

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING
UNIVERSITY OF DANANG**

TRƯỜNG THỊ BÍCH HỒNG

**A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF IDIOMS DENOTING
HUMANS WITH DISPRAISING IMPLICATIONS IN
ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE**

**Field: THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
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Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lưu Quý Khương

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Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. RATIONALE

Idioms are the essence of language. Every language in the world has its own giant treasure of idioms. And there is no doubt that idioms are an interesting and special phenomenon of languages. Idioms are the grease that makes a language flow. They introduce color and add grace and precision to speech and writing. Idioms, however, are also known as the roughest part in vocabulary acquisition that learners of a foreign language in general and Vietnamese learners of English in particular have to face. Idioms make learning a language become more complicated because of **their complexity in mechanism**. Not all the learners that are good at grammar and have a wide range of vocabulary can absolutely use idioms well because the meaning of an idiom cannot be worked out from the individual words in it. Besides, if a language is the carrier of the culture then idioms are considered as *cultural- linguistic means*. Indeed, there always exist the geography, history, customs, habits, religions and rites of a people or a society in idioms of a language.

From the reasons above and in high hope of making a small contribution to the present knowledge of idioms, we decided to conduct the thesis entitled “**A Contrastive Analysis of Idioms Denoting Humans with Dispraising Implication in English and Vietnamese**”.

1.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.2.1. Aims of the Research

This thesis aims at analyzing the syntactic, stylistic and semantic features of English idioms denoting humans with dispraising implication (IDHDIE) and Vietnamese ones (IDHDIV).

1.2.2. Objectives of the Research

With the aim mentioned above, the study tries to reach the following objectives:

- Investigating syntactic, stylistic and semantic features of IDHDIE and IDHDIV.
- Finding out the similarities and differences between IDHDIE and IDHDIV.
- Making some suggestions for teaching, learning and translating of IDHDIE and IDHDIV.

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the syntactic, stylistic and semantic features of IDHDIE and IDHDIV?
- What are the similarities and differences between IDHDIE and IDHDIV in terms of syntactic, stylistic and semantic features?
- How does the study contribute to the teaching, learning and translating of English through idioms?

1.4. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

We all know that idioms are extensively used by a large range of speakers in both languages - English and Vietnamese. However, we have no ambition to cover all idioms as well as all kinds of idioms denoting humans. This study concentrates on major syntactic, stylistic and semantic features of IDHDIE and IDHDIV.

1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Our thesis on studying idioms denoting humans with dispraising implications (IDHDI) has the following significance:

+ Giving a description of semantic, stylistic and syntactic features of IDHDIE and IDHDIV; from this, contributing to explaining the linguistic similarities as well as differences between the two languages and showing an essential relationship between language and culture.

+ Inspiring the love of the Vietnamese language and culture to English-speaking people when learning Vietnamese and vice versa through the study of IDHDI.

1.6. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 3: Methodology of Research

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussions

Chapter 5: Conclusion, Implications, Limitations, Suggestions

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 PREVIOUS STUDIES

In a book by Cruse [4], idioms were considered as a semantically lexical complex. Also in this book, some more related concepts were introduced- collocations and “dead” metaphor- so as to make the concept of idioms more clearly. Palmer [33] stated some restrictions in syntactic as well as semantic features of idioms. Howard [16] mentioned a rather confusing concept with idioms, collocation and shares similar restrictions to Palmer. Whitford and

Dixon [44] presented about 4900 idioms in an easy-to-follow way with illustrative examples along with each idiom. Dixon [6], Seidl [37] and Broukal [2] also introduced collections of idioms in different ways. All of these provided learners with a wide range of information on idioms.

In Vietnam, many linguists as well as lexicologists have paid much attention to idioms. Hồ Lê [61], Đái Xuân Ninh [64] and Nguyễn Thiện Giáp [51] presented the concept and borderline between idioms and other language units. Hoàng Văn Hành [53] described and analyzed idioms semantically and syntactically and also mentioned the origins of a number of Vietnamese idioms, which gave us a general view of the cultural aspect of Vietnamese idioms.

Besides, Lã Thành [69], Bùi Phụng [67], Vũ Dung, Vũ Thúy Anh, Vũ Quang Hào [50] compiled dictionaries in which idioms were both literally and figuratively explained along with illustrative examples. Đinh Ngọc Hải [52] collected a number of English idioms with uses, examples and clear explanations, which were helpful for learners of English. Phạm Thị Tố Như [34] focused on metaphorical idioms with words denoting animals. Lưu Quý Khương [58] did a survey of comparative logical sentences and comparative stylistic sentences in the English and Vietnamese languages. Nguyễn Văn Long [29] paid much attention to semantic features of idiomatic verb phrases. Nguyễn Thị Lệ Thu [32] had an investigation into simile in idioms. Ngô Đình Diệu Tâm [27] did research into idioms of comparison while Nguyễn Thị Diệu Hào [28]

focused on investigating the syntactic, semantic and cultural characteristics of idioms containing color words in English and Vietnamese. Võ Thanh Quyên [41] also had a study of idioms but she focused on idioms denoting human feelings. Vũ Đức Nghiệu [63] had a study on criticizing and praising man implication in Vietnamese idioms and then Nguyễn Thị Thu Mai [30] had an investigation into syntactic and semantic features of idioms denoting causes and results.

2.2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.2.1. Definition of Idioms

In this part, some of definitions of idioms are noted both in English [3], [4], [10], [37] and in Vietnamese [55], [61], [64].

2.2.2. Dispraising Implication

Implication is defined as “*a suggestion that is not made directly but that people are expected to understand or accept*” [114].

2.2.3. Idioms Denoting Humans with Dispraising Implication (IDHDI)

IDHDI are idioms which denote a certain aspect of human beings aiming to criticize or dispraise humans in an indirect way.

2.2.4. Classification of Idioms

Makkai [23] divides idioms into *encoding and decoding idioms*. Mai Ngọc Chừ et al. [49] states that idioms are divided into *idioms of comparison*. Hoang Van Hanh [54] divides idioms into three main kinds: *idioms of symmetry, idioms of comparison and ordinary idioms*.

2.2.5. Overview of Phrase Structure and Idiomatic Structure

2.2.5.1. Overview of Phrase Structure

a) *Noun Phrases*

b) *Verb Phrases*

c) *Adjective Phrases*

d) *Preposition Phrases*

2.2.5.2. Idiomatic Structures

Verb + Complement

Verb + Direct Object

Verb + Direct Object + Complement

Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object

Verb + Direct Object + Adjunct

Besides, other phrase patterns are: Noun Phrases, Adjective Phrases and Prepositional Phrases.

2.2.6. Main Features of Idioms

2.2.6.1. Syntactic Restriction and Stability

Generally, idioms are regarded as integral units. Idioms are fixed in their form and any substitutions and rearranging in their structure can lead to complete loss of their primary meaning. Most idioms reveal a certain inflexibility regarding different syntactic transformations, as Cruse [4, p. 167] states “*They typically resist interruption and reordering of parts*”. Hoang Van Hanh [23, p.27] confirms that “*the stability of idioms is standard form, bearing high social quality. However, we also have to add that this standard form of idioms is not rigid, but it is very flexible in daily use.*”

2.2.6.2. Semantic Ambiguity

“**Anomalous**”, “**irregular**” and “**unusual**” are the phrases which are normally used by researchers to describe idioms. According to Gairns and Redman [11], *semantic opacity is one of the characteristic aspects of idiom of any given language.*

2.2.7. Idioms and Other Language Units

2.2.7.1. Idioms and Free Word Groups

To some extent we cannot make substitutions or make different combinations with an idiom while we can do such things with a free word group. Idioms are mostly ‘frozen’ but free word groups are not.

2.2.7.2. Idioms and Collocations

According to Cruse [4, p.40], “*collocation will be used to refer to sequences of lexical items which habitually co- occur, but which are not nonetheless fully transparent in the sense that each lexical constituent is also a semantic constituent*”.

2.2.7.3. Idioms, Proverbs, Sayings and Clichés

A **cliché** is “*an idea or phrase that has been used so much that it is not effective or does not have any meaning any longer*” [46]. A **saying** is defined as “*a well- known short statement that expresses an idea most people believe is true and wise.*” and a **proverb** as “*a short well-known statement that contains advice about life in general*” [123]. All proverbs can be sayings but not all sayings are proverbs and idioms are neither proverbs nor sayings.

2.3. SUMMARY

Chapter 3

METHOD AND PROCEDURES

3.1. RESEARCH METHODS

A contrastive analysis of IDHDIE and IDHDIV was conducted so as to draw out some implications with particular reference to the teaching and learning of idioms.

3.2. DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLES

A corpus of 170 English samples and 184 Vietnamese ones was randomly gathered from websites or different materials at first, and then they are rechecked in English dictionaries.

3.3. INSTRUMENTATION

By observing and investigating the occurrence of idioms in dictionaries, websites, and materials related to idioms, we collect, analyze and classify them qualitatively. Checklists and statistical tables are used to show quantitatively the distribution of idioms to each syntactical pattern or semantic field. Tables for contrastive analysis, generalization and comparison are used to make the investigation clear.

3.4. DATA COLLECTION

Firstly, a large number of IDHDI in English and Vietnamese are collected. IDHDI collected from websites and other materials are looked up again in dictionaries to ensure their accuracy. After that, we read and pick out all idioms literally and figuratively denoting humans with dispraising implications. Secondly, we set up corpora of IDHDI in English and Vietnamese based. Then, they are grouped in alphabetical order for easier search.

3.5. DATA ANALYSIS

After finishing the collection of data, we qualitatively describe, analyze and compare the data in two corpora in terms of the syntactic, stylistic and semantic features.

3.6. RESEARCH PROCEDURES

3.7. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

In terms of reliability, the data for this study is mainly collected from dictionaries, websites and materials related to idioms. Any information quoted in this study is exactly the same as the original materials with clear references of the author(s), the name of publishers, the time and place of publication as well as the page number where the information is extracted.

In terms of validity, this study meets all required criteria. All IDHDIE and IDHDIV are collected from dictionaries and other sources. English idioms collected from bilingual dictionaries will be carefully checked up in the monolingual dictionaries to make sure of their origins and avoid the translating idioms.

3.8. SUMMARY

Chapter 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. SYNTACTIC FEATURES OF IDHDIE AND IDHDIV

4.1.1. Phrase Structures

4.1.1.1. IDHDI with Noun Phrase Structure

a) English

[1] (Art) + A + N (*a silly billy*)

[2] N + and+ N (*Airs and graces*)

[3] N + PP (*Snake in the grass*)

b) Vietnamese

[1] N + A/ N + A (*Bụng ông đít beo, Dao to búa lớn*)

[2] N + N (*Đầu óc bã đậu*)

[3] N + N/ N + N/ NP (*Mặt người bụng quý, Miệng mặt lòng dao*)

[4] N + Num + N (*Đòn càn hai mũi*)

[5] N + V/VP / N + V/VP (*Mùa hạ buôn bông mùa đông buôn quạt*)

Table 4.1 Noun Phrases of IDHDIE and IDHDIV

	ENGLISH	VIETNAMESE
Noun Phrases	[1] (Art) + A + N	[1] N + A/ N + A
	[2] N + and + N	[2] N + N/ V + N
	[3] N + PP	[3] N + N/ N + N/ NP
		[4] N + Num + N
		[5] N + V/VP / N + V/VP

4.1.1.2. IDHDI with Adjective Phrase Structure

a) English

[4] Adv + A + Prep (*As cunning as a fox*)

[5] A + and + A (*Meek and mild*)

b) Vietnamese

[6] A + A (*Tự cao tự đại*)

[7] A + comp- element + N (*Bạc như vôi, Béo như bò sữa cạp*)

[8] A + N (*Ba hoa chích chòe, Rõ tổ ong bầu, Ti hí mắt lươn.*)

[9] A + N/NP / A + N/NP (*Đông miệng ít tay, Điếc tai cày sáng tai họ*)

[10] A + VP (*Đốt lòi đuôi, Hết khôn dòn ra dại, Lười chày thây*)

[11] A + Adv/ A + Adv (*Vụng thối vụng nát*)

Table 4.2 Adjective Phrases of IDHDIE and IDHDIV

Adjective Phrases	ENGLISH	VIETNAMESE
	[4] Adv + A + Prep	[6] A + A
	[5] A + and + A	[7] A + comp- element + N/NP
		[8] A + N/NP
		[9] A + N/ NP / A + N/NP
		[10] A + VP
		[11] A + Adv/ A + Adv

4.1.1.3. IDHDI with Verb Phrase Structure

a) English

[6] V + A (*Talk big, Blow hot and cold, Play fast and loose*)

[7] V + V (*Creep and crawl*)

[8] V + NP (*Pass the buck, Shed/ weep crocodile tears*)

[9] V + PP (*Speaks with a forked tongue, act up*)

[10] V + NP + comp- element + N (*Have got more money than sense*)

[11] V + NP + NP (*Pay someone a left-handed compliment*)

[12] V + NP + PP (*Make a mountain out of a molehill*)

[13] V + N/ V + N (*Eat your cake and have it too*)

b) Vietnamese

[12] V + A/ V + A (*Ăn thừa nói thiếu, Bóc ngắn cắn dài*)

[13] V + Adv P (*Nằm mơ giữa ban ngày*)

[14] V + N + comp- element + N (*Khinh người như mề, Khinh người như rác*)

[15] V + N + PP (*Đổ nhót cho nheo, Ném tiền qua cửa sổ*)

[16] V + N + N/ NP (*Giết người không dao*)

[17] V + N/ V + N (*Ném đá giấu tay, Ngâm máu phun người*)

[18] V + Num/ V + Num (*Vơ năm gấp mười, Kiếm một tiêu*

mười)

[19] V/ VP + VP / V/ VP +VP (*Ăn cỗ đi trước lội nước đi sau*)

[20] V + N/ V + A (*Ăn bơ làm biếng*)

Table 4.3 Verb Phrases of IDHDIE and IDHDIV

Verb Phrases	English	Vietnamese
	[6] V + Adv P	[12] V + A/ V + A
	[7] V + V	[13] V + Adv P
	[8] V + NP	[14] V + N + comp- element + N
	[9] V + PP	[15] V + N + PP
	[10] V + NP + Adv P	[16] V + N + N/ NP
	[11] V + NP + NP	[17] V + N/ V + N
	[12] V + NP + PP	[18] V + Num/ V + Num
	[13] V + N/ V + N	[19] V/ VP + VP / V/ VP +VP
		[20] V + N / V + A

4.1.1.4. IDHDI with Prepositional Phrase Structure

a) English

[14] Prep (+ Art) + A + N (*In cold blood*)

Table 4.5 Summary of IDHDIE and IDHDIV in Grammatical

Patterns

Structures	English	Vietnamese
Noun Phrases	[1] (Art) + A + N	[1] N + A/ N + A
	[2] N + and + N	[2] N + N
	[3] N + PP	[3] N + N/ N + N/ NP
		[4] N + Num + N

		[5] N + V/VP / N + V/VP
		[6] A + A
Adjective Phrases	[4] Adv + A + Prep	[7] A + comp- element + N
	[5] A + and + A	[8] A + N
		[9] A + N/ NP / A + N/NP
		[10] A + VP
		[11] A + Adv/ A + Adv
		[12] V + A/ V + A
Verb Phrases	[6] V + Adv P	[13] V + Adv P
	[7] V + V	[14] V + N + comp- element + N
	[8] V + NP	[15] V + N + PP
	[9] V + PP	[16] V + N + N/ NP
	[10] V + NP + comp- element + N	[17] V + N/ V + N
	[11] V + NP + NP	[18] V + Num/ V + Num
	[12] V + NP + PP	[19] V/ VP + VP / V/ VP +VP
	[13] V + N/ V+ N	[20] V + N / V + A
Prepositional Phrases	[16] Prep (+ Art) + A + N	none

Table 4.6 Statistical Summary of Syntactic Features of IDHDIE and IDHDIV

IDHDIE and IDHDIV		ENGLISH		VIETNAMESE	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Syntactic Features	Noun Phrases	31	18.23	34	18.48
	Adjective Phrases	29	17.06	40	21.74
	Verb Phrases	104	61.18	110	58.78

	Prepositional Phrases	6	3.53	0	0.00
TOTAL		170	100	184	100

4.1.3. Similarities and Differences of Syntactic Features of IDHDIE and IDHDIV

4.1.3.1. Similarities

From table 4.6, we find that both languages have some similar patterns and use parallel structures and metaphorical descriptive structures as means of transferring their meanings.

Besides, both use a lot of comparison pattern expressed by “as...as” or “like” in English and “như” in Vietnamese, such as *as ugly as sin, like a bear with a sore head, làm như mèo mửa, đùng đùng như chĩnh trôi sông*. Idioms are fixed expressions, but actually, they are relatively fixed. Last but not least, idioms employed in reality, in fact, are more flexible than what is known.

4.1.3.2. Differences

IDHDIV tend to use some of the ways in forming idioms such as repeated theme, intermittent repeated rhythm and alliteration. These symmetric structures are rather diversified: **N + A/ N + A** (*Bụng ông đứt beo, Mặt búng da chì*), **N + N / N + N** (*Bụng thúng cái lưng cánh phàn, Của người bỏ tát, của mình lạt buộc*), **V + A / V + A** (*Đổi trắng thay đen. So hơn tính thiệt*). Moreover, the words in idiomatic expressions in IDHDIV are separated to guarantee the euphonic property and the parallelism in the structure of four-word terms. For instance, in the case of *Đao to búa lớn, So hơn tính thiệt*, the words “to lớn”, “hơn thiệt” are split into two parts which then combine with two nouns to form four-word phrases.

4.2. STYLISTIC FEATURES OF IDHDIE AND IDHDIV

4.2.1. Simile

Simile is a kind of comparison in which two things are compared because they have something in common though they are in all other respects different. The imaginative comparison is explicitly made with the help of *like* or *as*. In Vietnamese, comparisons are made by a lot of linking words such as *như, bằng, tựa, hết, giống*, among which the most common word used in Vietnamese idioms of comparison is *như*.

(4.39) *The con artist was **slippery as an eel**. Although he defrauded many people, he never went to prison.* [104]

4.2.2. Metaphor

Ellis and Barkhuizen [7, p.313] state “A metaphor consists of a comparison between two dissimilar notions where one notion is to be understood in terms of the other notion”. Đỗ Hữu Châu [48] defines metaphor as a way of naming one object by another object based on the similarity of properties.

(4.42) *Đi, nhất định đi, chả ở cái nhà này nữa, chả tình nghĩa gì với con người **miệng mật lòng dao** kia nữa.* (Cited in [62, p.472])

4.2.3. Metonymy

According to Galperin [12, p.144], “metonymy is based on a different type of relation between the dictionary and contextual meanings, a relation based not on identification, but on some kind of association connecting the two concepts which these meaning represent”. Aznaurova (Cited in [107]) states “Unlike associations caused by the context or by some extra linguistic factors, metonymy appears on the basis of associations potentially permanent for the certain types of relations: items of clothing – person, parts of body –

person, etc”. We can encounter some IDHDIE using the means of metonymy via images like *hand* as in *Bite the hand that feeds one*.

(4.43) *It's a real case of **biting the hand that feeds her**. She's reported her stepmother to the police for shop-lifting.*

[39, p.29]

4.2.4. Hyperbole

Galperin [12, p.173] reveals “Hyperbole is a highly emphatic SD brought about by extravagant overstatement of an emotive experience. It intensifies one of the features of the object to such a degree as will show it utter absurdity.”

(4.44) *Nhưng người đàn bà ấy là thị Nở, một người ngán ngờ như những người đàn trong cổ tích và xấu **ma chê quỷ hờn**.*

[81, p.42]

4.3. SEMANTIC FEATURES OF IDHDIE AND IDHDIV

4.3.1.1. Critique of Physical Appearance

a) English: *Skin and bone, Fat as a pig*

b) Vietnamese: *Béo như con trâu truong, Xấu như ma*

4.3.1.2. Greed

a) English: *Have one's cake and eat it too...*

b) Vietnamese: *Bòn như Định Công bòn vàng...*

4.3.1.3. Laziness

a) English: *There is only one that can be found: bone idle*

b) Vietnamese: *Lười chày thầy, Ăn thì có mó thì không...*

4.3.1.4. Opportunism

a) English: *Add fuel to the flame, fish in troubled waters...*

b) Vietnamese: *Bắt cá hai tay, Mượn gió bẻ măng...*

4.3.1.5. Selfishness/ Individualism

a) English: *Dog in the manger*

b) Vietnamese: *Của người thì cứt chó, của mình thì vừng đen...*

4.3.1.6. Shamelessness

a) English: *Have a thick skin, mutton dressed as lamb...*

b) Vietnamese: *Vừa ăn cướp, vừa la làng, Ăn cứt không biết thối, Bắt chuột không hay lại hay ia bếp, Cưa sừng làm nghé...*

4.3.1.7. Pry

a) English: *A Nosy parker, poke one's nose into something...*

b) Vietnamese: *Đôi co mách lẻo, Ăn ráy ngứa miệng...*

4.3.1.8. Wickedness

a) English: *Put a spoke in somebody's wheel...*

b) Vietnamese: *Đâm bị thóc chọc bị gạo, Xui nguyên giục bị..*

4.3.1.9. Contemptuousness/ Haughtiness

a) English: *As vain as a peacock, Airs and graces...*

b) Vietnamese: *Khinh người như rác, Nhìn người bằng nửa con mắt, Khinh khinh như chính mắt thối, Tự cao tự đại, Giơ nanh múa vuốt ...*

4.3.1.10. Disloyalty/ Unfaithfulness

a) English: *Stab someone in the back, Off again, on again...*

b) Vietnamese: *Bạc như vôi, Bội nghĩa vong ân. ..*

4.3.1.11. Stupidity/ Foolishness

a) English: *As thick as two short planks, A bloody fool...*

b) Vietnamese: *Đầu óc bả đậu, Dốt đặc cán mai, Dốt lòi đuôi...*

4.3.1.12. Silliness/ Clumsiness in behaviors

a) English: *Buy a pig in a poke, All thumbs*

b) Vietnamese: *Bán bò tậu ẽnh ương, Bắt bọ bỏ tai mình, Đan lồng nhót kiến, Đẽo đòn gánh đẽ vai...*

4.3.1.13. Hypocrisy

a) English: *A wolf in sheep's clothing, Shed crocodile tears....*

b) Vietnamese: *Sói khoác da cừu, Nước mắt cá sấu...*

4.3.1.14. Garrulousness

a) English: *Shoot off one's mouth, Play someone/ something up.*

b) Vietnamese: *Ba hoa chích chòe, Một tắc đến trời...*

4.3.1.15. Spendthrift

a) English: *Have (got)/ with more money than sense...*

b) Vietnamese: *Ăn tàn phá hại, Ăn như tiêu như phá,...*

4.3.1.16. Cold-heartedness

a) English: *As dead as mutton, A cold fish, As hard as stone...*

b) Vietnamese: *Lạnh như sắt*

4.3.1.17. Timidity

a) English: *A shrinking violet, As timid as a mouse...*

b) Vietnamese: *Nhát như cáy, Nhát như cheo, Nhát như thỏ đế.*

4.3.1.18. Illusion

a) English: *Live in an ivory tower, Build castles in Spain...*

b) Vietnamese: *Nằm mơ giữa ban ngày*

Table 4.8 Frequency of Semantic Field of IDHDIE and IDHDIV

	SEMANTIC FIELDS	English		Vietnamese	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1	<i>Critique of Physical Appearance</i>	11	6.47	25	13.59
2	<i>Greed</i>	2	1.18	8	4.35
3	<i>Laziness</i>	1	0.59	16	8.70
4	<i>Opportunism</i>	3	1.76	10	5.43

5	<i>Selfishness/ Individualism</i>	1	0.59	7	3.80
6	<i>Shamelessness</i>	9	5.29	6	3.26
7	<i>Pry</i>	5	2.94	5	2.72
8	<i>Wickedness</i>	29	17.06	30	16.30
9	<i>Contemptuousness/ Haughtiness</i>	17	10.00	8	4.35
10	<i>Disloyalty/ Unfaithfulness</i>	8	4.71	11	5.98
11	<i>Stupidity/ Foolishness</i>	8	4.71	11	5.98
12	<i>Silliness/ Clumsiness</i>	14	8.24	16	8.70
13	<i>Hypocrisy</i>	3	1.76	8	4.35
14	<i>Garrulousness</i>	6	3.53	5	2.72
15	<i>Spenthrift</i>	5	2.94	8	4.35
16	<i>Cold-heartedness</i>	12	7.06	1	0.54
17	<i>Timidity</i>	6	3.53	3	1.63
18	<i>Illusion</i>	5	2.94	1	0.54
19	<i>Others</i>	25	14.70	5	2.71
TOTAL		170	100	184	100

4.1.3. The Similarities and Differences of Semantic Features of IDHDIE and IDHDIV

4.1.3.1. Similarities

Surprisingly, some IDHDIE have Vietnamese equivalents, which prove the two peoples sometimes think in the same way to a certain extent. For instance, in English we have *Add fuel to the flame*, which is equivalent to the Vietnamese idiom *Đổ dầu vào lửa*.

4.1.3.2. Differences

Vietnamese idioms also use *ma*, *quỷ* in their IDHDI as in *xấu như ma*, *xấu như quỷ* although no one knows how ugly “*ma*” and “*quỷ*” are. They also use “*Phật*” in “*khẩu Phật tâm xà*” to dispraise hypocritical people. This is because of the impact of Buddhism, the religious belief of most of Vietnamese people, on the way people think. “*Ma*” and “*quỷ*” in Buddhism symbolize bad things, and they are usually described as very ugly persons while *Phật* (*Buddha*) is the symbol of good and kind ones. Western people, however, believe in God because they are Christian. In IDHDIE, therefore, “*devil*” is used to show bad things as in *Sell one’s soul to the devil*”; “*Lucifer*” as in *As proud as Lucifer*. These partly show the differences in national religious characteristics between Vietnamese people and English people. Another difference in the semantic features between IDHDIE and IDHDIV is regional characteristics between the two. IDHDIV own a few idioms which uses the names of some regions such as *Ác như cá sấu vùng Gấm*, *Bòn như Định Công hòn vàng*, and *Oai oái như phủ Khoái kêu com*. These idioms almost have no equivalents in English.

4.4. SUMMARY

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1. CONCLUSION

As we stated in the previous chapters, this work attempts to describe and analyze the syntactic, stylistic and semantic features of IDHDIE and IDHDIV. By doing this, we aim at finding out the constructions and the variety of meanings possessed by IDHDI, from

which finding out the way they are used in both languages. Finally, the features mentioned above have been identified and they are briefly presented as follows.

Syntactically, IDHDIE and IDHDIV can be expressed in different types of phrases and sentences. Phrasal structures are classified into noun phrases (31 in IDHDIE; 34 in IDHDIV), verb phrases (104 in IDHDIE; 110 in IDHDIV), adjective phrases (29 in IDHDIE; 40 in IDHDIV) and prepositional phrases (6 in IDHDIE; none in IDHDIV). In the limit of the collected corpus, it can be seen that verb phrases are the most popular in IDHDI of the two languages and there are no prepositional phrases in IDHDIV. The structures used in IDHDIE and IDHDIV are generally different. They have only a few patterns in common: **V + N + comp- element + N**, **V + N / V + N** and **V + N + PP**.

Semantically, we have totally a category of 18 groups of semantic field, in which IDHDI referring to *Wickedness* occupy the largest number in both English and Vietnamese languages. IDHDIE implying *Laziness* and *Selfishness/ Individualism* and IDHDIV referring *Cold-heartedness* and *Illusion* share the position of the least with one idiom in each field. Surprisingly, some IDHDIE have Vietnamese equivalents with the same images and even constituents. This proves that users of both languages, to some extent, have the same recognition and evaluation about the world in general and about human beings in particular.

Stylistically, most of the idioms in the corpus of this study express their meanings via means of stylistic devices such as metaphor, simile, metonymy and hyperbole, in which metaphor is superior in number in both languages.

5.2. IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING

It is true that Vietnamese learners often find learning and interpreting idioms great challenges. This is because idioms, as defined earlier, are semantically opaque and this obstacle prevents learners from comprehending their meanings. What makes it more difficult for learners/ users of English is that a lot of native speakers have the habit of using idioms when communicating. Misunderstanding the meanings of idioms can also obstruct communication and causes misunderstanding of communicators' ideas.

In order to help Vietnamese learners of English to get over the above problems, we hereafter would like to have some suggestions for language teaching and leaning.

Firstly, idioms should be taught to upper-intermediate or advanced students, who are ready to take their English fluency to the next level. It cannot be denied that to a beginning English learner, idioms can be quite confusing to remember and memorize. And it is better for our learners to know that one cannot achieve perfection in using idioms overnight.

Secondly, idioms should be taught in groups. It can be easily found that most idioms fall into simple categories, like idioms

with animals, parts of the body or colours; or more complex categories, like idioms belonging to topics- *Wickedness; Disloyalty*- for instance. Classifying idioms in categories can help learners memorize them easily.

Thirdly, idioms should be presented in context, not in isolation and authentic materials should be used to teach idoms. Some ESL teachers simply go over a list of English idioms and their definitions or explanations. However, in order to ensure that students not only understand them, but also are able to use them, teachers should present idioms along with examples in context, for example, in simple conversations where the meaning of the idiom is clear. Then, teachers can ask learners to guess the meaning of idioms and correct if necessary. This helps learners both learn the idiom and involve them in the situation in which the idiom is used. Besides, teachers had better show students how some of these idioms are used in the media, in newspapers and magazine articles, and in songs, cartoons, videos, advertisements, and so on. It is necessary for our learners to know that there are real people in real life who actually use idioms in their daily conversations. This is an effective way to motivate learners and encourage them to start using some of the idioms themselves.

Fourthly, equivalents should be taken full advantage of when teaching idioms. A list of idioms in learners' native language, Vietnamese, for instance, should be prepared. A good equivalent in Vietnamese is useful and can make teaching English idioms

far easier. For example, if you want to teach Vietnamese learners the meaning of *To pass the buck* you can simply say it is similar to *Ném đá giấu tay* in Vietnamese. This literally means *to throw a stone, and then hide one's hand* but it is a rather good equivalent to *to pass the buck*.

Last but not least, dialogues and role-play are useful written and oral activities in teaching idioms. Teachers can assign learners to write dialogues in pairs by using the English idioms introduced in class and then act out the dialogue in the following class. Learners can be motivated to write dialogues without burden because of pair collaboration and role-play activity can help them remember the dialogue they wrote through repetitive rehearsals. It is easier and more fun for them to remember English idioms because they have chance to share and enjoy learning English idioms with friends.

For example, to introduce the idiom *to have one's head in the clouds*, we can present a dialogue like the following one:

- John: Hey Sarah, are you still listening to me? Do you *have your head in the clouds*?

- Sarah: Sorry, I'm going to a party tonight, and I'm thinking of what to wear.

Hence, dialogue writing and role-play are useful and interesting activities for learners' meaningful and efficient drills. Involving learners in describing and narrating their experiences/activities by using idioms is also another efficient drill for teachers to consider.

Finally, a good knowledge of culture, beliefs, and habits of native speakers is as important as a good knowledge of the language learned. This is especially true for such a tough and vague aspect of the language as idioms.

5.3. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

IDHDI, in fact, cover a wide range of linguistic areas. However, due to the limit of time and reference materials as well as the constraints faced by the researcher, this paper cannot cover all constructions as well as all meanings of IDHDI. For these reasons, there are some other aspects that are in need to be further investigated.

Some suggestions for further research can be drawn as following:

- ❖ A Contrastive Analysis of Proverbs Denoting Humans with Dispraising Implications in English and Vietnamese
- ❖ An Investigation into Idioms Denoting Humans with Praising Implications in English and Vietnamese