

LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF INSPIRATIONAL ENGLISH QUOTATIONS DENOTING EDUCATION

ĐẶC ĐIỂM NGÔN NGỮ HỌC CỦA CÁC LỜI TRÍCH DẪN TRUYỀN CẢM HỨNG VỀ GIÁO DỤC TRONG TIẾNG ANH

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Abstract - Quotations are often used in speaking and writing in order to attract much of readers' attention or influence other people's thoughts and actions. The research focuses on identifying and examining linguistic features of Inspirational English Quotations denoting Education (IEQEs). The study is carried out based on the combination of a variety of methods such as descriptive, analytic and inductive ones in order to find out common linguistic features in terms of syntactic features, lexical choices, cohesive devices and stylistic devices of 457 samples of IEQEs collected from the world's largest quotation site on the internet namely: <http://www.brainyquote.com>, which belongs to one of the 16 branches of X-plore Incorporation in the United states. It is hoped that the results of the research will provide language learners with better insight into linguistic features of inspirational quotations in general and IEQEs in particular so that they can apply such quotations to their own speaking and writing more effectively and impressively.

Key words - linguistic features; inspirational quotations denoting education; syntactic features; lexical choices; cohesive devices; stylistic devices.

1. Rationale

People often use quotations in speaking or writing to make them more impressive, persuasive and to convey messages to their readers effectively. Such quotations are really interesting, meaningful and suitable for their situations. In reality, people find many quotations unforgettable and meaningful, which inspire them to overcome difficulties or challenges because human life always contains so many stages in their lives and everyone should face it. The power of quotations may affect people's thought, foster beliefs in their lives and stimulate them to do anything enthusiastically. Therefore, it cannot be denied that quotations play an important role in each our lives.

In fact, quotations are about every aspect of life including life, happiness, love, family, friendship, emotion, education etc... However, quotations denoting education from scholars from the ancient time to the modern time such as Plato, Aristotle, Solomon Ortiz, or John Dewey are paid much attention due to their popularity and powerful influence on people's thought. Most of the quotations express process of education, some values or necessity of education etc...

Furthermore, education plays an essential part in society and our lives. Education provides today's children with valuable and necessary skills to lead a productive life in tomorrow's society. To provide the young with education successfully, it consists of many elements such as their efforts, good learning methods, enthusiasm

Tóm tắt - Lời trích dẫn thường được dùng trong văn nói hay viết nhằm thu hút sự chú ý, tác động đến suy nghĩ và hành động của người khác. Nghiên cứu chú trọng vào nhận diện và phân tích các đặc điểm ngôn ngữ của *lời trích dẫn truyền cảm hứng về giáo dục trong Tiếng Anh* (IEQEs) dựa trên sự kết hợp của các phương pháp nghiên cứu khác nhau như miêu tả, phân tích và quy nạp nhằm tìm ra các đặc trưng ngôn ngữ phổ biến về đặc trưng cú pháp, sự lựa chọn từ ngữ, những phương tiện liên kết và những phương tiện phong cách của 457 IEQEs được sưu tầm trên một trang web về các lời trích dẫn: <http://www.brainyquote.com>. Trang web thuộc một trong 16 chi nhánh của tập đoàn X-plore ở Mỹ. Hy vọng kết quả của bài nghiên cứu sẽ cung cấp cho người học một cái nhìn sâu sắc hơn về đặc điểm ngôn ngữ học của các lời trích dẫn truyền cảm hứng nói chung và IEQEs nói riêng để họ có thể vận dụng chúng vào chính những câu nói và bài viết hiệu quả và thuyết phục hơn.

Từ khóa - đặc điểm ngôn ngữ học; lời trích dẫn truyền cảm hứng về giáo dục; đặc điểm cú pháp; lựa chọn từ ngữ; phương tiện liên kết; biện pháp tu từ.

together with good teaching methods of teachers as well as modern educational environment etc. Nevertheless, people may have strong aspirations to learn or work and get their enjoyment of learning only due to a meaningful quotation. Such quotations are called inspirational quotations. Let us have a look at the following examples which were spoken by Theodore Roosevelt, the 26th United States president and by Solomon Ortiz, the United States politician respectively:

(1.1) *A man who has never gone to school may steal from a freight car; but if he has a university education, he may steal the whole railroad.*

(https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/theodore_roosevelt_147900)

(1.2) *Education makes children less dependent upon others and opens doors to better jobs and career possibilities.*

(https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/solomon_ortiz_346228)

The stylistic device, antithesis that is used in the example (1.1) with full sentence structure can emphasize the true value of education in work as well as in our lives while the adjective phrase and verb phrase in the example (1.2) can express necessity of education to each individual in society. These quotations have woken children's mind or even adults' mind to have a strict attitude of learning and working. As a result, many questions are raised such as what makes quotations become powerful means of communication. How

vocabularies and wordings are combined in quotations to achieve effective and coherent communication? etc. This is because of the association with grammar rules, forms and structures with aspects of meaning or semantic functions over the lexical meaning of individual words. Therefore, this research is conducted with a strong aspiration to provide some useful practical knowledge of linguistic features of quotations for people who are interested in this field and want to use them in speaking or writing successfully. Additionally, the study will probably bring a little contribution to Vietnamese learners and teachers of English.

2. Previous related studies

Up to now, many writers and linguists have made great distributions to the collection of English quotations such as: Smyth (1941), Rees (2006), Bynum and Porter (2006), Radcliffe (2012), etc...

In the research, a quotation is viewed from the angle of discourse analysis as a form of "text". In the discourse analysis of IEQEs is limited to linguistic features of the written text.

Text is a multidimensional unit and has been defined in different ways by different linguists such as Halliday and Hasan (1976), Nunan (1993), Widdoson (1975), etc.

In Vietnam, there have been well-known researchers such as Hoàng Trọng Phiến (1980), Diệp Quang Ban (1998) and Đinh Trọng Lạc- Nguyễn Thái Hòa (1993) who have shown their interest in text linguistics and its related features.

3. Theoretical Background

3.1. Definitions of Terms

There are many definitions of a quotation such as that from Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary- 7th Edition (2005), or on the Internet at <http://www.differencebetween.info/difference-between-quotes-quotations-and-sayings>. However, the most reasonable definition which consists full of features of the collected samples can be understood as follows:

A quotation is a text with a definable communicative function used to convey a certain message to readers. The quotations are selected from the world's largest quotation website namely <https://www.brainyquote.com>.

Similarly, education has been defined in different ways by different sources or leaders of education department, such as Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary- 7th Edition (2005), F. Herbert (as cited in Gazala Bhoje, 2015), Law on the National Education System of the Republic of Indonesia (2003). Nevertheless, I would like to take the view that clearly expresses the outstanding features of the collected samples, as following:

Education is a learning progress not only in schools or colleges but also in the real lives through a conscious and deliberate effort so that learners can improve knowledge as well as actively develop the potential for them to have the spiritual strength of religious, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills needed themselves and society.

All in all, inspirational quotations denoting education

collected on the Brainy quote site will be carried out with the aim of encouraging readers to make great efforts in lifelong learning.

3.2. Methodology

The aim of the study is to identify and clarify the nature of IEQEs in order to find out their linguistic features in terms of syntactic features, lexical choices, cohesive devices and stylistic devices. In order to achieve this aim, the research employs a combination different research methods as follows:

The descriptive method is used to give a detailed description of linguistic features of IEQEs.

The analytic method is used to classify and justify a certain feature or characteristic.

The inductive method is helpful in drawing out the generalizations from the findings and making conclusions.

Four criteria for selecting samples have been established: 1- The samples must be collected on the official website namely the <https://www.brainyquote.com>. 2- The quotations' authors must be native English speakers coming from the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia. 3- The samples must be quotations denoting education. It means the samples must concern and relate mainly to processes, values or results of education in teaching, learning and training, especially in schools or colleges to improve knowledge, develop skills, as well as stimulate the spirit of studying among learners passionately. 4- Although IEQEs with the medium length from 21 to 30 words accounts for the highest percentage, all of the collected samples in the length from 07 to 60 words have been chosen due to their popularity.

With such criteria, 457 IEQEs have been collected to build up the data.

4. Findings and discussion

4.1. Syntactic features of ARSEs

Language of inspirational quotations has specific characteristics in terms of syntax and syntactic features. In order to make a speech become more persuasive, interesting and memorable, speakers make great efforts to convey the information in the most short, brief and succinct manner. IEQEs are not exceptions. It is important to discover the common syntactic features which are built from words and governed by various linguistic rules. In 457 collected IEQEs, Imperative sentences, Complex sentences with: *whether, whatever, whichever, not only...but also* and with type 1 conditional sentences and Mottos are commonly found.

Here is the distribution of imperative sentences, complex sentences and mottos in IEQEs:

Table 1. Distribution of Syntactic Features of IEQEs

| Syntactic Features | | Occurrence | Rate |
|----------------------|------------------------------|------------|--------|
| Complex Sentences | Type 1 Conditional Sentences | 31 | 17.8 % |
| | Other structures | 14 | 8 % |
| Imperative Sentences | | 31 | 17.8 % |
| Mottos | | 98 | 56.4 |

| | | |
|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Total | 174 | 100 % |
|--------------|------------|--------------|

Significantly, as can be seen from the Table 1, mottos occupy the highest percentage in IEQEs with 56.4 %. This is followed by complex sentences, accounting for 25.8 % in the total. Imperative sentences occupy the lowest with 17.8 %.

In conditional sentences, type 1 conditionals are mainly used in IEQEs. It is a real condition in the present or future. An action in the future will only happen if a certain condition is fulfilled by that time. We don't know for sure whether the condition actually will be fulfilled or not, but the conditions seems rather realistic – so we think it is likely to happen. Conditional sentences used in this case give readers strong advice in studying, working as well as in their lives. They also show the value or result of education.

According to Michael Vince (2009), there are three groups of the real conditional sentences identified in the research.

Pattern 1: If + present simple, future simple

Here are the examples:

(4.1). *If you don't design your own life plan, chances are you'll fall into someone else's plan. And guess what they have planned for you? Not much.* [11]

Pattern 2: If + present simple, present simple

(4. 2). *If you want to be an anthropologist, you need to study physical anthropology specialized in bones. If you want to be a forensic chemist, get a degree in chemistry. Do you want to do DNA work? Get a degree in microbiology. And do well. Study hard and go to graduate school.* [12]

Pattern 3: If + present simple, imperative form

(4. 3) *If you want a good education, go to private schools. If you can't afford it, tough luck. You can go to the public school.* [13]

The real conditional sentences with the form in the example (4.1) show that the outcome is really possible. And with the use of the form in the example (4.2), writers want to express the idea of advisability. Finally, the imperative form in the example (4.3) gives hearers strong advice.

In complex sentences, besides type 1 conditional sentences, other -structure- sentences play an important role in IEQEs.

In IEQEs, other structures of complex sentences are often composed of main clauses and subordinate clauses such as: " **not only....but also**", " **not...but**" " **whatever, whoever, whether, until...**", which cover most of the embedded information as follows:

(4.4) *True education is concerned **not only** with practical goals **but also** with values. Our aims assure us of our material life, our values make possible our spiritual life.* [14]

(4.5) *The main part of intellectual education is **not** the*

*acquisition of facts, **but** learning how to make facts live.* [15]

(4.6) *I don't think anybody anywhere can talk about the future of their people or of an organization without talking about education. **Whoever** controls the education of our children controls our future.* [16]

(4.7) *Education is hanging around **until** you've caught on.* [17]

In IEQEs, imperative sentences are found to convey the messages to readers effectively. According to Warriner (2003), there are two main forms of the imperative found in IEQEs:

- Affirmative Imperative: **Verb (base form)**

- Negative Imperative: **Do not (Don't) + Verb (base form)**

The imperative sentences formed without the subjects increase the impersonal relationship between the writers and the readers effectively. The affirmative imperative sentence in the below example (4.8) encourages readers to make great efforts in studying as well as working to get good results or achieve the goal. Meanwhile, negative imperative sentences in the example (4.9) advise readers not to give up hopes. They also urge readers to do something. Nothing cannot be possible if we always determine to do them.

The following examples are illustrated for each kind.

(4.8) ***Apply** yourself. **Get** all the education you can, but then, by God, **do** something. **Don't just stand there, make** it happen.* [18]

(4.9) ***Do not** wait; the time will never be 'just right.' **Start** where you stand, and **work** with whatever tools you may have at your command, and better tools will be found as you go along.* [19]

Furthermore, there are some mottos used in quotations denoting education. The use of mottos plays an important role in stimulating and inspiring someone's growing to their fullest potential. It is not excessive to say that the mottos are one of the common characteristics identified in IEQEs because of the fact that the mottos are short, impressive and memorable.

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary - 7th Edition (2005), "motto is a short sentence or phrase that expresses the aims and belief of a person, an institution, etc. and is used as a rule of behavior."

The mottos' structures discovered in collected data have various patterns such as preposition phrases, noun phrases, verb phrases, adjective phrases, and some imperative sentences with the aim of highlighting the function of IEQEs. Look at the following examples:

(4.10) ***Develop a passion for learning.** If you do, you will never cease to grow.* [20]

(4.11) *Education makes children **less dependent upon others** and **opens doors** to better jobs and career possibilities.* [21]

Thanks to using mottos with a variety of structures, the writers make their utterances or writing more powerful and unforgettable. The effective use of the adjective phrase

with key word such as *less dependent upon others* in (4.11) expresses the true value of education whereas the structure of imperative sentences including *develop a passion for learning*, and *opens doors* in (4.10), and (4.11) respectively make the mottos as strong and powerful as the characteristics of the verbs themselves.

4.2. Lexical Choices in IEQEs

4.2.1. Directive verbs in IEQEs

According to Yule (1996), a directive is an utterance used to try to get the hearers to do something. Directive verbs mean a class of verbs expressing acts of requesting, ordering, forbidding, warning, advising, suggesting, insisting, recommending and so on...In IEQEs, the writers utilize directive verbs in order to make their speaking or writing more attractive and powerful when they want to give advice or call the readers' passion for learning and working. Let us take a look at the following example:

(4.12) *Desire! That's the one secret of every man's career. Not education. Not being born with hidden talents. Desire.* [22]

y using directive verbs, the writers also expect educational leaders to provide all people good education or pay more attention to investing in education to enhance quality of education. The following example expresses these points:

(4.13) *Public education is our greatest pathway to opportunity in America. So we need to invest in and strengthen our public universities today, and for generations to come.* [23]

To sum up, the use of the directive verbs helps writers succeed in encouraging the readers to do what they think it is necessary for developing a country.

4.2.2. Modal verbs in IEQEs

In IEQEs, the modal verbs including *should*, *must*, *can* and *cannot* are used most commonly and others are less commonly. These modal verbs are often extrinsic modality and therefore, the most common meaning of category of *must* is **obligation**, that of *should* is **necessity** and *can* is **possibility**. Here is an example:

(4.14) *Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardor and diligence.* [24]

In short, by using the modal verbs: *should*, *must*, *can* or *cannot*..., the writers point out mission of authorities to enhancing and developing education and they also show responsibility of individuals to strive for reaching the highest goals in education.

4.2.3. Descriptive Adjectives

In linguistics, the adjective is one of the four major word classes, along with the noun, verb and adverb. It is a word whose primary role is to qualify or modify the meaning of a noun or noun phrase through expressing features or attributes which noun and noun phrase signify.

In the collected samples of IEQEs, the descriptive adjectives appear densely in three forms: the base form, the comparative and the superlative form. Here is a descriptive

adjective used in IEQEs:

(4.15) *Without education, we are weaker economically. Without economic power, we are weaker in terms of national security. No great military power has ever remained so without great economic power.* [25]

In short, by using and combining various descriptive adjectives and their different forms flexibly, the copywriters emphasize the necessity and benefits of education to each individual as well as society.

In summary, lexical choices are used in high occurrence in all three types of lexical choices. The use of modal verbs in IEQEs is most frequently with 94 times, accounting 35.3 %. Descriptive adjectives and directive verbs take up the lower percentage with 31.6 % and 33.1 % respectively. All three types of lexical choices help IEQEs convey essential information to the hearers more persuasively and effectively.

4.3. Cohesive Devices in IEQEs

4.3.1. Personal reference in IEQEs

Halliday and Hasan (1976) stated that personal reference refers to something specifying its function and role in the speech situation, through the category of person. Personal reference is classified into three categories: personal pronoun, possessive pronoun, and possessive determiner. Nevertheless, in 457 samples of IEQEs, there are no case of possessive pronoun found, but only personal pronoun and possessive determiner are commonly identified.

Below is an example for personal pronoun as a device of cohesion:

(4.16) *A high-quality public education can build much-needed skills and knowledge. It can help children reach their God-given potential. It can stabilize communities and democracies. It can strengthen economies. It can combat the kind of fear and despair that evolves into hatred.* [26]

Another way to establish the relationship between sentences is using possessive determiners, which also appear together with personal pronouns. Here is an example:

(4.17) *Education is the key to success in life, and teachers make a lasting impact in the lives of their students.* [27]

In the above examples, "*it*" in (4.16) is the personal pronoun that refers to the presupposed subject "*A high-quality public education*". By using such pronouns, the writers maintain the relationship between sentences without repeating the words again. The readers just need to look forward to the preceding parts to find out what these pronouns refer to. While the possessive determiner "*their*" in the example (4.17) refer to "*teachers*" by looking back to the predecessor.

4.3.2. Repetition in IEQEs

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), repetition is also one of the devices having its origin in the emotive language. Repetition is expressive means of language used when the speaker is under the stress of strong emotion. It

shows the state of mind of the speaker.

In IEQEs, the repetition refers to the use of same lexical item with the same meaning more than once in the text. The writers repeat the same words or phrases once more time in their writing or speaking in order to make an idea clearer, to emphasize its significance in the entire text, or to fix the attention of the readers on the key words of the text.

Let us consider the following examples:

(4.18) *You **have to** stay in school. You **have to**. You **have to** go to college. You **have to** get your degree. Because that's the one thing people can't take away from you is your education. And it is worth the investment.* [28]

(4.19) *Everyone who remembers his own education remembers **teachers**, not methods and techniques. **The teacher** is the heart of the educational.* [29]

It is easy to recognize the repetition of modal verb **have to** in the example (4.18). It aims at emphasizing the necessity of receiving an education or stimulating readers' spirit of learning, having great dreams in the future. Additionally, the repetition not only uses the same word over again, but also is not restricted to the same morphological form within the text. The word **teachers** and **the teacher** in the example (4.19) is the use of two lexical items that share the same lexical morphemes but that are not formally identical.

With such use, writers not only make the text more colorific but also emphasize its significance in the entire text.

Furthermore, repetition of structures also applies to the same text in IEQEs. Here is another example:

(4.20) *Without education, **we are weaker** economically. Without economic power, **we are weaker** in terms of national security. No great military power has ever remained so without great economic power.* [30]

In short, the repetition is identified more frequently in 457 collected samples (106 times). It is used with the purpose of highlighting values, importance of education and also inspire readers' passion for not stop discovering new knowledge.

4.4. Stylistic Devices in IEQEs

4.4.1. Parallelism in IEQEs

According to Cook (1989: 15), parallelism is "a device which suggests a connection, simply because of the form of one sentence or clause repeats the form of another. This is often used in speeches, prayers, poetry and advertisements. It can have a powerful emotional effect, and it is also a useful aide- mémoire".

It can be said that parallelism structures with words, phrases and clauses are thoroughly employed in the IEQEs as follows:

(4.21) *Education comes from within; you get it by **struggle and effort and thought**.* [31]

(4.22) *The government is **not your salvation**. The government is **not your road to prosperity**. Hard work, education will take you far beyond what any government program can ever promise.* [32]

The use of similar grammatical forms: the noun word

and the clause in the examples (4.21), (4.22) respectively not only make the ideas in the sentences clear and understandable but also express equal ideas. It is undoubted that the device of parallelism enhances the strength of what the speaker want to say to the readers and also emphasizes importance of hard work and education to each individual.

4.4.2. Antithesis in IEQEs

Antithesis is a stylistic device which contains in itself special characteristics. It is a common instrument for literature, press, politics and even daily life language in order to get rid of monotony and also to get more effective.

Let us have a look at the following examples:

(4.23) *Your talent is **God's gift to you**. What you do with it is **your gift back to God**.* [33]

Gob's gift > < **your gift**
to you > < **back to God**

By using the opposite noun phrase in the above example, the writer reminds the readers to be responsible to themselves in learning and enhancing their knowledge.

4.4.3. Metaphor in IEQEs

According to Galperin (1971), metaphor is an imaginative way of comparing something to something else which is the same in a particular way. If one thing is a metaphor for another, it is intended or regarded as a symbol of it

Let us analyze some examples of IEQEs to clearly see how the metaphor is applied.

(4.24) *Education is the **passport** to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.* [34]

In the examples in (24), the word **passport** with its literal meaning as an official document, often a small book, that we need to enter or leave a country. However, it implies a means or a condition to get a good job, to earn living in the future. Hence, using the device of metaphor, the writers emphasize roles as well as necessity of education to each individual.

In summary, in the total of 231 occurrences of stylistic devices, antithesis and parallelism have high percentage, taking up 43.2 % and 39 % respectively. This is followed by metaphor, making up 17.8 %. Most of the stylistic devices used in IEQEs considerably contribute to making IEQEs more impressive and persuasive to the readers.

5. Conclusion

The study focuses on clarifying some common linguistic features of IEQEs in terms of syntactic features, lexical features, cohesive devices and stylistic devices.

In terms of syntactic features, *imperative sentences*, *complex sentences* and *mottos* were explored. The mottos with the variety of phrases such as noun, adjective, preposition, and verb phrases occupy the highest rate. With the lower percentage than mottos, complex sentences are also found with main types including type 1 conditional sentences and other structure- sentences like *whatever*, *whoever*, *whetheretc*... Additionally, there are two main forms of imperative sentences, which are affirmative and

negative imperative, also frequently used in IEQEs.

With regard to lexical choices, the writers attract more attention from readers with the use of *directive verbs*, *modal verbs* and *descriptive adjectives*. Taking up the highest percentage of over 35.3%, modal verbs are employed to describe obligation, necessity of education as well as call for lifelong learning to each individual. Furthermore, the writers have a strong tendency to use directive verbs in order to attract more readers' attention. Finally, with the aim at not only expressing the role of education in working and living but also inspiring the readers' passion for learning and improving knowledge to meet development of the society, descriptive adjectives are densely used in three forms: the base, the comparative and the superlative form.

In respect of cohesive devices, the grammatical cohesive devices namely *reference* and *conjunction* and the lexical cohesive device namely *repetition* are examined. Among these devices, reference makes up the largest percentage (49.1 %), making the quotations clearer and more concise. This is followed by the frequency of conjunction in IEQEs (38.8 %), reaching the goal of making IEQEs more coherent, smooth and persuasive. Besides, the use of repetition (12.0%) also emphasizes significance of the repeated words or phrases in the entire text and expresses their logical- semantic relationship.

Concerning stylistic features, the copywriters have a tendency to employ *parallelism*, *antithesis* and *metaphor*. However, parallelism is used at a high rate, which makes the ideas in the sentences clearer and more understandable, expressing equal ideas. With the outranking percentage, antithesis plays an important part in emphasizing the true value of education. Lastly, thanks to the use of metaphor, IEQEs will become vivid and interesting. In short, each stylistic device has its own features and rhetorical effects so that all of them considerably contribute to making IEQEs more impressive and persuasive to the readers.

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