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**A STUDY ON ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE IDIOMS
RELATING TO SPIRITUAL LIFE**

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

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 RATIONALE

Being aware of the importance of idioms in daily interaction as well as in learning language, a lot of researchers have made efforts to study issues and aspects in this field. Many researchers have concentrated on analyzing idioms in syntactic, semantic and some cultural features in idioms denoting color, human body parts or numbers, etc. However, an investigation into idioms relating to spiritual life has not been dealt with so far. As a result, on the basis of the results of the previous studies, I would like to deal with the research title: “*A Study on English and Vietnamese Idioms Relating to Spiritual Life*”. However due to the limit time, we are not going to study all idioms relating to spiritual life; we just focus on idioms containing spiritual words in both languages.

1.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.2.1. Aims of the study

This study is aimed at investigating some syntactic, semantic and cultural characteristics of English and Vietnamese idioms containing spiritual words.

1.2.2. Objectives of the study

The study is expected to examine, categorize the syntactic, semantic and cultural features of English and Vietnamese idioms and point out the similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese idioms containing spiritual words and then offer some suggestions for using them.

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the syntactic, semantic and cultural features of idioms containing spiritual words in English and Vietnamese?
2. What are the similarities and the differences between English and Vietnamese idioms containing spiritual words in terms of syntactic semantic, and cultural features?
3. How can we apply this work in translation, learning, and teaching process?

1.4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

A study on syntactic and semantic features of English and Vietnamese idioms containing spiritual words will be a contribution to the understanding and using idioms of the learners.

1.5. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study of English and Vietnamese idioms containing spiritual words is on the aspects of syntax, semantics and culture.

1.6. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Literature and theoretical background

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

Chapter 4: Findings and discussion

Chapter 5: Conclusion

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS STUDIES

For foreign writers, a lot of books and dictionaries have brought us with great benefit. For example, in “*Oxford Dictionary of English Idioms*” by Cowie, Mackin & McCaig [7], idioms are carefully collected and categorized into alphabetical arrangement. Moreover, their meanings and examples of usage in English are also mentioned and explained. The collections of idioms will not stop there because there are still a great number of books related to idioms such as “*Idioms for Everyday Use*” by Broukal and Milida [2], “*Essential Idioms in English*” by Dixon [10], “*Idioms and Idomaticity*” by Fernando and Chitra [12], “*Idioms Structures in English*” by Makkai [34], “*English Idioms and How to use them*” by McMordie [36], etc.

For Vietnamese writers, the first researchers having important contributions to this field we must mention are Nguyễn Lực, Nguyễn Văn Đăng. They have published “*Thành Ngữ Tiếng Việt*” [72] which consists of a lot of idioms. Besides, dictionaries written by Việt Chương [60], Vũ Dung, Vũ Thúy Anh, Vũ Quang Hào [65], Nguyễn Lâm [70], Bùi Phụng [78], Lã Thành [80], contain a great number of idioms which are not only literal but also figuratively illustrated with understandable examples. In addition, Nguyễn Thiện Giáp [64], has paid a lot of attention to the explanation of the concept and borderline between idioms and other units in language.

In terms of syntax and semantics, Hồ Lê [71] and Nguyễn Thiện Giáp [64] have deeply explained the concept and borderline between idioms and other language units.

2.2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.2.1. Definition of idioms & Spiritual life

2.2.1.1. Definitions of idioms

According to Oxford Dictionary [7], idiom is defined as “a group of words in a fixed order that have a particular meaning that is different from the meanings of each word understood by its own”. The definition of idiom can be approached by Cruse [8] as “idiom is an expression whose meaning can not be inferred from the meanings of its parts”. According to Richards et al [45], “An idiom is an expression which functions as a single unit and whose meaning cannot be worked out from its separate parts”.

2.2.1.2. Spiritual life

The English word "spiritual" has its roots in Greek thought, and it implies a split between the material world and the realm of the spirit, because the opposite of spiritual is material. “Spiritual” means connecting with the human spirit, rather than the body or physical things, and connecting with religion [52]. Therefore, what is Spiritual Life? Spiritual life is a life that connected with the human spirit, rather than the body or physical things. And it is "connected with religion". There are three elements that operate in the spiritual world. They are the Divine, the Human’s soul, and the Satanic [101].

Based on the above definitions, we just focus on idioms containing spiritual words are such as God, Lord, saint, angel, heaven, paradise, soul, spirit, ghost, devil, hell. And in Vietnamese, we try to find idioms containing the following words: “Trời”, “Phật”,

“Bụt”, “thần thánh”, hồn”, “vía”, “địa ngục”, quỷ” and “ma”. For example, in English, we have “honest to God”, “**An act of God**”, or “**the devil to pay**”. And Vietnamese idioms are such as “**bụt nhà không thiêng**”, “**ma chê quỷ hờn**” or “**hết hồn hết vía**”.

2.2.2. Main Features of Idioms

2.2.2.1. Popular Features

2.2.2.2. Syntactic Restriction and Stable Features

2.2.2.3. Semantic Features

2.2.2.4. Symbolic Features

2.2.2.5. National Features

2.2.3. Idioms and Other Language Units

2.2.3.1. Idioms and Phrases

2.2.3.2. Idioms and Collocation

2.2.3.3. Idioms and Proverbs

2.2.4. Overview of Phrase Structure

2.2.5. Definitions of Semantic Fields

2.3. SUMMARY

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

Describing and analyzing some syntactic and semantic characteristics accompanied by discovering and comparing some cultural features of two languages English and Vietnamese are main purposes that we deal with in this study.

3.2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is conducted with a combination of descriptive, qualitative and comparative methods.

3.3. DATA COLLECTION

In general, to fulfill the scope of the study, we collected dictionaries, books, and the websites on the internet of idioms. After that, we read and pick out all idioms literally and figuratively containing spiritual words. In order to select idioms easily and fast while doing analysis, we put all the idioms which we had collected together in alphabetical order and in three main groups: the divine, Human's soul and the satanic.

3.4. DATA ANALYSIS

After being selected the material, the samples of English and Vietnamese idioms containing spiritual words were examined, classified, described, analyzed and compared to enable the comparison to find out the similarities and the differences in terms of syntactic, semantic and cultural features.

3.5. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The data were selected from English, American and Vietnamese newspapers. Most of linguistic and grammatical books are reliable.

CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. SYNTACTIC FEATURES OF ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE IDIOMS CONTAINING SPIRITUAL WORDS

4.1.1. Phrase Structure

4.1.1.1. Idioms containing spiritual words in the structure of a noun phrase

Similarities:

a. Firstly, the central component of a noun phrase of idioms containing spiritual words can be modified by an adjective in both languages.

b. Secondly, it seems hard to find English idioms as well as Vietnamese one being modified by another noun.

c. Thirdly, the structure of noun phrase with coordination relation can be found in two languages.

Differences:

a. Firstly, the central component can be modified by a prepositional phrase only found in English not in Vietnamese.

b. Secondly, the central component can be modified by –s genitive, and there are not many English idiom containing spiritual words in this type of corpus, and in Vietnamese this type does exist.

c. Thirdly, it should be kept in mind that most of English noun phrase of ICSWs can be in singular or plural forms depending on the subject they refer to while Vietnamese ones are usually in singular forms and such determiners as *và, những, một số, một vài ...* cannot be inserted between their components.

d. Fourthly, the central component can be modified by a non-

finite phrase is one of different things when comparing between English and Vietnamese idioms in the structure of noun phrase.

4.1.1.2. Idioms containing spiritual words in the structure of a verb phrase

Similarities

In this pattern, there are some similar points between English and Vietnamese idioms containing spiritual words.

Firstly, many English and Vietnamese ICSWs are in this pattern.

Secondly, most of them rarely put in passive forms

Thirdly, Noun (NP) in this pattern functions as a direct object to the verb.

Fourthly, compared with free word groups with the same lexical components, English and Vietnamese ICSWs in this pattern turn out to use in negative forms.

In short, It can be seen that these examples of idiom verb phrase are extremely tight in structure and must be treated as an integrated whole. Examining these ones, we see that under no circumstances can they be broken up to form new arrangements nor can they be change into passive form.

Differences

By analyzing verb phrase in both languages, we can easily find that Vietnamese idiomatic verb phrases are more complicated than the English one. This can be proved due to the fact that there are more structures in verb phrases found in Vietnamese than in English.

In short, It can be seen that these examples of idiom verb phrase are extremely tight in structure and must be treated as an integrated whole. Examining these ones, we see that under no circumstances can they be broken up to form new arrangements nor

can they be change into passive form.

4.1.1.3. Idioms containing spiritual words in the structure of an adjective phrase

Similarities

Generally, in the structure of an AdjP, idioms containing spiritual words of English and Vietnamese are in comparison form. It is very popular in English to use the comparative form with “as”: as white as a ghost, kind as Buddha and “như” in Vietnamese: **nhọt nhạt như mắt ma, lành như bụt.**

The commonest function of the adjective phrase idioms is as complement of a clause.

Occasionally it functions as complement or adjunct.

(17) Mary has just come in with a face **as white as a ghost** to say there has been an accident at the corner of the lane [3, p.32].

Differences

In spite of the fact that Vietnamese idioms relating to spiritual life are also often in comparison form (E.g. followed by the word “như”), their comparison is more diversified. In fact, English idioms in general and English idioms relating to spiritual life in particular have few variants. For example, “ugly” is mainly compared with a sin whereas in Vietnamese idioms, there are many referents for “xấu” such as: **xấu như ma, xấu như ma lem, xấu như mẹ ma, xấu như quỷ, xấu ma chê quỷ hờn.**

4.1.1.4. Idioms containing spiritual words in the structure of a preposition phrase

Even though idioms relating to spiritual life in the prepositional phrase structure are not as frequent as those in the adjective phrase structure, we can find some cases in English but idioms in this

structure is hardly found in Vietnamese.

4.1.2. Sentence Structure

- Simple Patters

(24) “**Heaven bless you**, my child,” said she, embracing Amelia, and scowling the while over the girl's shoulder at Miss Sharp. [110]

The example above has the following structure

a. Subject + Predicator + Object

(25) When we neglected our Thinrumurais, we allowed ourselves to be caught in all the **haste of the devil** as the Latin saying goes “Omnis festinatio ex parte diaboli est”- “All haste is of the devil.” [111]

Another structure of the sentence idiom is described in the above idiom as an example. This is formed as

b. Subject + Predicator + Adjunct (Prepositional phrase)

(26) She blamed the crimes on the local jobless teenagers. “**The devil makes work for idle hands**,” she would say [74, p.149].

c. Subject + Predicator + Object + Adjunct

(27) Trong mỗi đợt vô ra Sài Gòn lập thủ tục, nào phỏng vấn, nào chích ngừa, bầu đàn thê tử của họ chiếm trọn một hai toa tàu xuyên Việt, là thường. Đây là những chuyến đi có kèn có trống, nghĩa là có chén rượu già từ hay đưa tiễn, chứ không phải chun bụi lũi bờ như mấy năm trước, thiệt là hết rồi con bĩ cực, thiệt là có ông **trời ngó lại** [111].

a. Subject + Predicator

(28) Biết đâu, tài Cường và con bé đã chẳng có tình có ý với nhau từ lâu rồi. Minh thật thà quá, ai biết được cái chuyện **ma ăn cỗ** ấy [113].

b. Subject + Predicator + Object

(29) Các nhà khoa học vừa có câu trả lời mới cho hiện tượng cận tử - những người lên cơn đau tim cảm thấy **hồn lìa khỏi xác** [114].

This idiom has the following pattern

c. Subject + Verb + Adjunct

- Complex patterns

Apart from simple sentence forms, Vietnamese idioms containing spiritual words are largely formed in compound sentences.

(30) “Quân giặc **hồn bay phách rụng**, vút giáp bỏ gươm, giày xéo lên nhau mà chết” [90].

(31) Không hổ danh ‘phù thủy’ lắm chiêu, dưới bàn tay của mình, Mr Đàm đã biến một Kim Thư nổi tiếng xinh đẹp trở thành người đàn bà sở hữu vẻ đẹp ‘**ma chê quỷ hờn**’ theo phong cách Thị Nở [115].

d. Subject + Predicator, Subject + Predicator

(32) Không hiểu **ma đưa lối, quỷ đưa đường** như thế nào, Nhân lại so sánh gì ữa hai người phụ nữ bên cạnh Nguyễn [97].

e. Subject + Predicator + Object, Subject+ Predicator + Object

4.2. SEMANTIC FEATURES OF ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE IDIOMS CONTAINING SPIRITUAL WORDS

4.2.1. Semantics of the most popular spiritual word in English and Vietnamese idioms

“God” in English and “Trời” in Vietnamese

Similarities

a. Wish/ Hope

Idioms containing the two spiritual words show people’s wish

or hope in life: **to God** (used after a verb to emphasize a particular hope or wish), **God forbid** (let us hope that what is mentioned is not so, cannot be, will never happen), **wish/ hope to God** (wish/ hope emphatically, or earnestly), **God willing** (used to say that you hope that things will happen as you have planned and that there will be no problems). In Vietnamese we have **trời chẳng đong cửa ai, lấp biển vá trời, đội trời đạp đất, cầu trời khẩn phật**.

b. Powerlessness

In both the languages, the most popular spiritual word acquires the symbolic meanings of powerlessness: **be in the lap of the gods** (if the result of a situation is in the lap of the gods, you cannot control what will happen), **an act of God** (an occurrence or an event for which no human is responsible; an act of nature such as a storm, an earthquake, or a wildfire). In Vietnamese, there are a lot of idioms: **chạy trời không khỏi nắng, chạy trời không khỏi số, kinh thiên động địa, chân trời góc bể, chạy chẳng khỏi trời**.

Differences

In English, there are the following significations

a. Surprise

Surprise is a brief emotional state experienced as the result of an unexpected significant event [141]. In English, with the spiritual word (God), we have a lot of idioms whose meaning is about this emotional state, for instance, **by God** (used to emphasize a feeling of determination or surprise).

b. Gratefulness

Thank God for small favors (be thankful that something good has happened in a bad situation), **praise be to God** (let us be

thankful), **God bless you** (may God reward you for your kindness; thank you) are idioms found from the data to show gratefulness.

c. Certainty

Of this meaning, in English we have: **sure as/ as sure as God made little green apples** (absolutely certain).

d. Respect

This meaning can be seen as the following idioms: **God rest her/his soul** (pious, or affectionate, parenthesis used when referring to somebody who is dead).

e. Religious belief

English idioms sharing this meaning consist of: **the God's chosen people** (with reference to the Christian doctrine of salvation by election or redemption) **God only knows** (only God knows) a man of God (a male priest, or a very religious man).

In Vietnamese

a. Venturesomeness

Bán trời không mời thiên lôi and **bán trời không văn tự** are two idioms containing “Trời” show venturesomeness.

b. Luck

In Vietnamese, **trời xui đất khiến**, **trời ngó lại**, **trời không chiều lòng người**, **trời kêu ai nấy dạ**, **trời che đất chở**, **muu sự tại nhân**, **thành sự tại thiên**, **khi nên trời cũng chiều lòng** can be taken as examples for this meaning.

c. Magniloquence

We have **nói trên trời dưới bể**, **nói trên trời dưới đất**, **một tát đến trời**, or **coi trời bằng vung** in Vietnamese.

d. Complaint

This new meaning is likely to reflect people's behavior when

they get into trouble in daily life: **của trời trả trời**, **của đất trả đất**, **kiêu trời trách đất**, or **trời cao đất dày**.

e. Advice

Of this new meaning, in Vietnamese, we can find some idioms such as: **trời bắt sao chịu vậy**, **trời cao bể rộng**, **trời còn rộng đất còn dài**, or **nước mưa cửa trời**.

f. Revengefulness

Không đội trời chung, **trời đánh thánh đâm**, **trời đánh thánh vật**, and **trời tru đất diệt** are found in Vietnamese idioms.

In short, by studying the new meanings of the most popular spiritual words in both languages, we can say that the most popular spiritual word in Vietnamese can have various meanings comparing with the most popular one in English.

4.2.2. Symbolic Characteristics of English and Vietnamese Idioms containing spiritual words

4.2.2.1. Simile

(33) I'm **as sure as God made little green apples** that he's the one. I'm right, as sure as you live [96].

(34) Từ ngày về nhà này, Lan **hiền như bụt** nên ai cũng quý [106].

4.2.2.2. Metaphor

(35) Hoạn Thư **hồn lạc phách xiêu**

Khẩu đầu dưới trướng liệu kêu ca

(Nguyễn Du, Truyện Kiều)

In English, we have the idiom “**give up the ghost**” using the spiritual word for their metaphors.

(36) The old man **gave up the ghost** [102].

4.2.2.3. Symmetry

(37) Chiến thắng trong trận Điện Biên Phủ của quân Việt Minh là sự kiện **kinh thiên động địa**. [107].

(38) Now we are getting to the **heart and soul** of the matter. This feature is the heart and soul of my invention [102].

4.2.3. Semantic Fields

4.2.3.1. Personality

For example, English idioms: an angel of mercy, an angel of light.

(39) Send Mary to us for as long as you like; we're both so fond of her, and she is **an angel of light** in the house. [7, p.13]

Vietnamese idioms: **bệ chưa nặn đã nặn bụt, hiền như bụt, khẩu phật tâm xà, một tất đến trời, nói thánh nói tướng, nói thánh nói thần, chùa rách bụt vàng, and chùa nát có bụt vàng.**

(40) Trục rằng: **Chùa rách phật vàng**, ai hay trong quán ần tàng kinh luân. (Lục Vân Tiên)

4.2.3.2 Appearance

Vietnamese idioms: **bản như ma lem, đỏ như mặt trời mọc, ma chê quỷ hờn, thân tàn ma dại.**

(43) Nhưng người đàn bà ấy lại chính là Thị Nở, một người ngẩn ngơ như những người đàn trong cổ tích và xấu **ma chê quỷ hờn** [84, p.26].

In English, people use the idiom “**as white as a ghost**” to describe someone’s appearance because of her or his illness, shock or fear.

(44) When I saw that Tony was **as white as a ghost**, I knew something was wrong [101]

4.2.3.3. Human feelings

English idioms: a heaven on earth, in the seventh heaven, one’s spirits rise/ sink.

(45) The 175 acres of field and woodland at the Children’s International Village at Sedlescombe, Sussex, is a **heaven on earth** [7, p.280].

The Vietnamese are also familiar with such expressions, some idioms are found: **phách lạc hồn xiêu, sợ bóng sợ vía, sợ kinh hồn kinh vía, kinh hồn bạt vía, hồn bất phụ thể, hồn vía lên mây, hồn bay (kinh, xiêu) phách lạc, hết hồn hết vía.**

(50) Quân Tây Sơn nhân cơ hội ấy tràn vào thành như nước vỡ bờ. Tổng Phúc Hiệp **hồn xiêu phách lạc** lên ngựa tháo chạy.

(Quỳnh Cư, Những vì sao đất nước)

4.2.3.4. Experience

(52) I like people here always queue up. Back home we just push and shove, and **the devil take the hindmost** [56, p.84].

Let us take an idiom in Vietnamese which show human’s experience. That is **mù trời mới bắt được két**. This idiom means that people wanting to get success in life must have basic foundation.

4.2.3.5. Belief

In English: **by God’s grace, God willing.**

In Vietnamese: **ông trời có mắt, cầu trời khẩn phật, phật tại tâm, chạy chẳng khỏi trời.**

4.2.3.6. Warnings

In Vietnamese: **của Bụt mất một đên mười, ai bảo trời không có mắt, đi đêm có ngày gặp ma.**

4.2.3.7. Praise and criticism

(59) “That’s **a hell of** a way to treat someone. He’s a hell of a driver! Watch out!”

“He is **one hell of a guy**. We really like him. We had a helluva good time” [95].

In Vietnamese idioms: **nói thánh nói tướng, một tất đến trời, lấy gậy chọc trời, thần cũng vị tiên, đom đóm bắt nạt ma trời, đom đóm cứ tưởng là ma**, and **thần hồn nát thần tính**.

(62) Nó nói thật đấy! Em cũng nghe tiếng gì như tiếng trẻ con khóc. An cười: ôi dào! Các cô thì chỉ **thần hồn nát thần tính**”

(Rừng sâu, Nguyễn Xuân Khánh)

4.2.3.8. *Human Relationship*

The human relationship is mainly emphasized in Vietnamese idioms, we have **thần thiêng vì bộ hạ, hợp bóng hợp vía, cây thần phải nể cây đa**, or **cú kêu cho ma ăn**.

(58) Song cũng là **cú kêu cho ma ăn**, đi không về không, chi đến nỗi gieo tai gieo vạ.

(Văn tế sống Trường Lưu nữ sĩ, Nguyễn Du)

4.2.3.9. *Behavior and Attitude*

In English: give the devil its due or lend someone's soul to a task.

(64) She's very messy in the kitchen, but I have to **give the devil her due**. She bakes a terrific cherry pie. John is a bit too nosy, but he keeps his yard clean and is a kind neighbor. I'll **give the devil his due** [102].

In Vietnamese: **bụt nhà không thiêng**.

4.2.3.10. *Conversational Response*

Both languages share this semantic characteristics in many idioms found. This shows that both highly want to express the naturalism in communication.

In Vietnamese idioms, we can see **không có trời ai ở được với ai**, or **trời ơi là trời** and **good heaven**, or **thank god/ heaven** in English.

(66) **Thank heaven** for little girls get bigger everyday

[50, p.540]

(67) I took some pictures of the gun pit in which he had died. I was going to send them to his family. **Thank God!** I had second thoughts [7, p.272].

4.2.3.11. *Luck*

In Vietnamese: **trời không chiều lòng người, trời kêu ai nấy dạ, mưu sự tại nhân, thành sự tại thiên, thánh nhân đãi kẻ khù khờ**.

(69) She can't do it. She doesn't have **a ghost of a chance**.

There is just a ghost of a chance that I'll be there on time [100].

(70) **Mưu sự tại nhân, thành sự tại Thiên**.

Nhân nguyện như thử như thử

Thiên lý vị nhiên vị nhiên

(Gia Cát Lượng)

Meaning: Mưu việc ở người, nên việc ở Trời.

Ý người như thế như thế

Lẽ Trời chưa vậy chưa vậy ..

4.2.3.12. *Distance*

Only Vietnamese idioms mention the distance. We can see it through the following idioms: **mệnh mông góc bễ chân trời, âm dương đôi ngã or trời nam bễ bắc**.

(71) **Mệnh mông góc bễ chân trời**

Nắm xương vô chủ biết rơi chôn nào

(Văn tế thập loại chúng sinh, Nguyễn Du)

4.2.3.13. *Patience*

It can be said that advice of patience on doing something is one of the semantic features found in the two languages. “**Have the patience of a saint**” used to mention about a great deal of patience. With this semantic field, we also can find out in Vietnamese idiom. Thai is “**trời còn rộng đất còn dài**”

(74) Ferry realized at once that here was a major new talent, a man who could film animals as they are, use the skills of the stalker and **the patience of a saint** [7, p.271]

In summary, in spite of physiological similarities, each person shows their thought different pictures with different means of language. The choice of images depends on the particularly cultural characteristics and the social psychology of each person. One fact that when compare the semantic fields between English and Vietnamese idioms, we can discover that there are much more English idioms than English one sharing the same semantic field.

4.3. CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE IDIOMS CONTAINING SPIRITUAL WORDS

Similarities

Firstly, one of the most significant notices is that some English and Vietnamese idioms containing spiritual words are shown in comparison forms. When human beings began to perceive the world, they used comparison as a mean of thinking. It can be the fact that by using comparison, human can express themselves and the world around them effectively and understandably. Therefore, it can be noted that in idioms relating to spiritual life, human beings use the comparison markers “as... as ...” in English and “như” in Vietnamese naturally in human daily communication and literature.

Processed by simile and association from the surrounding familiar images, idioms containing spiritual words often show human thought, social behavior and the way they view the surroundings. What’s more, both Vietnamese and English idioms containing spiritual words use unreal things to talk about real things, and to reveal or illustrate abstract ideas or phenomenon. It is worth noting that idioms in general and idioms containing spiritual words in English and Vietnamese are stable in language forming a unity which can not be broken down into smaller parts.

Secondly, one element of the culture is religion which means the belief or faith of a people. No one can deny that religion has a great effect on our lives, and the national religions make cultural features differ from each other. Buddhism is one of the major religions and has great influences on the political and social problems of many countries, including Vietnamese. Buddhism has been becoming important factors contributing to the cultural identity of Vietnam. Whereas Buddhism is one of the main religions in the world, was introduced in Vietnam in two ways, directly from India and indirectly from China [61, p.79], a large number of English people are Christmas. Consequently, both languages have a lot of idioms containing religious words.

Thirdly, spiritual life of people of the two countries is very plentiful and multiform. This can be seen through the numbers of spiritual words used in idioms.

Fourthly, it seems that both nations share the same opinion about causality. It can be understood that God may reward you for your kindness through the idiom “God bless you”. And in

Vietnamese, “**ai bảo trời không có mắt**”, or “**trời cao có mắt**” are taken as examples

Fifthly, through English and Vietnamese idioms found and used in this thesis, we can come to a conclusion that both nations believe in the existence of spiritual elements. They consider the spiritual elements as a part of their daily life.

Sixthly, it can be drawn that when people feel powerless with great incidents happening in their life, they surely think due to the spiritual elements.

Differences

Between two countries, there are differences in the customs, cultural and historical backgrounds, religious belief and geographical environment, therefore, the ways idioms are formed and the ways they convey their meanings are not similar.

In conclusion, idioms in both languages, the common valuable cultural heritage of the whole human beings, have not only some generality but also the demonstration of its own national cultural characteristics.

Both countries have the belief in the spiritual life; however, the ways they show are really different.

It is said that veneration of the dead is based on the belief that the deceased, often family members have a continued existence or possess the ability to affect the fortune of the living. While ancestor veneration is one of the most unifying aspects of Vietnamese culture, as practically all Vietnamese regardless of religious affiliation have an ancestor altar in their home or business. For Vietnamese, traditionally they did not celebrate birthdays before Western influence on their thoughts, but the death anniversary was always an

important and necessary occasion. They are always ready to have essential gatherings of members of family. They also prepare a lot of special food to put on the ancestor altar. These practices are done rather frequently during important celebrations such as the starting of a new business, or even when a member needs guidance or counsel in important period of their life. For English people, they often show their belief in spiritual character through holidays.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

5.1. CONCLUSION

In terms of structure, according to the viewpoint of traditional grammar of Quick and Greenbaum (1990), English and Vietnamese idioms containing spiritual words are realized by units smaller than clause. As set phrasal expressions, 140 English and 163 Vietnamese idioms containing spiritual words have been contrastively divided into the main types of phrasal structure with different numbers of distribution in each syntactic type. An interesting point is also discovered that there is no existence of the idioms of prepositional and adverb phrases in Vietnamese idioms containing spiritual words. Sentences structures are presented in simple and compound sentences. In addition, in short, by studying in terms of phrase structure and sentence structure, Vietnamese idioms containing spiritual words have a variety of patterns comparing with English one.

Semantically, idioms analyzed in the corpus of this study express their meanings via semantic transfer means such as metaphor, simile, and symmetry. The meaning of idiom containing spiritual words are discussed and analyzed in main semantic fields

such as appearance, personality, human feelings, experience, belief, warning, praise and criticism, human relationship, conversational response, luck, distance, and patience. It can be seen that the semantics of the most popular spiritual word in idioms in Vietnamese has a lot of meanings than in those in English. Moreover, in terms of semantic fields, we can note that the number of Vietnamese idioms sharing the same semantic field is larger than English one.

5.2. IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING IDIOMS

Firstly, idioms and their examples from a variety of sources, especially in dictionaries are one of the reliable and abundant sources. In addition, these idioms containing spiritual words do not usually talk about spiritual life.

Secondly, it is the fact that idioms seem to be used to replace words or group of words that can not convey speakers' opinions effectively and exactly. In conclusion, it is senseless to teach and learn a language without any consideration and exploration of the existence of idioms in the language.

Thirdly, in the process of teaching and learning English and Vietnamese, idioms appear in a lot of different material, so while learners at all levels must notice to idioms, teachers should be flexible and sensible in dealing with cultural differences between languages in order to get more precise explanation to the learners.

Fourthly, those who hope to get the goal of using English idioms naturally and correctly in communication should read a variety of document; note to idioms, compare passages, and base on the context to translate them into their own language suitably and correctly by paying much attention to cultural features.

Last but not least, one main and important thing that the learners should do frequently is to practice writing much and carefully choosing idioms to use English idiomatically and fluently. Importantly, the learners should remember one thing is that by using idioms in communication, we easily convey our opinions politely, effectively and naturally.

Basing on the knowledge about the English and Vietnamese accompanied by the symbolic features of ICSWs in the two language languages, it can be recognized that there are some similar and different points in terms of cultural features presented in this study

5.3. IMPLICATIONS FOR TRANSLATING IDIOMS CONTAINING SPIRITUAL WORDS

It could be projected that not all idioms of one language can be directly translated into another language. Therefore, while translating idioms, one should appropriately find out the equivalents. Because of the fact that they are able to be similar in terms of semantics and structure or only semantics, translators have to use either words or free combinations of words. Importantly, in order to improve the skills of translating idioms containing spiritual words, translators themselves have obtained the syntactic and semantic features as well as cultural aspects of idioms containing spiritual words, and especially know how to apply their knowledge to the context where idioms come up.

5.3. LIMITATIONS OF THE THESIS AND FURTHER STUDY

- An Investigation into Pragmatic and cultural aspects of English and Vietnamese idioms relating to spiritual life.
- English and Vietnamese Proverbs relating to spiritual life.