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**A STUDY OF IDIOMS  
CONTAINING TERMS FOR PLANTS  
IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE**

**Field : The English Language**

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**M.A. THESIS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
(A SUMMARY)**

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. RATIONALE

In the process of communication, sometimes we come across some expressions that we can't understand although we can comprehend the meaning of every single word in them.

The main reason why we fail to understand what these sentences are all about lies in the low level of linguistic competence of English idioms. Idiom is often defined as "a group of words which have a different meaning when used together from the one it would have if the meaning of each word were taken individually" [9]. In fact, idioms are frequently heard and read in everyday speech and in literature thanks to their succinctness, vividness and especially quintessence in every language. Idioms in this way bear the cultural characteristics of a country in which they are used. Therefore, in order to understand as well as translate idioms from a language into another one, knowledge of not only linguistic aspects but also of cultural reality has to be involved. As a result, there may be nothing strange in the fact that gaining an insight into English idioms is not only a wish but also a necessity to any learners of English. Indeed, the Oxford Dictionary of English Idioms [11] states in its introduction that the "accurate and appropriate use of English expressions which are in the broadest idiomatic sense is one distinguishing mark of a native command of the language and a reliable measure of the proficiency of foreign learners". These strong properties of idioms have posed a serious challenge for several

studies among linguists for the last decades such as Collins, V. H. [9], Cruse, D. A. [14] or Mc Carthy, M.; and O'Dell, F. [38].

There have been so far studies on idioms containing such terms as colors, animals, kins and so on. However, none of them researched into the idioms related to plants in English and Vietnamese. As a result, this study focuses on *idioms containing terms for plants (TsFPs) in English and Vietnamese* to help better teaching English and Vietnamese as a foreign language.

#### 1.2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Thanks to this study, Vietnamese learners could not only have potential source of English and Vietnamese idioms containing TsFPs but also help Vietnamese learners of English and English learners of Vietnamese know how to use these idioms properly and especially avoid negative interferences in translating idioms. Besides, the result withdrawn from the study could help learners have a good insight into the custom, thought and the social behavior of the native speakers of English and Vietnamese.

#### 1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

##### 1.3.1. Aims

This study is carried out to find out the similarities and dissimilarities of syntactic and semantic features of English and Vietnamese idioms containing TsFPs to help them learn English and Vietnamese better. In addition, learners could be aware of the beauty of a foreign language and its cultural features.

##### 1.3.2. Objectives

The study is intended to:

- Describe the syntactic and semantic features of English idioms containing TsFPs.

- Make a comparison between English and Vietnamese idioms containing TsFPs with regard to syntactic and semantic features.

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

The study is to answer the following questions:

1. What are the syntactic and semantic features of English idioms containing TsFPs?
2. What are the syntactic and semantic features of Vietnamese idioms containing TsFPs?
3. What are the similarities and differences in syntactic and semantic features of English and Vietnamese idioms containing TsFPs?

#### **1.5. SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

Idioms have become an interesting object of several recent studies in various languages. Within the scope of this study, we wish to confine ourselves to studying English and Vietnamese idioms containing TsFPs in terms of syntactic and semantic features. The similarities and dissimilarities in syntactic and semantic features withdrawn from the study could be explained on the basis of the cultural features of the languages in comparison.

#### **1.6. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

The study is organized into five chapters: Chapter 1 is Introduction; Chapter 2 is Literature Review and Theoretical Background; Chapter 3 is Method and Procedure; Chapter 4 is Findings of Discussions; Chapter 5 is Conclusion and Implications.

## **CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1. LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1.1. Previous Studies of English Idioms in Foreign Countries**

Idioms take up a large proportion of both monolingual and bilingual dictionaries such as: Oxford Dictionary of English Idioms by Cowie, A. P et al [11], NTC's American Idioms Dictionary by Spears, R. A.[50], The Cassell Dictionary of English Idioms by Fergusson, R. [21], From the Horse's Mouth: Oxford Dictionary of English Idioms by Ayto, J. [2]. In addition, there are some more collections of idioms such as “Idioms” by Copper, D. [12], “American Idioms and Some Phrases Just for Fun” by Swick, E. [52].

In fact, idiomaticity is not a new subject in linguistic study. There has been plenty of work on it such as “Essential Idioms in English” by Dixon, R. J. [17], or “Idioms for Everyday Use” by Broukai, M. [6]...

#### **2.1.2. Previous Studies of English and Vietnamese Idioms in Vietnam**

Vietnamese idioms also prove significant in Vietnamese language, and several native linguists have been trying to collect them and to detect their special peculiarities. The pioneers are Nguyễn Lực and Lương Văn Đăng [63]. Lately, Nguyễn Lực has just produced an important and useful book “Thành ngữ tiếng Việt” [64]. More interestingly, there have been a lot of contrastive studies on

idioms in Vietnamese and other languages such as English, French, Russian... by Nguyễn Đình Hùng [60], Bùi Phụng [67].

Furthermore, a number of contrastive studies on the various aspects of idioms have been carried out in Danang University. For example, “A Study of Some Characteristics of Structure, Meaning and Culture of English Idioms About Animals” by Phạm Thị Tố Như [41]; “A Contrastive Analysis of English and Vietnamese Idioms Using the Terms of Human Body Parts” by Nguyễn Thị Hiệp [31]...

## **2.2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.2.1. Definitions of Idioms**

The word “idiom” has acquired quite different denotations describing its syntactic and semantic features.

Semantically, it is recognizable from the above examples that there is not a direct link between the meanings of each constituent part of the idioms and their meaning as a whole

In addition, there are many definitions of idioms that focus on its structural features. They support the viewpoint that an idiom is structurally and lexically restricted.

Most Vietnamese authors share the same view that idiom is an expression whose meaning is not compositional, and does not follow from the meaning of the individual words which make up of it.

### **2.2.2. The Origins of Idioms**

#### **2.2.2.1. Idioms from Living Circumstances**

#### **2.2.2.2. Idioms from Religion and Belief**

#### **2.2.2.3. Idioms from Historical Allusion**

#### **2.2.2.4. Idioms from Traditions and Customs**

### **2.2.3. Typical Features of Idioms**

Although the term “idiom” is defined from slightly different angles, lexicographers and linguists hold some similar views about peculiar features of idioms. In this paper, four distinctive features of idioms are focused in terms of syntactic and semantic aspects.

#### **2.2.3.1. Lexical Integrity and Structural Stability**

#### **2.2.3.2. Semantic Opacity**

#### **2.2.3.3. Symbolism / Stylistic Features**

#### **2.2.3.4. The Inseparability of Culture and Idioms**

### **2.2.4. Idioms and Other Language Units**

Idioms bear some syntactic and semantic resemblance with other phraseology units in the language, which sometimes cause some difficulties to distinguish this unit from the others. The confusion usually exists between idioms and phrases, collocations, proverbs and clichés.

#### **2.2.4.1. Idioms and Phrases**

#### **2.2.4.2. Idioms and Collocations**

#### **2.2.4.3. Idioms and Proverbs**

#### **2.2.4.4. Idioms and Clichés**

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHOD AND PROCEDURE**

#### **3.1. RESEARCH METHODS**

In order to achieve the aims and objectives, in this study, descriptive and contrastive methods are mainly utilized.

The descriptive method is used to describe in details the syntactic and semantic features through the examples of idioms with TsFPs collected from referent books, stories, novels, dictionaries and Internet websites.

In addition, the contrastive method could be used to identify the similarities and differences in the syntactic and semantic features of idioms containing TsFPs in English and Vietnamese.

### 3.2. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The main materials used in the study are collected from the following major sources:

- The bilingual magazines, novels and short stories and literature books.
- The grammar books written by English and Vietnamese linguists.
- The English-Vietnamese and Vietnamese-English dictionaries.
- English journals.
- The Internet webpages.

### 3.3. DATA ANALYSIS

After collecting 400 idioms containing TsFPs from English and Vietnamese books, novels, dictionaries and journals respectively, we categorize them into two main aspects: syntactic and semantic one.

Syntactically, the classification of the data is mainly based on the different structural categories, namely: noun phrases, verb phrases, adjective phrases, prepositional phrases and adverb phrases.

Semantically, the classification is carried out on the basis of typical semantic features of idioms containing TsFPs in both languages

### 3.4. PROCEDURES

The steps will be involved:

- Collecting idioms containing TsFPs in both languages from books, novels, short stories, dictionaries and Internet.

- Analyzing the syntactic and semantic features of idioms containing TsFPs in English and Vietnamese.

- Identifying the similarities and differences between the two languages concerning idioms containing TsFPs with regard to syntactic and semantic features.

- Suggesting some implications for teaching and learning this popular kind of idioms in English and Vietnamese as a foreign language.

## CHAPTER 4

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### 4.1. SYNTACTIC FEATURES OF IDIOMS CONTAINING TsFPs IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE

##### 4.1.1. Phrase Structures

##### 4.1.1.1. English and Vietnamese Idioms Containing TsFPs of Noun Phrase Patterns

- *(Article) + Adjective (Adj) + Noun (N)*

Table 4.1 shows that there are 13 noun phrase idioms (6.5%), which make up quite a small part of the idioms from plant stocks. The words denoting plants are the head nouns in most of noun phrase idioms under this kind of structures. The adjectives in these idioms functions as pre-modifiers. None of Vietnamese idioms containing TsFPs of this pattern can be found (⊙).

In English	In Vietnamese
<i>hot potato, old bean, bad apple, second banana, top banana, sour grapes...</i>	⊙

- *(Article) + Past Participle + Noun*

English idioms containing TsFPs in this form occupy little percentage (N = 3 # 1.5%) in the total idioms collected. There are no Vietnamese idioms equivalent of this pattern.

In English	In Vietnamese
<i>rotten apple, broken reed, forbidden fruit</i>	⊙

- *Noun + Noun*

In this pattern, while only 12% idioms containing TsFPs (N = 24) are used by native English speakers, 14% idioms (N = 28) are preferred by native Vietnamese speakers. In English Idioms, sometimes the co-ordinating conjunction “and” links two nouns to show the relationship between two words.

In English	In Vietnamese
<i>root and branch, salad days, carrot and stick, meat and potatoes, couch potato...</i>	<i>bãi bể nướng dâu, bữa rau bữa cháo, cà riêng cà tôi, com sung cháo dền, dây mơ rễ má...</i>

- *Noun / Noun Phrase (NP) + Prep. P*

The number of English idioms containing TsFPs of this pattern is 23, accounting for 11.5%. The prepositional phrase in this structure is composed of a noun as the head and is preceded by a prepositional phrase. The prepositional phrase functions as a post modifier of a noun before it. For Vietnamese idioms, the modifying prepositional phrase normally begins with the comparative word (CW) “như”. 7 idioms containing TsFPs of this pattern (3.5%) can be found in Vietnamese.

In English	In Vietnamese
<i>a babe in the woods, thorn in your side, wood from the neck up, a hill</i>	<i>mặt xanh như tàu lá, mặt vàng như nghệ, muỗi như trấu, con</i>

*of beans, apple of someone's eye, straw in the wind...* | *như con ngô con khoai...*

- *Noun + Subordinate Clause (Sub. Clause)*

In this structure, 2 English idioms (1%) can be found and no Vietnamese idiom is available.

In English	In Vietnamese
<i>a path strewn with roses, straw that breaks the camel's back</i>	⊙

- *Noun + Adj + Noun + Adj*

In comparison with English idioms of noun phrase patterns, Vietnamese also owns some typical idioms containing TsFPs under the form of noun phrases. Normally, they have a parallel structure and the order of this pattern cannot be often changed. In the parallel structure, there are four words for each due to the desire for the rhythm to make a smooth speech. The number of Vietnamese idioms under this kind of parallel structure is 12, occupying 6%. Meanwhile, there are not any idioms of this pattern in English.

Let's consider these Vietnamese idioms containing TsFPs below.

In English	In Vietnamese
⊙	<i>quýt ngọt cam chua, lá thắm chỉ hồng, cà chua mắt mận, nước độc rừng xanh...</i>

#### **4.1.1.2. English and Vietnamese Idioms Containing TsFPs of Verb Phrase Patterns**

- *Verb + Noun / NP*

This type of structure is not quite common in Vietnamese idioms containing TsFPs (2%). On the contrary, English idioms containing TsFPs under this structure are more popular (11%).

In English	In Vietnamese
<i>bear fruit, draw the shortest straw, go bananas, hit the hay, know beans, spill the beans, turn a new leaf...</i>	<i>ăn cháo lá đũa, đơm đó ngon tre, nói nhát gừng...</i>

- *Verb + Noun / NP + Prep. P*

It is not surprising from Table 4.2 that there are few Vietnamese idioms containing TsFPs in this structure. Only 8 Vietnamese idioms (4%) of this structure are collected. In contrast, the number of English idioms in this form occupies 6.5% (N = 13).

In English	In Vietnamese
<i>can't see the forest for its trees, kick something into the long grass, pull someone's chestnut out of the fire...</i>	<i>cạn ao bèo đến đất, đút mía cho voi, leo cau đến buồng, thả hổ về rừng, đâm đầu vào bụi...</i>

- *Verb + Prep. P*

In this pattern, the verb operates as the central component. It is modified by the prepositional phrase. Let's look at the investigated samples below, it is interesting that 39 English idioms in this pattern are found in the total number of the idioms collected (19.5%). As for idioms containing TsFPs in Vietnamese, merely 9 idioms (4.5%) of this type can be found.

In English	In Vietnamese
<i>bark up the wrong tree, cut down the tall poppies, drop like a hot</i>	<i>mọc như nấm, bắn như vãi trấu, câm như thóc, im như thóc, nín</i>

<i>potato, grow like mushrooms wither on the vine...</i>	<i>như thóc, chết như ngã rạ, chết như sung rụng...</i>
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- *Verb + Noun / NP + Noun*

Rarely are the idioms containing TsFPs of this pattern found in both languages. In this case, Table 4.2 shows that only 4 idioms (2%) can be collected in English and none of Vietnamese idiom is found.

In English	In Vietnamese
<i>drive someone bananas, go climb a tree, give someone beans, hand someone a lemon.</i>	⊙

- *Verb + Noun / NP + Verb*

There are only 2 English idioms of this type containing TsFPs (1%) and only one corresponding Vietnamese idiom (0.5%).

In English	In Vietnamese
<i>bear the grass grow don't let grass grow under one's feet</i>	<i>ngậm bồ hòn làm ngọt</i>

- *Verb + (Noun / NP) + Sub. Clause*

There are only two idioms containing TsFPs (1%) of this pattern in English and one idiom in Vietnamese (0.5%).

In English	In Vietnamese
<i>make hay while the sun shines know how many beans make five</i>	<i>lạy ông tôi ở bụi này</i>

- *Verb + Noun / NP + Verb + Noun / NP*

Table 4.2 indicates that no English idioms containing TsFPs in this form can be found from my data, whereas a lot of Vietnamese idioms containing TsFPs appear under this parallel structure (34.5%). In this form, a noun can follow a verb and functions as a direct object to modify the verb.

In English  
⊙

In Vietnamese

ăn bờ ở bụi, ăn cây nào rào cây  
ấy, ăn hương ăn hoa, bòn gio  
đãi trấu, bôn gio trát trấu, dệt  
gấm thêu hoa...

**4.1.1.3. English Idioms Containing TsFPs of Adjective Phrase Patterns**

Table 4.3 reveals that English idioms containing TsFPs of adjective phrase (AP) patterns seem to be popular (19.5%) and one of the most typical structures is under the comparative pattern.

- (CW) + Adj + CW + NP
- Adj + Noun + Adjective + Noun

**4.1.1.4. English Idioms Containing TsFPs of Prepositional Phrase Patterns**

Syntactically, prepositional phrase pattern of English idioms containing TsFPs has the structure of *Preposition + Noun / NP*. Table 4.4 shows that it is uncommon to find terms involved in plants in English idioms under the form of prepositional phrases (7.0%). In this study no idioms under the prepositional phrase pattern are found in Vietnamese.

The following table 4.5 gives the summary of certain syntactic features of both English and Vietnamese idioms containing TsFPs, namely, *noun phrases*, *verb phrases* and *adjective phrases*.

**Table 4.5 Phrase Structures of English and Vietnamese Idioms Containing TsFPs**

	English	Vietnamese
<i>Noun Phrases</i>	[1] (Article) + Adj + N	[1] ⊙
	[2] (Article) + Past Participle + Noun	[2] ⊙
	[3] Noun + Noun	[3] Noun + Noun
	[4] N / NP + Prep. P	[4] Noun / NP + Prep. P
	[5] N + Sub. Clause	[5] ⊙
	[6] ⊙	[6] N + Adj + N + Adj
<i>Verb Phrases</i>	[1] Verb + N / NP	[1] Verb + N / NP
	[2] Verb + N / NP + Prep. P	[2] Verb + N / NP + Prep. P
	[3] Verb + Prep. P	[3] Verb + Prep. P
	[4] Verb + N / NP + Noun	[4] ⊙
	[5] Verb + N / NP + Verb	[5] Verb + N + Verb
	[6] Verb + (N / NP) + Sub. Clause	[6] Verb + (N / NP) + Sub. Clause
	[7] ⊙	[7] Verb + N / NP + Verb + N / NP
<i>Adj. Phrases</i>	[1] (CW)+ Adj + CW + NP	[1] (CW)+ Adj + CW + NP
	[2] ⊙	[2] Adj + N + Adj + N
<i>Prep. Phrases</i>	[1] Preposition + N / NP	[1] ⊙

#### **4.1.2. Sentence Structures**

As mentioned above, besides phrase structures, sentence patterns are found to be used in some idioms containing TsFPs in Vietnamese while none is found to be used in its counterpart in English (N = 0).

##### ***4.1.2.1. Subject + Verbal Predicate***

##### ***4.1.2.2. Subject + Verbal Predicate + Complement***

##### ***4.1.2.3. Subject + Verbal Predicate + Object***

##### ***4.1.2.4. Subject + Verbal Predicate + Adjunct***

##### ***4.1.2.5. Subject + Verbal Predicate + Subject + Verbal Predicate***

#### **4.2. SEMANTIC MECHANISMS AND ORIGINS OF ENGLISH IDIOMS CONTAINING TsFPs**

In this thesis, we would like to clarify the semantic mechanism of English idioms containing TsFPs in order to discover the literal as well as the figurative meaning of idioms.

##### **4.2.1. Literal Meaning of English and Vietnamese Idioms from Their Components' Meaning**

##### **4.2.2. Idioms' Meaning Motivated by Metaphorical Devices**

##### **4.2.3. Meaning of Idioms Based on Real-world Situation, History Allusion and Cultural Background**

#### **4.3. SEMANTIC FEATURES OF IDIOMS CONTAINING TsFPs IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE**

Concerning the meanings, idioms containing TsFPs could be divided into two categories according to the study's result:

+ Idioms having Human Implications (82.5% in English versus 91.5% in Vietnamese)

+ Idioms having Non - human Implications (17.5% in English versus 8.5% in Vietnamese)

#### **4.3.1. Idioms Having Human Implications**

##### ***4.3.1.1. Idioms Expressing Human Physical States***

##### ***4.3.1.2. Idioms Expressing Human Personality***

##### ***4.3.1.3. Idioms Expressing Human Moods or Psychological States***

##### ***4.3.1.4. Idioms Expressing Human Actions, Behaviors and Activities***

##### ***4.3.1.5. Idioms Expressing Human Situations and Conditions***

##### ***4.3.1.6. Idioms Indicating Human Social Status***

##### ***4.3.1.7. Idioms Implying Human Success and Failure***

##### ***4.3.1.8. Idioms Implying Human Understanding***

##### ***4.3.1.9. Idioms Implying Human Relationship***

#### **4.3.2. Idioms Having Non - Human Implications**

##### ***4.3.2.1. Idioms from Plants Implying Things and the Qualities or Characteristics of Things***

##### ***4.3.2.2. Idioms Expressing Quantity***

##### ***4.3.2.3. Idioms Expressing Quality***

##### ***4.3.2.4. Idioms Expressing Size and Shape***

##### ***4.3.2.5. Idioms Implying a Place***

##### ***4.3.2.6. Idioms Implying a Belief***

##### ***4.3.2.7. Idioms Expressing Development of a Thing***

In this subsection, we have so far analysed the semantic features of idioms containing TsFPs in English and Vietnamese which frequently could be illustrated in Table 4.8.

**Table 4.8 Frequency of Semantic Features of Idioms Containing TsFPs in English and Vietnamese**

<i>Semantic Features of Idioms Containing TsFPs in English and Vietnamese</i>		English		Vietnamese	
		N	%	N	%
<i>Idioms Having Human Implications</i>	Human physical states	18	9.0	20	10.0
	Human personality	16	8.0	27	13.5
	Human moods / psychological states	18	9.0	10	5.0
	Human actions, behaviors and activities	60	30	67	33.5
	Human situations and conditions	34	17	49	24.5
	Human social status	4	2.0	1	0.5
	Human success and failure	6	3.0	0	0.0
	Human understanding	5	2.5	1	0.5
	Human relationship	4	2.0	8	4.0
<i>Idioms Having Non- human Implications</i>		35	17.5	17	8.5
<b>Total Number</b>		<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

#### 4.4. SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE IDIOMS CONTAINING TsFPs

##### 4.4.1. Similarities

+ Syntactic features

From Table 4.7, we find out that both English and Vietnamese own a system of idioms in certain structure groups such as noun phrases, verb phrases and adjective phrases.

In the structure of noun phrases, idioms containing TsFPs in English and Vietnamese share such common structures as *Noun + Noun*, *Noun / NP + Prep. P.*

Idioms containing TsFPs in the form of verb phrases are the most popular in both languages with a large number of examples collected in the corpus. As a result, there are some similar structures in English and Vietnamese such as *Verb + Noun / NP*, *Verb + Noun / NP + Prep. P*, *Verb + Prep. P.*

In term of Adjective Phrase, the structure of *Adj + Prep. P* is illustrated in both English and Vietnamese. In English and Vietnamese Adjective Phrase Patterns, adjective plays a decisive role in the meaning of an idiom.

+ Semantic features

Firstly, Vietnamese and English idioms containing TsFPs are employed with the same semantic features related to human beings such as physical states, personality, moods or psychological states, actions, behaviors and activities, situations and conditions, human relationship...

Secondly, there are some Vietnamese and English idioms from plants carrying more than one semantic feature.

Thirdly, it is easy to understand literal and transparent meaning of an English and Vietnamese idiom containing TsFPs because its meaning can be made by associating its individual words' meaning under comparative structures.

Fourthly, idioms were created by native speakers, describing their life as well as their culture. Accordingly, in order to decode semantic mechanisms of English and Vietnamese idioms containing TsFPs, we often base on real-world situation, history allusion and cultural background. In addition, both English and Vietnamese idioms containing TsFPs use some certain characters, things,

concrete events to illustrate abstract ideas or phenomena by the means of metaphorical devices.

#### 4.4.2. Differences

##### + Syntactic features

Apart from some similarities mentioned above, idioms containing TsFPs in the two languages have a few differences in syntactic features based on the samples investigated.

Firstly, in the collection of English and Vietnamese idioms containing TsFPs, there are some particular structures that one of two languages possesses. For example, English idioms of noun phrase patterns own some that do not belong to the collection of Vietnamese idioms such as *Adj + Noun*, *Past Participle + Noun*, *Noun + Sub. Clause*. On the contrary, Vietnamese idioms of noun phrase patterns own the structure *Noun + Adj + Noun + Adj* that does not exist in English.

Secondly, it has been proved statistically that idioms containing TsFPs of verb phrase patterns in Vietnamese are more common than those in English.

Thirdly, there are no idioms containing TsFPs in the form of prepositional phrases in Vietnamese in comparison with prepositional structures in English. The reason for the difference is that the number of prepositions in Vietnamese is limited in use.

In addition, parallel structures by pairing related words or phrases are illustrated in Vietnamese idioms containing TsFPs which cannot be shared in English not only to give a rhythmic flow and coherence but to help the writer deliver a powerful message to your readers.

Moreover, among the samples investigated, there are no cases of idiom in the form of sentences in English in comparison with the sentence structures in Vietnamese idioms.

##### + Semantic features

Apart from sharing the common semantic features in common with Vietnamese idioms, English idioms containing TsFPs have their own semantic feature expressing human success and failure. Because of the differences in the customs, historical and cultural backgrounds, religious belief and different geographical environment of Vietnam and the countries where English is used as the native language. Thus, there are some differences in forming idioms and the way idioms conveying their meanings.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

#### 5.1. CONCLUSIONS

The study has revealed the following results:

Syntactically, idioms analyzed are under the phrasal structures. The phrasal structures are categorized into noun phrases, verb phrases, adjective phrases and prepositional phrases in English. Similarly, Vietnamese idioms are in the structure of noun phrases, verb phrases and adjective phrases and even sentence structures.

Semantically, the meaningful human and non-human implications through idioms containing TsFPs in English and Vietnamese have been analyzed with regard to many semantic features such as human physical states (good or bad), human personality (good or bad), human moods or psychological states (positive or negative), human actions and activities (positive,

negative, neutral effect), human situations and conditions (favorable and unfavorable), human relationship and human social status... In addition, idioms having non- human implications are also found to refer to things, quantity, phenomena, conceptions...

## **5.2. IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.2.1. Implication for Learning Idioms Containing TsFPs**

Most idioms containing TsFPs under comparative structures express literal meanings; consequently, it is very easy for learners to understand their meaning.

In the case of figurative meanings, identification of the semantic mechanism of the idiom plays an important role in decoding its sense. Specifically, idiom's meaning is motivated by the existence of metaphorical devices or is determined on the basis of real-world situation, history allusion and cultural background.

### **5.2.2. Implication for Teaching Idioms Containing TsFPs**

The need for learning idioms leads to the challenge of teaching idiomatic expressions whose meaning can only be known through conventional use. In respect of this problem, we would like to give the following solutions.

Firstly, idioms introduced to students should be suitable for the learners. For learners at a lower level, idioms should be listed in semantic fields, topics or key words. Of course, the explanation in terms of structure and meaning is indispensable in order to avoid misunderstanding the figurative meaning. At advanced level, analyzing semantic mechanisms of idioms should be done so that learners can discover the figurative meaning of an idiom by themselves.

Secondly, teaching the history of how an idiom came into common usage is also helpful to learners and may provide clues to its present usage.

Thirdly, the more we know about their cultural backgrounds, the better we understand English and Vietnamese idioms. Therefore, in order to teach idioms effectively, it is necessary to teach their cultural characteristics as well.

Last but not least, in practicing idioms, the teacher should decide the idioms that are common so that students have opportunities to hear read and use the expressions through types of exercises.

### **5.2.3. Implication for Translating Idioms Containing TsFPs**

In translation, understanding idioms in general and idioms containing TsFPs in particular as well as finding the translational equivalents are not an easy task due to semantic opacity, loss of the link between the origin and the current usage, the use of metaphor. In this thesis, some translation tactics relating to literal translation and figurative translation could be given to help Vietnamese learners of English deal with idioms containing TsFPs.

#### **5.2.3.1. Literal Translation**

The aim of literal translation is to preserve the national flavor of the source language idioms, while not transgressing the linguistic principles of the target language. Many English idioms in the comparative form could be translated in a literal way, for instance: *as lovely as violet, spread like mushrooms, thick as pea soup, as welcome as the flowers...* In terms of this type of translation, the original form and images of English idioms are unchanged without causing confusion in meaning. For example, *alike as two peas in a*

*pod* could be translated literally into *giống như hai giọt nước*, *grow like mushrooms* into *mọc như nấm*, *as red as a beet* into *đỏ như gấc*.

### 5.2.3.2. Figurative Translation

Due to the complication in understanding the figurative meaning of an idiom, we would like to suggest some approaches to the translation of English idioms containing TsFPs into Vietnamese:

- + Interpreting the denotative meaning of the given idiom containing TsFPs in the source language
- + Clarifying the connotative meaning of the idiom mentioned
- + Elucidating the general meaning of the idiom in the given context in term of semantic features.
- + Finding the Vietnamese equivalence under the light of the semantic mechanisms that have been discussed.

## 5.3. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

### 5.3.1. Limitations

In spite of the fact that we have tried our best to search for necessary materials, there could leave the possibility that the following shortcomings cannot be avoidable.

- Firstly, this paper could not cover all constructions as well as meanings of idioms containing TsFPs under discussion due to the limitation of time, lack of relevant materials relating to this topic in both English and Vietnamese.

- Secondly, the deficiency in the origin of idioms containing TsFPs is the factor affecting the semantic mechanism of these idioms.

### 5.3.2. Suggestions for Further Research

In this thesis, we have confined ourselves to the study of a humble part of syntactic and semantic features of English and Vietnamese idioms containing TsFPs to find out their similarities and

differences. As a result, many other aspects need to be studied in further researches. For example, the research of the idioms containing TsFPs may be carried out in terms of pragmatic features in English and Vietnamese.