

# LOSS AND GAIN IN THE VIETNAMESE TRANSLATION OF STYLISTIC DEVICES USED IN *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN* BY HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

## ĐƯỢC VÀ MẤT TRONG BẢN DỊCH TIẾNG VIỆT CỦA CÁC BIỆN PHÁP TU TỪ SỬ DỤNG TRONG TÁC PHẨM *TÚP LỀU BÁC TÔM* CỦA HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

Nguyen Thi Quynh Hoa<sup>1</sup>, Tran Thi Yen Nhi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Foreign Language Studies, The University of Danang; hoadng@dng.vnn.vn

<sup>2</sup>Master Student Course 30, English Language Major

**Abstract** - Many linguists and researchers have paid much attention to stylistic devices (SDs) with their characteristics and functions. Using SDs effectively and skillfully contributes to the success of literary works in general and novels in particular. However, to help people worldwide understand the roles and values of SDs in the novels, the translational versions are extremely important. This article attempts to identify and analyze Loss and Gain in the Vietnamese translation of SDs used in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe. The article is aimed at figuring out two types of SDs namely lexical SDs and syntactical SDs as well as loss and gain in terms of lexis, structure and meaning in the Vietnamese translational version of these SDs. These findings can help language learners apply SDs with confidence in their own writing, especially in producing interesting and effective English-Vietnamese translations.

**Key words** - stylistic device; *Uncle Tom's cabin*; loss and gain; translation; Harriet Beecher Stowe

**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. Sử dụng khéo léo và hiệu quả các biện pháp tu từ đã đem đến sự thành công cho tác phẩm văn học nói chung và tiểu thuyết nói riêng. Tuy nhiên, để giúp độc giả hiểu được vai trò và giá trị của chúng trong các cuốn tiểu thuyết, các bản dịch đóng vai trò hết sức quan trọng. Bài viết này trình bày những hiện tượng được và mất trong bản dịch tiếng Việt của các biện pháp tu từ thường dùng trong tác phẩm *Túp lều bác Tôm* của Harriet Beecher Stowe. Các biện pháp tu từ đã được phân tích theo hai loại: từ vựng và cú pháp, đồng thời khai thác các hiện tượng được-mất về mặt từ vựng, cấu trúc, và nghĩa khi dịch chúng sang tiếng Việt. Các phát hiện này có thể giúp người học tự tin áp dụng các biện pháp tu từ vào việc viết văn, đặc biệt trong việc tạo ra các bản dịch Anh-Việt hay và hiệu quả hơn.

**Từ khóa** - biện pháp tu từ; *túp lều Bác Tôm*; được và mất; dịch thuật; Harriet Beecher Stowe

### 1. Rationale

There is no doubt that nowadays, together with the development of the society and the world, the need for interaction among human beings is rapidly widened because they aim at getting knowledge, transmitting information, exchanging experience and more importantly, gaining some relationships. In reality, language enables people in every corner of the world to communicate, share information and gain experience through various means of interaction. However, what enables us to access information originally written in different source languages easily? Without a shadow of doubt, we get an answer immediately: that is translation.

Nevertheless, translating a text from a language into another is always a difficult task because translators will have to face linguistic, literary, socio-cultural problems which require them to have suitable translation methods. One of the greatest difficulties of translators is translating SDs. They are often used and crafted for emphasis, freshness of expression, or clarity. Nonetheless, in order to translate these SDs from one language to another language effectively to help readers gain an accurate insight into their meaning is really a big challenge. During producing his/her translation, he (or she) has to cope with many problems. The most frequent but unavoidable one in translating process is loss and gain.

As Mcguire (1980:12) in *Translation Studies* concludes, "Once the principle is accepted that sameness cannot exist between two languages, it becomes possible to approach the question of loss and gain in the translation process".

The novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (UTC), which is chosen

for my study was translated by Đỗ Đức Hiếu, a meritorious teacher, a writer as well as a scholar of literature. However, when translated into Vietnamese, the translational version cannot help avoiding loss and gain phenomena, especially basically elaborate lexical, meaning and syntactic features of the phenomena of loss and gain in their translation of SDs.

In reality, it cannot be denied that loss and gain in translation may be among the most common phenomena that deserve much attention. It is advisable for translators to choose and make use of appropriate translational technique and/or methodology to gain significant translational version. In this sense, the translators are required to have not only good language competence but also good knowledge on cultural aspects which can be used as instruments to obtain successful translation version.

From this novel, the examples of SDs namely metaphor, repetition, simile, rhetorical questions and personification and *loss* and *gain* phenomena in translating them into Vietnamese will be carefully taken into consideration, which 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 American novels and help Vietnamese learners of English and translators manage better when they translate the SDs from English into Vietnamese.

### 2. Theoretical background

#### 2.1. Definition of Stylistic Devices

Up to now, there have been a number of studies relating to SDs used in language done by a lot of English

and Vietnamese researchers. SDs, 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" [5, 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".

Galperin [5, p.89] stated that there are three main levels of SDs distinguished: phonetic, lexical and syntactical ones. In detail, some SDs often used are simile, metaphor, repetition, personification etc.

In summary, SDs in language can be defined as distinctive linguistic expressions that serve their own purposes and effects with their own inventory of tools, make language colourful and mysterious. There are a lot of 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: lexical SDs and syntactical ones.

## 2.2. Loss and Gain in Translation

### 2.2.1. Loss in Translation

Loss is the disappearance of certain features in the TL text which are presented in the SL text. In translation there is more probability of loss than gain. This is largely attributed to the lack of immediate equivalence between concepts, words, phrases and syntax in the TL, which are in the SL. This process is termed linguistic distance.

Loss in translation is expressed by Bassnett (2005, p.15) as "a situation in which terms or concepts in the SL text do not find their substitutes in the TL text".

### 2.2.2. Gain in Translation

Gain is a concept that relates to translation as a finished product. It is the enrichment or clarification of the SL. Gain enables a language to be flexible and usable in any social circle.

As McGuire (1980: 30) concludes, "Gain as the enrichment or clarification of the source language text in the process of translation".

## 2.3. Research methods

The study makes use of the descriptive method as the main method for the analysis of SDs in *UTC*. The descriptive method is used to pick out the samples and sort them into different categories of SDs. The analysis of common SDs under investigation is based on Galperin's theory.

In order to prepare for the research, the samples are collected based on three criteria:

- The English sample must be a sentence containing a SD based on the definition of SDs mentioned in 2.1.
- The Vietnamese sample must be a translational equivalent of the English sample.
- The samples must be taken from the English version *UTC* by Harriet Beecher Stowe and the Vietnamese

translational version *TLBT* by Đỗ Đức Hiểu, a meritorious teacher, a writer as well as a scholar of literature.

After being well-investigated and checked with such criteria, 278 samples of SDs which belong to 5 SDs namely: simile, repetition, rhetorical questions, metaphor and personification are collected from *UTC* for detailed study.

The descriptive method is used to describe, give more details, explanations and clarify characteristics of loss and gain in terms of lexical, syntactic and meaning fields in SDs in the Vietnamese version of *UTC*, which was based on the theories of Bassnett and McGuire.

## 3. Findings and discussion

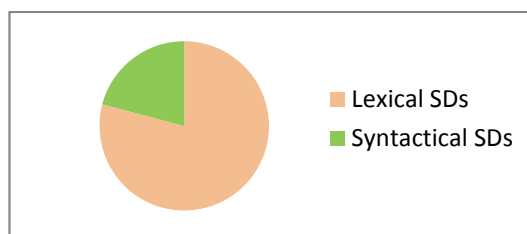
### 3.1. Frequency of SDs Used in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

It can be realized from the analysis of the data collected from the novel *UTC* by Harriet Beecher Stowe that there are 5 SDs used and they belong to two types: lexical and syntactical ones namely simile, metaphor, repetition, rhetorical questions and personification.

**Table 1.** Frequency of Two Types of SDs Used in the Novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

Type	Percentage
Lexical SDs	79.1%
Syntactical SDs	20.9%

**Figure 1.** Frequency of Two Types of SDs Used in the Novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*



**Table 2.** Frequency of SDs Used in the Novel *UTC*

No.	Type	<i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i>	
		Occurrence	Percentage
1	Simile	95	34.2%
2	Repetition	67	24.1%
3	Rhetorical questions	58	20.9%
4	Metaphor	46	16.5%
5	Personification	12	4.3%

From the tables above, it can be seen that the highest percentage for the SD used in the *UTC* is simile (34.2%). This is followed by repetition, which accounts for 24.1%. Rhetorical questions are the SD used with 20.9%, followed by metaphor with 16.5%. Personification has the smallest number accounting for 4.3%. In short, it is discovered that compared to the syntactical SDs, the occurrences of lexical SDs in the novel namely simile, repetition, personification and metaphor are more frequent with the percentage of over 79.1% in total.

### 3.2. SDs Used in the Novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

#### 3.2.1. Lexical SDs

##### 3.2.1.1. Simile

Simile is one of the devices referring to the practice of drawing parallels or comparisons between two unrelated and dissimilar things, people, beings, places and concepts.

(3.1) *'T's older, ye know,' said Tom, stroking the boy's fine, curly head with his large, strong hand, but speaking in a voice as tender as a woman's, 'and I sees all that's bound up in you. (7, p.95)*

In the above example, Stowe used the similar comparison **"as...as"** to compare the voice of Uncle Tom (UT) with a woman's with the aim of emphasizing that UT is a gentle person who always has good behavior with other people, especially speaks softly to others.

##### 3.2.1.2. Repetition

Repetition is one of the SDs of using some sounds, words or phrases consciously with the aims of emphasizing the expansion attention, impressing or eliciting in the hearts of readers, listeners.

(3.2) *Well, I grew up – long years and years – no father, no mother, no sister, not a living soul that cared for me more than a dog: nothing but whipping, scolding, starving. (7, p.105)*

It can be seen that the repetition of **"no"** aims at fixing the attention of the readers on it. It remarks George's pitiful condition. He grew up without his father, mother, sister standing by him.

##### 3.2.1.3. Metaphor

Metaphor is defined the imaginative use of a word or phrase to describe something else, to show that the two images have the same qualities.

(3.3) *If you an't the devil, Tom Loker, you's his twin brother; I'll say that for ye!* (7, p.62)

In this case, the metaphors **"the devil"** and **"his twin brother"** are used to describe the manner of the character, specifically here is Tom Loker, the trader, who is extremely crude, barbarous, and violent.

##### 3.2.1.4. Personification

Personification is the act of presenting objects or qualities as human beings.

(3.4) *The silver, fair-browed moon rose in the purple sky, and looked down, calm and silent, as God looks on the scene of misery. (7, p.324)*

It can be seen that personification is used skillfully and naturally. The verb **"looked down"** is to describe humans' actions, however, Stowe used them to refer to actions of the moon: it has the empathy with the scene of misery and oppression the slaves had to suffer.

#### 3.2.2. Syntactical SDs

Through the analysis of the data collected, only one syntactical SD was found: **rhetorical questions**.

A rhetorical question is a figure of speech in the form of a question that is asked in order not to elicit a specific

answer, but rather to encourage the listeners to consider a message or a viewpoint.

(3.5) *'My master! And who made him any master? That's what I think of- what right has he to me? What right has he to make a dray-horse of me-to take me from things I can do, and do better than he can, and put me to work that any horse can do? (7, p.16)*

The questions are made with the aims of expressing the fit of George's anger toward his boss's cruelty and a hard heat. In addition, he wants to raise his voice in defence of human rights that he might have had.

### 3.3. Loss and gain in the Vietnamese translation of SDs used in UTC

#### 3.3.1. Loss and gain in the Vietnamese translation of simile used in UTC

##### 3.3.1.1. Loss

##### a. Loss in Structure: Relative Clauses

English	Vietnamese
(3.6a) <i>Just as a chair or table, which once decorated the superb saloon, comes, at last, battered and defaced, to the bar-room of some filthy tavern, or some low haunt of vulgar debauchery. (7, p.312)</i>	(3.6b) <i>Cũng gần như một chiếc ghế hay một chiếc bàn trước bày trong một phòng khách lộng lẫy, nay kê trong một quán rượu ô uế, bị những khách hàng bê tha lôi, kéo, phá hoại. (8, p.355)</i>

##### b. Loss in Meaning: Caused by Omission

English/ Vietnamese	Sameness	Loss in Meaning
a big dog	a dog	dog + big
một con chó		Ø

##### 3.3.1.2. Gain

##### a. Gain in Structure

##### + In terms of Idiomatic Structure

English	Literal meaning	Literal translation
a feather	một chiếc lông	nhẹ như bấc

##### c. Gain in Meaning: Addition of Words/ Word Phrases

English/ Vietnamese	Sameness	Loss in Meaning
a tiger	a tiger	Ø
một con hổ cái		một con hổ + cái

#### 3.3.1.3. Frequency of loss and gain in the Vietnamese translation of simile used in UTC

**Table 3.** Samples and percentage of loss and gain in the Vietnamese translation of simile

Loss and Gain			Occurrence	Percentage
Loss	Structure	Relative Clauses	14	14.7%
	Meaning	Caused by Omission	13	13.7%
Gain	Structure	Idiomatic Structure	30	31.6%

		Addition of words/ words phrases	15	15.8%
	Meaning	Addition of Word/ Word Phrases	23	24.2%
<b>Total</b>			<b>95</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 3.3.2. Loss and gain in the Vietnamese translation of repetition used in UTC

#### 3.3.2.1. Loss

Loss in Structure: Loss Phenomenon in terms of Lexis

English	Vietnamese	Omission
(3.7a) <i>I do; then see if ye won't <del>drink-drink-drink</del> – yerself into torment; and serve yer right, too – ough!</i> (7, p.199)	(3.7b) <i>Chị sẽ <u>uống</u>, <u>uống</u> cho kỳ đến ngày xuống âm phủ, tha hồ mà sướng.</i> (8, p.246)	<b>drink</b>

#### 3.3.2.2. Gain

a. Gain in Structure: Addition of Equivocal Subject

English	Vietnamese	Addition
(3.8a) <i>'Oh, Mr Symmes! – <u>save me</u> – <u>save me</u> – do hide me!'</i> said Eliza. (7, p.57)	(3.8b) <i>Chị thờ hờn hén: -<u>Ông Xim!</u> <u>Ông cứu cháu với!</u> <u>Cứu cháu với!</u> Ông cho cháu đi trốn với.</i> (8, p.86)	<b>ông</b>

### 3.3.2.3. Frequency of loss and gain in the Vietnamese translation of repetition used in UTC

**Table 4:** Samples and percentage of loss and gain in the Vietnamese translation of repetition

Loss and Gain			Occurrence	Percentage
Loss	Lexis	Reduction of Word/ Word phrases	23	34.3%
Gain	Structure	Addition of Equivocal Subject	16	23.9%
	Lexis	Addition of Vietnamese Buffer Words	28	41.8%
<b>Total</b>			<b>67</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 3.3.3. Loss and gain in the Vietnamese translation of rhetorical questions used in UTC

#### 3.3.3.1. Loss

a. Loss in Structure: Relative Clauses

English	Vietnamese
(3.9a) <i>Who could see that all this smiling outside was but a hollowed shell over a heart that was a dark and silent sepulcher?</i> (7, p.278)	(3.9b) <i>Ai có thể đoán biết được rằng cái bề ngoài tươi vui ấy che dấu một <u>trái tim nặng nề</u>, u buồn như một <u>nấm mồ</u>?</i> (8, p.321)

b. Loss in Meaning

+ **Caused by Omission**

English/ Vietnamese	Sameness	Loss in Meaning
precious soul	soul	soul + precious
linh hồn		Ø

+ **Caused by using Unrelated Words/ Phrases**

(3.10a) **head** (in: *What business had his slave to be marching round the country, inventing machines, and holding up his **head** among gentlemen?* (7, p.13)

→ (3.10b) **mặt** (in: *Một thằng nô lệ của hắn có quyền gì mà lại có thể đi khắp đó đây, **mặt** thì vênh lên, và lại sáng chế máy móc nữa?* (8, p.25)

#### 3.3.3.2. Gain

a. Gain Phenomenon in terms of lexis: Addition of Vietnamese buffer words

English	Vietnamese	Addition
(3.11a) <i>Had not this man braved him- steadily, powerfully, and resistlessly-ever since he bought him?</i> (7, p.379)	(3.11b) <i>Con người ấy chẳng đã lúc nào cũng thách thức nó từ ngày nó mua hay <b>sao</b>?</i> (8, p.430)	<b>sao</b>

b. Gain in Meaning: Addition of Words/ Word Phrases

English/ Vietnamese	Sameness	Gain in Meaning
a runaway	một người bỏ trốn	Ø
một nô lệ bỏ trốn		một nô lệ + bỏ trốn

### 3.3.3.3. Frequency of loss and gain in the Vietnamese translation of rhetorical questions used in UTC

**Table 5:** Samples and percentage of loss and gain in the Vietnamese translation of rhetorical questions

Loss and Gain			Occurrence	Percentage
Loss	Structure	Relative Clauses	5	8.6%
	Meaning	Caused by Omission	6	10.3%
		Using Unrelated Words/ Phrases	4	6.9%
Gain	Lexis	Addition of Vietnamese Buffer Words	24	41.4%
	Meaning	Addition of Words/ Word Phrases	19	32.8%
<b>Total</b>			<b>58</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 3.3.4. Loss and gain in the Vietnamese translation of metaphor used in UTC

#### 3.3.4.1. Loss

a. Loss in Meaning

+ **Loss in Meaning in terms of Structure**

Structural shifts (Article + Adj + N → N + Adj)	flashing eyes con mắt này lửa
--	-------------------------------------

**+ Loss in Meaning caused by Omission**

English/ Vietnamese	Sameness	Loss in Meaning
precious soul	soul	soul + precious
linh hồn		∅

## 3.3.4.2. Gain

**a. Gain in Structure****+ Addition of Words/ Word Phrases**

English/ Vietnamese	Sameness	Gain in Meaning
Crying	tiếng khóc	∅
tiếng khóc xé ruột xé gan		tiếng khóc + xé ruột xé gan

## 3.3.4.3. Frequency of loss and gain in the Vietnamese translation of metaphor used in UTC

**Table 6.** Samples and percentage of loss and gain in the Vietnamese translation of metaphor

Loss and Gain			Occurrence	Percentage
Loss	Meaning	Structure	5	10.9%
		using Unrelated Words/ Phrases	6	13%
		Caused by omission	8	17.4%
Gain	Structures	Idiomatic Structure	12	26.1%
	Meaning	Addition of Words	15	32.6%
Total			46	100%

## 3.3.5. Loss and gain in the Vietnamese translation of personification used in UTC

## 3.3.5.1. Loss

**Loss in Meaning: Omission of Words/ Word Phrases**

English	Vietnamese	Omission
(3.12a) <i>Then he thought he felt that hair twining round his fingers; and then, that it slid smoothly round his neck, and tightened and tightened, and he could not draw his breath.</i> (7, p.350)	(3.12b) <i>Nó tưởng như thấy một món tóc cuốn vào ngón tay, rồi lều lều cổ. Những sợi tóc quấn chặt lấy cổ đến ngạt thở.</i> (8, p.397)	<i>smoothly</i>  <i>tightened</i>

## 3.3.5.2. Gain

**Gain in meaning: Addition of Words/ Word Phrases**

English	Vietnamese	Addition
(3.13a) <i>Cassy sat in the corner, sullenly looking into the fire.</i> (7, p.372)	(3.13b) <i>Cátxi ngồi bên lò sưởi buồn rầu nhìn ngọn lửa nháy múa.</i> (8, p.419)	<i>nhảy múa</i>

## 3.3.5.3. Frequency of loss and gain in the Vietnamese translation of personification used in UTC

**Table 7.** Samples and percentage of loss and gain in the Vietnamese translation of personification

Loss and Gain			Occurrence	Percentage
Loss	Meaning	Caused by omission	5	41.7%
Gain	Meaning	Addition of Phrases	7	58.3%
Total			12	100%

## 3.4. Causes of Loss and Gain in the Vietnamese translation of SDs used in UTC

It is clear that loss and gain are unavoidable phenomena in the process of translation because of many reasons: translators' ability to use language, translators' choice of translation method and differences between the source language (SL) and the target language (TL). It can be noticed that sameness between two languages does not always exist because "meaning is a property of a language. A SL has a SL meaning, and a (TL) has a TL meaning" [3, p35]. Because of this feature, the appearance of loss or gain of meaning in translation cannot be avoided. And it is the last cause - differences between languages that affect translational equivalents. Therefore, loss and gain cannot be considered as mistakes but they are inevitable phenomena in the process of translation that each translator should be aware of in order to make his/ her product better.

## 4. Conclusion

The study reveals that there are 5 SDs commonly used in UTC which are categorized on the basis of linguistic levels in which lexical SDs consist of simile, repetition, metaphor and personification; syntactical SDs include only rhetorical questions. In the novel UTC, these SDs were used skillfully and flexibly.

It is found that there are in total 278 English samples demonstrating the 5 SDs. A number of the samples (197 English samples) are translated into Vietnamese with the features of SDs retained. However, the remaining (81 English samples) are translated into Vietnamese through the use of other language expressions in Vietnamese. In these two cases, both loss and gain are found in the translation of the original samples. More clearly, this research explores, describes and analyzes the cases of loss and gain in terms of syntax, lexis and meaning in the Vietnamese translational version of these SDs used in UTC. Among them, the phenomena of loss and gain in terms of lexis and meaning are dominant.

More clearly, owing to the differences between the two languages, sometimes the translators cannot express in accuracy the true meaning of the SL by using an exact equivalent in the TL. Although loss and gain in translation process are unavoidable and commonly seen as a phenomenon, not a mistake, the translators should try their best to convey as the same meaning as the SL does.

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 literary works. Proper uses of SDs in writing certainly help to enhance confidence in students in using the language for communicative purposes. Besides, due to the situational context or cultural context, learners as well as language users can add more information to the target sentence to make its meaning clearer, or omit some components to make the translated sentences more acceptable and understandable to readers.

### REFERENCES

- [1] Bassnett. (1991). *Translation Studies*. London: Routledge.
- [2] Bazerman, C. (1988). *Shaping Written knowledge: The Genre and*

*Activity of the Experimental Article in Science*. Madison: University of Winson Press.

- [3] Catford, J. C. (1965). *A Linguistics Theory of Translation*. Oxford University Press, London.
- [4] Đinh Trọng Lạc (2003). *99 phương tiện và biện pháp tu từ tiếng Việt*, Nhà xuất bản GD Hà Nội.
- [5] Galperin, I. R. (1977). *Stylistics*, Moscow Higher School Publishing House.
- [6] Mcguire, S.B. (1980). *Translation Studies*. New York, Methuen.

### SOURCES OF DATA

- [7] *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, (1952), The National Era (as a serial) & John p. Jewett and Company, the United States.
- [8] *Túp lầu bác Tôm*, (1990), Đỗ Đức Hiểu dịch. Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Văn học.

*(The Board of Editors received the paper on 12/12/2016, its review was completed on 15/12/2016)*