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**THE USE OF CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR  
IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE  
IDIOMS WITH HUMAN ORGANS**

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

In this paper, I am going to inspect how cultures affect the coinage of idioms in Vietnamese and English, examining how and why the metaphorical sources in idioms with the parallel implications would be different or alike. Why idioms with human organs would be selected as materials for this investigation rather than others is mainly due to the prevalence of the human organs around us. In the present study, English idioms with the Vietnamese correspondents are included.

#### **1.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

##### **1.2.1. Aims of The Study**

- Studying the possibility of reasoning of idioms and the combination of fixed phrases from the units constituting them.
- Studying the role of conceptual metaphor in creating the meaning of idioms.
- Finding out the similarities and differences in using idiomatic metaphors in English and Vietnamese with human organs.
- Making implications to teaching and learning idioms and reading comprehension effectively.

##### **1.2.2. Objectives of The Study**

- To collect and categorize English and Vietnamese idioms with human organs.

- To focus on using the conceptual metaphors in idioms with human organs.

- To make a comparative and contrastive analysis of conceptual metaphors in terms of syntactic and semantic functions.

- To offer some suggestions to learning and teaching English idioms.

#### **1.3. SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

In this research, the researcher only intends to cover conceptual metaphors as a device used in idioms in both English and Vietnamese. And this study will only take into account the semantic features of conceptual metaphors in idioms with human organs, not in other forms of the language phenomena.

#### **1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. Can we reason the meaning of idioms from the units constituting them, specially the idioms with human organs? What is the role of conceptual metaphor in creating the meaning of English and Vietnamese idioms with human organs?
2. What are the differences and similarities between English and Vietnamese idioms with human organs?
3. Where are the origins of the differences and similarities from?
4. How should the result of the study be applied to teaching and learning idioms?

## 1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

### 1.5.1. In Terms of Theory

+ Theory of conceptual metaphor is not only to study idioms but also help study other fields such as psychology, psycholinguistics, culture and so on.

+ The analysis of the role of conceptual metaphor in establishing hidden meaning contributes significantly to determine the hidden meaning of idioms.

+ It is an important contribution for the specific methods of teaching English idioms.

### 1.5.2. In Terms of Practice

+ To help learners of English in Vietnam understand the differences of English and Vietnamese cultures.

+ To provide an extensive area of idioms with human organs in teaching idioms and help learners improve their understanding of the field, get better results in subjects such as reading comprehension, translation and the analysis of literary works and last but not least the result of this investigation will be the basis for further research on other kinds of idiomatic metaphor.

## 1.6. ORGANIZATION OF STUDY

Chapter 1 – “The Introduction”

Chapter 2 – “Literature Review and Theoretical Background”

Chapter 3 – “Method and Procedure”

Chapter 4 – “Findings and Discussions”

Chapter 5 – “The Conclusion”

## 1.7. DEFINITION OF TERMS

### 1.7.1. Metaphor

### 1.7.2. Conceptual Metaphor

#### 1.7.2.1. Concept

#### 1.7.2.2. Conceptual Metaphor

### 1.7.3. Idioms

### 1.7.4. Metaphors in Idioms

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

#### 2.1. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Wikipedia, metaphor: "The *[first subject]* is a *[second subject]*."

Lakoff's, in "The contemporary theory of metaphor" (1992) [31], metaphor is to be understood as any mapping between normally separate conceptual domains.

According to Galperin (1971) [13], a metaphor is a relationship between the dictionary and contextual logical meanings based on the affinity or similarity of certain properties of two corresponding concepts.

Nguyen Duc Ton (2007), [70: Metaphor is a way of replacing names or substituting qualities, attributes of the first subject to a second object based on comparing the common qualities, attributes between them.

Dinh Trong Lac (1996), [64] shows that there are some similarities between object A and B. Object B is used to refer to object A. It is called metaphor.

## **2.2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.2.1. The Features of Languages**

As a linguistic phenomenon, metaphor has two major guises: (1) it can be a lexical mechanism, i.e. a feature which belongs to the lexis or vocabulary of a language; (2) or it can be a grammatical phenomenon, i.e. a special resource of the grammar of a language.

According to Lakoff (1987), [29], *The metaphor is not just a matter of language, but thought and reason.*

### **2.2.2. Definitions and Classification**

#### **2.2.2.1. Notion of Metaphor**

Metaphor, according to Halliday, is a verbal transference; a variation in the expression of meanings which involves a non-literal use of a word. In particular, metaphor is an irregularity of content that consists on the use of a word in a sense different from its proper one and related to it in terms of similarity.

#### **2.2.2.2. Conceptual Metaphors**

A conceptual metaphor is “a metaphor that exists in the mind of a speaker, and may thus be unconscious” (Johansen, 2007, p. 11). In order to generate a conceptual metaphor, the knowledge from one domain must be mapped onto another. To be more specific, the domain where the concept is mapped from is the source domain and the domain where the concept is mapped onto is the target domain

(Johansen, 2007). A brief and convenient way to represent this mapping is the following: TARGET DOMAIN IS SOURCE DOMAIN, which is called a conceptual metaphor.

#### **2.2.2.3. Metaphor Classification.**

According to Galperin (1971), [13], there are two main types of metaphor.

- *Genuine metaphors*: are absolutely unexpected (i.e. are quite unpredictable).

- *Trite metaphors ( dead metaphors)*: are commonly used in speech and therefore are sometimes even fixed in dictionaries as expressive means of language.

#### **2.2.3. Lexical Metaphor and Grammatical Metaphor**

The concept of grammatical metaphor, which is perhaps a metaphorical extension of the term from its rhetorical sense as a figure of speech, enables us to bring together a number of features of discourse which at first sight look rather similar than different from each other.

#### **2.2.4. Congruent And Metaphorical Variants**

First, strictly speaking we should not talk as if a particular way of expressing a meaning were either metaphorical or congruent in absolute terms.

Second, we have mentioned metaphorical and congruent ways of expressing the “same” meaning.

The third point is that more metaphorical wordings are inherently neither better nor worse than more congruent wordings.

### 2.3. METAPHORS IN IDIOMS

Psycholinguistic research has shown that people's tacit knowledge of conceptual metaphors, such as ANGER IS HEATED FLUID IN A CONTAINER, partly motivates how they make sense of idiomatic phrases like *blow your stack* and *flip your lid*. But do people quickly access conceptual metaphors each time an idiom is encountered in discourse? The present studies used a priming method to examine the role of conceptual metaphors in immediate idiom comprehension. Experiments showed that people access conceptual metaphors when understanding idioms, but significantly less so when processing literal paraphrases of idioms and demonstrated that people access the appropriate conceptual metaphors, such as ANGER IS HEAT, when processing some idioms, such as *blow your stack*, but not when they read idioms, such as *jump down your throat*, which have similar figurative meanings that are motivated by different conceptual metaphors (e.g., ANGER IS ANIMAL BEHAVIOR).

## CHAPTER 3

### THE DESIGN-METHODS AND PROCEDURES

#### 3.1. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

##### 3.1.1. Aims

This study focuses on the possibility of reasoning of idioms and the combination of fixed phrases from the units constituting them and studies the role of conceptual metaphor in creating the meaning

of idioms. Finally, finds out the similarities and differences in using idiomatic metaphors in English and Vietnamese with human organs.

##### 3.1.2. Objectives

- To collect and categorize English and Vietnamese idioms with human organs.
- To analyze conceptual metaphors in English and Vietnamese idioms with human organs. Conceptual metaphors relate to container, power, personality and other metaphors which will be carried out.
- To offer some suggestions to learning and teaching English idioms.

#### 3.2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- + Method of statistics
- + Method of analysis and synthesis
- + Method of comparison and contrast
- + Typological-systematic method
- + Method of hypothesis

#### 3.3. DATA COLLECTION

+ In English: *Oxford Dictionary of English Idioms* by Cowie, A.P. [05]; *Essential English Idioms* by Spears, R.A. & Kirkpatrick, B. [49]; *Similes & Metaphor* by Nandy, Milton [41]; *Mastering English Idioms* by Phạm Vũ Lửa Hạ [44]; *Pocket English Idioms* by Seidl, Jennifer & McMordie, W. [47]; *English Idioms* by Seidl, Jennifer & McMordie, W. [48]; *Essential English Idioms* by Dixon, R.J. [08]; *Oxford Idioms Dictionary for Learners of English* by Cowie, A.P. [06]; *Longman American Idioms* by Urbom [50]; A

*Dictionary of American Idioms* by Makkai, Boatner and Gates [37]; and *Idioms for Everyday Use* by Broukal, Milida [02].

+ In Vietnamese: *Thành Ngữ Tiếng Việt* by Nguyễn Lực, Lương Văn Đang [66]; *Từ điển giải thích thành ngữ tiếng Việt* by Nguyễn Như Ý [71]; *Từ Điển Thành Ngữ và Tục Ngữ Việt Nam* by Nguyễn Lân [65]; *Từ Điển Thành Ngữ và Tục Ngữ Việt Nam* by Vũ Dung, Vũ Thúy Anh & Vũ Quang Hào [58].

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE IDIOMS WITH HUMAN ORGANS

#### 4.1. BODY PARTS AS CONTAINERS

##### 4.1.1. The Factor: HEAD

*Table 4.1: Brief description of the semantic features of the factor head*

Noun	English Meanings	Vietnamese Equivalent
<b>HEAD</b>	- [C] the part of the body on top of the neck containing the eyes, nose, mouth and brain...	- Cái đầu
	- [C] the mind or brain	- Khả năng lập luận, trí thông minh
	- [sing.] the size of a person's or animal's head, used as a measurement of distance or height	- Khả năng trí óc hoặc tài bẩm sinh coi như đặc biệt

- [C, U] the person in charge of a group of people or an organization	- Người đứng đầu một nhóm, một cơ quan hay tổ chức
- [U] the side of a coin that has a picture of the head of a person on it	- Mặt của đồng tiền có hình người
- [sing.] the top or highest part of sth	- Phía trên hoặc phần cao nhất
- [sing.] the place where a river begins	- Khởi nguồn

*Table 4.2: Brief description of the differences between metaphors in English and Vietnamese idioms with the factor head*

	English	Vietnamese
Conceptual Metaphor	- Head is a container. - Head is idea and thought.	- Head-a container is not found. - Head-a container is only found in phrases such as: TRONG ĐẦU, TRONG ÓC, TRONG TÂM TRÍ, NHỒI SỌ...
Idioms	- With preposition: IN, OF, INTO, OUT OF...	- No prepositions because Vietnamese idioms are mainly set up by bidual structures.

*Table 4.3: Frequency of the factor HEAD in English and Vietnamese idioms*

Factor	English		Vietnamese	
	Raw numbers	Percentage	Raw numbers	Percentage
<b>HEAD</b>	63	52.06%	58	47.93%

**4.1.2. The Factor: EYES**

*Table 4.4: Brief description of the semantic features of the factor eyes*

Noun	English Meanings	Vietnamese Equivalents
<b>EYES</b>	- [C] either of the two organs on the face that you see with	- Cặp mắt
	- [sing.] the ability to see	
	- [C] the hole in the end of a needle that you put the thread through	- Khả năng quan sát - Lỗ kim
	- [C, usually sing.] a particular way of seeing sth	- mắt nhà nghề
	- The place of emotion	- Tình yêu thương

*Table 4.5: Brief description of the differences between metaphors in English and Vietnamese idioms with the factor eyes*

	English	Vietnamese
Conceptual Metaphor	- Eye is also a container. - Eyes contain emotion and feelings. - Eyes connect closely to psychological state.	- Eye-a container is found fewer.

Idioms	- With preposition: IN, OF, INTO, OUT OF...	- Fewer prepositions because Vietnamese idioms are mainly set up by bidual structures.
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*Table 4.6: Frequency of the factor EYE in English and Vietnamese idioms*

Factor	English		Vietnamese	
	Raw numbers	Percentage	Raw numbers	Percentage
<b>EYE</b>	71	42.51%	96	57.48%

**4.1.3. The Factor: HEART**

*Table 4.7: Brief description of the semantic features of the factor heart*

Noun	English Meanings	Vietnamese Equivalents
<b>HEART</b>	- [C] the organ in the chest that sends blood around the body, usually on the left in humans	- Trái tim
	- [C] the place in a person where the feelings and emotions are thought to be, especially those connected with love	- Tâm tâm
	- (in adjectives) having the type of character or personality mentioned	- Có tâm lòng
	- [sing.] the most important part of sth	- Phần trung tâm, quan trọng nhất

**Table 4.8: Brief description of the differences between metaphors in English and Vietnamese idioms with the factor heart**

	English	Vietnamese
Conceptual Metaphor	-Heart is also a container. -Heart contains emotion. -Heart suffuses love. -Heart is also arid or admirable.	-Heart-a container is not found. -Heart-a container is only found in phrases such as: TRONG TIM, TRONG LÒNG, TRONG RUỘT...
Idioms	- With prepositions such as: OVER, WITH, OF, TO, IN....	- No prepositions because Vietnamese idioms are mainly set up by bidual structures.

**Table 4.9: Frequency of the factor HEART in English and Vietnamese idioms**

Factor	English		Vietnamese	
	Raw numbers	Percentage	Raw numbers	Percentage
<b>HEART</b>	43	100%	00	00.00%

**4.2. BODY PARTS WITH POWER AND RESPECT**

**4.2.1. Holding Something in Hand is In Control**

**Table 4.10: Brief description of the semantic features of the factor hands**

Noun	English Meanings	Vietnamese Equivalents
<b>HANDS</b>	- [C] the part of the body at the end of the arm, including the fingers and thumb - [sing.] (informal) help in doing sth - [C] (usually in compounds) a part of a clock or watch that points to the numbers - [C] a person who does physical work on a farm or in a factory - [C] a sailor on a ship - [C] a set of playing cards given to one player in a game - [sing.] hand in sth the part or role that sb/sth plays in a particular situation; - (in adjectives) using the hand or number of hands mentioned - [sing.] (old use) a particular style of writing	- Bàn tay  - Sự giúp đỡ  - Kim đồng hồ  - Công nhân, tá điền  - Thủy thủ  - Ván bài  - Sự ảnh hưởng, sự tác động  - Khéo léo  - Chữ viết



**Table 4.11: Brief description of the differences between metaphors in English and Vietnamese idioms with the factor hands**

	English	Vietnamese
Conceptual Metaphor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Hand symbolizes power.</li> <li>-Hand symbolizes controller.</li> <li>-Clean hand symbolizes honest.</li> <li>-Dirty hand symbolizes diligence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hand symbolizes power. (Fewer)</li> <li>- Hand symbolizes controller. (Fewer)</li> <li>- No equivalence.</li> <li>- Equivalence.</li> </ul>
Idioms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- With prepositions such as: OVER, WITH, OF, TO, IN, INTO, OUT OF...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No prepositions because Vietnamese idioms are mainly set up by bidual structures.</li> <li>- In phrases such as: RA TAY, THẰNG TAY, MÁT TAY, NGỨA TAY, MÓ TAY, XUỐNG TAY...</li> </ul>

**Table 4.12: Frequency of the factor HAND in English and Vietnamese idioms**

Factor	English		Vietnamese	
	Raw numbers	Percentage	Raw numbers	Percentage
<b>HAND</b>	85	100%	85	100%

**4.2.2. Face of a Man of Honor**

**Table 4.13: Brief description of the semantic features of the factor face**

Noun	English Meanings	Vietnamese Equivalents
<b>FACE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the front part of the head between the forehead and the chin</li> <li>- an expression that is shown on sb's face</li> <li>- a side or surface of sth</li> <li>- (in compounds) used to refer to a person of the type mentioned</li> <li>- (in adjectives) having the type of face or expression mentioned</li> <li>- the particular character of sth</li> <li>- a particular aspect of sth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mặt</li> <li>- Sự biểu lộ tình cảm</li> <li>- Bề mặt, cạnh</li> <li>- Người</li> <li>- Sắc thái</li> <li>- Đặc tính</li> <li>- Khía cạnh</li> </ul>

**Table 4.14: Brief description of the differences between metaphors in English and Vietnamese idioms with the factor face**

	English	Vietnamese
Conceptual Metaphor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Face is men's honor.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Face is men's honor.</li> </ul>
Idioms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fewer (Only 47 idioms)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More (115 idioms)</li> <li>- In phrases such as: RỬA MẶT, MẶT DÀY, MẶT MO, MẶT THÓT, MẶT THỊT, MẶT NẠC, BỀ MẶT...</li> </ul>

*Table 4.15: Frequency of the factor FACE in English and Vietnamese idioms*

Factor	English		Vietnamese	
	Raw numbers	Percentage	Raw numbers	Percentage
FACE	47	29.19%	114	70.80%

#### 4.2.3. Lifted Nose Expressing Pride

*Table 4.16: Brief description of the semantic features of the factor nose*

Noun	English Meanings	Vietnamese Equivalents
NOSE	- [C] the part of the face that sticks out above the mouth, used for breathing and smelling things	- Mũi
	- [C] the front part of a plane, spacecraft, etc	- Phần trước máy bay
	- a special ability for finding or recognizing sth	- Năng lực phát hiện
	- [sing.] a sense of smell	- Khứu giác
	- [v + adv. / prep.] (of an animal) to search for sth or push sth with its nose	- Sục sạo
	- [+adv. / prep.] to move forward slowly and carefully	- Đi chậm về phía trước

*Table 4.17: Brief description of the differences between metaphors in English and Vietnamese idioms with the factor nose*

	English	Vietnamese
Conceptual Metaphor	-Lifted nose expressing pride	- Face is men's honor.
Idioms	-More (29 idioms)	- Fewer (Only 7 idioms) - In phrases such as: PHÔNG MŨI, NỖ MŨI, HÌNH MŨI, VÊNH MŨI...

*Table 4.18: Frequency of the factor NOSE in English and Vietnamese idioms*

Factor	English		Vietnamese	
	Raw numbers	Percentage	Raw numbers	Percentage
NOSE	28	80%	7	20%

#### 4.3. BODY PARTS AND PERSONALITY

##### 4.3.1. Clean or Dirty Hands is a Manifestation of Personality

##### 4.3.2. Personality is Material

##### 4.3.3. Personality Is Eye-Shaped.

#### 4.4. OTHER CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS

##### 4.4.1. Conceptual Metaphors of Head

##### 4.4.2. Eyesight Is Also Touch

##### 4.4.3. Eyesight Is The source Of Awareness

##### 4.4.5. Shaking Hands Presenting Cooperation

*Table 4.19: A summary of conceptual metaphors for idioms with the factors head, eyes, heart, hand, nose in idioms.*

FACTORS	CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS
<b>HEAD</b>	- Head is a container - Head is idea and thought
<b>EYES</b>	- Eye is also a container. - Eyes contain emotion and feelings. - Eyes connect closely to psychological state. - Character is shape of eyes.
<b>HEART</b>	- Heart is also a container. - Heart contains emotion. - Heart suffuses love. - Character is shape of heart. - Heart is also arid or admirable.
<b>HANDS</b>	- Hand symbolizes power. - Hand symbolizes controller. - Clean hand symbolizes honest. - Dirty hand symbolizes diligence.
<b>FACE</b>	- Face is men's honor. - Face is a front part of something. - Face is brave and courageous.
<b>NOSE</b>	- Lifted nose expressing pride.

*Table 4.20: A summary of conceptual metaphors for English and Vietnamese idioms with human organs.*

FACTORS	CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS			
	English		Vietnamese	
	<i>Raw numbers</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Raw numbers</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Arms	12	100%	0	00%
Back	40	80.0%	10	20.0%
Bone	19	65.52%	10	34.48%
Brains	18	100%	0	00%
Ears	28	50.0%	28	50.0%
Eyes	71	42.52%	96	57.48%
Face	47	29.19%	114	70.81%
Feet	40	43.48%	52	56.52%
Fingers	21	100%	0	00%
Hair	14	38.89%	22	61.11%
Hands	85	50.0%	85	50.0%
Head	63	52.07%	58	47.93%
Heart	43	100%	0	00%
Knees	8	100%	0	00%
Legs	18	65.72%	52	74.28%
Lips	8	42.11%	11	57.89%
Mouth	27	25.24%	80	74.76%
Neck	17	53.13%	15	46.87%
Nose	28	80.0%	7	20.0%

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION–IMPLICATIONS–RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1. RECAPITULATION

From what has been analyzed and presented in the foregoing chapters about describing, analyzing and focusing on conceptual metaphors in idioms with human organs in English and Vietnamese idioms, the writer draws some conclusions about the metaphors of these languages and then put forward some implications to the English teaching and learning.

#### 5.2. LIMITATIONS

Firstly, due to the limited time, the shortage of necessary materials and the rather new topic of the thesis, my thesis maybe has some faults.

Secondly, owing to metaphor usage in languages which is really wide and various, my research mainly pays attention to only describing, analyzing and focusing on conceptual metaphors in idioms with human organs in English and Vietnamese idioms.

Thirdly, metaphor in languages contains abstract concepts which need the agents and the receivers who must have the rich cultural and traditional backgrounds. Thus, metaphorical features in English are easy to make us confused. That is the reason why I do my best to prove them and to make them less confusing.

Finally, there are many different points in concept, syntactic and semantics, between English and Vietnamese idioms so in my thesis, I have compared and contrasted them in details.

### 5.3. IMPLICATION FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING THE METAPHORICAL FEATURES IN ENGLISH

#### 5.3.1. Applications of Teaching Idioms

##### 5.3.1.1. *Reality*

When viewing any teaching materials of English for students at intermediate level and above, we are easy to see that idioms and fixed phrases occupy a fair amount of vocabularies that students need to learn. This is understandable because to be able to communicate naturally and fluently in familiar situations, students should be able to use English idioms better. In English, idioms are very important, so that students must understand exact situation to use correct idiom. This is not easy with some students because they have habit of learning English vocabularies by heart in Vietnamese equivalent, then graft Vietnamese meaning in communicative situation. Another reason, teachers also avoid teaching idioms even though idioms have an important role in developing learners' language.

##### 5.3.1.2. *Solution*

In summary, if learners are explained structures of concepts behind structures of idioms, they will be able to infer the meaning and remember idioms more effectively. This is different from the views of some teachers and authors of textbooks, they think that idioms can not be reasoned. Through analyses, we know that teaching methods relying on exploiting conceptual metaphor will support students to study idioms better and help learning activities more

interesting and less boring. Essence of idioms is expression created from conceptual process about an objective world plentifully.

### **5.3.2. Conceptual Metaphor And Teaching Reading Comprehension**

For foreign language students, reading comprehension is an important skill. Reading comprehension is not only simple to supply input linguistic data to develop linguistic skills for learners, but also an act of mental development, evaluation, and remark. For this reason, researchers want to improve skill of reading, they carry out it on many fields such as: psychology, applied linguistics, pedagogics and English teaching method...etc.

## **5.4. CONCLUSIONS**

The thesis “*The Use of Conceptual Metaphor in English and Vietnamese Idioms With Human Organs*” has brought a new perspective on the meaning of idioms. In terms of theory, the thesis has summarized the basic arguments and the importance of cognitive language about the mechanism of formation of meanings fixed phrases, especially idioms.

On the practical content of the thesis, we analyzed and studied groups of metaphorical concept which play a key role in creating meaning for idioms containing elements only body parts between English and Vietnamese.

From discoveries of metaphorical concept's roles in creating the meaning of idioms, in the last chapter, we put forward a great many ideas in teaching English idioms.