexts, using comparative structures is a way for the author to emphasize or highlight a person's characteristics.

"He had a nice, boyish sort of cheerfulness that had never been trained out of him, and I probably have not brought it out. He loved to win at tennis. He probably loved to **win as much as Lenglen, for instance.**" [3, p. 54]

The comparative used in the text helps readers easily understand Robert's desire to win at tennis because Lenglen was the Wimbledon champion during the season 1919- 1923.

#### d. Climax

"He was more enthusiastic about America than ever, **and he was not so simple, and he was not so nice.**" [3, p. 2]

In the text above from the novel *The Sun Also Rises*, the verb phrase "was not so" is repeated and combined with the adjectives "simple" and "nice" together with the conjunction "and". It is clear that using climax here makes a quick and special impression on readers about the inner side of Robert. The writer seems to warn people who communicated with him that he was not as good as he looked like.

### 3.2.3. Human Behaviour

#### a. Simile

"She stood holding the glass and I saw Robert Cohn looking at her. **He looked a great deal as his compatriot must have looked when he saw the promised land.** Cohn, of course, was much younger. But he had that look of eager, deserving expectation." [3, p. 9]

The author uses simile to describe Robert Cohn's feeling when he saw beautiful Brett. It is her beauty that makes Cohn look at her as his compatriot must have looked when he saw the promised land. This comparison gives readers an ironical opinion that this man has never seen anyone as beautiful as she is.

#### b. Personification

"We said good night. 'I'm sorry I can't go,' Mike said. Brett laughed. I looked back from the door. Mike had one hand on the bar and was leaning toward Brett, talking. Brett was looking at him quite coolly, but **the corners of her eyes were smiling**" [3, p.18]

After the party, Brett knew that Mike completely fell in love with her but she kept cool but the verb "smile" used for her eyes proves the opposite. The personification employed effectively here helps readers understand the implication of the writer about Brett - a beautiful but dangerous woman.

#### c. Irony

"**He was crying. His voice was funny.** He lay there in his white shirt on the bed in the dark" [3, p.99]

It is clear that Robert Cohn loved Brett very much and he was ready to do all for her but finally, he became the loser in the game to have her love. He might need to have the sympathy but when he cries, his voice was funny. Clearly, the readers can understand the reason why the irony is used here.

#### d. Climax

Via Word Repetition

"Montoya **smiled**..."

(...)He **smiled** again. He always **smiled** as though bull-fighting were a very special secret between the two of us; a rather shocking but really very deep secret that we knew about. He always **smiled** as though there were something lewd about the secret to outsiders, but that it was something that we understood" [3, p.66]

Describing Montoya's action, the writer uses word repetition. The verb "smile" is repeated many times in different sentences. It gives readers an unforgettable impression about this man and his secret smile.

Via Clause Enumeration

The example below mentions the girl named Georgette. She kept talking about her life, which made people around feel bored. But when she heard another topic through Jake's question with his friend, she was ready to participate in their conversation. The author enumerates her activities:

"She turned to Frances, **sitting smiling, her hands folded, her head poised on her long neck, her lips pursed ready to start talking again.**" [3, p. 7]

#### e. Polysyndeton

"Montoya was glad to see us, **and** shook hands **and** gave us good rooms looking out on the square, **and** then we washed **and** cleaned up **and** went down-stairs in the dining-room for lunch. The driver stayed for lunch, too, **and** afterward we paid him **and** he started back to Bayonne." [3, p. 46]

In both examples above, polysyndeton used as a SD makes a special effect. Through conjunction “and” employed, the readers can feel the sequence of actions of characters as well as the eagerness in their action. This kind of SDs is simple but creates effective emphasis.

### 3.2.4. Human Feeling

#### a. Simile

*“No money. Money hasn't come,” he paused. “I tell you it's strange, Jake. When I'm like this I just want to be alone. I want to stay in my own room. I'm like a cat.” I felt in my pocket.” [3, p.19]*

The sentence “*I'm like a cat*” in the example above is short and the description is simple but through the simile, the readers can realize how Robert felt. He just wanted to be alone and relax and then he found the solution. He was like a cat thrown up in the air but then he landed on his feet. corrected

#### b. Personification

*“I lay awake thinking and my mind jumping around. Then I couldn't keep away from it, and I started to think about Brett and all the rest of it went away. I was thinking about Brett and my mind stopped jumping around and started to go in sort of smooth waves. Then all of a sudden I started to cry” [3, p.14]*

In the text above, the mind - an abstract thing - is described as a living object which is moving and thinking. Clearly, the personification applied in TDPs makes readers understand the chaotic feeling inside our main character when thinking of the beautiful woman - Brett.

## 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study reveals that there are 8 SDs used in English TDPs in the novel *The Sun Also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway namely simile, metaphor, personification, irony, climax, enumeration, polysyndeton and comparative structures. Hemingway mainly employed SDs, especially syntactical SDs, which occupies over 70% to describe human behaviour and character more than their appearance. This helps the writer form direct and simple sentences with deep meaning. In addition, the lexical SDs such as simile, metaphor, personification, irony which are used skillfully and effectively would contribute to the introduction of the characters according to the writer's imagination. All the SDs used in TDPs in this novel firstly bring readers a direct impression about the people being described, but deep inside it contains many of the writer's

implications. It proves Hemingway's iceberg theory in his own writing style. Essentially, he gives readers the hard facts which are the tips of the iceberg floating above water. The remaining part - the supporting structure - exists beneath the water, out of sight from the readers. Actually, Hemingway was very intentional about why he wrote in that way. The style might look simple, but it is not that simple. For example, through the surface of describing a person's behaviour, readers can understand the beneath of how he or she is and they are eager to discover many other things relating to the characters. Let's apply Hemingway's iceberg theory in examining the ending of his famous first novel:

*“A taxi came up the street, the waiter hanging out at the side. I tipped him and told the driver where to drive, and got in beside Brett. The driver started up the street. I settled back. Brett moved close to me. We sat close against each other.” [3, p. 129].*

Through a text describing human behaviour employing SDs namely polysyndeton and repetition to create a rapid, eager and close atmosphere, readers may realize that at the end of *The Sun Also Rises*, Jake Barnes and Brett Ashley contemplate a life together. The fates of these characters are never directly stated. Hemingway does not tell the reader that Jake Barnes and Brett Ashley will be together. Instead, it is "pretty to think" that they could have had a wonderful life together. It is Hemingway's talent and attraction.

It is suggested that English language teachers should know that it is very important to help students realize the usefulness and necessity of learning and employing SDs in TDPs. Proper uses of SDs in writing TDPs certainly help enhance students' confidence in using the language for communicative purposes.

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