

# COMPARATIVE RHETORIC IN SOME EPICS OF THE EDE PEOPLE IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS OF VIETNAM

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**Abstract** - The Ede epic is a part of the epic of the Central Highlands, Vietnam, created by the Ede people in the early period of history. This is a genre filled with fictional, beautiful colors; its language has rhymes, and rhythms, describing heroic feats in labor and combat; monumental and majestic images of major events taking place in the life of the community. The epic of Ede comprehensively reflects the economic, and social life and customs of Ede people. It, simultaneously, expresses a desire of the nation for a happy and prosperous life; praises love, nobility, and human courage before the trials of nature and in the struggle against evil. On the basis of the theory of comparative and rhetorical comparison; the structure of rhetorical comparison, the article studies the art of rhetorical comparison in some epics: Dam San, Xing Nha, Khing Ju of the Ede people in the Central Highlands of Vietnam; Clarifying the elements of rhetorical comparison, such as: The element to be compared; Comparative aspect factor; Comparative relation elements - comparative words; Comparative factor. Thereby clarifying the value of the art of rhetorical comparison in the Ede epic for the content of the work and showing the cultural features of the Ede people in ancient times.

**Keywords:** compare rhetoric, epics, Ede, Dam San, Xing Nha, Khing Ju, Central Highlands, Vietnam.

## Table of Contents

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1. RESEARCH METHODS

#### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### CONCLUSION

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

## INTRODUCTION

Epic (epic singer, long anthem) is a term of international origin: *epic* (English), *Épopée* (French). The epic refers to a type of folk tale in the form of telling stories, stringing, summarizing myths, legends into systems in an artistic, lively and attractive way, creating a monumental picture of the community ethnicity history. “Epic is a large work of narrative writing, depicting the careers of heroes and major historical events” (Phe, 1997, p.845).

The epic of the Central Highlands in Vietnam, composed of 801 works (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2013), are epic heroes with a capacity comparable to the major epics of the world, such as *Iliad*, *O-đi-xê*, and *Ramayna*, etc. This is a product of oral literature produced by the community of ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. It reflects honestly and vividly the life of community activities, the struggles for the noble human ideas whose central event is the image of mythical heroes.

The Ede epic consists of 13 works (Hoat, 2019, p.18), created by the Ede people in the Central Highlands of Vietnam from ancient times, with common characteristics of the epic and epic genre of the Central Highlands, reflecting the cultural and historical features of Ede community. The language of the epic Ede is rhyming words (*klei duê*) that rich in images and music, combined with opposite sounds and rhythms of syllables to express the content, that is rememberable and understandable. Folk authors often use a combination of rhetorical, comparative, simile, metaphorical, metamorphic, exaggerated

measures, etc. through images of plants, birds and animals to express human actions and moods. Therefore, although the epic works have hundreds or thousands of sentences, many artisans still memorize and inspire listeners.

The paper surveys the art of rhetorical comparison with some typical Ede epic works in the Central Highlands of Vietnam, such as: Dam San, Xing Nha, Khing Ju,...; analyzes aspects of comparative structure, comparative factors, and clarifies the value of the art of rhetorical comparison in Ede epic and Ede cultural features in epic society.

## 1. RESEARCH METHODS

Accessing documents on rhetorical comparison and comparison, rhetorical comparison structure, some epics of the Ede people, such as Dam San, Xing Nha, Khing Ju to generalize theoretical and practical issues serve as a basis for research.

Survey some epics of the Ede people, such as: Dam San, Xing Nha, Khing Ju combine field surveys in some villages of the Ede to make statistics, collect, synthesize, classify, and translate epic sentences and sentences in communication using rhetorical comparisons to explain the elements of rhetorical comparison, such as: The element is compared; Comparative aspect factor; Comparative relation elements - comparative words; Comparative elements in some epics of the Ede.

Analyzing, synthesizing, comparing and contrasting: On the basis of surveyed data, explain the inner relationships of the art of comparing rhetoric with other art forms; External commentary on the forms of rhetorical comparisons in the epic and the forms of rhetorical comparisons in the communication of the Ede people. From there, comprehensively evaluate the value of the art of rhetorical comparison to the content of the work and express the cultural features of the Ede people.

### Research methods

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## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Regarding the content of the article, there are typical works of domestic and foreign authors. Such as:

Collecting and translating the epic Ede, with the following authors: Dao Tu Chi (1959) collected and translated Klei khan Y Dam San into Vietnamese (Chi, 1959). Y Dien et al (1963) collected, translated and introduced six epic works Xing Nha, Dam Di, Khing Ju, Dam Dron, Y Porao, Y Ban (Dien, Yung, Bleu, & Anh, 1963). E.M. Meletinsky (1963), From archaic epics to classical epics (Meletinsky, 1963). Nguyen Huu Tham (collected, translated, edited) (2003), Ede epics - Khan Dam San and Khan Dam Kteh Mlan, volume 1 (Ede language) (Thau, 2003)...

Studying the Ede epic, with the following authors: Phan Dang Nhat (1991), Ede epic (Nhon, 1997). Vo Quang Nhon (1997), Heroic Epic of the Central Highlands (Nhat, 1991), Truong Thong Tuan (2005), Epic language of the Central Highlands rich in tunes (Tuan, 2005). Vietnam Institute of Social Sciences (2021) Project on Investigating, collecting, preserving, translating and publishing epic treasures of the Central Highlands. Nguyen Minh Hoat (2020), Exploiting the linguistic and cultural values of the Ede epic to apply to education and training in the Central Highlands (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2013)...

Research works in the country focus on the following fields: Collection, translation, research on the epics of the Central Highlands and the epics of the Ede... The research contents have contributed to

clarifying the value of the content and the art of the Ede epic serves as a theoretical basis for the research content.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Discussion of rhetorical comparison

*The concept of comparison and rhetorical comparison.* Comparison is an operation of thinking. The terms “comparative” in Vietnamese is used only a measure that is widely used in many areas of life. Regarding comparative art measures, the authors offer the following typical views:

The Vietnamese dictionary explains the method of comparison as follows: “*comparison is looking at this and looking at the other to see the similarity, difference or inferiority*” (Phe, 1997, p.861). The essence of the method of comparison is the association and relationship between the one used for comparison (this) and the given for comparison (the other).

From a learning style perspective, comparison is a common practice in all languages. Therefore, this is also one of the issues that linguists are interested in studying: A-Ju-Xtêpannov with French learning style (1965), Vinôgradov with Russian learning style (1969), Morren with French language learning style (1970),... These works were introduced in Vietnam to help clarify the theory and application of the comparative method as well as affirm its value in visual creation art statue.

The rhetorical comparison is soon mentioned by Vietnamese linguists. Beginning in the 1960s, when Vietnamese research works appeared, comparisons were also mentioned in lectures on learning styles. These include the research works that mention comparisons such as: (Chau, 1962), (Dat, 2001), (Lac & Hoa, 1993), (Lac, 1994), (Lac, 1998)... The authors have given out of perspective on comparative art. Specifically:

Authors Dinh Trong Lac and Nguyen Thai Hoa, have the concept of comparison: “*Comparison is the method of rhetorical expression when comparing one thing with another as long as there is a similarity between the two things. Somehow, to evoke specific images, aesthetic emotions in the perception of the reader and the listener*” (Lac & Hoa, 1993, p.198).

Dinh Trong Lac also said that: “*Comparing is a rhetorical device in which one compares the two different objects of objective reality which are not completely homogeneous but only have a similar feature. somehow, to describe with the image a new way of perceiving the object. It should be distinguished from logical comparisons, in which the one being compared and the comparator are objects of the same type and the purpose of the comparison is to establish the equivalence between the two objects.*” (Lac, 1994, p.154).

Discussing the concept of comparison, Cu Dinh Tu, has the view: “*Comparison is a comparison of two objects that share a certain sign to symbolically express the characteristics of one of the two objects*” (Tu, 2007, p.145).

In the above works, most authors make a distinction between *logical comparison* (logical comparison) and *rhetorical comparison*.

*Logical comparison*, only the message value, does not produce expressive value. What compare and what is compared are objects of the same type, and the purpose of the comparison is to establish the equivalence between the two objects. Example: *My face is as round as my mother's. Miss Hoa is thinner than Miss Hue.*

Rhetorical comparison is both cognitive and expressive. The use of rhetorical comparative measures might create described objects more vivid, new and attractive. “*Through rhetorical comparison, one can identify the distinctions belonging to the user*” (Tu, 1983, p.278).

From the above points of view, as can be seen that rhetorical comparison - a form of vocabulary rhetorical measure, is a method of expressing verbally in an image based on comparing two phenomena with signs similarities, in order to highlight characteristics and properties of one phenomenon through characteristics and properties of the other. There are two sides of rhetorical comparisons. The first one is the object to be represented symbolically and the second one is the object used to compare. These two sides are connected by words such as like, how much, that much, is, etc.

*The structure of rhetorical comparison.* Rhetorical comparison is commonly used in genres of folklore, poetry and prose. Depending on the different purposes and circumstances, the rhetorical comparison is used to express the association, attitude and affection of the artist towards things and events in the work.

The theory of rhetorical comparison in terms of conclusion and semantics with the views of the authors in the works (Lac & Hoa, 1993) are uniform in the full structure of the rhetorical comparison method including four factors: Comparable factor (A), Comparative aspect factor (x), Comparative relation factor - comparative word (tnss), Comparative factor (B). For example:

*Table 1.1. Examples of elements in rhetorical comparative structure.*

(A)	(x)	(tnss)	(B)
Face	fresh	like	flowers

A comprehensive comparison formula can be generalized:  $A + x + \text{tnss} + B$ .

However, when compared, depending on the object, situation, purpose, the author can create variations, such as: inverting the structure of elements or adding or removing elements in the structure.

Rhetorical comparison in the Ede epic, there is a structure and relationship of four elements like comparisons in general language, but the Ede's comparative style in the epic often has the same message structure: an A or a message A, an x or an x, may be more than a tnss and more than a B. For example:

*"Dlǎng lǎng nǚ yak êbat, msě tlang lơ wơ, si grǔ êwa, si êa đoh bơ đung chung rung."* (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, Cultural Research Institute, 2007, p.67).

(Her feet walked like a kite flying high, like a bird hovering in the sky, like a soft stream of water smoothly) (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, Cultural Research Institute, 2007, p.242).

In the example above, there was only 1 A: *"Dlǎng lǎng nǚ yak êbat"* (watching her feet walk); but there are 3 tnss: *msě / si / si* (as) repeated and topped the comparative elements to emphasize and clarify the object being compared; and there are 3 B: *"tlang lơ wơ"* (kite flying high), *grǔ êwa* (the bird glides in the sky), *"êa đoh bơ đung chung rung"* (gentle stream of water flows smoothly).

The logo images appearing in B are valuable for clarifying the beauty of A: *"Dlǎng lǎng nǚ yak êbat"* (watch her step away). Although there is no x in this example, the readers and listeners associate x to understand the content of comparison through the relationship between the elements.

*This type of comparison aims to emphasize the element being compared (A) and clarify it on many angles, with the aim at helping listeners and readers understand the nature of A more clearly.*

*In some comparative structures, although Tnss are not present, it is due to the similar meaning between A and B may recognize the comparative factors.*

### Comparison factors from TUV

#### *Elements to be compared (A)*

Factors to be compared (A) in Ede epic include: beauty of appearance, personality, psychology of strength and human activities; things and phenomena in life; Some animals and plants associated with human life, etc. were compared with comparative factor (x) to clarify the object being compared.

Factors to be compared are the beauty of shape, personality, psychology, strength and human activity

- Beauty of human parts in epic Khing Ju.

*"Asei mlei mtih kni mse cim băng yuôr. Buk nu dlông mse buk mniê. Kiê kngan nu grin bi gruôn mse lueh ksua. Bô mta nu suêc wêc mse mtu suên tlam"* (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.162).

(The body is strong and young like a bird, long hair is like the hair of girls, the finger is as beautiful as the feather of a porcupine, the face is bright like starlight) (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.930).

- Khing Ju's image is as strong as a buffalo butting together, dancing like lightning:

*"K'khuk go djam ktang mse si kbao bi mnuh"* (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.44).

(A man's strength is as strong as that of a buffalo hitting each other) Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.866).

*"Khing Ju djă đao hmăr mse si kmla."* (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.126).

(The guy when the man jumps fast like lightning.) (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.910).

- Surfing and jumping action of Dam San is compared to a serpent cloud.

*"Êbat hlam êlan mse prao hwiê, êbat hlam dliê mse prao hmăt, kdăt jing jai, kdurt jing jai..."* (Thau,

2003, p.20).

(Describe Dam San: walk on the road like a serpent, walk in the forest like a whip, both jump and leap.) [Translation: Na My, Ede lecturer, College of Education Dak Lak].

- Ho Nhi's steps are very gentle and graceful.

*"Bah êbat mnu prang, chuang êbat mlang bâo, kam mlâu đung bơ aru."* (Thau, 2003, p.18)

(Servant describes Ho Nhi: When she walked over, it sounded like a flock of flock flapping its wings, a haze of husks drifting along her steps.) (Thau, 2003, p.14).

- Psychological and emotional activities of people are also described to express the feelings and moods of the characters through comparisons between abstract objects and things in reality. For example:

*"Hmei ciăng ruă tian htei ôh."* (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, Cultural Research Institute, 2007, p.68).

(We don't want to hurt.) [Translation: Na My, Ede lecturer, Dak Lak Pedagogy College].

*"Kâo mse mnũ buh blang, huĩ tlam anei."* (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, Cultural Research Institute, 2007, p.116).

(I'm like a newly hatched chicken, afraid this afternoon.) [Translator: Na My, Ede lecturer, Dak Lak Pedagogy College].

With the comparative factor being human, the comparison has contributed to expressing the concept of beauty to the people of the community in the epic. Since then, building the beauty of the heroic image is admired and worshiped.

Human images, activities, body parts, and psychology are at the center of a comparison to clarify the nature, actions and relationships. Thereby, they express the role and position of people in cultural and social life. For human subjects and those related to humans, comparative art has contributed to clarify the concepts of Ede beauty to humans and human activities. From this, the hero image of the community build has been built.

#### *Factors to be compared are things and phenomena in life*

In addition to human subjects, comparables are things and phenomena in life, such as: *ao iêng* (skirt), *klei mrai* (thread), *tuôr* (gyroscope), *kpiê* (wine), *ênai cing* (gong), *gõ êsei* (rice cooker), etc. are used in the Xing Nha epic. Although these elements are rarely used compared to the human element, they have contributed to highlighting the life of the character in the epic vividly and close to real life. Comparable factors are things and phenomena in life that naturally reflect the views, emotions, attitudes, etc. of folk artists towards epic characters and literary life of Ede people. For example:

*"Ktuê mbông, hrông ktuk mtih."* (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, Cultural Research Institute, 2007, p.46).

(Running along the bed against the wall.) [Translation: Na My, Ede lecturer, Dak Lak Pedagogy College].

The gong is compared with many different images. In the mind of the Ede people, gong is one of the items to show the wealth of the village. The more the gong resounded, the louder the sound, the more bustling... the more prosperous and peaceful the village's life.

Or the image of a skirt is compared to the beauty of nature:

*"Âo msẽ bruă kteh luôm juê."* (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, Cultural Research Institute, 2007, p.37).

(Austria is like a young banana leaf.) [Translation: Na My, Ede lecturer, Dak Lak Pedagogy College].

#### **Factors to be compared are some animals and plants associated with human life**

Factors that are compared in the Ede epic are herds of cows, elephants, buffaloes, magic trees (smuk, smun), etc. For example:

*"Êmô bħă ră mse si muôr hdăm."* (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.57).

(Cows as much as the termite ants.) (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.873).

*"Êman nu mnê mse grăm aru."* Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.57).



(Elephant sounds like a roar of thunder.) (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.873).

“*Dlăng kbaos si trong mtaḥ, êmô hrah si trong ksa, bha bhuôn si muôn hdăm.*” (Thau, 2003a, p. 46).

(Black buffaloes like green eggplant, red cows like ripe tomatoes, but velvet like ants and termites.) (Thau, 2003b, p. 49).

“*Phun sa thun dar, adhan sa mlan ktông, hla sa êwa cim phior.*” (Thau, 2003a, p. 53).

(The tree's roots go around for a year, the branches of a bird pass for a month, the leaves of the bird fly in one breath.) (Thau, 2003b, p. 58).

“*Hroh braih mtih mse mnga êpang.*” (Thau, 2003a, p. 14).

(Pounding white rice like an elfang.) (Thau, 2003b, p. 8).

For each subject, the author uses appropriate comparative images that have artistic value in each specific situation. Each object is compared according to a different model with shaping value vividly and attractively that brings hero characters out comparing to other characters. The comparative object of the epic is rich, diverse and often presented with tip models. For instance, boys look more handsome, more powerful and intelligent than other people. Girls are more beautiful in appearance such as legs, thighs, breast, chest, teeth, hair,... The wealth of the village or a chieftain is calculated in numbers: elephants, buffaloes, cows, chickens, ducks, people traveling, ivory, jars, su,... The object of comparison in the epic reflects the spiritual and cultural life of the Ede people. Through epic, community culture appears honestly and vividly.

### **Comparative aspect factor (x)**

Comparative aspect factor (x) is the factor representing an attribute, an activity of things which stated in the comparative element. Its role shows the characteristics of things that the comparative element represents. Those are verbs, adjectives that indicate the emotional state, emotions, activities of the characters, and characteristics of things related to the element being compared. Example: Comparative aspect factor (x) in Ede epic:

“*Dhě dhě msě djam kduh cim.*” (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, Cultural Research Institute, 2007, p.138).

(Dancing as lightly as a flying bird.) (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, Cultural Research Institute, 2007, p.341).

“*K'khuk go djam ktang mse si kbaos bi mnuh.*” (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.44).

(Power is like a buffalo butting together.) (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.866).

“*Aseh êran hmar mse angin, blung liă blung lia knam.*” (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.272).

(Horses run as fast as the winds glide in the clouds.)

The adjectives *dhě* (light), *ktang* (strong); verb *êran* (running) are comparative elements to clarify the characteristics and actions of the objects being compared.

### **Comparative relation element - comparative words (tnss)**

Comparative relation factor - comparative words (tnss) are factors used to express the correlation of comparison in a specific form. Things to be compared are equal or better than those considered as a standard. The comparative relation element is considered to be the simplest element in the comparative structure including the comparative words.

In the Khing Ju epic, the wording indicates comparative relations in the following table:

Table 2.1. The ratio of comparative words used in the Khing Ju epic.

Order	Comparative terms (tnss)	Number of turns	Ratio (%)
1	<i>Mse</i> (as)	117	56,5
2	<i>Si</i> (is)	50	24
3	<i>Mse si</i> (as is)	20	9,6
4	<i>Ciang mse</i> (seems like)	3	1,4
5	<i>Kdlun</i> (than)	10	5
6	<i>Mdor</i> (equal)	7	3,5
Total		207	100%

(Source: Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences. (2007). *Tay Nguyen epic treasure - Epic Ede - Khing Ju*. Hanoi: Social Sciences)

In the comparative structure of the epic Khing Ju, *tnss* are the most commonly used *mse\* (as), appearing at a high frequency of 117/207 (56,5%) compared to other *tnss*. There are, however, some missing *mse\* comparative structures which are replaced by other comparative terms. *tnss* denote different nuance values. For example, the word *si* (is) in a comparative structure has the same value as the word *mse\* (like), but the nuance of meaning is completely different. *Mse\* (as) has a presumptive nuance, indicating similarities in a certain aspect of perceived bias, *si* (being) a positive nuance, completing homogeneity of an objective basis.

In the comparative structure of the epic Xing Nha, *tnss* are listed in table 2.2.

Table 2.2. The percentage of comparative words used in the Xing Nha epic.

Order	Comparative words (tnss)	number of turns	Ratio (%)
1	<i>Mse</i> (as)	110	55,83
2	<i>Si</i> (as /is)	55	27,91
3	<i>Mse si</i> (as is)	14	7,1
4	<i>Kdlun</i> (than)	9	4,57
5	<i>Mđor</i> (equal)	6	3,04
6	<i>Ciang mse</i> (seems like)	3	1,52
<b>Total</b>		<b>197</b>	<b>100%</b>

(Source: Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, Cultural Research Institute. (2007). *Tay Nguyen epic - Ede-Xing Nha epic*. Hanoi: Social Sciences.

Through table 2.2, *mse* (as) had the largest rate of 110/197 (55,83%), followed by *si* (is) 55/197 (27,91%).

#### Comparative factor (B)

The comparative factor (B), considered as the nucleus of the comparison, is the most important and indispensable of the comparative structure, and also the standard of comparison. Cause we may not make a good comparison without standard factors. Folk authors have to use a variety of diverse and comparative factors, mainly using images in the objective world but close to the daily lives of people. It is images related to humans, animal images, plant images and natural images, etc. to make valuable standard objects that highlight the shape beauty and human action. The standard objects in the comparative structure are closely related to the life of the Ede people. For instance:

*The comparative element is an image that relates to a person*

- Compare parts of the person.

*“Buk nu dlông mse buk mniê.”* (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.162).

*(Long hair like girls' hair.)* (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.930).

*“Kào sang mtăp êđai kđiêng tiêng tit aduôn ah.”* (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.285).

*(Our house is the little finger only.)* (Hbia Ling Pang said modestly.) [Translation: Na My, Ede lecturer, Dak Lak Pedagogy College].

*“Kda Yang Hruê... Buh asei nu djo buê.”* (Thau, 2003a, p.63).

*(Describing the Goddess of the Sun: in front of Dam San is a girl with a body like an ear.)* (Thau, 2003b, p.70).

Human parts, such as hair, fingers, earrings, etc., are made as comparative factors both specificity and understandability as well as the value of human beauty to clarify the object being compared.

- Actions.

*“Ayong Khing Ju kđăt kjuh boh cư sa băng mlai. Kjuh boh drai sa băng nu mlung.”* (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.516).

(Khing Ju jumps over seven mountains in one step, through seven falls it takes only one breath.) (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.1104).

“*Angin êbũ ắt dlông nu mớh.*” (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, Cultural Research Institute, 2007, p.114).

(The storm is not equal to it - the meaning of the action of Xing Nha.) [Translator: Na My, Ede lecturer, Dak Lak Pedagogy College].

The dance actions of Khing Ju are compared with images: just one jump, just one breath; storms and winds are not equal to the acts of Xing Nha,... The actions of epic characters are compared with the magnificent images of nature, which have contributed to clarify the sublime power of heroic characters.

- Living details and familiar objects in life.

“*Nũ truh ngam mđăp mđian mniê pi tian si thao hğăm.*” (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, Cultural Research Institute, 2007, p.60).

(It came, hiding the pregnant woman how to escape.) [Translation: Na My, Ede lecturer, Dak Lak Pedagogy College].

“*Mnuih ti gah jơng mse trông arôk. Bi mnuih ôk jơng mse trông hlôo.*” (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.95).

(People in the pavilion are like wood, and sitting in the east is like a pestle of rice.) Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.894).

“*Ai blũ hrei đơ bung mdei.*” (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, Cultural Research Institute, 2007, p.111).

(It is as big as a basket.) [Translation: Na My, Ede lecturer, Dak Lak Pedagogy College].

Details of activities such as burning fire in the middle of the night; familiar items: a mortar, a firewood, a pestle of rice, a basket... These materials help the readers and the listeners look back, feel each beat, the breath of life, and recognize the typical cultures of Ede people in the epic.

The comparative material used in the Ede epic created a similarity of some characteristics among things and the collated phenomenon. In fact, it is possible to have the same comparison objects but use different comparative materials depending on the attitude, the choice of folk authors. Through rhetoric comparing images, folk authors express attitudes such as love, hate, sad, joy, compliment, criticism, contempt, respect,... with the object being compared. Those affects the thoughts and feelings towards the listeners. Rhetoric comparing images combined with other rhetorical forms such as exaggeration, coincidence help readers and listeners think of the magnificent, transcendent images of heroic beauty in epic.

#### *The comparative factor is animal images*

The comparative factor is the animal in the epic Ede, from small animals, such as: *lir dua ktuôp* (grasshopper), *cim băng yuôr* (bird of a feather), *hluăt yuôr* (worm),... to large animals, such as tigers, rhinos, elephants, buffalos, etc. For example:

“*Mnuih lu boh biă yơh mse lir dua ktuôp.*” (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.329)

(Crowds like locusts.) (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.1024)

“*Asei mlei mtih kni mse cim băng yuôr.*” (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.162)

(Strong, white body like a wild bird.) (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.930)

“*Khing Ju kdlăm msuăt mse hluăt yuôr.*” (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.318)

(He curves like a worm.) Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.1018)

“*Nao yơh di nu dê, mnuih bhu si ktong, bhong si klap, nap nap si muôr hđăm...*” (Thau, 2003a, p.35).

(The group left, crowded like swarms of tongs, thick as ephemera, swarming like ants, like termites.) (Thau, 2003b, p.35).

“*Tiêt he kga, pla tluôn dôt, mhiu mhao mse prao hłăm bang, mhuing mhuang mse êmeh hlam dhông, êmông hlam trấp ...*” (Thau, 2003a, p.60).

(Description of the Dam San: He took the gauze and sat down, welcoming it like a snake in a cave, like a tiger in a lagoon, like a rhino in a valley.) (Thau, 2003b, p.67)



“*Dăm Săn: Ktang đêi êmeh ih mjhan, ktang đêi êman ih mtrut...*” (Thau, 2003a, p.25).

(Dam San told Ho Ang: she kept pushing me like rhino, she kept sexing me like elephant.) (Thau, 2003b, p.22).

The folk author took images of animals closing to the Ede's life and activities to compare, clarify the nature, actions and attributes of the objects being compared. For example: People in the village are described as crowded as grasshoppers, swarms of tongs, especially as moths, ants, and termites. Animals with strong and agile characteristics such as elephants, tigers, rhinos,... are used in comparative factors to highlight the action nature of a hero.

*The comparative factor is the botanical image*

The comparative factors, the name of the plants in the epic Ede, are very rich and diverse. These are plants in Ede habitat such as, *hwiê guôl đang* (rattan thread), *hwiê guôl jôk* (rattan), *ana hra* (fig tree root), *agha kniêng* (knieng root), *kmun* (melon melon), *mkai* (watermelon), flowers, etc. For example:

“*Mlô mun nu mse hwiê guôl đang. Mlô kang mse hwiê guôl jôk.*” (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.76).

(His mustache is like a fine rattan. The chin is as beautiful as a rattan.) (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.883).

“*Jong kjăp ktang mse si ana hra. Klang pha nu mse agha kniêng.*” (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.131).

(Look at his strong legs like a fig tree's root, his thigh bone like a knieng root.) (Khing Ju) (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.912).

“*Anei prong nao si kmun, prong nao si mkai.*” (Thau, 2003a, p.68).

(It grows with a melon, then with a watermelon.) (Thau, 2003b, p.76).

“*Hroh braih mtih mse mnga êpang.*” (Thau, 2003a, p.14).

(Pounding white rice like an elfang.) (Thau, 2003b, p.8).

“*Čơ đăt mnga đing nuh đang tuh knuh mrô.*” (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, Cultural Research Institute, 2007, p.42).

(Look at them like blooming flowers.) Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, Cultural Research Institute, 2007, p. 200).

Folk authors have taken the characteristics of the plants, the specialties of the Central Highlands mountains and forests compared with the personality and human activities. This form of comparison is both close, idyllic, honest, rustic, specific, vivid, memorable, and understandable containing hidden experiences, life philosophies. Considering nature as an object in order to compare with human life, consistent with agricultural thinking and valuable clarifying factors that need to be compared.

*The comparative factor is the natural image*

The comparative factor is the natural image in the epic Ede, such as: *kmla* (lightning), *grăm arông* (roar of thunder), *grăm aru* (thunderstroke), *mtu suên tlam* (star light), *mtu suên tlam* (moon and stars in the sky), *êwa angin êbu* (breath of the storm),... For example:

“*Khing Ju krên sbên djă đao uk ruk mse grăm arông. Tong arông mse grăm aru.*” (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.317).

(Khing Ju's angry dancing shield, gurgling like thunder roar. The more you dance the more the shield sounds like the sound of lightning.) (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.1017).

“*Dăm Săn: Ơ hêh ơ hêh, ngac bi hgu bi hge mse kmla mlam.*” (Thau, 2003a, p.54).

(Dam San told his servant when cutting the magic tree: come and swing your hammer, the ax like lightning in the dark.) (Thau, 2003b, p.60).

“*Bô mta nu suêc wêc mse mtu suên tlam.*” (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.162).

(The face is bright as the starlight.) (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.930).

“*Bô mta msuêc mse si mtu suên tlam.*” (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.131).

(The face is shining like a moon and stars in the sky.) (Khing Ju) (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences,

2007, p.912).

*“Êwa ayong Khing Ju ksuh mse êwa angin êbu. Pu purk sang ciăng bi yur bi kyong.”* (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.344).

(Khing Ju's breath is like a storm, blowing the house away, the hut is shattered.) (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 2007, p.1031).

*“Jik lao kên krô.”* Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, Cultural Research Institute, 2007, p.80).

(She is as brilliant as a rainbow.) [Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, Cultural Research Institute, 2007, p.262).

*“Mão hêh êdam mão cư ngang.”* Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, Cultural Research Institute, 2007, p.79).

(Having a son is like having a high mountain to lean on.)). Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, Cultural Research Institute, 2007, p.260).

The above comparison factors show the Ede's relationship with the natural environment that attached to plants and animals in the majestic mountains and forests, deeply understand the characteristics and situations related to animals and plants. Those have been applied for knowledge and experience to life to clarify the characteristics of human behavior and create vivid, rich epic images. Besides, these also have contributed to making the epic poem not only easy to remember but mark the human heart as naturally as their own life, and reflect the traditional Ede cultures as well.

### **The values of the art of rhetorical comparison in the Ede epic**

#### *For content works*

Rhetorical comparison creates concrete, vivid images and art forms used by folk authors in the Ede epic with high frequency to express the emotions, thoughts and assessments of the community before the objects expressed in the work. Since then, through the discourse helps the audience to better understand the nature, characteristics of things, phenomena, specific awareness, vividness, depth and expressive about the objects. Elements of the rhetorical comparison structure concretize the table of visual, vivid images to help listeners remember, memorize and understand deeper the objects being compared.

On the other hand, rhetorical comparison suggest generalized, abstract images. From specific images of the objects being compared, rhetorical comparison have turned into abstract generalizations. This art form has helped readers to synthesize the objects and phenomena in life into easy-to-grasp status rules and activities. Thereby, creating a multi-dimensional association and expressing the depth of the state of the object from concreting to elusive, vague, aim at receiving the objective laws of life. Rhetorical comparison is also valuable for making short epic sentences, rudimentary functions that evoke a rich imagination and multi-dimensional association from the reality of life in the epic towards the high values of flying, romantic and super surreal, bringing the color of myth, belief, and spirituality.

#### *Expressing the characteristics of community culture*

The comparative factors in the Ede epic are used to show the relationship of Ede people to the living environment. Simultaneously, the comparative factors in rich symbolic expression are simple, realistic, rememberable and understandable. Pictures of some familiar natural phenomena such as wind, storm, lightning, rainbow,... both gentle and strength expressing the mettle of the hero. The objects of comparison are images of the natural world combined with exaggerated art, which contribute to the beauty of the epic characters. This form of art has shown the desire of man to stand on a par with the natural world and to master the nature of Ede people, in accordance with the characteristics of the genre.

Comparative factors are used through names, images, characteristics, situations and circumstances in appearance of animals, plants, natural phenomena and human life, expressing their own characteristics with typical cultural mark of Ede people. The objects and phenomena are considered as close and intimate comparison factors with the life of the Ede community in order to clarify the nature of the objects to be compared in a real, specific and intuitive way.

### **CONCLUSION**

The epic of Ede, one of the genres of folklore, are oral artworks and the result of collective creative processes that engage and serve directly various activities in community life. In addition to the literary

and linguistic value, this is a highly integrated literary genre, which contains valuable documents about the history, ideology, culture and customs of indigenous peoples. The language of the epic is rich in imagery, vividness, subtlety, conciseness, accuracy, profundity, relevancy and generalizations through the art of rhetoric comparison.

Rhetorical comparison is commonly used in genres of folklore, poetry and prose. Depending on the different purposes and circumstances, the rhetorical comparison is used to express the association, attitude and affection of the artist towards things and events in the work. Rhetorical comparison in the Ede epic includes structure and relationship of four elements as compared with language in general. It is the manipulation between the comparison of this object to other things in order to clarify the similarities and differences between them with the aims at evoking specific images and aesthetic emotions in the perception of the readers, the listeners, and the audience.

Comparative factors in Ede epic associated with the living environment, human conception, awareness of things, phenomena and culture customs of the community in which contribute to create spectacular, memorable, reciting sound, and a strong impression to the listeners. Moreover, this art form has a part in expressing emotions and connecting words seamlessly. It also riches in artistic values, and clearly shows the characteristics of genre and cultural features of Ede identity expressed in epics.

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