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**A STUDY OF
IDIOMS DENOTING FAMILY
IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE**

**Field : THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
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**M.A. THESIS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
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**CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION**

1.1 RATIONALE

Language is the best means of communication in human life. Language is the expression of human communication through which knowledge, belief, and behavior can be experienced, explained, and shared. Nowadays, English is the most popular and effective means in communication and international integration.

Idioms are highly regarded as cultural-linguistic units because they basically reflect the sphere of human life such as mind, emotions, world perception and evaluation, age, morality, behaviour or human relation... An idiom is unusual either grammatically, as in “tie the knot” or there is a meaning that cannot be derived from the conjoined meanings of its elements, as in “They are like two peas in a pod”. Every language has idioms, and they are challenging for foreign students to learn. However, the learners will save much time and strength when using idioms in writing or speaking. Moreover, using idioms will bring about the ornate sentences they can make the pleasant for other people. Therefore, in order to understand as well as translate idioms from a language to another language, the knowledge of linguistic and cultural reality has to be completely involved.

“Family” is the interesting and familiar topic to many languages. Especially, it is popular in both Vietnamese and English languages. The idioms denoting the family are about fathers, mothers, sons and daughters, husbands and wives and their relatives; or the relationships between parents and children, wives and husbands, brothers and sisters as well as their lifestyle between people in the family, kinship...

From these reasons above, I decide to study about this topic in the hope of helping Vietnamese learners to achieve the correct comprehension and exact usage as well as to avoid negative interferences in translating idioms. In addition, the research will contribute a small field about family in the catalogues of idiom.

1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.2.1 Aims of the study

The study will focus on:

- examining linguistic features of English and Vietnamese idioms denoting family.
- involving Vietnamese learners of English in learning the idioms in all skills.

1.2.2 Objectives of the study

In order to achieve these aims, the objectives will attempt to:

- describe syntactic, semantic and cultural features of English and Vietnamese idioms denoting family.
- find out the similarities and differences of idioms denoting family in English versus Vietnamese.
- give some suggestions for learning and translating English idioms with words denoting family.

1.3 RESEARCH SCOPE

In this research, we wish to discover, analyze and contrast the syntactic and semantic features of English and Vietnamese idioms denoting family. We will investigate idioms that have contents related to the family and relationships of members in the family. We will mention idioms that do not have family words but are related to family and these idioms deal with family affairs. However, we will

not mention idioms if they contain family words without conveying contents related to family.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study will find the answers to the questions:

1. What are the syntactic features of English and Vietnamese idioms denoting family?
2. What are the semantic features of English and Vietnamese idioms denoting family?
3. What are the similarities and differences in syntactic and semantic characteristics of idioms denoting family in English versus Vietnamese?

1.5 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

With the purpose of making a study on the syntactic, semantic and cultural features of idioms denoting the family in English versus Vietnamese, the study will be able to provide Vietnamese learners of English with better mastering how to apply this kind of idioms in sensible ways, how to thoroughly understand, effectively and naturally use them in receptive and productive skills.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 REVIEW OF PREVIOUS STUDY

Idioms have attracted many language researchers all over the world. They are an important factor in native – like discourse by English as well as a foreign language speaker. There are some important books such as “Idioms Organization” by Wright [50], “The

American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms” by Ammer [27] or “Oxford Dictionary of English Idioms”[44]and so on.

In Vietnamese, there are many authors has studied about idioms such as “Thành Ngữ và Tục Ngữ Việt Nam Chọn Lọc” by Trần Quang Mân [16], “Từ Điển Thành Ngữ Anh Việt” by Lã Thành [20], “Từ Điển Thành Ngữ Tiếng Anh” by Vĩnh Bá [1], Hoàng Văn Hành [7] with “Thành ngữ học Tiếng Việt”.

Furthermore, there are many studies on Vietnamese and English idioms such as theses of Nguyen Van Long, Pham Thi To Nhu, Nguyen Thi Hiep, Nguyen Thi Phuong Thu, Nguyen Thi Thu Mai and so on. However, up to now, there have been no studies **relating idioms denoting family**. This is the reason why this study comes into being investigated in an attempt to focus on semantic and syntactic features of idioms denoting family in English and Vietnamese.

2.2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.2.1 Definition of idioms and idioms denoting family

2.2.1.1 Definition

Up to now, there are many definitions of idioms. From Simple English Wikipedia [82], an idiom is defined as “*a word or phrase which means something different from what it says*”. Broukai [28] considers that idioms are “*any polylexonic lexeme made up of more than one minimal free form of word*”. Accordingly, idioms are units realized by at least two words. In addition, “*the meaning of an idiom is not predictable from its component parts, which are empty of their usual senses*”.

There are many Vietnamese researchers have given out a number of definitions of idioms. According to Nguyễn Như Ý [24],

an idiom “*is a phrase or a fixed syntactic group has a monolithic semantics*” Nguyễn Lâm [10] defined that idioms are fixed phrase to express a concept. Hồ Lê [11] stated that “*an idiom is a word combination which has a stable structure and a figurative meaning, and it is used to describe an image, a phenomenon, a characteristic or a state*”. Nguyễn Thiện Giáp [5] was of the opinion that idioms are set expressions have both the complete in meaning and valuable description. Idioms express conceptions are usually based on specific images and symbols.

2.2.1.2 Idioms denoting family

In linguistics, there are many family idioms used in everyday life or in books and novels, in newspapers or films and so on. Idioms denoting family contain the kinship. That is, fathers, mothers, siblings, husbands and wives, old generations in the family or other blood relationships.

In Vietnamese, idioms denoting family involving in members in the family such as fathers, mothers, children and their relationships, for example “*mắt cha còn chú*”, “*cha sinh mẹ dưỡng*”, “*con có mẹ như măng ấp hẹ*”, “*con bế con bông*”, “*cha hiền con thảo*”, “*có nếp có tẻ*”... These idioms praise the role of parents in the family, and Vietnamese customs about having children. Besides, family idioms also denoting the relationships between husbands and wives such as, “*của chồng công vợ*”, “*chồng hoà vợ thuận*”, “*của chồng công vợ*”, “*vợ chồng Ngâu*”, “*chồng ma vợ quỷ*”... In English idioms, we also have idioms such as “*like father, like son*”, “*two peas in a pod*”, “*a family man*”, “*your next of kin*”...

2.2.2 Main features of idioms

2.2.2.1 Structural features

As these definitions of idioms above, an idiom is a fixed group of words. Each word is regarded as a component of an idiom. An idiom can consist of at least two components. Between components of an idiom it is impossible to insert any word from the user's intension.

Structurally, the central part of an idiom can be nouns (*your next of skin*), verbs (*tie the knot*), or adjectives (*nearest and dearest*). Each idiom has a stable structure and meaning, using idioms make the sentences smoother and more flexible.

Idioms are structurally and lexically restricted, that means, we cannot add, omit or replace components without breaking or distorting their real meaning. In both English and Vietnamese, the stability in idioms is very high.

However, there are some idioms can be broken or changed more or less in their structures. For example, we sometimes say *sao cho trong ấm thì ngoài mới êm (trong ấm ngoài êm), tay bông tay bẻ (tay bẻ tay dắt), like mother like daughter (like father like son)*.

2.2.2.2 Semantic features

Lexical meaning of idioms follow different rules that unlike common words. Idioms are composed of words however they are not the combination of the meaning of each element forming them. All idioms have complete meanings and they are generalized by all their forming elements.

Idioms have high evocativeness because in conversation the speaker usually uses utterances that express his attitude or emotion. For instance, when talking about a strong attachment to a couple, we

use the idiom “*sán nhau như vợ chồng sam*”, “*chồng như đó, vợ như hom*”.

2.2.3 Overview of phrase structures

2.2.3.1 Verb Phrases

Concerning verb phrase, Greenbaum [32, 246] defined that “*it has as its head a main (or lexical) verb. The main verb may be preceded by up to four auxiliaries.*”

A verb phrase is the expansion of a verb, in the same way that a noun phrase is the expansion of a noun. The verb phrase can be expressed both as an experiential structure and logical structure. While the experiential structure is extremely simple, most of the semantic load is carried by the logical structure.

In Vietnamese language, there have no regular distinction between finite and non finite verb forms like the way English does.

2.2.3.2 Noun Phrases

In grammar, a noun phrase is a phrase whose head is a noun or a pronoun, optionally accompanied by a modifier set. Like all phrases, the constituents of the English noun phrase can be analyzed into both functional constituents and formal constituents.

2.2.3.3 Prepositional Phrases

A prepositional phrase comprises a preposition as the headword plus a second, complement or completive element which is integral to the structure of the phrase. This complement element is most typically realized by a nominal phrase. Instead, the structure is divided into two functional components - the preposition followed by its complement. In general, a prepositional phrase expresses a relationship between the complement of the preposition and some other constituent of the sentence.

2.2.3.4 Adjective Phrases

The adjective phrase has its head an adjective, which may be preceded by premodifiers and followed by postmodifiers [32, 288]. Adjective phrases act just like adjectives. They modify, describe, or give more information about a noun or pronoun.

2.2.4 Idioms and other language units

2.2.4.1 Idioms and phrases

Phrase is a short group of words which are often used together or a sequence of two or more words arranged in a grammatical construction and acting as a conceptual unit. As in Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistic [43], it is defined “*is a group of words which form a grammatical unit. A phrase does not contain a finite verb and does not have a subject-predicate structure*”.

2.2.4.2 Idioms and proverbs

Both idioms and proverb are set expressions, stable in structure and are ready-made units for reproduction. The clear reflection of national characteristic of the people using them is another similarity. However they are quite different in grammatical and semantic nature.

A proverb is a folksy saying but an idiom is a folksy saying unique to a culture or ethnic group. A proverb is a statement that reveals wisdom or an experience shared by many people. Proverbs is usually known by many people, stating something commonly experienced or giving advice or a short popular saying, usually of ancient origin, that expresses effectively some commonplace truth or useful thought.

2.2.4.3 Idioms and collocations

Collocations and idioms share several common features. Both of them are fixed groups of words, are highly restricted and have arbitrary limitation on use. Collocations provide the mutual expectancy of words, or the ability of a word to predict the likelihood of another word occurring.

2.2.5 Culture and language

2.2.5.1 Concepts of culture

Culture is our life. It appears to be the truth that we are trying to find significance of culture in our life. Culture is defined “*the total set of beliefs, attitudes, customs, behaviour, social habits etc. of the members of a particular society*”[81]. The value of ourselves lie in what the word culture refers to as the whole social system of transmitted ideas, beliefs, behavioral patterns, including language, actions, attitudes, value and knowledge specific to a particular society.

2.2.5.2 Culture in language

The relationship between culture and language is highly closed. Language and culture are undoubtedly closely integrated and interdependent during their whole development processes. It is possible to say language is one of the top important elements of any cultures, for it reserves and reflects most apparently that culture’s characteristics.

2.2.6 Summary

In brief, this chapter has reviewed previous studies relating this study. Idioms are not new topic for researchers and they have discussed in many books. However, no studies have been carried out family idioms in English and Vietnamese. In addition, this chapter has presented some notions of idioms as well as some specific

characteristics which will be the foundation for the following chapters especially, in Chapter 4 – the findings and discussion.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study is designed to analyze and describe syntactic and semantic features as well as some typical cultural characteristics of English and Vietnamese idioms denoting family. This study made use of contrastive analysis in qualitative and quantitative approaches. I have collected, divided and analyzed data in both languages with the purpose of recognizing the similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese idioms denoting family.

In this study, I have used descriptive method in the first stage in order to demonstrate syntactic and semantic features of idioms denoting family in English and Vietnamese. Analytical method was also used to analyze the structures of idioms denoting family, their constituents and meanings and then used the method of synthesis in grouping them according to characteristics to find out their linguistic and cultural features. In addition, in this study contrastive method was used to distinguish the similarities and differences between two languages in the ways people use these idioms in daily life and in writing.

3.2 DATA COLLECTION

The data used in the study were collected from English and Vietnamese books, dictionaries, poems, novels, short stories, magazines... with clear examples in which they are used. We will work with approximately 462 idioms denoting family in English and

Vietnamese. Both monolingual and bilingual publications are the main sources of examples.

3.3 DATA ANALYSIS

In this paper, the data are analyzed on the basis of semantic and syntactical perspectives. The collected data will be qualitatively and quantitatively processed to investigate some linguistic features of idioms denoting family in English and Vietnamese. The data are categorized into main aspects: syntax and semantics.

Firstly, syntactic features of English and Vietnamese idioms were described with different structural categories such as noun phrases, adjective phrases, verb phrases, adjective phrases, prepositional phrases, adverb phrases and sentences. Each structure has more than two examples and then there will be a table which summarizes the content and make the part be more clearly. From which, I find out the similarities and differences in idioms denoting family's structures.

Secondly, the data will be also analyzed into semantic field. It is classified on the basic of some characteristics of family idioms which involve in topics of members in family, human relationships...

Then, idioms will be treated and present objective demonstrations to find out the cultural characteristics of the expression.

3.4 PROCEDURE

The steps will be based on:

- collecting the idioms denoting family in both languages from dictionaries, books, novels, short stories, newspapers or magazines, on the internet....; finding examples in which they are used.

- analyzing English and Vietnamese idioms denoting family in term of syntactic and semantic features and contrastive analysis

- finding the similarities and differences between structural and semantic mechanisms of English and Vietnamese idioms denoting family.

- suggesting some implications for teaching and translating of this kind of idioms from English to Vietnamese for the learners.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 SYNTACTIC FEATURES OF ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE IDIOMS DENOTING FAMILY

4.1.1 Syntactic glimpse at English and Vietnamese idioms denoting family

In this part, idioms denoting family will be focused on the syntactic features in both languages. Classification of idioms into smaller units depends on the independence of semantics in components and idioms. Therefore, idioms will be classified into different kinds of phrases such as a noun phrase, verb phrase, adjective phrase, prepositional phrase and so on.

However, in both English and Vietnamese idioms denoting family, there are not any adverb phrases so we will describe this feature through analyzing examples and categorize structures under the form of noun phrases, verb phrases, adjective phrases and prepositional phrases.

4.1.1.1. Family idioms in a structure of a Noun phrase

Noun phrase is the most common structure in idioms. Following many previous studies, a noun phrase usually occupies the largest amount. I summarize them as the table below.

Table 4.1 Noun Phrase structures of English and Vietnamese FIs

	English	Vietnamese
Noun Phrase	1/ (Article) + Noun + Noun	1/ Noun + Noun
	2/ (Article) + Adj. + Noun	2/ Noun + Adj. + Noun + Adj.
	3/ (Article) + Adj. + Noun + Pre. phrase	3/ Noun + Verb + Noun + Verb
	4/ (Article) + Noun + Pre. + Noun/NP	4/ Noun + nào + Noun + này
	5/ (Article) + V-ing + Noun + Pre. Phrase	5/ Noun + nọ + Noun + kia
	6/ (Article) + Past Participle + Noun	6/ Noun + sao + Noun + vậy
	7/ Noun's + Noun	
	8/ Noun + and + Noun	
	9/ (Article) + Noun + Adverb + Noun	
	10/ (Number) + Adj. + Adj. + Noun	

4.1.1.2. Family idioms in a structure of a Verb phrase

The verb phrases in both languages can be listed in the table below.

Table 4.2 Verb Phrase structures of English and Vietnamese FIs

	English	Vietnamese
Verb phrase	1/ Verb + Noun/NP	1/ Verb + Noun/NP
	2/ Verb + Pre. phrase	2/ Verb + Noun + Verb + Noun
	3/ Verb + Adverb phrase + Pre. phrase	3/ Verb + Adj. + Verb + Adj.
	4/ To be + Family	

4.1.1.3 Family idioms in a structure of an Adjective Phrase

I present the table below as the summary of this structure.

Table 4.3 Adjective Phrase structures of English and Vietnamese FIs

Adjective phrase	English	Vietnamese
	Adj. and Adj.	Adj. + Noun, Adj. + Noun

4.1.1.4. Family idioms in a structure of a Prepositional Phrase

I summarize it by the following table.

Table 4.4 Prepositional Phrase structures of English and Vietnamese FIs

Prepositional phrase	English	Vietnamese
	1. Prep + NP	1. Pre. + Adj. + Pre. + Adj.
	2. Pre. + Pre. Phrase	

4.1.2 The structures of English and Vietnamese idioms denoting family

4.1.2.1 Parallel structure

Parallel structure or contrary idioms are idioms that they have contrary relation among parts of them and other elements form the idioms. Relying on descriptive approach, Vietnamese idioms denoting family can be divided into three main kinds: contrary idioms, comparative idioms and common idioms.

4.1.2.2 Comparative structure

This is a common structure in English and Vietnamese idioms. In idioms denoting family, the comparative markers may be “like” or “more...than...” in English and “như” or “nào.... này”, “còn hơn.

4.1.2.3 Borrowed idioms

In Vietnamese idioms denoting family, there are many idioms have Chinese origins. EIsDF have no these idioms.

The syntactic features of idioms denoting family are summed up in the table 4.6

Table 4.6 A summary of English and Vietnamese idioms denoting Family in grammatical patterns

Phrase Structures	English	Vietnamese
Noun Phrases	1. (Article)+Noun +Noun	1. Noun + Noun
	2. (Article)+Adj. + Noun	2. Noun+ Adj.+ Noun+ Adj.
	3. (Article) + Adj + Noun+ Pre.	3. Noun+ Verb + Noun+ Verb
	4. (Article)+Noun + Pre. + Noun/NP	4. Noun+ nào+ Noun+ này
	5. (Article)+ V-ing+ Noun+ Pre	5. Noun+ nọ+ Noun+ kia
	6. (Article)+ Past Participle + Noun	6. Noun+ sao+ Noun+ vậy
	7. Noun's + Noun	
	8. Noun + Pre. + Noun	
	9. Noun+ and + Noun	
	10. (Number) + Adj. + Adjective + Noun	
Verb Phrase	11. Verb+ Noun/NP	7. Verb+ Noun/NP
	12. Verb+ Pre	8. Verb+ Noun+ Verb+ Noun
	13. Verb+ Adverb Phrase+ Pre. Phrase	9. Verb+ Adj. + Verb+ Adj.
	14. To be + Noun	
Adjective Phrase	15. Adj. + Adj.	10. Adj. + Noun + Adj. + Noun
Prepositional Phrase	16. Pre + NP	11. Pre. + Adj. + Pre. + Adj.
	17. Pre. + Pre. Phrase	12. Pre. + Pre. + Comparative clause

Table 4.7 A summary of syntactic features of English and Vietnamese denoting Family in sStatistics

English and Vietnamese Idioms Denoting Family		English		Vietnamese	
		Number	Percent (%)	Number	Percent (%)
Phrase Structures	Noun Phrases	75	40.1	118	43
	Verb Phrases	44	23.5	85	30.9
	Adjective Phrase	18	9.6	36	13
	Prepositional Phrases	35	18.7	8	2.9
Comparative Structures		15	8.1	28	10.2
Total		187	100	275	100

4.1.3 Similarities and differences of syntactic features of English and Vietnamese idioms denoting family

4.1.3.1 Similarities

Both English and Vietnamese idioms denoting family have same grammatical groups such as noun phrases, verb phrases, prepositional phrases and adjective phrases. Two languages have parallel structures and comparative structures though the amounts are not the same. In both languages, noun phrases occupy the largest amount. There is no adverbial structure in EIsDF and VIsDF.

4.1.3.1 Differences

The first, in Vietnamese idioms there are no any structures of prepositional and adverbial structures. Secondly, although they both have same grammatical groups, in every group there aren't same

amount of structures. Particularly, in verb phrases and adjective phrases, Vietnamese idioms occupy much more amount than English idioms. Thirdly, most of corresponding idioms in Vietnamese have four words they create two corresponding parts with each other. In English, they can be three or four words.

4.2 SEMANTIC FEATURES OF ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE IDIOMS DENOTING FAMILY

4.2.1 Symbolic characteristics of idioms denoting family in English and Vietnamese

4.2.1.1 Metaphor

Metaphor is the process of seeing something as something rather than comparing something. It is an expression that describes a person or an object by referring to something that is considered to possess similar characteristics. Metaphor is one of the rhetorical means that is used popularly in literature, poetry etc; especially, metaphor is mainly used in the meaning transfer of idioms.

4.2.1.2 Metonymy

Metonymy is a figure of speech used in rhetoric in which a thing or concept is not called by its own name but by the name of something intimately associated with that thing or concept.

4.2.1.3 Hyperbole

Hyperbole can be defined as a deliberate overstatement or exaggeration of a feature essential to the object or phenomenon. This stylistic device is used in meaning transfer of idioms such as *con đàn châu đống* in Vietnamese.

4.2.1.4 Simile

In English and Vietnamese, simile is a comparison of two objects based on one shared quality. The structure of simile in

English contains elements such as *like, as or more than* and in Vietnamese it is *như, hết, bằng, tựa, hơn* and so on.

4.2.1.5 Symmetry

Symmetrical idioms are the most common idioms in Vietnamese. They occupy over fifty percent of other idioms in use. The most significant of this kind is it has symmetry between parts and elements to build idioms.

4.2.2 Semantic fields of English and Vietnamese Idioms Denoting Family

4.2.2.1 Relationship between husbands and wives

4.2.2.2 The relationship between parents and children

4.2.2.3 The relationship of siblings

4.2.2.4 Other relationships

4.2.2.5 Home and house

4.2.2.6 Situations and lifestyles in the family

To make it clearly, I summed up the table below.

Table 4.8 Table of semantic features of idioms denoting family in English and Vietnamese

English and Vietnamese idioms denoting family			English		Vietnamese	
			Number	Percent (%)	Number	Percent (%)
Character-istics of English and Vietnamese Idioms Denoting Family	1	Relationship between husbands and wives	46	24.6	100	36.4
	2	Relationship between parents and children	35	18.7	84	30.5
	3	Relationship of siblings	12	6.4	21	7.6
	4	Other relationships	41	21.9	27	9.8
	5	Home and house	25	13.4	11	4
	6	Situations and lifestyles	28	15	32	11.7
Total			187	100	275	100

4.2.3 National characteristics of English and Vietnamese idioms denoting Family

Every nation has its own national characteristics. These are expressed through their contents. Depending on the custom of each nation as well as its style of living and viewpoints toward the practical world around, events or phenomena happening to them, they reflect what they see and use some images that become the cultural symbols or religious symbols.

4.2.3.1 Cultural symbols

Culture is formed by creative activities of human beings. It is obviously that relying on language, we can find the specific cultural features of a nation.

First of all, that is the respect of children to parents, engraving the upbringing of the parents. Secondly, the marriage in Vietnamese culture contains some different characters. In the past, parents had the right to choose husbands or wives for their children and they looked for the suitable “better half” for daughters or sons.

The distinction between boys and girls still remains until now. In many Vietnamese families, parents expect sons much more than girls. In addition, to Vietnamese people, children are priceless presents of the Creator. Another feature of national culture of Vietnamese people is that in many old feudal families, a husband could have more than one wife.

In Britain in particular and other western countries in general, when children are old enough they have to leave the house and start a new life. There are some idioms which concern with this matter such as *fly the nest, empty nests* and so on.

4.3.3.2 Symbolic Animals

Animals are always connected closely to human beings. Animals make our language significant with symbols. The animals often appear in English and Vietnamese people are dogs, cats, birds, sheep, tigers and so on.

It is easy to find out that *dogs* are one of the animals which appear the most regular in idioms both English and Vietnamese. Dogs are the most closed animal to humans.

Fish is sometimes expressed as a mother who loves and takes care of her children carefully; this image is seen through the idiom *cá chuối đấm đuối vì con*. Furthermore, some wild animals also appear on VIsDF such as *con hươu mẹ vượn, cha mẹ cú con tiên, cha hổ mang để con liu diu* and so on.

The images of fowls or chickens are used in VIsDF. Hens and her chickens are compared with the mother and children as the idioms *gà cùng một mẹ* or sometimes cocks are the metaphoric images of the widowers like the idiom *gà trống nuôi con* and so on.

It is clearly that animals are used in idioms are familiar ones. They connect to human life closely. Depending on each culture there are some differences in using the symbolic animals in forming idioms. For example, the sheep is a common castle in western countries the image of black sheep expresses a member of the family who has disgraced himself, one whose name is generally not mentioned in the family circle

4.3.3.3 Human body parts

Culture takes an important role in comparing idioms from different languages. The meaning of idioms cannot be predicted from its component part is not quite valid and cannot be applied to idioms body parts. The body-parts terms used in idioms are divided into two classes: those denoting external body parts and those denoting internal body parts and organs. It is found that the metaphors, through imaginary in nature, are not really all or betray. They seem to have a bodily or psychological basis although they are inevitably influenced by cultural models. In English, human body parts used such as a head, hand, mouth, heart and so on. and in Vietnamese they are đầu, tay, gôi, tóc, hạt máu and so on.

In short, we can find out idioms describe the human life; they convey people's experiences, thoughts and notions. These are

different from every country. Each nation has its own ways to reflect the reality relying on using idioms logically.

4.2.4 Similarities and differences in semantic features of English and Vietnamese denoting family

4.2.4.1 Similarities

English as well as Vietnamese idioms in the systems of folklores have a giant value. They are diversiform and abundant in both contents and forms. Idioms about family in both languages are a colourful and quite completed picture about different aspects in human life.

The contents of the idioms denoting family in English and Vietnamese turn around the same topics such as *the relationship between husbands and wives, parents and children, siblings, house and home, situations and lifestyles in the family*. The blood relation is always respected. Both English and Vietnamese idioms use rhetorical devices. These are metaphors, metonymy, symmetry and so on. In addition, these two languages use many expressions which have both figurative and literal senses.

4.2.4.2 Differences

Traditionally, in Vietnam, there are many generations live together *under the same roof* in Vietnamese this means “tứ đại đồng đường”. Therefore, in the relationship between grandparents and children or grandchildren, VIsDF mention *cháu hư tại bà, bác cầu cho con cháu*.

EIsDF have not got many idioms about the sentiment between relatives whereas VIsDF has got many idioms like that. In England, when the children are mature, they have to live independently. Therefore the relationships between parents-in-law and daughters-in-law or sons-in-law only have in English in theory meanwhile, VIsDF focus much on these aspects.

Another different point between E&VIsDF is the sexual distinction. In VIsDF the role of men is usually respected than women. This is because of feudal thoughts in Vietnam men will continue the ancestral line (*nối dõi tông đường*). In many

Vietnamese families, daughters are not always expected; sons are favourite children like the idiom *con trai con đũa, nhất nam viết hữu, thập nữ viết vô*.

In a word, in Vietnamese idioms, all relationships are showed in many aspects both positiveness and negativeness. Moreover, the kinship is a complicated relationship. It contains other relations of each member in the family and there are many obligations in it. These are the most significant differences between EIsDF and VIsDF in the semantic field.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSION

As I stated in the previous chapters this thesis examines the basic ideas and various views on semantic and syntactic features of English and Vietnamese idioms denoting family in order to find out the similarities and differences in meanings as well as constructions in both languages.

In Chapter One, I present the rationale of the study and state what the study is aimed at. Moreover, the method or scope of the study, the research questions are also mentioned.

The Chapter Two is the theories involved in this thesis under consideration which serve as the basic foundation of data analysis and findings discussion in the following chapters.

I describe the methods and procedures of the paper in the Chapter Three and present some aims and objectives of the study.

Chapter Four focuses on analyzing the syntactic and semantic features of EIsDF and VIsDF.

In the syntactic aspects, idioms in English and Vietnamese are analyzed under phrasal structures. These structures are categorized into noun phrases, verb phrases, adjective phrases, and prepositional phrases. I also include the comparative structures of two languages. In addition, I list orderly English idioms first and the following is

Vietnamese idioms in order to compare the similarities and differences between them.

Semantically, Vietnamese and English idioms in this study express their meanings transfer means such as metaphor, metonymy, hyperbole, and symmetry. Particularly, the EIsDF and VIsDF are constructed on the basis of describing events and phenomena by **means of metaphor, means of metonymy and means of simile**. Besides, the thesis examines semantic fields in both languages through six main aspects like husbands and wives, parents and children, siblings, other relationships, home and house, and lifestyles in the family.

In Chapter Five, the paper reviews the whole chapters and gives some implications for Vietnamese teachers and students in teaching and learning idioms denoting family.

5.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING

As I mentioned in Chapter One, idioms are important factors in native-like discourse by English as a foreign language speaker. Idioms are considered as a popular, indispensable and distinctive phenomenon of every language which reflects cultural and historical characteristics of the people speaking that language.

Understanding and using idioms proficiently will help learners speak and write more consisely. However, this is not always easy and language learners often feel perplexed when meeting idioms in using. In order to help Vietnamese learners of English to feel easy when understanding and using them I would like to give some suggestions for language teaching and learning.

First of all, idioms should be taught to Vietnamese learners of English at all levels.

For elementary levels, task or exercises comparing literal and figurative meanings of idioms should be used to help learners to realize the absurdity of the literal meanings.

For intermediate and advanced levels, the idioms should be encompassed into theoretical linguistic subjects. The learners can be asked to take assignment on collecting idioms involving special key

words and then study their aspects related to structural or semantic features

Secondly, understanding idioms should be based on reliable sources such as dictionaries, course books, papers of previous researchers and so on.

Thirdly, learners should have habits of using idioms for everyday, especially, in speaking and writing to make conversations or writings clearer and more concise.

Furthermore, there should be a combination between teaching foreign languages and teaching idioms. To understand the meaning of idioms we should have the basic knowledge of languages as well as know about their historical and cultural characteristics.

Lastly, understanding and using idioms will help teachers and learners to do better. They can find out the best ways to make their translation more perfect.

5.3 LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

It is clearly that this study can not cover all features of idioms denoting family because of the limitation of time and reference material as well as the constraints faced by researchers.

For the further research, I have some suggestions:

- A study of English and Vietnamese Proverbs Denoting Family.

- An investigation into Cultural Aspect of English and Vietnamese Idioms Denoting Family

- A study of Idioms Denoting Human Relationships in English and Vietnamese.