SIMILE AND PERSONIFICATION OF "WIND" AND "RAIN" IN AMERICAN AND VIETNAMESE NOVELS

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Abstract: This study explored the use of similes and personifications to describe "rain" and "wind" in American and Vietnamese literature from the mid-20th century to the present. Through a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, the study categorized and analyzed 285 examples of similes and personifications denoting "rain" and "wind" in American and Vietnamese novels to identify similarities and differences in the portrayal of these natural phenomena. The findings showed that the American and Vietnamese novel writers utilized similes and personifications to convey the sounds, intensity, impact on the human body, emotions, and actions in terms of wind and rain. The author also tried to explain the differences in the use of these two stylistic devices in the two languages based on cultural and climatic perspectives. The study offered practical suggestions for those who are interested in the description of wind and rain in American and Vietnamese novels in particular.

Keywords: Personification, simile, novels, rain, wind

1. Introduction

In nature, "rain" and "wind" stand out as natural elements that are closely intertwined with human emotion and experience, contributing to the richness of literary works. For example:

(1) Gió mưa là bệnh của giời,

Tương tư là bệnh của tôi yêu nàng. [Nguyen Binh, 1940]

Wind and rain are implicitly compared with human lovesickness through metaphor.

(2) *Mưa **như người giận dai**, gầm gừ, xối xả và miên man, có cảm giác mây đen đã kéo cả đại dương lên trời để bây giờ **hả hê** trút xuống*. [Nguyen Nhat Anh, 2010, p.121]

Example (2) describes the rain "like an angry person" (như người giận dai), combining both simile and personification to emphasize its intensity. The use of the phrase "hả hê" (gloating) attributes a sense of satisfaction to the cloud as if it is gloating after having released the heavy rain.

(*3*) *as that day advanced, the dusk slipped back toward darkness, and **the wind cried and whimpered over the fallen corn***. [Steinbeck, 1939, p.9]

In example (3), the wind is personified as it is described as "cried and whimpered". Personification gives the wind human-like qualities of emotion, implying that it can express distress or sorrow. By attributing emotion to the wind, the author turns it into a dynamic force. Throughthe researcher's initial observations of the corpus, among the stylistic devices utilized, simile and personification emerge as the most frequently employed techniques in the depiction of natural phenomena.

Recognizing the need for comprehensive analysis of the nuanced ideas and emotions conveyed by personifications and similes depicting "rain" and "wind", this study aimed to analyze

the usage and impact of similes and personifications in American and Vietnamese novels from the mid-20th century to the present.

The research sought answers to the following research questions:

[1] What are the similes and personifications depicting "rain" and "wind" used in American and Vietnamese novels from the mid-20th century to the present?

[2] What are the similarities and differences between American and Vietnamese novels in using similes and personification to depict "rain" and "wind"?

2. Literature review

2.1 Stylistic devices

Galperin (1971, p.26) defined a stylistic device (SD) as "a conscious and intentional literary use of some of the facts of the language (including expressive means) in which the most essential features (both structural and semantic) of the language forms are raised to a generalized level and thereby present a generative model". The researcher also stated that most SDs display an application of two meanings: the general meaning (lexical or structural) which has already been established in the language as a system, and a specific meaning overlaid on the unit by the text that occurs in the language context.

2.2 Simile

Pierini (2007, p. 23) defined simile as "the statement of a similarity relation between two entities, essentially different but thought to be alike in one or more respects, or a dissimilarity relation".

According to Galperin (1971), the structural formal elements of simile involve connective words such as "like", "as", "such as", and "as if". These words serve to establish analogies between two objects or actions. Addison (1993) added some more simile formal elements which are "just as... so", "so have I seen" or "if... so".

While both simile and ordinary comparison of equality serve to draw parallels between the two concepts, they differ in their stylistic effects. Ordinary comparisons are more direct and straightforward, providing a simple and clear comparison. Similes, on the other hand, often evoke vivid imagery and create more imaginative associations between the compared elements, adding depth and richness to the language (Galperin, 1971; Israel, Harding, & Tobin, 2014).

The distinction between simile and metaphor is crucial, as they are often mistakenly used interchangeably. According to Wales (1989, p.421), "simile is a figure of speech whereby two concepts are imaginatively and descriptively compared: e.g. *My love is like a red, red rose."* In similes, "like" and "as" are commonly used. While, also for Wales (1989, p.421), "metaphor is a figure of speech where two fields of reference are similarly juxtaposed, but without an explicit marker of similitude: *X is Y*, rather than *X is like Y*, e.g., *My love is a red, red rose*. Here the figurative meaning must be deduced. Thus, connective phrases like "like" or "as" in similes serve as linguistic signals distinguishing them from.

2.3 Personification

Lakoff and Johnson (2008, p.34) recognized personification as "a general category that covers a very wide range of metaphors, each picking out different aspects of a person or ways of looking at a person". Wales (1989, p.349) defined personification as "a figure of speech or trope in which an inanimate object, animate non-human, or abstract quality is given human attributes".

At the linguistic level, personifications can be established through verb or adjective argument structures, or entity-to-entity mappings conveyed by nouns. While personifications can be realized linguistically as metaphors, similes, or metonymies, personifications realized as similes are typically more obvious due to their explicit nature (Dorst, 2011).

According to Harris (1997), personification is generally used as an artistic method, but it may also be used to define or explain an abstract idea in terms of human behavior, which helps the reader understand and relate to the concept more thoroughly. By attributing human qualities to non-human entities, personification can make descriptions more relatable and engaging to the readers.

2.4 The connection between literature and the environment

Rueckert (1978) uses the term ecocriticism to express the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature. Meanwhile, cokinos (1944) defines ecocriticism as "the critical and pedagogical broadening of literary studies to include texts that deal with the nonhuman world and our relationship to it". Glotfelty and Fromm (1996) emphasize the pivotal role of literature in raising human consciousness about our place in a fragile natural world.

Kerridge (2014) suggests that ecocriticism seeks to integrate environmental awareness across diverse literary forms and genres, each contributing uniquely to addressing ecological concerns. For example, apocalyptic narratives in science fiction, horror, and road genres can create a sense of urgency and alarm, while realist and speculative fiction offer pragmatic solutions and delve into the repercussions of environmental degradation. Furthermore, nature writing and poetry foster a deeper connection to the natural world, while modernist techniques like collage and digital media effectively convey the vast scale of climate change.

This study, specifically focusing on the depiction of wind and rain in novels, aims to uncover cultural nuances without delving into future predictions. Therefore, within the category of novels, this research concentrated on realist and speculative fiction genres to examine instances where rain and wind are described.

2.5 The history context of Vietnamese and American literature from the mid-20th century to the present

Vietnamese and American literature have been greatly shaped by their historical contexts:

The mid-20th century saw Vietnam's fight for independence from French colonialism, followed by the devastating Resistance War against America. These conflicts deeply influenced Vietnamese literature, with themes of national identity, resistance, trauma, and the devastation of war featuring prominently. After the reunification of Vietnam in 1975, socialist realism became the dominant literary mode, promoting revolutionary ideals and social progress. The Renovation (Đổi Mới) policy introduced in 1986 brought about economic and cultural reforms, allowing for

greater artistic freedom. Vietnamese literature began to explore diverse themes and styles, including reflections on the war, critiques of social issues, and personal narratives. Nowadays, increased globalization has led to new voices and perspectives in Vietnamese literature within the cross-culture (Le Thi Hang, 2015; Nguyen Van Long & La Nham Thin, 2006).

The mid-20th century saw a surge in activism and social movements in America. American literature reflected these struggles, with works addressing issues of race, equality, and social justice. Postmodernism emerged as a dominant literary trend, challenging traditional narratives, and experimenting with form and language. American literature became increasingly diverse, with writers from marginalized communities gaining recognition and challenging dominant narratives. This led to a richer and more inclusive literary landscape, reflecting the country's multicultural identity (Baym, 2003).

3. Methodology

To comprehensively investigate similes and personifications in English and Vietnamese literature, a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches was utilized. The qualitative approach was employed to systematically categorize and analyze textual data to identify patterns and underlying meanings related to “wind” and “rain”. The quantitative approach was used to generate numerical data in the use of language to develop systematic comparisons between American and Vietnamese novels.

In addition, the descriptive method which analyzed the novels selected and described literary devices in the texts, and the comparative method, which systematically compared the usage and effects of these devices, were also employed.

3.1 Research subjects and scopes

Subjects of the study are similes and personifications of “wind” and “rain” used in American and Vietnamese novels published from the mid-20th century to the present. Focusing on a specific period allows for a more manageable scope of analysis. These literary works were collected from online sources providing the scan of the published versions.

The choice of literary works for analysis was based on the following criteria. First, the authors chosen are familiar to contemporary readers such as American writers Margaret Mitchell, John Dickson Carr, John Steinbeck, etc., along with well-known Vietnamese writers Bao Ninh, Nguyen Hong, Ma Van Khang, Nguyen Nhat Anh, etc. Second, a high density of similes and personifications compared to other stylistic devices is found in the chosen novels. Third, the number of novels selected in the two languages should be relatively equal. As a result, the source of data consists of 50 Vietnamese and 50 American novels.

To ensure that the study remains grounded in the reality of human emotion, the setting of the chosen novels must reside on Earth and exclude fictional elements that do not reflect reality. With the goal of capturing a diverse range of human emotions and experiences with wind and rain, this research chooses novels from different genres, including thriller, adventure, historical fiction, children’s book, and literary fiction, with an additional criterion that the novels realistically depict wind and rain, excluding unrealistic elements like those found in science fiction or fantasy genre.

Within the collection of 50 American novels, the researcher sorted out 15 works of literary fiction, 14 historical novels, 8 thrillers, 7 adventure novels, and 6 children's books. The chosen Vietnamese novels reveal a clear dominance of literary fiction, with 37 titles falling into this category. Historical fiction comes in second with 6 entries, followed by children's books with 7 titles. These novels are literary works that have gained critical acclaim or significant attention from readers, as evidenced by awards, good reviews, and sales figures.

Regarding the sampling, the researcher analyzed all the samples detected with the total population sampling. Each sample collected must be a sentence containing a simile or a personification depicting "rain" or "wind" from the selected novels. On analyzing the sources of data, the researcher found 285 samples of similes and personifications denoting wind and rain from 100 novels chosen. The corpus includes 146 Vietnamese samples and 139 English samples. Vietnamese samples include 57 similes, 80 personifications, and 9 of both types. English samples include 36 similes, 81 personifications, and 12 of both types.

3.2 Data collection

The data collection process involves the following steps:

- Utilizing the online encyclopedia Wikipedia.com to generate a list of American and Vietnamese novels published from the mid-20th century to the present by the generator called "Automatic category table of content".

- Identifying novels that have the potential of containing descriptions of "rain" and "wind" based on the titles, genres, and authors with the priority given to the novels that have gained noticeable public attention.

- Getting access to the novels by using two websites Internet Archive and DTV E-book.

- Using the searching feature of the website Internet Archive and DTV E-book to search for words or phrases denoting rain or wind including: "rain", "wind", "downpour", "drop", "drizzle", "gust", "breeze".

- Extracting sentences containing similes and personifications depicting "rain" and "wind" from the selected novels.

- Categorizing identified instances separately for further analysis and comparison.

3.3 Data analysis

The steps for data analysis in this research were as follows:

- Documenting the identified instances of similes and personifications of "rain" and "wind".

- Analyzing each instance within the context of the novels to understand the purpose and meaning of the similes or personifications.

- Comparing to identify similarities and differences in the usage of similes and personifications describing wind and rain between American and Vietnamese novels.

4. Findings and discussion

4.1 Similes denoting "rain" and "wind"

Table 1. Frequency of similes denoting "rain" and "wind"

Topic	Number of samples		Percentage (%)	
	English	Vietnamese	English	Vietnamese
Rain	20	31	41.67	46.97
Wind	28	35	58.33	53.03
Total	**48**	**66**	**100**	**100**
	114			

4.1.1 Similes denoting the intensity of rainfall

The intensity of the rain can be conveyed through auditory effects. The sound of the rain can be depicted in comparison to the falling sound of objects, such as beans hitting a surface in example (4). This comparison evokes a sense of the raindrops' impact.

(4) *Tiếng mưa **như hột đậu bắn vào ni lông choàng** của mỗi người, đồm độp, giòn khô.* *[Nguyen Quang Sang, 1985, p.194]*

The sound of the rain can be compared to the sound created by the movement of animals. This comparison conveys powerful auditory imagery, evoking a sense of intensity, urgency, and perhaps chaos.

(5) *Mưa thoạt đầu không tiếng, thoắt đã vang lên lộp bộp rồi chuyển qua rào rào nghe **như tiếng hàng ngàn con ngựa đang phi**.* *[Nguyen Nhat Anh, 2002, p.4]*

(6) *...through holes in the roof, rain scurried **like the noise of rats.*** *[Carr, 1947, p.170]*

Visual descriptions that evoke the rain's impact on the surroundings can also be used to convey the intensity. In Vietnamese literature, likening rainfall to the rushing flow of a waterfall to convey the relentless downpour of rain is a recurrent motif as presented in the examples below:

(7) *...nước mưa dội xuống **ào ào như thác.*** *[Nguyen Thi Hoang, 1964, p.7]*

(8) *...mưa **như trút nước xuống như thác đổ** hơn một ngày đêm.* *[Bao Ninh, 1987, p.113]*

On the other hand, American writers often compare rainfall with the piercing or striking impact of cold weapons such as knife, whip, or sledgehammer as follows:

(9) *All day the rain **stabbed down like silver knives**, cutting at the roads until it had reduced them to a pulp of yellow mud.* *[Seton, 1941, p.186]*

(10) *Unbelievable weights of water **dropped like sledgehammers** on the heads and shoulders of the seamen.* *[Price, 1952, p.85]*

To enhance the intensity of rainfall, writers can utilize similes to compare rainfall to water pouring out of a broken container. This simile vividly portrays the relentless nature of the rain, displaying an overwhelming amount of water and dramatic change in weather conditions.

(11) Suddenly there was an ear-splitting crash of thunder and the rain poured down **as if the explosion had burst a reservoir.** [O'Hara, 1941, p.42]

(12) *Buổi sáng mưa rơi tí tách, đến gần trưa bỗng vỡ òa **như bầu trời đột ngột bị thủng.***

[Nguyen Nhat Anh, 2013, p.145]

4.1.2 Similes denoting the visual texture of rain

Rain is usually likened to fine particles dispersed in the air such as sifted flour or dust, emphasizing its delicate texture and appearance. The imagery of fine, dispersed raindrops and shimmering light creates a hazy and blurred appearance of the surroundings.

(13) *Con sông Hương.hiện ra trước mắt, mờ ảo trong* ***màn mưa bụi như bột rây***.

[Phung Quan, 1988, p.65]

Continuous falling rain can even be likened to sunshine, perhaps indicating the persistence, and reflecting effect of the rainfall.

(14) *The pattering rain kept on falling* ***was like sunshine***. *[Armstrong, 1945, p.7]*

4.1.3 Similes denoting the impact of the rain on human

To deliver the sensory description of the rain, writers often compare small, fast, and cold raindrops to pointing objects such as needles, lances, and arrows. These comparisons emphasize the intensity and discomfort evoked by the relentless and stinging rainfall.

(15) *...làn mưa bay chênh chếch* ***như kim châm*** *tạt vào mặt.* *[Phung Quan, 1988, p.147]*

(16) *...the* ***chilly needle-like drops*** *drove hard into her face.* *[Mitchell, 1936, p.781]*

(17) *The rain was cold. It began to fall much faster, striking the dying man in the face* ***like millions of ice-tipped lances***. *[Yerby, 1947, p.231]*

4.1.4 Similes denoting the sound of wind

A simile is a powerful tool for depicting the sounds generated by the wind, ranging from gentle whispers to fierce howlings. In the following two examples, the sound of the wind is depicted to contribute to a mood of suspense and unease, immersing the reader in a scene filled with anticipation and mystery. These comparisons imply the wind is loud and unsettling, resembling something supernatural or ominous.

(18) *Gió hú lên từng hồi* ***như những loạt còi ma quái dị.*** *[Nguyen Thi Hoang, 1964, p.26]*

(19) *Wind howled around the house* ***the way it did on the radio for a ghost story***

[Sorensen, 1956, p.182]

Similes depicting the sound of the wind can contribute to the atmospheric descriptions of longing or sorrow by likening it to a sigh or song. When portraying it as lamenting or grieving, these similes create an atmosphere of sadness and desolation, enhancing the reader's perception of the scene. They add an emotional dimension to the sound of the wind. For example:

(20) *Gió thổi vào một vùng tĩnh lặng muôn đời,* ***như một lời rên xiết, nhớ thương***

[Ma Van Khang, 1989, p.35]

(21) *Outside the stockade, the wind swept through the bare branches of the forest and sang* ***like a sorrowful squaw***. *[Allen, 1943, p.322]*

The sound of the wind is also usually likened to the sounds of various water bodies, including streams, oceans, or seas, conveying a sense of force and magnitude, evoking a tumultuous and overwhelming sound as illustrated in the following examples:

(22) *ngọn gió rì rào suốt đêm ngày,* ***như tiếng của một dòng suối đang dội về.***

[Nguyen Quang Sang, 1985, p.137]

(23) *And when the wind came up through the scrub-oak it* ***sounded like the ocean.***

[Means, 1945, p.108]

4.1.5 Similes denoting the intensity of the wind

In novels, the movement of the wind is often depicted by similes to evoke the dynamic and unpredictable nature of its motion. These similes not only describe the intensity of the wind but also convey the emotions and atmosphere associated with it. In the following examples, wind is portrayed as supernatural forces to emphasize its wild nature, contributing to the sense of chaos and danger:

(24) *Gặp nơi đất trống, gió* ***như hung thần tự do gào thét, hoành hành, cuốn lên từng cơn lốc mịt mù cát bụi****.* *[Ma Van Khang, 2017, p.263]*

(25) *Wind rushing at houses, flipping over clotheslines, uprooting bushes and sending them scooting across dooryards* ***like fat demons.*** *[Whipple, 1941, p.335]*

4.1.6 Similes denoting the impact of wind on human

The cold wind can have a harsh impact on humans, evoking a sensation of discomfort as if being hit by a whip or sliced by sharp objects as in the following examples:

(26) *...mỗi lần gió đông* ***như ngọn roi quất nhanh qua mặt****, tôi tưởng* ***như hai gò má bị một lưỡi dao sắc cứa dài****.* *[Nguyen Hong, 1940, p.39]*

In the three mentioned examples from Vietnamese novels, the wind is likened to a swift whip, emphasizing its sharp and sudden impact on the face. This comparison evokes a sense of pain and discomfort as if the wind were lashing across their skin with force.

(27) *It was not yet autumn, and the sky was clear, but the wind was bitter and sharp and* ***cut across my face like a knife****.* *[Carlos, 1946, p.120]*

By likening the wind to a knife, the author emphasizes its sharpness and slicing impact. The comparison implies that the wind's force is not only strong but also piercing, implying discomfort or even pain for the character, highlighting the direct and swift movement of the wind.

4.2 Personification denoting "rain" and "wind"

Table 2. Frequency of personification denoting "rain" and "wind"

Topic	Number of samples		Percentage (%)	
	English	***Vietnamese***	***English***	***Vietnamese***
Rain	31	29	33.33	32.58
Wind	62	60	66.64	65.42
Total	**93**	**89**	**100**	**100**
	182			

4.2.1 Rain with human actions

Writers can depict an unexpected downpour by attributing to it actions of running, marching, or chasing, imbuing the rain with a sense of purposeful movement and agency:

(28) *Cơn mưa* ***tìm thấy đường đi, chồm vào*** *thẳng bé* ***bằng bước nhảy cuối cùng dồn nén hả hê.***
[Nguyen Binh Phuong, 1999, p.8]

(29) *The rain came* ***marching up the street.*** *[Estes, 1942, p.87]*

Having an enveloping nature, the rain may be described with the action of "drawing curtain". This personification implies a sense of purpose or action associated with the rain, as if it actively concealed or obscured the environment, conveying visual imagery of raindrops falling densely.

(30) *Mưa bụi theo gió mùa về* ***giăng màn*** *ủ dột khắp các phố xá từ đầu tháng chạp.*

[Ma Van Khang, 2012, p.138]

(31) *The rain* ***drew its silver curtain*** *closer around them.* *[Dalgliesh,1944, p.3]*

4.2.2 Rain with human emotions

As far as its emotional aspect is concerned, rain is often associated with tears, evoking a sense of melancholy or sorrow, and thus is often described with feelings of sadness.

(32) *...mưa như* ***giận hờn*** *ai, như* ***khóc*** *như* ***than*** *[Mac Can, 2006, p.44]*

(33) *...mưa bay* ***hờn tủi*** *giữa lưng chiều thành phố.* *[Nguyen Thi Hoang, 1964, p.304]*

The two examples mentioned above personify the rain as expressing emotions of anger, lamentation, and sulkiness creating a vivid image of the emotional downpour.

4.2.3 Wind with human actions

In novels, the wind is often personified with human-like actions, lending it a dynamic presence within the narrative. By attributing human behaviors to the wind, writers can convey the wind's impact on the context of their literary works.

The wind, with its soft whistle, often evokes a sense of longing or sorrow, like a human sigh. By likening the wind's sound to that of sighing, writers can create an atmosphere of melancholy, longing, or lamentation as presented in the following examples:

(34) *Gió* ***thở dài****. Im lặng lan xa.* *[Bao Ninh, 1987, p.94]*

(35) *The wind* ***sighed*** *a little as it wove its way through the long line of willows.*

[Daly, 1942, p.12]

Besides "*sighing"*, when describing the sound of the wind, writers may use verbs indicating actions that produce human-like sounds, such as singing, screaming, whispering, humming, and shouting to convey the impact nature of the wind on characters and atmosphere settings in novels:

(36) *... cây cối hòa giọng với* ***gió rên những bản nhạc ma****.* *[Bao Ninh, 1987, p.6]*

(37) *The wind* ***shouted*** *back at them.* *[Ullman, 1946, p.290]*

Besides describing the sound of the wind, writers also frequently depict it as a gentle force through the action of caressing, conveying the portrayal of a nurturing entity carrying a sense of peace.

(38) *Gió biển **vuốt ve** chúng tôi.* *[Vu Thu Hien, 1987, p.148]*

4.2.4 Wind with human attitudes

The wind can be depicted with different human attitudes to convey its various states.

*(39) Cả gió nồm nữa cũng quá **hờ hững, vô tâm.*** *[Nguyen Xuan Duc, 1983, p.39]*

In example (4.36), the writer portrays the wind as indifferent and apathetic (*hờ hững, vô tâm),* perhaps indicating that the wind is so light that it barely makes any impact on the surroundings.

(40) *The **angry winds** knocked down a tall pine tree near the hut.* *[Buff, 1951, p.46]*

This personification attributes human emotion (anger) to the winds, suggesting that they are powerful and destructive, evoking a sense of danger.

(41) ***Gió bấc** như **có thù riêng**, luôn luôn quạt cho giọt mưa hắt vào các khe lều.*

[Ngo Tat To, 1939, p.79]

This sentence describes the northern wind as "had its own grudge" (*có thù riêng)* suggesting that the northern wind appears to have an intended plan of blowing the raindrops into the tents. This creates a vivid and powerful image of the strength and harshness of nature.

4.2.5 Wind with human body parts

The wind is invisible, so writers often illustrate its effects on objects or individuals, especially by portraying the wind as hands or fingers to convey its tactile presence.

(42) *... tôi thấy vạt đế đang được **bàn tay của ngọn gió ve vuốt**...*

[Nguyen Quang Sang, 1975, p.47]

(43) *...small flurries of wind like **warm fingers riffing the hair** [West, 1945, p.238]*

4.3 Similarities and differences in similes denoting "rain"

Table 3. Frequency of similes denoting "rain" in American and Vietnamese novels

Similes denoting	Number of samples		Percentage (%)	
	English	Vietnamese	English	Vietnamese
The intensity of the rain	9	18	45	58.06
The overall visual texture of rain	4	10	20	32.26
The impact of the rain	7	3	35	9.68
Total	**20**	**31**	**100**	**100**
	51			

When describing the impact of rain on humans, the depiction of cold raindrops as needles is a shared motif in both American and Vietnamese literature, likening the sensation of raindrops hitting the skin to the piercing feeling of needles.

Vietnamese novels frequently employ similes that highlight the visual texture of rain (32.26%), focusing on its appearance and sensory qualities. In contrast, American novels often use similes to emphasize the impact and consequences of rain (35%), showcasing its effects on the environment and characters.

Vietnamese novelists often compare rain with bodies of water like waterfalls, seas, or streams. The phrases "mưa như trút nước" (raining like water being poured out) and "mưa như thác đổ" (raining like a waterfall) have become common expressions in Vietnamese literature and everyday conversations. Water is essential for life, and in Vietnam, rain is one of the primary sources of water for agriculture, especially rice cultivation, which is the backbone of the economy. Comparing rain with rivers, streams, or waterfalls emphasizes its life-giving properties and reinforces its crucial role in sustaining livelihoods.

On the other hand, American writers tend to compare rainfall with the piercing or striking impact of cold weapons such as knife, whip, or sledgehammer. It can be seen that many American novels of the genres of literary fiction, historical fiction, and thriller prioritize action and conflict, with a focus on external challenges and obstacles faced by characters. This emphasis on overcoming adversity aligns with the cultural values of American individualism and the "rugged individual" archetype, where characters are expected to be self-reliant and resourceful in the face of a harsh environment (Slotkin, 1992). Slotkin also discusses how the frontier environment, often depicted as harsh and unforgiving, was seen as a test of character. As a result, depicting rain as a forceful and impactful element adds tension and drama to the narrative, driving plot and character development in many American novels.

4.4 Similarities and differences in similes denoting "wind"

Table 4. Frequency of similes denoting "wind" in American and Vietnamese novels

Similes denoting	Number of samples		Percentage (%)	
	English	***Vietnamese***	***English***	***Vietnamese***
The sound of the wind	9	20	32.14	57.14
The intensity of the wind	11	7	39.29	20
The impact of the wind on human	8	8	28.57	22.86
Total	**28**	**35**	**100**	**100**
	73			

Both American and Vietnamese novelists utilize similes to convey the atmospheric presence of wind sounds by frequently likening the sound of wind to the sounds of various water bodies, such as streams, oceans, or seas. Moreover, both cultures associate the sensation of being struck by the wind with the feeling of being whipped or sliced by sharp objects such as knife or razor.

While Vietnamese and American writers occasionally draw parallels between the intensity of the wind and supernatural forces, their portrayals may diverge due to different cultural backgrounds. In Vietnamese novels, natural forces like the wind may be depicted as a mystical entity whose cultural connotations are deeply rooted in the country's spiritual beliefs and folklore, symbolizing the presence of ancestral spirits or divine intervention (Le Quoc Hieu, 2022). In contrast, American literature, influenced by Judeo-Christian traditions and themes of spiritual conflict, often frames supernatural forces within a framework of good versus evil (Ashford, 2014).

While wind can be portrayed as a benevolent force in some instances, it is also frequently depicted as a malevolent entity akin to demons or evil spirits, reflecting the destructive power of nature.

4.5 Similarities and differences in personification denoting "rain"

Table 5. Frequency of personification denoting "rain" in American and Vietnamese novels

Topic	Number of samples		Percentage (%)	
	English	Vietnamese	English	Vietnamese
Rain with human actions	20	15	64.52	51.72
Rain with human emotions	11	14	35.48	48.28
Total	**31**	**29**	**100**	**100**
	60			

Both American and Vietnamese novels attribute human moving actions to rain, such as running, marching, or chasing. This personification imbues the rain with a sense of purposeful movement and agency.

While both American and Vietnamese novels personify rain, the cultural background of each tradition may influence the specific emotions or actions attributed to rain. The United States has a large amount of historical fiction that reflects the country's historical experiences, including narratives of conquest, settlement, and industrialization. In these American novels, rain may be personified as both a disruptive force and a source of renewal. On the other hand, Vietnamese culture has deep agricultural roots, with rice farming playing a central role in traditional society. In Vietnamese novels, rain may be personified as a benevolent force that sustains crops and nourishes the land, symbolizing abundance, fertility, and the cyclical nature of life.

4.6 Similarities and differences in personification denoting "wind"

Table 6. Frequency of personification denoting "wind" in American and Vietnamese novels

Topic	Number of samples		Percentage (%)	
	English	Vietnamese	English	Vietnamese
Wind with human actions	48	46	77.42	76.67
Wind with human characteristics	12	11	19.35	18.33
Wind with human body parts	3	3	4.8	5
Total	**62**	**60**	**100**	**100**
	122			

Both American and Vietnamese novels personify the wind with human-like actions, such as running, sighing, singing, or whispering. Wind is often associated with human emotions such as longing, sorrow, tenderness, or anger in both American and Vietnamese literature. Both languages portray the wind as having hands or fingers, to convey its tactile presence and interaction.

While both countries experience a variety of wind patterns, their literary representations diverge significantly. Vietnamese novels showcase a rich vocabulary for wind, with unique names for each type with different characteristics attributed to them. The cool and dry "gió bấc" blows from the northeast in winter, while the warm and humid "gió nồm" arrives from the southwest in summer. Additionally, the scorching "gió Lào" emerges from the west during the dry season, impacting central Vietnam. This practice of naming imbues wind with a distinct identity, transforming it from a mere natural force into a character with individual traits and influences. Vietnam experiences a predictable cycle driven by distinct seasonal winds. These winds have

been observed and documented in Vietnamese folklore. Passed down through generations, traditional wisdom has bestowed unique names upon each specific wind pattern, allowing people to immediately recognize their characteristics, anticipate the changing seasons, and prepare accordingly.

In American novels, the wind is often referred to simply as "wind," or occasionally with a directional indicator like "the northeast wind". The vast and diverse American landscape, encompassing expansive plains, towering mountains, arid deserts, and dense forests, results in a wide array of unique wind patterns across the country. Assigning specific names to winds based on localized experiences could lead to confusion and misinterpretations for those living in different regions. A generalized term like "wind," accompanied by directional indicators when necessary, allows for a more universally understood description of this natural force across the diverse American terrain.

5. Conclusion and implications

In both American and Vietnamese novels, rain is depicted with similes to convey its sound, intensity, visual texture, and impact on humans. Novelists frequently use similes to liken the sound of wind to various water bodies, such as streams, oceans, or seas. This shared imagery reflects a universal human experience of associating natural phenomena with familiar sounds, enhancing the atmospheric presence of wind in their narratives. The sensation of being struck by the wind is commonly associated with the feeling of being whipped or sliced by sharp objects in both cultures.

Despite these shared themes, differences emerge in the specific imagery associated with rain and wind between American and Vietnamese literature. These differences reflect the cultural perspectives of each literary tradition, enriching the diversity of literary expression. American novels often evoke themes of resilience and existence, portraying rain, and wind as forces of disruption and challenge in the face of urbanization and industrialization. In contrast, Vietnamese literature tends to emphasize harmony with nature and spiritual connection, depicting rain and wind as benevolent forces that sustain life and signal renewal.

The personification of rain and wind in American and Vietnamese novels reveals the nuanced interplay between cultural backgrounds and climatic conditions. While American literature often portrays rain as both disruptive and renewing, reflecting historical experiences, Vietnamese literature emphasizes its nurturing role in agriculture. Similarly, while the wind in American novels reflects the country's diverse climate patterns and extreme weather events, Vietnamese literature associates it with seasonal changes and agricultural cycles.

This study sheds light on how literary works both reflect and influence our understanding of the natural world. By incorporating similes and personifications related to natural phenomena into educational curricula, students can deepen their appreciation for the environment while honing their language proficiency. Moreover, translators can benefit from this research by gaining a nuanced understanding of the cultural intricacies embedded in the portrayal of environmental elements across diverse literary traditions, thereby enriching the cross-cultural exchange of literary works.

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TỈ DỤ VÀ ẨN DỤ VỀ GIÓ VÀ MƯA TRONG TIỂU THUYẾT MỸ VÀ VIỆT NAM

Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu này tìm hiểu việc sử dụng phép tỉ dụ và nhân hóa để miêu tả "mưa" và "gió" trong văn học Mỹ và Việt Nam từ giữa thế kỷ 20 đến nay. Kết hợp cả phương pháp định tính và định lượng, tác giả đã phân loại, phân tích 285 ví dụ về tỉ dụ và nhân hóa của "mưa" và "gió" để xác định những điểm tương đồng và khác biệt trong khắc họa các hiện tượng tự nhiên này ở tiểu thuyết Mỹ và Việt Nam. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy các nhà văn đã sử dụng phép tỉ dụ và nhân hóa để biểu đạt âm thanh, cường độ, tác động đến con người, cảm xúc và hành động của con người qua hai hiện tượng gió và mưa. Tác giả cũng giải thích sự khác biệt về việc sử dụng hai biện pháp phong cách này ở hai ngôn ngữ dựa trên bình diện văn hóa và khí hậu, từ đó đưa ra những đề xuất cho những người quan tâm đến việc bồi dưỡng cả kỹ năng ngôn ngữ và ý thức về môi trường thông qua nghiên cứu văn học.

Từ khóa: Nhân hóa, tỉ dụ, tiểu thuyết, mưa, gió