

To cite this article: Dr. Quyen Nguyen Tu, Hang Ngo Thuy, Hue Hoang Thi, Huyen Nguyen Thi Ngoc, Ngan Luc Dieu and Ngoc Vu Minh (2025). THE RHETORICAL DEVICE OF REPETITION IN LITERARY TEXTS IN VIETNAM'S GRADE 5 VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE TEXTBOOK, International Journal of Education and Social Science Research (IJESSR) 8 (3): 107-116 Article No. 1070, Sub Id 1672

THE RHETORICAL DEVICE OF REPETITION IN LITERARY TEXTS IN VIETNAM'S GRADE 5 VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE TEXTBOOK

Dr. Quyen Nguyen Tu¹, Hang Ngo Thuy², Hue Hoang Thi³, Huyen Nguyen Thi Ngoc⁴, Ngan Luc Dieu⁵ and Ngoc Vu Minh⁶

¹University of Education, Thai Nguyen University

^{2,3,4,5,6}Student of the faculty of elementary Education, University of Education, Thai Nguyen University

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.37500/IJESSR.2025.8309>

ABSTRACT

In literary texts, the use of repetition as a rhetorical device contributes significantly to artistic expression. This article compiles, categorizes, and analyzes the roles of lexical and syntactic repetition in literary texts found in the Grade 5 Vietnamese language textbook of Vietnam. The aim is to provide teachers and students with a deeper theoretical foundation regarding this stylistic device, thereby facilitating the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in Vietnamese language classes and meeting the demands of current educational reform.

KEYWORDS: rhetorical devices, lexical repetition, syntactic repetition, literary texts, artistic value

1. INTRODUCTION

In Vietnam's 2018 General Education Curriculum, the Vietnamese language subject plays a particularly important role in developing both the qualities and competencies of primary school students. This subject not only serves as a foundational tool for communication and for learning other subjects, but it also helps students cultivate critical thinking, nurture their emotional development, and shape their character. In particular, through the study of literary texts, students are further nurtured in aesthetic appreciation, enabling them to understand and be moved by what is good and beautiful.

In the Vietnamese language subject, exploring rhetorical devices in textbook reading passages is essential, as it serves as a key to helping students discover the beauty of language and gain a deeper understanding of the text's content. Stylistic devices such as simile, personification, lexical repetition, and syntactic repetition not only make sentences more vivid and engaging but also help convey the author's emotions, attitudes, and perspectives. When students are guided to recognize and analyze these devices, they enhance their literary appreciation and linguistic thinking, enabling them to apply language more flexibly in both speaking and writing. At the same time, they develop the habit of reading analytically and valuing the artistic power of the Vietnamese language. This is an important preparatory step to help students gain confidence in studying literature at higher levels of education.

This article aims to explore the use of lexical and syntactic repetition in literary texts found in Vietnam's Grade 5 Vietnamese language textbook, with the goal of providing teachers and students with a deeper theoretical foundation on this rhetorical device, thereby facilitating more effective instruction and comprehension in reading lessons.

2. CONTENT

2.1. Definition of Lexical and Syntactic Repetition

Lexical and syntactic repetition is “the conscious repetition of words or phrases with the purpose of emphasizing ideas, expanding meaning, creating strong impressions, or evoking emotions in the reader or listener” [5, p.93].

2.2. Characteristics of Lexical and Syntactic Repetition in Literary Texts in the Grade 5 Vietnamese Language Textbook

According to the results of our survey, we identified 106 instances of lexical and syntactic repetition in literary texts across the three textbook series *Canh Dieu*, *Ket noi tri thuc voi cuoc song*, and *Chan troi sang tao*. The number and percentage of occurrences of these rhetorical devices in each textbook series are shown below:

Table 1. Number and percentage of lexical and syntactic repetition in literary texts in the Grade 5 Vietnamese language textbook

No.	Textbook series	Lexical and syntactic repetition	
		<i>Number</i>	<i>percentage</i>
1	Canh Dieu	33	31,13
2	Ket noi tri thuc voi cuoc song	36	33,96
3	Chan troi sang tao	37	34,91
Total		106	100%

From the above statistics, it can be observed that lexical and syntactic repetition appears a total of 106 times in the literary texts across all three textbook series, with the frequency of occurrence in each series showing no significant disparity. Specifically, the *Canh Dieu* series features 33 instances (31.13%), the *Ket noi tri thuc voi cuoc song* series has 36 instances (33.96%), and the *Chan troi sang tao* series includes 37 instances (34.91%).

2.2.1. Classification of word and phrase repetition in Literary Texts in the Grade 5 Vietnamese Textbook

Repetition of words and phrases in the Grade 5 Vietnamese textbook can be classified into the following types:

- Successive repetition
- Circular repetition
- Spaced repetition

The quantity of each type of repetition technique can be visualized in the statistical table below:

Table 2. Quantity and Percentage of Each Type of Word and Phrase Repetition in Literary Texts from the Grade 5 Vietnamese Textbook

Textbook series	Successive Repetition		Spaced Repetition		Circular Repetition	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>percentage</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>percentage</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>percentage</i>
Canh Dieu	15	37,5	18	28,12	0	0
Ket noi tri thuc voi cuoc song	5	12,5	30	46,87	2	100
Chan troi sang tao	20	50	16	25,01	0	0
Total	40	100%	64	100%	2	100%

Looking at the statistical table above, it is evident that the number of repetition techniques (word and phrase repetition) of each type varies across the textbook series. For successive repetition, the Chan troi sang tao series has the highest number (20 instances, accounting for 50%), while the *Ket noi tri thuc voi cuoc song* series has the fewest (only 5 instances, accounting for 12.5%). In contrast, for spaced repetition, the *Ket noi tri thuc voi cuoc song* series has the highest number (30 instances, accounting for 46.87%), while the other two series have relatively similar proportions (*Canh Dieu* with 18 instances or 28.12%, and *Chan troi sang tao* with 16 instances or 25.01%). Notably, circular repetition appears only in the *Ket noi tri thuc voi cuoc song* series, and the number of such instances is limited (only 2).

Thus, while all three textbook series place importance on using repetition techniques in literary texts, each applies them in different ways in terms of type and frequency. This variation reflects the artistic intent of each author, aiming to achieve different rhetorical effects.

2.2.1.1. Successive Repetition

Successive repetition is a form of repetition “in which the repeated words or phrases appear directly next to each other to create a novel impression with a progressive effect” [5, p. 93]. As previously presented in the statistics, this type of repetition appears in the literary texts of all three textbook series.

For example:

(1) *“The forest today is like a festival of green — green in many varying shades, from deep to light, thick to thin.”* [4, p. 22]

Or:

(2) *“Let’s fly together, make the Earth spin!
Let’s fly together, make the Earth spin!”*

...

*“Every flower’s color is precious and fragrant!
Every flower’s color is precious and fragrant!”*

...

*“This planet belongs to us!
This planet belongs to us!”* [7, p. 75]

In this type of repetition, we can see that the repeated words or phrases appear directly next to one another. Specifically, in example (1), *màu xanh* (“green”) is repeated twice, placed right next to each other. In example (2), each line of poetry repeats the entire sentence exactly as it is: “Let’s fly together, make the Earth spin!”, “Every flower’s color is precious and fragrant!”, and “This planet belongs to us!”.

2.2.1.2. Spaced Repetition

Spaced repetition is a form of word or phrase repetition “in which the repeated elements are placed far apart to create a strong impression and a highly musical effect” [5, p. 93]. In the Grade 5 Vietnamese language textbook, this type of repetition also appears quite frequently, especially in the *Kết nối tri thức với cuộc sống* series. For example:

(3)

“The grain of rice from our village

Holds the taste of alluvium
From the Kinh Thay River
Carries the scent of fragrant lotus
From the full pond
Holds the lullabies of Mother
Bittersweet and tender...

The grain of rice from our village

Endures July storms
And March rains
Soaked with falling sweat

...

The grain of rice from our village

In the years of American bombs
Raining down on rooftops

In the years of rifles
Carried by those going far
In the years of bullet belts
Golden like ripened fields

...

The grain of rice from our village

Bears your efforts, my friends
Fighting droughts each morning

...

The grain of rice from our village

Sent to the frontlines
Sent to distant places
We sing with joy
Golden grain of our village.” [2, p. 17]

In the poem “*The Grain of Rice from Our Village*” by Tran Dang Khoa, the phenomenon of word and phrase repetition is quite evident. In this poem, the *phrase the grain of rice from our village*, along with the words *the years*, *has*, *send* and *I*, are repeated multiple times. These repetitions occur at intervals rather than appearing consecutively or directly next to each other.

Another example:

(4) “We must love one another, must respect one another, must help one another in order to pursue the common happiness of ourselves and our descendants.” [6, p. 93]

In example (4), the word *must* is repeated three times, and this is also a case of spaced repetition, as the repeated words do not appear directly next to each other in the text.

2.2.1.3. Circular Repetition

Circular repetition is a form of repetition “in which the last word of the preceding sentence is repeated as the first word of the following sentence, and so on, creating a flow that links the lines or sentences together like waves” [5, p. 94].

In the literary texts of the Grade 5 Vietnamese language textbook, this type of circular repetition is not common. As previously mentioned, we were only able to identify two instances, and both are found in the poem *The Year of the Horse* from the *Ket noi tri thuc voi cuoc song* textbook series. These are:

- (5)
- Mom, what is my zodiac year?
 - Your year is the Year of the Horse.
 - The horse never stays in one place,
 - Your year is the year of movement...
 - Mom, I will gallop

*Through countless winds,
The green winds of the midlands,
The crimson winds of the red soil...*

It can be observed that in example (5), the words *horse* and *wind* are repeated in a circular manner. This is evident as these words appear at the end of one line and at the beginning of the next, creating a smooth transition between the two lines of the poem.

In conclusion, in the Grade 5 Vietnamese language textbook, the phenomenon of word and phrase repetition appears in various forms, and this diversity in expression contributes to specific rhetorical values within the texts.

2.2.2. The Value of Word and Phrase Repetition in Literary Texts in the Grade 5 Vietnamese Textbook

In the literary texts of the Grade 5 Vietnamese language textbook, the use of word and phrase repetition by the authors has certain values. According to our analysis, this technique holds the following values:

2.2.2.1. Emphasizing the Content of the Text

In the literary texts of the Grade 5 Vietnamese language textbook, the use of word and phrase repetition serves to emphasize the content or information that the writer wants to convey.

Example:

(6)

“You come from China,
You come from the Americas,
You from the Danube River’s bank,
I – The Red River of Vietnam” [6, p. 93]

The word *you* in the example above is repeated three times, emphasizing the image of international friends coming from different regions of the world. This repetition creates a steady rhythm, allowing the reader to feel the lively, joyful atmosphere of an international festival, where the friendship and unity between nations are celebrated.

The word *must* in example (3) mentioned earlier is a form of spaced repetition. By repeating this word, it emphasizes the urgency and indispensability of the three important actions: loving, respecting, and helping one another. At the same time, it demonstrates a strong, logical argument and a firm, decisive attitude of the speaker regarding what should be done in communal life.

2.2.2.2. Creating a List in the Text

Creating a list of related items is one of the values of word and phrase repetition, as demonstrated in the literary texts in the Grade 5 Vietnamese language textbook. For example:

(7)

“- Mom, I will gallop

Through countless winds

The green wind of the midlands

The crimson wind of the red soil

The black wind of the great forest” [1, p. 18]

The repetition of the word *wind* at the beginning of each line creates a list structure, introducing to the reader three different aspects of the wind, corresponding to three specific locations: the midlands, the red soil region, and the great forest. This listing not only highlights the quantity but also evokes vivid imagery of the color and characteristics of the winds in each region.

2.2.2.3. Affirming the Information in the Text

In the Grade 5 Vietnamese language textbook, the use of word and phrase repetition has, in many cases, served to affirm the information mentioned in the text. This can be illustrated by the following example:

(8) *“The Kinh people or the Tho, Muong or Man, Gia-rai or E-đê, Xo-đang or Ba-na, and other ethnic minorities, all are descendants of Vietnam, all are siblings.” [6, p. 93]*

In example (8), the phrase *all are* is repeated in a parallel structure to express equality, unity, and the fraternal bond without discrimination between ethnic groups. The use of phrase repetition here not only affirms a clear political stance but also strengthens the ideology of national unity — one of the fundamental principles in the revolutionary path of President Hồ Chí Minh. This repetition evokes a sacred sentiment among the ethnic communities within the great Vietnamese family.

Another example:

(9)

“The bee makes honey, loves flowers

The fish swims, loves water; the bird sings, loves the sky

A human wants to live, my dear

Must love comrades, love brothers.” [6, p. 99]

In this stanza, the word *love* is repeated several times throughout the lines, clearly affirming the emotional bonds and connections that exist between all living beings and humans in life. In the first two lines, *love* is used to describe the natural bond between creatures and their environments: the bee loves flowers, the fish loves water, and the bird loves the sky. This is not just a description of natural phenomena but also carries a profound metaphorical meaning: love and connection are fundamental to life; they are the conditions for existence and development.

In the final line, the word *love* continues to appear in the message: “*Must love comrades, love brothers.*” Here, *love* shifts to a social and ethical context, emphasizing that in order for a person to live meaningfully and with integrity, they must know how to love one another and live in solidarity and compassion. Thus, the repetition of the word *love* not only creates a rhythmic, heartfelt flow but also carries a philosophical and humanistic meaning about the origin of life: love is the essential foundation, extending from nature to society, from animals to humans.

2.2.2.4. Creating Artistic Effect in the Text

While the first three values mentioned above refer to the “surface” effects of word and phrase repetition in the literary texts of the Grade 5 Vietnamese language textbook, this fourth point emphasizes the “inner” value of these techniques. Specifically, word and phrase repetition, in certain respects, contributes to creating an artistic effect, reflecting the deeper intentions of the author. This is evident in several aspects, as follows:

- Contributing to Creating Vivid Imagery in the Text

Example:

- (10) “*After her finger,
There is the sound of seeds sprouting,
The sound of leaves rustling in the garden,
The sound of morning calls from mother,
The sound of distant life.*” [1, p. 28]

In this example, the word *sound* is repeated several times, contributing to the creation of vivid imagery in the poem. Each repetition of the word *sound* opens up a rich world of sounds: the sound of seeds sprouting, the sound of leaves rustling in the garden, the sound of a mother's call at dawn, the sound of distant life... These sounds not only evoke the beauty of nature and life but also carry symbolic meaning for existence, faith, hope, and dreams.

Example:

- (11) “*On summer nights
When the cicadas
Have fallen asleep,
I listen carefully
On Tran Phu street,
The sound of the bamboo broom
Rustling,
Under the tamarind trees.
The sound of the bamboo broom
At night,
Sweeping the dust...*” [6, p. 80]

In this stanza, the repetition of the phrase *the sound of the bamboo broom* not only emphasizes the familiar sound that rings out in the quiet summer night but also contributes to creating vivid and emotional imagery. The sound of the broom is not merely the sound of sweeping dust; through the author's listening, it becomes a symbol of the diligent, quiet labor of workers. Amidst the setting where the cicadas have fallen silent, and the tamarind trees rustle, the sound of the bamboo broom stands out as the soul of the nighttime street, evoking a sense of calm, stillness, and profound tranquility.

- Expressing the Emotions and Mood of the Author or Lyric Characters in the Text

The use of word and phrase repetition in the literary texts of the Grade 5 Vietnamese language textbook also serves the purpose of expressing the emotions and moods of the author or the lyric characters in the text.

Example:

(12) "*My city is so beautiful! So beautiful!*" [3, p. 106]

In the conclusion of the text "*Morning in Ho Chi Minh City*," the author Nguyen Manh Tuan uses the phrase *So beautiful! So beautiful!* to express his intense, overwhelming feelings about the city's radiant and lively beauty in the morning. The repetition of this phrase effectively conveys the author's deep love, pride, and strong connection to the city.

Example:

(13) "*Sleep well, A-kay, sleep well, A-kay dear,
Mother loves A-kay, Mother loves the soldiers,
You dream of giving me white rice grains,
Later, when you grow up, you will wield a pestle to pound rice...*"
[2, p. 13]

In the poem "*The Lullaby for Children Growing on Their Mother's Back*," the repetition of the phrases *Sleep well, A-kay* and *Mother loves* shows the mother's deep affection and care for her child. The repetition of *Sleep well* is not only a soothing word, but also expresses the mother's wish for her child to have a peaceful and restful sleep. The phrase *Mother loves* is repeated in the line *Mother loves A-kay, Mother loves the soldiers* which not only affirms the mother's love for her child but also reflects her feelings for the soldiers who protect the country.

3. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, through the survey and analysis of the rhetorical devices of word and phrase repetition in the Grade 5 Vietnamese language textbook, it is clear that these devices are used relatively frequently in literary texts, especially in poetry. A thorough understanding of word and phrase repetition in texts will assist both teachers and students in the teaching and learning process of the Vietnamese language in general, and in reading comprehension at the 5th grade level in particular.

REFERENCES

1. Bui Manh Hung (Chief Editor), Tran Thi Hien Luong (Editor) (2024). *Vietnamese Language 5 (Volume 1)*, Vietnam Education Publishing House.
2. Bui Manh Hung (Chief Editor), Tran Thi Hien Luong (Editor) (2024). *Vietnamese Language 5 (Volume 2)*, Vietnam Education Publishing House.
3. Nguyen Thi Ly Kha, Trinh Cam Ly (Co-Editors) (2024). *Vietnamese Language 5, Volume 1*, Vietnam Education Publishing House.
4. Nguyen Thi Ly Kha, Trinh Cam Ly (Co-Editors) (2024). *Vietnamese Language 5, Volume 2*, Vietnam Education Publishing House.
5. Dinh Trong Lac (1994). *99 Means and Rhetorical Devices in Vietnamese*, Education Publishing House, Hanoi.
6. Nguyen Minh Thuyet (Chief Editor and Editor) (2024). *Vietnamese Language 5, Volume 1*, Ho Chi Minh City University of Education Publishing House.
7. Nguyen Minh Thuyet (Chief Editor and Editor) (2024). *Vietnamese Language 5, Volume 2*, Ho Chi Minh City University of Education Publishing House.