

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING
UNIVERSITY OF DA NANG

VÕ NGỌC ÁNH

AN INVESTIGATION INTO
ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE IDIOMS
CONTAINING WORDS DENOTING METAL

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

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. RATIONALE

It is a fact that all learners who desire to master one language as native speakers usually face a lot of difficulties preventing them from gaining successful conversations. One of the reasons for these problems lies in the way people perceive and use idioms.

Why do idioms sometimes make learners unable to communicate effectively? Firstly, that is because an idiom is *a group of words whose meaning is different from the meaning of the individual words* [13, p.771]. Secondly, idioms are considered as special factors of the vocabulary system of a language because they reflect cultural specific characteristics of each nation, including material and spiritual values.

As a result, if learners wish to master one language, one of the most effective ways is that they must learn that language by idioms with not only linguistic but also cultural features.

Metal (gold, silver, brass, iron,..) is not an unfamiliar subject, but none of them have done a research on idioms related to metal. Consequently, I decided to carry out my research on the topic "***An Investigation into English and Vietnamese Idioms Containing Words Denoting Metal***" with the hope of contributing to idiom research collections and to the field of better teaching and learning English as a foreign language.

1.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.2.1. Aims

This study was carried out to find out the similarities and differences of syntactic, semantic and stylistic features between *English and Vietnamese idioms containing words denoting metal* (ICWDM)) to help learners understand and use this kind of idioms correctly and effectively in communication.

1.2.2. Objectives

This study was planned to:

- investigate the syntactic, semantic and stylistic features of English and Vietnamese ICWDM.
- compare and contrast English and Vietnamese ICWDM to find out the similarities and differences between them in terms of syntactic, semantic and stylistic aspects.
- suggest some implications for teaching and learning English and Vietnamese ICWDM.

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the syntactic, semantic and stylistic features of English and Vietnamese ICWDM?
2. What are the similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese ICWDM in terms of their syntactic, semantic and stylistic aspects?
3. What are some suggestions for the teaching and learning English and Vietnamese ICWDM?

1.4. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study focused on making a contrastive analysis on English and Vietnamese ICWDM in terms of syntactic, semantic and stylistic characteristics. The cultural features were just dealt with where necessary.

1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study of syntactic, semantic and stylistic features of English and Vietnamese ICWDM was hoped to bring great benefit to learners of two languages above and also helped them overcome the difficulties they encountered in using idioms in general and ICWDM in particular.

1.6. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The research includes five chapters: Chapter 1 (Introduction), Chapter 2 (Literature Review and Theoretical Background), Chapter 3 (Research Design and Methodology), Chapter 4 (Findings and Discussion) and Chapter 5 (Conclusions and Implications).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. OVERVIEW

2.2. PREVIOUS STUDIES RELATED TO THE TOPIC

In English, many linguists did research on idioms such as Ammer [1], Cowie et al. [4], Cruse [5], Fernando [8], Warren [33] and so on.

In Vietnamese, there have also been a lot of authors whose studies generally related to idioms such as Dương Ngọc Dũng and Ninh Hùng [39], Trần Phong Giao [40], Hoàng Văn Hành [42], Nguyễn Lực, Lương Văn Đăng [47] and so on.

Up to now, there have also been over 40 M.A theses done in various aspects of idioms at the University of Danang, for instance, Nguyễn Văn Long [20], Phạm Thị Tố Như [22] and so on.

2.3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.3.1. Definition of Idioms and ICWDM

2.3.1.1. Definition of Idioms

Ammer [1] defines an idiom as *a set phrase of two or more words that means something different from the literal meaning of the individual words.*

As for Cruse [5, p.37], *an idiom is an expression whose meaning cannot be accounted for as a compositional function of the meanings its parts have when they are not parts of idioms.*

In Vietnamese, Hoàng Văn Hành [42, p.31] considered an idiom as "*một loại tổ hợp từ cố định, bền vững về hình thái - cấu trúc, hoàn chỉnh, bóng bẩy về ý nghĩa, được sử dụng rộng rãi trong giao tiếp hằng ngày*" (a fixed group of words which is firm in terms of morphor-structure, complete and figurative in terms of meaning, and is widely used in daily speaking).

With the aim of structural and semantic analysis of ICWDM in both English and Vietnamese, we decided to choose Cruse's definition [5, p.37] as the foundational one for this study.

2.3.1.2. Definition of ICWDM

Metal is a type of solid mineral substance that is usually hard and shiny and that heat and electricity can travel through, for example tin, iron and gold. [13, p.964]

Words denoting metal are considered as nouns or adjectives that denote the meaning of metal such as *iron (sắt), gold/ golden (vàng), steel (thép), silver (bạc), lead (chì)*, and so on.

ICWDM can be considered as idioms containing one or more words denoting metal.

2.3.2. Main Features of Idioms

2.3.2.1. Syntactic Features

Most idioms are *fixed expressions* which have no lexical addition or replacement and no changes in structure and word order. These important features of idioms show their *stability* and *restriction*.

2.3.2.2. Semantic Features

Idioms have *semantic opacity* or *ambiguity*. Although idioms are semantically opaque, they can be guessed sometimes if used in a particular situation.

2.3.2.3. Stylistic Features

Idioms belong to the category of non-literal or figurative language; that is, they have connotative or figurative meaning through various stylistic devices such as simile, metaphor, metonymy, hyperbole and so on.

2.3.3. Idioms and Other Language Units

2.3.3.1. Idioms and Words

2.3.3.2. Idioms and Phrases

2.3.3.3. Idioms and Collocations

2.3.3.4. Idioms and Proverbs

2.3.4. Phrase Structures

In this study, we would like to choose Greenbaun's view of phrases as working knowledge.

2.3.4.1. Noun Phrases

A noun phrase contains a head noun which may be introduced by one or more determiners and modified by one or more premodifiers and postmodifiers.

2.3.4.2. Adjective Phrases

The adjective phrase has an head adjective which may be preceded by premodifiers and followed by postmodifiers.

2.3.4.3. Prepositional Phrases

The prepositional phrase consists of a preposition and its complement.

2.3.4.4. Adverb Phrases

The adverb phrase is a phrase whose head is an adverb, which can be premodified by intensifying adverbs and postmodified by adverbs, comparative clauses, and prepositional phrases.

2.3.4.5. Verb Phrases

A verb phrase has a main verb as the head which may be preceded by up to four auxiliaries (or auxiliary verbs).

There are a large number of idiomatic verb combinations which are classified into *phrasal verbs*, *prepositional verbs* and *phrasal-prepositional verbs*.

2.3.5. Clause and Sentence Structures

2.3.5.1. Clauses

In [24, p.53], Richards et al. defined a clause as *a group of words which forms a grammatical unit and which contains a subject and a finite verb*. Moreover, they classify clauses into two kinds: *dependent clause* and *independent clause*.

2.3.5.2. Sentences

Loberger [16, p.144] gave a definition of sentence: *a sentence is a grammatical unit of language that is recognized by speakers as having relative independence of meaning, that conveys a complete idea or question, and that has a definite beginning and ending*. He also classified sentences into three kinds: *simple sentences*, *compound sentences* and *complex sentences*.

2.3.6. Semantic Fields

Semantic fields or lexical fields are defined as *the organization of related words and expressions into a system which shows their relationship to one another*. [24, p.211]

2.3.7. Summary

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. OVERVIEW

3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

3.3. RESEARCH METHODS

3.4. INSTRUMENTATION

3.5. DATA COLLECTION

3.6. DATA ANALYSIS

3.7. RESEARCH PROCEDURES

3.8. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

3.9. SUMMARY

This chapter gave an overview of the research design. Beside quantitative and qualitative methods, descriptive and contrastive ones were mainly used for the findings of the study. Books, dictionaries, the internet tools, checklists, tables and so on are useful instruments for data collection and analysis. Also, it mentioned how detailed the data for this study were collected and analysed and pointed out the research procedures to follow with the aim of guaranteeing the research schedule. Finally, it further emphasized the importance of validity and reliability in doing research.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. OVERVIEW

4.2. SYNTACTIC FEATURES OF ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE IDIOMS CONTAINING WORDS DENOTING METAL

4.2.1. Syntactic Features of English ICWDM

4.2.1.1. Phrase Structures

Noun phrases

[1] Pre.M (Adjective) + Head Noun

[2] Pre.M (Noun) + Head Noun

[3] Determiner (Article) + Pre. M (Adjective) + Head Noun

- [4] Determiner (Article) + Pre.M (Noun) + Head Noun
- [5] (Pre. M) + Head Noun and (Pre. M) + Head Noun
- [6] Determiner (Article) + (Pre. M) + Head Noun + Post. M
(Prepositional Phrase)

Verb Phrases

- [7] Verb + Noun
- [8] Verb + N.P
- [9] Verb + (Noun/N.P) + Prep.Phase
- [10] Verb + Adverb/Adverbial Clause
- [11] Verb + Prep./Prep. Phrase + Prep. Phrase
- [12] Verb + Adj + N.P + Prep. P

Adjective Phrases

- [13] Head Adj + Post. M

Prepositional Phrases

- [14] Preposition + Complement (Noun/ N.P)
- [15] Preposition + Complement (Noun/N.P + Preposition)

4.2.1.2. Comparative Structures

In the total number of English ICWDM, we could find the comparative structure with the words "*as ... as*" and "*like*". This kind of comparison is called "*comparison of equality*".

4.2.2. Syntactic Features of Vietnamese ICWDM

4.2.2.1. Phrase Structures

Noun phrases

- [1] Pre. M + Head Noun + Pre.M + Head Noun
- [2] Head Noun + Post.M
- [3] Head Noun + Post.M + Head Noun + Post.

Verb Phrases

- [4] Verb + Post.M(Noun/N.P)
- [5] Verb + Post.M (Noun) + Verb + Post.M (Noun)
- [6] Verb + Noun + Noun + Verb

Adjective Phrases

- [7] Head Adj + Post.M (Prepositional phrases)
- [8] Head Adj + Post.M + Head Adj + Post.M

4.2.2.2. Sentence Structures

- [9] Subject + Verbal Predicate + Object
- [10] Subject + Verbal Predicate + Subject + Verbal Predicate

4.2.2.3. Comparative Structures

According to Đinh Văn Đức [38, p.196], *Vietnamese adjectives do not have grammatical categories of comparison but still own comparative meanings and means of expression with extra words that are bằng, như, hơn, kém, nhất.*

In Vietnamese ICWDM, 19 idioms under the comparative structure with "như", one idiom with "bằng" and one with "hơn" were found.

4.2.2.4. Parallel Structures

Parallel structure is one of the most popular ones in Vietnamese. A great number of Vietnamese ICWDM in parallel structures were found. Most of them have four words that create two corresponding parts with each other.

4.2.2.5. The Variation on the Form of Vietnamese ICWDM

The form of Vietnamese idioms can vary phonetically or lexically.

4.2.3. Distribution of EICWDM and VICWDM in Syntactic Features

Table 4.2. Frequency of Syntactic Features of English and Vietnamese ICWDM

Types of ICWDM		English		Vietnamese	
		Occurrence	%	Occurrence	%
Syntactical Features					
Phrase Structures	Noun Phrases	62	51.7	58	48.3
	Verb Phrases	43	35.8	20	16.7
	Adjective Phrases	9	7.5	21	17.5
	Prepositional Phrases	6	5	0	0
Sentence Structures		0	0	21	17.5
Total		120	100	120	100

4.2.4. Similarities and Differences between EICWDM and VICWDM in Syntactic Features

4.2.4.1. Similarities

Firstly, both English and Vietnamese ICWDM have some similar phrase structures such as noun phrases, verb phrases and adjective phrases. Moreover, they do not have any adverbial phrase structures.

Secondly, in the form of verb phrases, the head verbs in two languages are followed by nouns or noun phrases which function as direct objects.

Finally, they also contain comparative structures.

4.2.4.2. Differences

Firstly, there are no ICWDM in the form of prepositional phrases in Vietnamese. Furthermore, the number of patterns in the phrase structures in English ICWDM is more diversified than Vietnamese ones.

Secondly, the parallel structure is a popular one in Vietnamese ICWDM. However, we hardly found this one in English ICWDM. In addition, phonetic and lexical changes can occur in Vietnamese ICWDM whereas no cases of idiomatic variants happen in the English ones.

Last but not least, English ICWDM do not have sentence structures like the Vietnamese ones.

4.3. SEMANTIC FEATURES OF ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE IDIOMS CONTAINING WORDS DENOTING METAL

4.3.1. Semantic Features of English ICWDM

4.3.1.1. Semantic Opacity of English ICWDM

Basing on the degree of semantic opacity, Fernando [8, p.32] classified idioms into three categories: *pure idioms*, *semi-literal idioms* and *literal idioms*.

4.3.1.2. Semantic Fields of English ICWDM

[1] Human Personality

+ *Positive Human Personality*

(4.84) The children were *good as gold*. They sat quietly and read all afternoon. [3, p.150]

(Bạn trẻ **rất ngoan**. Chúng ngồi im lặng và đọc sách suốt buổi chiều.)

+ **Negative Human Personality**

(4.87) He walked in, **bold as brass**, and asked me to lend him \$ 50.
[40, p.74]

(Anh ta bước vào và **trơ tráo** hỏi mượn tôi 50 đồng.)

[2] **Human Actions or Activities**

(4.90) The shopkeeper bought a gun and swore the next time someone broke into the shop, he'd **fill him full of lead**. [61]
(Ông chủ cửa hàng đã mua một cây súng và thề rằng thời gian tới ai mà đột nhập vào cửa hàng thì ông ta sẽ **bắn người đó**.)

[3] **Human Psychological State**

(4.92) He'll **be like a cat on a hot tin roof** till he gets his exam results. [3, p.53]
(Anh ta **lo lắng và nhấp nha nhấp nhòm** cho đến khi anh ta biết được kết quả kì thi.)

[4] **Physical State**

(4.94) An army must be **as hard as steel** in battle and can be made so; but, like steel, it reaches its finest quality only after much preparation. [4, p.22]
(Quân đội **ắt hẳn sẽ hùng mạnh** trong trận chiến nhưng giống như thép, nó đạt được chất lượng tốt nhất chỉ sau khi được chuẩn bị kĩ càng.)

[5] **Work**

(4.96) She's still **got several irons in the fire**: her television work, her film work and her writing. [3, p.194]

(Bà ta vẫn **làm nhiều việc cùng lúc**: nào là ở ngành truyền hình, nào là ngành điện ảnh, nào là viết lách).

[6] **Success and Failure**

(4.98) The girl's outdoor track team has grabbed **the brass ring** seven times. [13, p.157]
(Đội điền kinh nữ đã bảy lần đạt được **chiến thắng**.)

(4.100) If that play was supposed to be a comedy, it **went over like a lead balloon**. [29, p.169]
(Nếu vở kịch đó được xem là vở hài kịch thì nó **thất bại thảm hại** rồi.)

[7] **Money**

(4.101) A society that **worships the golden calf**, i.e. that is obsessed with money. [40, p.283]
(Một xã hội **tôn thờ về tiền bạc**, tức là một xã hội bị ám ảnh bởi tiền bạc.)

[8] **Value**

(4.103) My new tennis racket is **not worth a plugged nickel**. [1, p.447]
(Cái vợt tennis mới của tôi **không có giá trị** gì cả.)

[9] **Opportunities**

(4.106) He was in a good mood, so I asked for a loan of \$200. I thought I'd better **strike while the iron is hot**. [43, p.451]
(Ông ta đang lúc vui vẻ nên tôi đã hỏi vay 200 đôla. Tôi nghĩ tốt hơn nên **lợi dụng cơ hội** ấy mới được.)

[10] Time

(4.107) The sixteenth century was *the golden age* of Italian art.
[25, p.133]

(*Thế kỉ 16 là thời kỳ hoàng kim của nền nghệ thuật nước Ý.*)

4.3.2. Semantic Features of Vietnamese ICWDM**4.3.2.1. Semantic Opacity of Vietnamese ICWDM**

Semantic opacity not only happens in English idioms but also in Vietnamese ones.

4.3.2.2. Semantic Fields of Vietnamese ICWDM**[1] Human Appearance**

(4.117) "Người con gái *vóc ngọc mình vàng* ấy, mỗi lần mỉm cười dường như làm nghiêng nước nghiêng thành." [54, p.654]

[2] Human Personality

(4.118) Người chiến sĩ an ninh *lòng vàng gan đá* ấy là một tấm gương sáng chói cho mọi người học tập, noi theo.[54, p.387]

[3] Human Actions/Activities

(4.124) "Phải *đãi cát lấy vàng*, phải biết chọn tài liệu." [54, p.242]

[4] Human Psychological State

(4.126) "Đường ngồi trên hè *mặt nặng như chì*, Vẽ đang đứng giữa sân cười hô hô". [47, p.393]

[5] Physical State

(4.128) "Sức mạnh của lớp chiến sĩ *chân đồng da sắt*, nặng tình yêu nước thương dân, ý chí quyết chiến, quyết thắng, được thể hiện quanh đề tài chiến thắng Điện Biên Phủ lịch sử."
[54, p.116]

[6] Work

(4.131) "Giai cấp địa chủ phong kiến không đầy năm phần trăm dân số, mà chúng và thực dân chiếm hết độ bảy phần mười ruộng đất, *ngồi mát ăn bát vàng*". [47, p.450]

[7] Success

(4.133) "May khoa thì mà *danh chiếm bằng vàng*, tức hôm nọ chi anh đồ, hôm này đã ông Cống, ông Nghè chi đài các."
[54, p.219]

[8] Value

(4.135) "Ai ơi chớ bỏ ruộng hoang,
Bao nhiêu *tác đất, tác vàng* bấy nhiêu." (Ca dao)

[9] Social or Family Status

(4.137) "A nghĩ tới lời đàm tiếu của hàng phố khi thấy một kẻ "*cành vàng lá ngọc*" như ả đi làm me Mĩ". [54, p.87]

[10] Wealth

(4.139) "Thấy người ta được giàu có, ăn chơi sung sướng, thì mình cũng ước ao được lăn vào nơi *bể bạc rừng vàng*." [47, p.546]

4.3.3. Distribution of English and Vietnamese ICWDM in Semantic Fields

Table 4.3. Frequency of Semantic Fields of English and Vietnamese ICWDM

Types of ICWDM	English		Vietnamese	
	Occurrence	%	Occurrence	%
Human Appearance	0	0	7	5.8
Human Personality	17	14.2	27	22.5
Human Actions/Activities	11	9.2	7	5.8
Human Psychological State	5	4.2	4	3.3
Physical State	15	12.5	19	15.9
Work	22	18.3	10	8.3
Success (and Failure)	10	8.3	3	2.5
Value	4	3.3	7	5.8
Money	10	8.3	0	0
Social or Family Status	0	0	4	3.3
Wealth	0	0	15	12.5
Opportunities	2	1.7	0	0
Time	4	3.3	0	0
Others	20	16.7	17	14.3
Total	120	100	120	100

4.3.4. Similarities and Differences between English and Vietnamese ICWDM in Semantic Features

4.3.4.1. Similarities

Firstly, one the most salient semantic features in both English and Vietnamese ICWDM is the semantic opacity with three basic degrees (*pure idioms, semi-idioms and literal idioms*).

Secondly, Vietnamese and English ICWDM share some of the same semantic fields such as *human personality, human actions/activities, human psychological state, physical state, work, success and value*.

Finally, basing on the data selected, we could see that both Vietnamese and English people normally tend to use *gold (vàng)* to mention good or valuable things or *iron (sắt)* and *steel (thép)* with the purpose of referring to hardness and physical strength.

4.3.4.2. Differences

Firstly, the differences in the customs, historical and cultural backgrounds, religious belief and geographical environment of English and Vietnam have influences on forming idioms and the ways conveying the meanings of idioms in two languages

Secondly, Vietnam passed the feudal regime for a long time in history. Therefore, we could find some images in Vietnamese ICWDM relating to this regime such as *mũ bạc đai vàng, bảng vàng bia đá, cành vàng lá ngọc* and so on. What is more, Vietnamese people have been heavily influenced by the resistance wars against French colonialism and American imperialism, so their material life has been so hard such as *tóc rối da chì, chân chì vấy cộc* and so on. Despite the hard life, they always praise the loyalty to the country as well as the bravery of the Vietnamese soldiers such as *lòng lim dạ sắt, lòng vàng gan đá* and so on. On the other hand, these elements do not appear in English ICWDM. The cause of this may be that Britain was ever the largest empire in history and, for over a century, was the foremost global power.

Last but not least, English ICWDM do not own some semantic fields in Vietnamese ones such as *human appearance, wealth and social or family status*. Neither do Vietnamese ICWDM express some semantic fields in English ones such as *time, opportunities, failures and money*.

4.4. STYLISTIC FEATURES IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE IDIOMS CONTAINING WORDS DENOTING METAL

4.4.1. Stylistic Devices in English ICWDM

4.4.1.1. Metaphor

(4.142) They had both *been born with silver spoons in their mouths*, and never had to worry about money. [3, p.38]

(*Họ đều sinh ra trong gia đình giàu sang và chẳng bao giờ phải lo về tiền bạc.*)

4.4.1.2. Simile

(4.144) The thief, whoever he is, must be *as bold as brass* to have carried out a robbery at midday. [39, p.81]

(*Tên trộm, bất luận hắn là ai, chắc hẳn trơ tráo lắm mới đi cướp giữa ban ngày ban mặt như thế.*)

4.4.1.3. Metonymy

(4.146) The general and some of the other *brass hats* are coming round to visit the camp today. [39, p.296]

(*Vị tướng và các sĩ quan cấp cao đang đến thăm trại hôm nay.*)

4.4.2. Stylistic Devices in Vietnamese ICWDM

4.4.2.1. Metaphor

(4.149) Chiếc quạt này tuy xấu nhưng được cái *nồi đồng cối đá*, dùng mãi không hỏng. [54, p.503]

4.4.2.2. Simile

(4.151) "Đôi mắt xéch, chiếc cằm bạnh, cái miệng chữ nhật ấy với thái độ *lạnh như sắt*, chà cứ chi, ai gặp cũng phải sợ".

[47, p.352]

4.4.2.3. Metonymy

(4.154) "Ngán nhẽ lâu son gác tía, chén phong lưu những máu chan hòa, Gớm cho *mũ bạc đai vàng*, đài vinh hiển bằng xương cao ngất." [54, p.436]

4.4.2.4. Hyperbole

(4.155) "Trên mặt đèo đã vắng ngắt chỉ còn các chiến sĩ *chân đồng vai sắt* khiêng đôi, khiêng tư huỳnh huych hồi hải giục nhau vượt lên." [54, p.116]

4.4.3. Distribution of English and Vietnamese ICWDM in Stylistic Devices

Table 4.4 Frequency of Stylistic Devices of English and Vietnamese

Types of ICWDM Stylistic Devices	English		Vietnamese	
	Occurrence	%	Occurrence	%
Metaphor	91	75.8	57	47.5
Simile	11	9.2	22	18.3
Metonymy	18	15	9	7.5
Hyperbole	0	0	32	26.7
Total	120	100	120	100

4.4.4. Similarities and Differences between English and Vietnamese ICWDM in Stylistic Features

4.4.4.1. Similarities

First of all, both English and Vietnamese linguists share the same view of metaphor, simile and metonymy.

Secondly but also lastly, both English and Vietnamese ICWDM are constructed on describing things, phenomenon and process by the means of metaphor which ranks the highest amount such as *a tin ear* in English and *nồi đồng cối đá* in Vietnamese, by the means of simile such as *as bold as brass* in English and *đen như đồng hun* in Vietnamese, and by means of metonymy such as *brass hats* in English and *mũ bạc đai vàng* in Vietnamese.

4.4.4.2. Differences

As mentioned above, the only difference between English and Vietnamese ICWDM in terms of stylistic devices is that hyperbole

only appear in Vietnamese ICWDM with a large number. In addition, most Vietnamese ICWDM using hyperbole combine the images of parts of human body such as *chân (legs)*, *xương (skeleton)*, *da (skin)*, *gan (liver)* and so on with the images of metals with the hardness such as *đồng (bronze)*, *sắt (iron)* or *vàng (gold)* to denote the extraordinary strength or good health (e.g., *xương đồng da sắt*), the bravery (e.g., *gan đồng dạ sắt*) and the loyalty (e.g., *lòng son dạ sắt*).

4.5. SUMMARY

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1. OVERVIEW

5.2. CONCLUSIONS

Syntactically, both English and Vietnamese ICWDM have the comparative structures and some same phrasal structures such as *noun phrases*, *adjective phrases* and *verb phrases*. However, no adverbial phrases were found in English and Vietnamese ICWDM and no prepositional phrases were discovered in Vietnamese ICWDM. Besides, Vietnamese ICWDM own a great number of parallel and sentential structures, whereas these structures do not appear in English ICWDM. In addition, the form of Vietnamese ICWDM can vary phonetically or lexically.

Semantically, the most salient feature of idioms is semantic opacity which is expressed through three basic degrees: *pure idioms*, *semi-literal idioms* and *literal idioms*. In the semantic fields, both Vietnamese and English ICWDM share some semantic fields such as

human personality, human actions/activities, human psychological state, physical state, work, success and value. Nevertheless, there are some additional semantic fields that appear in Vietnamese ICWDM such as *human appearance, wealth and social or family status* and that appear in English ICWDM such as *time, opportunities, failures and money.*

Stylistically, *metaphor, simile and metonymy* are three stylistic devices used in both English and Vietnamese ICWDM in which metaphor gets the highest amount. More interestingly, hyperbole is a very common stylistic device in English idioms but we could not find any English ICWDM using this means. Meanwhile, a large number of Vietnamese ICWDM are expressed by this means.

5.3. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

In order to help learners overcome these problems, we would like to suggest some implications for language teaching and learning.

- To teachers

+ Teachers should introduce idioms to learners at all levels. However, they should choose different ways for different levels.

+ Teachers should give more precise explanations of cultural elements affecting idiom meanings to help students widen the knowledge about the culture of the two countries.

+ Teachers should examine the correctness of idioms from different course books, dictionaries and other resources before teaching them to learners.

+ Teachers should give them comments for their understanding and application so that they will improve next time.

- To learners

+ Learners should understand that learning one foreign language is combined with learning idioms.

+ Learners should have their own collections of idioms.

+ To remember idioms well, learners should use them frequently in both speaking and writing.

5.4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This thesis could not cover all constructions, all semantic fields and all stylistic devices.

To be honest, the number of selected idioms for analyzing is not numerous since the corpus of the thesis includes 240 idioms in both English and Vietnamese.

Finally, the cultural feature is also an interesting aspect for the research, but I did not have enough time and ability to mention it thoroughly in this thesis.

5.5. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

(i) An Investigation into Cultural and Pragmatic Features of English and Vietnamese Idioms Containing Words Denoting Metal.

(ii) An Investigation into Linguistic Features of English and Vietnamese Proverbs Containing Words Denoting Metal.