

# AN INVESTIGATION INTO SEMANTIC FEATURES OF HYPERBOLE USED IN FOOTBALL COMMENTARIES IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE NEWSPAPERS

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**Abstract** - This paper investigates the semantic features of hyperbole used in football commentaries in English and Vietnamese newspapers to find out the similarities and differences between them. To conduct the study, both the descriptive and contrastive methods are used. The data consists of 600 hyperboles in English and Vietnamese (300 for each) online newspapers. The results shows that most of hyperboles used in the two languages are the same in some typical topics. Along with the similarities, there are some differences resulted from cultural differences as well. For example, the same image can be employed to show quite opposite meanings in the two online newspapers. In general, the paper is expected to help Vietnamese learners of English achieve comprehensive understanding of hyperboles in football commentaries in English and Vietnamese newspapers. Also, those who are interested in writing this genre can find the paper a good source of reference.

**Key words** - hyperbole; semantics; stylistics; football commentary; newspaper.

## 1. Introduction

Hyperbole, one of the popular types of stylistic devices, plays a crucial part in everyday language use. Speakers/writers find it a powerful tool to make the discourse more impressive and to effectively attract the listeners'/ readers' attention. This kind of stylistic device appears frequently in conversations, literature, short stories, as well as in other discourse types, especially, in football commentary where all scales of emotion seem to be all expressed. Nevertheless, in order to catch the ideas shadowing in the expressions or to have a thorough knowledge on hyperbole is not easy for Vietnamese learners of English as well as for foreigners who study the Vietnamese language and culture. Take the following sentences in English and Vietnamese as examples:

- (1) The Spaniard fired a precise shot through *a sea of bodies* and beyond a stranded Boaz Myhill.  
(goal.com/en-/match/newcastle-united-.../report)
- (2) Than Quảng Ninh có cơ hội cực kỳ nguy hiểm ở phút 36 khi Quang Hải đột phá trong phạm vi hẹp trước *một rùng cầu thủ* rồi cả thủ môn Tô Vĩnh Lợi.  
(bongdaplus.vn/.../thua-trận-b-bd-...-hai-phong)

From the above examples we can see that the hyperbolic expression in English is different from the Vietnamese one in meaning but they are used with the same purpose to emphasize the difficulty the players face in front of the opponents' goal. More interestingly, the same hyperbolic image is utilized in different functions as follows:

- (3) *Ghosting in at the far post, he gained the crucial touch* on Fabregas' delivery to register his first Premier League goal for the club.  
(goal.com/en/match/chelsea-vs-arsenal/.../report)

- (4) Trên hàng tiền vệ, Fabregas *vật vờ như bóng ma* trên sân. (bongdaplus.vn/tin-bai/36/131539/Chelsea...)

English writers make use of the image of "ghost" as a hyperbole to talk about someone's *skill*, they find "ghost" a special image that a normal person cannot catch sight of or keep up with to denote *Chambers' skill*, no Arsenal players could keep up with his performance as in example (3). On the contrary, the Vietnamese ones often utilize "ghost" to denote someone that can do nothing or show the *weakness* of someone as we often hear "vật vờ như bóng ma" as in example (4).

Obviously, there is a wide variety of semantic features and uses of hyperbole both in English and Vietnamese which may cause difficulties to learners. Therefore, this paper can help Vietnamese learners of English raise the awareness of the differences between the two languages in terms of using this stylistic device to enhance their communicative competence.

## 2. A review of previous studies related to the topic

Up to now, there have been a number of studies on hyperbole. Galperin [5] provided the definition of hyperbole and some functions of hyperbole. Carter and McCarthy [1] succinctly explained that hyperbole magnified and produced a contrast with reality. Cutting [4] introduced some cases in which the speaker flouted Grice's maxim of quality by exaggerations such as "I could eat a horse". Colston and Keller [3], Colston and O'Brien [2] presented modern theories of hyperbole and related tropes. Hoàng Tất Thắng [10] gave his point of view on hyperbole and mentioned two functions of hyperbole which are cognitive and expressive. Đinh Trọng Lạc [7], [8] showed the main purpose of hyperbole and two levels of hyperbole. Phan Hồng Liên [9] assumed that exaggeration is somewhat related to simile. Võ Thị Kiều Loan [6] investigated linguistic features of hyperbole in literature. In general, hyperbole so far has been investigated in the settings of novels, poems or short stories. Meanwhile, this paper mainly focuses on semantic features of hyperbole used in football commentaries in English and Vietnamese newspapers.

## 3. Some theoretical concepts

### 3.1. Stylistic Devices

Galperin [5, p.26] defines that a stylistic device (SD) is "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".

### 3.2. Definitions of hyperbole

According to Galperin [5, p.173], *hyperbole is “a deliberate overstatement or exaggeration, the aim of which is to intensify one of the features of the object in question to such a degree as will show its utter absurdity”*.

For Dinh Trong Lac, [7, p.46] “*Hyperbole (also called: excess, bombast, overshooting or exaggeration) is the use of word(s) or expression(s) to multiply the characters of an object or a phenomenon in order to highlight the nature of the mentioned object and make a strong impression on the reader or listener. Hyperbole is different from a lie in that its nature, motivation and purpose do not blow up or distort the truth to trick the reader or listener. It does not make him / her believe in what the speaker says, but makes him / her understand what is said*”.

Based on the above definitions, in this paper hyperbole is understood as *a lexical stylistic device which significantly contributes to creating the wonder of any language in common and literary works in particular by using words or expressions several times to multiply the properties of the object or phenomenon. It aims to highlight the nature of the object which needs describing, and to produce a particularly strong impression or to draw attention of the reader or make him pay more attention to, and understand more deeply what the author writes/speaks*. This working definition satisfies the view on hyperbole of Galperin [5] in English, and the view on hyperbole of Đinh Trọng Lạc [7] in Vietnamese.

### 4. The corpus

The paper mainly concentrates on the analysis of the semantic features of hyperbole used in football commentaries in English and Vietnamese newspapers. The corpus consists of 300 examples in English and 300 in Vietnamese randomly taken from online sports newspapers such as *goal.com*, *nydailynews.com*, *nytimes.com*, and *the guardian.co.uk* in English, along with *bongda.com*, *bongdaplus.com.vn*, *bongda24h.com*, and *tinthethao365.com.vn* in Vietnamese.

### 5. Findings and discussion

#### 5.1. Semantic features of Hyperbole used in English and Vietnamese football commentaries

The data analysis has detected 21 topics divided into 3 groups of hyperboles often used in football commentaries in online newspapers in the two languages. *The first group is about emotions* consisting of joy, sadness, anger, worry, frightfulness, regret and shock. *The second group is on the nature of a football match* such as tension, excitement, boredom, victory, loss, *danger and beauty*. *The last one is of elements related to people* such as strength, speed, accuracy, talent, weakness, determination and great ability.

The most noticeable topic in the first group may be joy. Joy is a feeling of great happiness – an inner state of well being – which enables us to profit spiritual values in our life. In English football commentaries, “*as happy as kids*”, “*as if it were a World Cup winner*”, “*erupt*”, “*into a frenzy*” and so on are used as hyperboles to express the state of joy. Like in (5), the writer overshoot their happiness, their joy *as happy as kids on summer recess* to make a

strong impression on readers. Like English writers, Vietnamese ones usually employ quite a large number of hyperbolic phrases such as “*như một đứa trẻ*”, “*như mở cờ trong bụng*”, “*như nổ tung*”... to multiply joy in Vietnamese as in (6).

- (5) They spent most of 90 minutes at Ottawa’s Landsdowne Stadium *looking as happy as kids* on summer recess, and the upshot was their happiest result of this World Cup.

(nydailynews.com/.../u-s-soccer-team-road-women-w...)

- (6) Tới 8.4, HLV giàu cá tính Lê Thụy Hải đã nở nụ cười rất tươi, nhảy lên ôm chầm lấy từng người *như một đứa trẻ* khi Abass ghi bàn san bằng tỷ số 1-1 cho Becamex Bình Dương (B.Bình Dương).

(tinthethao365.com.vn/news/tag/lê+thụy+hải/)

Along with the *happiness*, *sadness* is a feeling that always appears in each football match. Both English and Vietnamese writers employ hyperbole skillfully to show this feeling in many ways. As we know that “*Newcastle United sleepwalk their way*” in (7) is an unreal thing, but we can get the *sadness* shadowing it or “*khóc thẳm*” as in (8) is, too.

- (7) So Arsenal continue to keep Manuel Pellegrini and perhaps even José Mourinho sweating while *Newcastle United sleepwalk their way* towards the end of a deeply unsatisfactory season?

(theguardian.com › Soccer › Newcastle United 1-2 Arsenal | Premier League)

- (8) Chỉ 1 tuần trước đây thôi, những trái tim Arsenal còn rộn ràng hát vang bài ca chiến thắng ở Wembley, khi họ hạ bệ nhà vô địch Chelsea, khiến cho HLV Mourinho “*tức nổ máu mắt*”. Mặc dù vậy, giờ đây, họ *lại đang khóc thẳm ở ngay mái nhà Emirates*, trước đối thủ yếu hơn rất nhiều, West Ham.

(bongda365.com.vn/bong.../arsenal-thua-soc-...)

Similarly, *anger*, *worry*, *frightfulness* and *shock* exist during and even after a finished match, and they are exaggerated tactfully to show *anger* as “*tức nổ máu mắt*” in (8), or to denote *worry*, *frightfulness* and *shock* as the following examples:

- (9) *Newcastle’s hearts were in their mouths* when Stewart Downing raced into the penalty area 23 minutes in.

(goal.com/en-/match/newcastle-united.../report.)

- (10) Trong những phút cuối căng thẳng, nếu Casillas không xuất sắc cản 2 pha nguy hiểm mười mười thì bây Kền kền đã *ôm hận thiên thu*.

(bongda365.com.vn /.../real-madrid-3-4-schalke-)

- (11) He talked of a psychological pressure on his players yet they had the extra man; even though *his defenders froze* at key moments.

(goal.com/en/match/chelsea-vs-arsenal/.../report)

- (12) Dù HLV Trần Bình Sự nhận định rằng Than Quảng Ninh là đối thủ rất mạnh, nhưng các học trò của ông lần khán giả chủ nhà vẫn phải *choáng váng khi họ thua quá nhanh* trong cuộc so kè chiều nay.

(bongdaplus.vn/.../thua-trận-b-bd-mat-ngoi-dau-)

In fact, feeling *dizzy* is a normal status but in this example (12) it is an exaggeration of *shock* because no one felt dizzy at all and the match were happening as it used to be.

In general, hyperboles used for the first group are very multifarious and diversified and we can find them in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Hyperboles of the first group

English	Vietnamese
<b>1. Hyperboles of Joy</b>	
"as happy as kids", "erupt", "into a frenzy", "rocking", "as if it were a World Cup winner", "a dream start"...	"như một đứa trẻ", "nổ tung", "nức lòng", "vỡ òa", "đầy sóng", "ngất ngây", "như mở cờ trong bụng", "không ngủ", "như trở về từ cõi chết"...
<b>2. Hyperboles of Sadness</b>	
"brokenhearted", "spirit felt broken", "remained unmoved", "were stunned into silence", "sleepwalk their way"...	"khóc thắm", "chết lặng", "sụp đổ", "con ác mộng", ...
<b>3. Hyperboles of Anger</b>	
"want to fight anyone", "death stares", "The anger was stamped all over his face"...	"ăn tươi nuốt sống", "tức nổ máu mắt"...
<b>4. Hyperboles of Worry</b>	
"hearts were in their mouths", "nervously over their shoulders",...	"bầu trời lo lắng", "trái tim như muốn nhảy khỏi lồng ngực"
<b>5. Hyperboles of Frightfulness</b>	
"froze", "a heart attack", "almost silenced"...	"tê công", "nổi ám ảnh", "phải nín thở, bịt mắt", "như chết lặng",...
<b>6. Hyperboles of Regret</b>	
"waste or miss a golden opportunity", "squander/spurn a gilt-edged chance"	"bỏ lỡ/ bỏ qua cơ hội ngàn vàng / không thể ngon ăn hơn", "ôm hận thiên thu"
<b>7. Hyperboles of Shock</b>	
"huge shock"	"choáng váng"

In the second group, aspects of a football match such as *tension*, *excitement*, *boredom*, *victory*, *loss*, *danger* and *beauty* are hyperbolized as follows:

(13) This match began with both teams pressing high and it was **breathless**. (theguardian.com > Soccer > Bayern Munich 3-2 Barcelona /Champions League)

(14) Tottenham đã **tấn công nghệt thở** trong 4 phút bù giờ hòng níu kéo lại 1 điểm nhưng bất thành.

(bongda.com.vn/ tin bai/.../real/rodriguez...)

Clearly, **breathless** and **tấn công nghệt thở** are of the same meaning when used to highlight *tension* in football.

*Excitement* is a pleasant topic to write or talk about in football.

(15) For all that, the Allianz Arena was as **boisterous as**

**ever**, a wave of noise breaking around its cantilevered sides as Bayern pressed aggressively at the start.

(theguardian.com > Soccer > Bayern Munich 3-2 Barcelona /Champions League)

(16) Trận tứ kết lượt về Cúp nhà Vua đã khởi đầu **không thể hấp dẫn hơn**.

(tinthethao365.com.vn/./Atletico...)

Besides, there are different hyperboles used in English and Vietnamese to highlight *victory* and *loss* as follows:

(17) Sergio Aguero equalled a Premier League record by scoring five times as Man, City returned to **winning ways with a 6-1 demolition** of Newcastle.

(goal.com/en-/match/.../ newcastle/.../rep...)

(18) Lúc này, Cordoba vỡ trận, tinh thần suy sụp, rơi vào **thê thua như núi đổ**.

(bongda365.com.vn/.../msn-toa-sang-barcelona...)

*Danger* in football is rather different from other fields. It does not cause death like others, but it is about dangerous situations leading to goals or loss. Nevertheless, English writers take advantage of such phrases as *deadly*, *venomous*, or *lethal* to overshoot the dangerous situations in football.

(19) Despite Athletic's stubborn defending in the third encounter between the sides this month, Barca took the lead early in the second half through **Suarez's venomous strike**.

(goal.com/en-/match/athletic...barcelona/.../report)

Besides, *beauty* is also one of the most common subjects to be hyperbolized. When talking about beauty, people often think of the appearance of someone or thing whereas *beauty* in football can be considered as an art, therefore, it is hard to hyperbolize it. *Dream* may be the most appropriate word to describe *beauty* and is employed in most discourse types. Along with *như mơ* (*dream*), Vietnamese writers often use *tuyệt*, *siêu* or comparing to *drawing* as we sometimes hear *đẹp như vẽ/ như tranh* as in example(20) to magnify *beauty*.

(20) Nhưng đến phút 25, lưới của đội khách đã phải rung lên sau **một pha phối hợp như vẽ** của ĐT.LA.

(bongdaplus.vn/.../danh-bai-hai-phong-1-0-...)

Other hyperboles of the second group are summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Hyperboles of the second group

English	Vietnamese
<b>1. Hyperboles of Tension</b>	
"palpable", "frantic", "breathless", "wild", "ruthlessness", "starved of oxygen"...	"tấn công nghệt thở", "ép sát kinh hoàng", "trận Derby này là", "không cho ... một giây phút để thở", "chóng mặt"...
<b>2. Hyperboles of Excitement</b>	
"burst into life", "as boisterous as ever", "surreal moment" "full voice", "an exhibition", "emotions ran high on and	"cực kỳ", "không thể hấp dẫn hơn", "hấp dẫn hơn cả mong đợi", "siêu kinh điển..."

English	Vietnamese
<i>off the field...</i>	
<b>3. Hyperboles of Boredom</b>	
	y hết như một trận giao hữu, vô hồn
<b>4. Hyperboles of Victory</b>	
"thriller", "demolition", "cruelly finished off"	"chiến thắng điên rồ nhất", "chiến thắng hủy diệt", "cuộc tàn sát", "vụ thảm sát kinh hoàng", "nghiền nát", "màn hủy diệt", "con địa chấn", "như một hố đen khổng lồ trong vũ trụ nuốt chửng dải ngân hà"...
<b>5. Hyperboles of Loss</b>	
	"thua như núi đổ", "bỏ mạng", "chết", "bị hạ nhục"...
<b>6. Hyperboles of Danger</b>	
"deadly", "venomous", or "lethal"	"chết người", "hiểm địa", or "cực kỳ nguy hiểm"
<b>7. Hyperboles of Beauty</b>	
"dreamy"	"đẹp như mơ", "siêu phẩm", "pha phối hợp như vẽ"

The third group expressing *strength, speed, accuracy, talent, weakness, determination and great ability* may be a rich field for hyperboles to be employed. In fact, we can find a wide variety of hyperboles used in this area. Let us consider the following examples;

- (21) But Real were soon back in front through Marcelo's **thunderous shot** into the net after a one-two with Ronaldo.

(goal.com/en-gb/match/espanyol-vs-real.../report)

- (22) Cú đổi cánh **nhanh như cắt** của Messi và Neymar có thể không khiến Juve bất ngờ, vì đó là bài tấn công quen thuộc của họ, nhưng hai pha xâm nhập của Iniesta và tiền vệ Croatia là **không thể ngăn chặn**.

(bongda365.com.vn / tam-biet-pirlo...)

- (23) Getafe's lead lasted just six minutes, however, as Ronaldo took centre stage once more with a fizzing free-kick that curled around the wall and into the bottom-left corner with **laser-like accuracy**.

(goal.com/en-india/match/real...getafe/.../report)

- (24) Ở La Liga, chỉ có 2 "**quái vật**" **Ronaldo và Messi** là có số đường chuyền thành bàn nhiều hơn anh.

(bongdaplus.vn/tin-bai/19/.../quai-vat-ghi-ban-cr7-)

- (25) Luis Enrique described Messi as player from **another dimension**, noting that while others watch him weekly, he has the pleasure "every day".(theguardian.com › Soccer › Barcelona|Champions League)

Besides, writers sometimes use *comparing* as a strategy to hyperbolize weakness of someone.

- (26) They kept making chances but that high-pressing backline **still looked as brittle as a four-day old pretzel**. (theguardian.com › Soccer › Swansea ... Manchester.)

- (27) Bàn gỡ đến khiến không khí tại Etihad như hồi sinh, tất cả đang mong chờ cuộc lội ngược dòng ngoạn mục thì Clichy lên tiếng với thề vàng thứ hai rồi sân, cảm hứng của đội chủ nhà tụt xuống **như bánh đa ngâm nước**.

(bongda365.com.vn /.../suarez-lap-cu-dup...)

- (28) The United striker gave away possession in the lead-up to Swansea's equaliser and, **running as if he had lead in his boots**, ... (theguardian.com › Soccer › Manchester United /Premier League)

*Great ability* is a topic attracting writers as much as other subjects. English writers use "*saviour*" or "*talisman*" to overstate people's ability. Moreover, Vietnamese writers sometimes employ "*siêu nhân*" or they convey other famous characters to beautify this topic as in (29).

- (29) Cú chích bóng ở cự li gần của anh hình như là cực khó với nhiều thủ môn, nhưng **Buffon, như một Spider-man bước ra từ những trang truyện của Marvel**, từ chối tất cả. (bongda365.com.vn /tin-chinh/tam-biet-pirlo)

Table 3 below gives a wide range of hyperboles belonging to group 3.

Table 3. Hyperboles of the third group

English	Vietnamese
<b>1. Hyperboles of Strength</b>	
"hammer", "slam", or "rocket", or "storm", "thunderous"	"thump", "bullet", "cannon", "búa bổ", or "như trái phá", "nã rocket", "như nã đại bác", "như vũ bão"...
<b>2. Hyperboles of Speed</b>	
"electricity", "lightning", or "blink"	"nhanh như chớp", "như cắt", "nhanh như một con sóc", "như những con thoi", "như xé gió", "thần tốc", "như mũi tên", "tốc độ tên lửa", "như cơn lốc", "nhanh như điện",
<b>3. Hyperboles of Accuracy</b>	
"inch-perfect", "placed finish", "laser-like accuracy", or "like there was a computer chip in his boot"	"cực kỳ chính xác", "chính xác từng mm", "chính xác từng centimet", "như đặt"
<b>4. Hyperboles of Talent</b>	
"catlike reactions", "a phenomenal goal-machine", "stunning", "another dimension", or even "ghost"...	"như lên đồng", "không tưởng", "xuất thần", "thần sầu", "ma thuật", "siêu", "quái vật", "thiên tài", "vì tinh tú trên Dải thiên hà", "sinh vật ngoài hành tinh", "đến từ hành tinh khác"
<b>5. Hyperboles of Weakness</b>	
"nightmare performance", "sleepy", "virtually non-existent", "dreadful defending", or "as if he had lead in his boots", "as brittle"	"cực kỳ mờ nhạt", "siêu tồi tệ", "gần như mất tích", "như mơ ngủ", "như những kẻ nghiệp dư", "thiếu chất xám", "vật vờ như bóng ma",

English	Vietnamese
<i>as a four-day old pretzel</i> ” ...	“ <i>thì đầu như đeo chì</i> ”, “ <i>nư bánh đa ngâm nước</i> ” ...
<b>6. Hyperboles of Determination</b>	
“ <i>covered mile after mile</i> ”, “ <i>frantic</i> ”, “ <i>stifle</i> ”, “ <i>rejuvenate</i> ”, “ <i>non-stop</i> ”, ...	“ <i>cày từng cm</i> ”, “ <i>nư một chiến binh</i> ”, “ <i>điên cuồng tấn công</i> ”, “ <i>đá chết bỏ</i> ”, or “ <i>nư muốn ăn tươi nuốt sống đối thủ</i> ” ...
<b>7. Hyperboles of Great Ability</b>	
“ <i>saviour</i> ”, “ <i>talisman</i> ” ,	“ <i>đấng cứu sinh</i> ”, “ <i>siêu nhân</i> ” ...

From the examples above, it can be found that hyperboles are really multifarious and diversified. Each writer has different ways to make fantastic and creative hyperboles. The more skilled the writer is, the more interesting the comment is.

### 5.2. Frequency of English and Vietnamese hyperboles used in sports online newspapers

**Table 4.** Relative frequency of hyperboles in English and Vietnamese used in football commentaries

Topics	English		Vietnamese	
	Occurrence	%	Occurrence	%
[1] joy	14	4.7	22	7.3
[2] sadness	17	5.7	11	3.7
[3] anger	5	1.7	2	0.7
[4] worry	7	2.3	11	3.7
[5] frightfulness	5	1.7	5	1.7
[6] regret	15	5.0	3	1.0
[7] shock	1	0.3	9	3.0
[8] tension	32	10.7	18	6.0
[9] excitement	7	2.3	18	6.0
[10] boredom		0.0	7	2.3
[11] victory	19	6.3	11	3.7
[12] lose		0.0	4	1.3
[13] danger	6	2.0	3	1.0
[14] beauty	1	0.3	12	4.0
[15] strength	65	21.7	21	7.0
[16] speed	19	6.3	26	8.7
[17] accuracy	17	5.7	21	7.0
[18] talent	24	8.0	41	13.7
[19] weakness	32	10.7	36	12.0
[20] determination	9	3.0	14	4.7
[21] great ability	5	1.7	5	1.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Table 4 indicates that hyperboles expressing *strength* is the most frequently employed in English with 21.7% and *talent* is the most in Vietnamese with 13.7%. While hyperboles expressing *beauty* and *shock* are perhaps the least-commonly used in English with 0.3%, Vietnamese writers find them good topics to hyperbolize in their commentaries and on the contrary, *anger*, *regret* and

*danger* are rarely utilized in Vietnamese with 0.7% and 1.0% but they are common fields to be exaggerated in English. Interestingly, both English and Vietnamese hyperboles share the same distribution for *frightfulness* and *great ability*: 1.7%. The results also show that there is no English hyperboles expressing *boredom*, *loss*. From the table, we can find that most English and Vietnamese writers consider the third group – of elements related to people – as fascinating features for hyperboles to be employed and English writers seldom pay attention to the second group, which is contrary to Vietnamese ones. The other discrepancies are not remarkable.

## 6. Conclusion and suggestions

### 6.1. Conclusion

In brief, the analysis above shows that English and Vietnamese sports journalists employ quite a large number of hyperboles when they want to highlight a certain feature of the mentioned object, to create a strong impression on readers or to make their writings more dramatic and interesting.

#### a. Similarities

Hyperboles used in football commentaries in English and Vietnamese newspapers have many things in common. They express most of the basic aspects of football in 3 groups of 21 topics. All scales of emotion or feelings can be found there. Other features related to football such as *tension*, *excitement*, *strength*, *victory*, *speed*, *accuracy*, *beauty*, *talent*, and so on are also denoted. More importantly, both hyperboles in English and Vietnamese are the same in some typical topics. For example, both English and Vietnamese writers use “*dream*” to denote “*beauty*”; “*erupt*” for “*joy*” or *break one’s heart* instead of *sadness*. Most English and Vietnamese writers consider “*cannon*” or “*thunder*” as hyperboles for “*strength*” or “*lightning*” instead of “*speed*”. Moreover, “*genius*” and “*sleepy*” may be the popular hyperboles replacing “*talent*” and “*incapability*”, and so on.

#### b. Differences

There are some differences between English and Vietnamese hyperboles used in newspaper football commentaries. Firstly, Vietnamese writers sometimes consider “*boredom*” of a football match and “*loss or a lost game*” as interesting topics to hyperbolize; , these aspects , on the other hand, are rarely paid attention to by the English ones. Secondly, while English writers tend to utilize hyperboles to promote “*strength*”, the Vietnamese ones find “*talent*” a good topic for hyperboles to be employed. Finally, the same idea but different words are employed in English and Vietnamese; when talking about “*accuracy*”, while “*inch*” is used in English, “*centimeter or millimeter*” are resorted to in Vietnamese. Clearly, there is a slight difference between the underlying cultural features. English writers make use of the image of “*ghost*” as a hyperbole to talk about someone’s “*talent*”, they find “*ghost*” a special image that a normal person cannot catch sight of or keep up with to show skilled players. On the contrary, Vietnamese ones often utilize “*ghost*” to denote the *weakness* of someone as we often hear “*vật vờ như bóng ma*”.

## 6.2. Suggestions

### a. Problematic Situations in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning

In reality, learning to interpret and express exaggeration seems to be a difficult task for Vietnamese learners of English. Moreover, hyperboles represent a part of English largely untaught, whereas they exist in almost every aspect in our daily life. Therefore, in order to understand and use hyperboles correctly, learners should first equip themselves with a wide knowledge of cultural, religious and social aspects.

### b. Suggestions for Language Learning and Teaching

In order to help Vietnamese learners of English to use hyperbole better, suggestions for learning and teaching this stylistic device are provided below.

- To teachers:

Firstly, hyperboles occur in most aspects in our life and sometimes cause some difficulties for Vietnamese learners of English. Therefore, teachers should draw their attention to the differences between what is stated and what is really meant in both languages.

Secondly, fluency in a language includes mastering how to produce and understand words or phrases with particular meanings. Consequently, foreign language teachers should supply learners with knowledge of hyperboles and stimulate them to beautify their own language.

- To students:

Students should master features of hyperboles in the two languages, which will make it easier for them to understand and use hyperbolic expressions. Also, students need to improve their knowledge of language to be able to understand hyperboles in reading texts, and make daily conversations more communicative with hyperboles.

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