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A STUDY OF SEMANTIC AND SYNTACTIC FEATURES  
OF IDIOMS RELATING TO FRUITS  
IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE

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## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. RATIONALE

Language is used to show not only the way of each people perceives the world around but also the way of each people reacts towards that world. Each language also conveys a particular aspect of its culture which prevents people from communicating each other effectively and clearly. In addition, nowadays in the stage of integration, the more society develops, the more people have great demands in communication. Moreover, it is undeniable that acquiring good command in English is beneficial to one's career and self-development. However, the figurative meaning of these idioms could bring about difficulties to English and Vietnamese learners. There have been so far a lot of studies and investigations into idioms concerning animals, plants, colors, causes and results etc. Nevertheless, hardly any study of idioms relating to *fruits* has been carried out. Furthermore, another aspect is "*the study of language can and should be divided into two parts: syntax and semantics*" [26, p.14]. These are the reasons why we would like to carry out this thesis titled "*A Study of Semantic and Syntactic Features of Idioms Relating to Fruits in English and Vietnamese*".

### 1.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

#### 1.2.1. Aims of the Study

The study aims at:

- Investigating the semantic and syntactic features of English and Vietnamese idioms relating to *fruits* (IsRTFs) in the combined analysis of both features.
- Finding out the similarities and differences in the semantic and syntactic features of these idioms in English and Vietnamese.

- Helping learners of English and Vietnamese learn, use idioms better and raise the awareness among them of the beauty of language and its cultural features.

#### 1.2.2. Objectives of the Study

- Identify and describe semantic and syntactic features of English and Vietnamese IsRTFs.
- Compare semantic and syntactic features of these IsRTFs in English and Vietnamese.
- Find out the cultural features of these IsRTFs.
- Offer some implications for better teaching and learning English and Vietnamese as a foreign language.

### 1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the semantic and syntactic features of English IsRTFs?
2. What are the semantic and syntactic features of Vietnamese IsRTFs?
3. What are the similarities and differences in the semantic and syntactic features of English and Vietnamese IsRTFs?
4. What are the underlying cultural features reflected through these similarities and differences in IsRTFs?

### 1.4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

### 1.5. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

### 1.6. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The study is organized into five chapters: Chapter 1 (Introduction), Chapter 2 (Literature Review and Theoretical Background), Chapter 3 (Methods and Procedures), Chapter 4 (Findings and Discussions) and Chapter 5 (Conclusions and Implications).

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

**2.1. OVERVIEW**

**2.2. A REVIEW OF PREVIOUS STUDIES**

For the past decades, an important number of studies have turned their attention to idioms.

For English idioms, there have been many books which are of much benefit to learners such as Ginzburg et al. (1979) [12] with “*A Course in Modern English Lexicology*”, Cruse (1986) [7] with “*Lexical Semantics*”, Sag et al. (2003) [41] with “*Syntactic Theory – A Form Introduction*”, etc.

In Vietnam, Vietnamese researchers have so far paid a great deal of regard to idioms. There have been many authors carrying out studies on idioms such as: “*Từ điển thành ngữ Việt Nam*” by Nguyễn Như Ý et al. (1992) [75], “*Từ điển thành ngữ tục ngữ ca dao Việt Nam*” by Việt Chương (2007) [54], “*Thành ngữ tiếng Việt*” of Nguyễn Lực, Lương Văn Đăng (2009) [65] ...

**2.3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

**2.3.1. Definition of Idioms**

As for Cobuilb [5, p.iv] “*an idiom is a special kind of phrase. It is a group of words which have a different meaning when used together from the one it would have if the meaning of each word taken individually*”. In Vietnamese, idioms have also attracted a lot of the interest of researchers. Mai Ngọc Chừ, Vũ Đức Nghiệu and Hoàng Trọng Phiến [53, pp.153-165] state that “*idioms are groups of words which are syntactically restricted and have a particular meaning. Their meanings are often imaginative and figurative*”.

**2.3.2. Idioms Relating to Fruits**

In the book “*Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary: International Student’s Edition*” Turnbull et al. [49, p.604] stated that “*fruit is the part of a plant that consists of one or more seeds and flesh, can be eaten as food and usually tastes sweet: tropical fruits such as bananas and pineapples*” or “*a part of a plant or tree that is formed after the flowers have died and in which seeds develop*”. In this thesis, we study idioms containing fruits words such as *raspberry, apple, banana, lemon, peach, olive, nut, etc.* in English and *quả bưởi, bông, cà chua, nhãn, chuối, khế, chanh, dứa, quýt, sung, cam, mít, etc.* in Vietnamese and containing parts of fruits such as *hạt nhãn, hạt na, etc.*

**2.3.3. Typical Features of Idioms**

**2.3.3.1. Semantic Ambiguity**

**2.3.3.2. Syntactic Restriction and Stability**

**2.3.3.3. Inseparability of Semantic and Syntactic Features**

**2.3.4. Overview of Phrase Structures**

A syntactic point of view in this thesis is based on the viewpoint of Greenbaum in “*The Oxford English Grammar*” [15].

**2.3.4.1. Noun Phrase**

**2.3.4.2. Verb Phrase**

**2.3.4.3. Adjective Phrase**

**2.3.4.4. Adverb Phrase**

**2.3.4.5. Prepositional Phrase**

**2.3.6. Idioms and Other Language Units**

**2.3.6.1. Idioms and Phrases**

**2.3.6.2. Idioms and Collocations**

**2.3.6.3. Idioms and Proverbs**

**2.3.7. Relationship between Language and Culture**

**2.3.7.1. Concept of Culture**

**2.3.7.2. Inseparable Relationship between Language and Culture**

**2.3.8. Idioms Related to Culture**

Idioms - refined parts of language – are influenced by culture dramatically. According to Glucksberg [13] “*learning idiom provides learners with a good opportunity to acquire information about a language’s culture*”.

**2.3.9. Summary**

**CHAPTER 3**

**METHODS AND PROCEDURES**

**3.1. OVERVIEW**

**3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research design has been made with the aim of providing guidelines for systematic data gathering and finding the diversity of IsRTFs in English and Vietnamese. It further helps discover the typical underlying cultural features of IsRTFs.

**3.3. RESEARCH METHODS**

In order to achieve the aims and objectives of the study, the descriptive and comparative methods could be used combined with the qualitative and quantitative approaches.

**3.4. INSTRUMENTATION**

**3.5. DATA COLLECTION**

**3.6. DATA ANALYSIS**

**3.7. RESEARCH PROCEDURES**

**3.8. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

**3.9. SUMMARY**

**CHAPTER 4**

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**4.1. OVERVIEW**

**4.2. SEMANTIC AND SYNTACTIC FEATURES OF IDIOMS RELATING TO FRUITS (IsRTFs) IN ENGLISH AND IN VIETNAMESE**

After a collection and a detailed analysis, IsRTFs can be organized into nine main categories: *appearance, moods and feelings, honesty/ dishonesty, love affairs/ relationship, success/ failure, behavior/ attitude/ activity/ action, advantageous/ disadvantageous situation, poverty, geography* in the form of a noun phrase, a verb phrase, an adjective phrase, an adverb phrase and a prepositional phrase.

**4.2.1. IsRTFs Expressing Appearance**

English IsRTFs expressing *appearance* counts for 7.9% in the total idioms collected (11 out of 140) but Vietnamese ones occupy a bit more percentage 11.4% (# 16 out of 140).

**Table 4.1: Frequency of Semantic and Syntactic Features of IsRTFs Expressing Appearance in English and Vietnamese**

ENGLISH	VIETNAMESE
[1] N + and + N	[1] N + N/ NP
[2] (as) + A + as + NP	[2] N + N / N + N
Ø	[3] N + nhr + NP
Ø	[4] N + A + nhr + NP
Ø	[5] N + A+ NP
Ø	[6] A/ AP + nhr + NP

**4.2.2. IsRTFs Expressing Moods and Feelings**

Vietnamese IsRTFs expressing *moods and feelings* contribute quite a large percentage (N=30 # 21.4%) in our collection compared to English idioms (N=14 # 10%).

**Table 4.2: Frequency of Semantic and Syntactic Features of IsRTFs**

**Expressing Moods and Feelings in English and Vietnamese**

ENGLISH	VIETNAMESE
[3] (art) + N + N	[7] N + A + <i>nhu</i> + N/ NP
[4] V + like + N	[8] N + A / N + A
[5] V + N/ NP	[9] V + <i>nhu</i> + VP
[6] V + S.one + N	[10] V + NP
[7] V + Prep + NP	[11] V + NP + V
[8] (as) + A + as/ than + NP	[12] A + <i>nhu</i> + N/ NP
[9] Prep + NP	[13] A + <i>nhu/ hon</i> + VP
∅	[14] A + <i>nhu</i> + Clause
∅	[15] A + <i>nhu</i> + N / A + <i>nhu</i> + N
∅	[16] <i>Nhu</i> + VP

**4.2.3. IsRTFs Expressing Honesty/ Dishonesty**

Data in our corpus also reveals that, there is a negligible amount of English idioms (N= 5 # 3.6%) of the semantic field of *honesty/ dishonesty*. Meanwhile, Vietnamese idioms are 10 occurrences (# 7.1%).

**Table 4.3: Frequency of Semantic and Syntactic Features of IsRTFs Expressing Honesty/ Dishonesty in English and Vietnamese**

ENGLISH	VIETNAMESE
[10] A + N	[17] N + A + N + NP
[11] N + PP	[18] V + N/ NP / V + N/ NP
∅	[19] V + N + V + PP
∅	[20] V + NP

**4.2.4. IsRTFs Expressing Love Affairs/ Relationship**

Vietnamese IsRTFs expressing *love affairs/ relationship* occupy 14 occurrences (# 10%) meanwhile English idioms in this semantic field make up 3.6% (N=5)

**Table 4.4: Frequency of Semantic and Syntactic Features of IsRTFs Expressing Love Affairs/ Relationship in English and Vietnamese**

ENGLISH	VIETNAMESE
[12] N + PP	[21] V + N/ NP / V + N/ NP
[13] V + N	[22] A + N / A+ N

**4.2.5. IsRTFs Expressing Success/ Failure**

Both English and Vietnamese idioms make up a small number in sharing with this semantic feature (N<sub>E</sub>=11 # 7.9%, N<sub>V</sub>=9 # 6.4%).

**Table 4.5: Frequency of Semantic and Syntactic Features of IsRTFs Expressing Success/Failure in English and Vietnamese**

ENGLISH	VIETNAMESE
[14] (art) + A + N	[23] V + N / V + N
[15] V + NP	[24] V + NP
[16] V + N + Past.P	[25] V + <i>nhu</i> + Clause
[17] not + A + N	[26] V + <i>nhu</i> + N

**4.2.6. IsRTFs Expressing Behavior/ Attitude/ Activity/ Action**

IsRTFs in this semantic field in our corpus occupy the largest amount. Noticeably, English idioms (N=60 # 42.9%) make up nearly double in comparison with Vietnamese (N=37 # 26.4%).

**Table 4.6: Frequency of Semantic and Syntactic Features of IsRTFs Expressing Behavior/ Attitude/ Activity/ Action in English and Vietnamese**

ENGLISH	VIETNAMESE
[18] (art) + N + N/ NP	[27] N/ NP + A/ AP/ N/ NP + A/ AP
[19] (art) + A + N	[28] NP + NP
[20] (art + A) + Past.P + N + (PP)	[29] N + V / N + V
[21] N + Pre.P	[30] NP + như + N
[22] N + and + N	[31] V + N/ NP / V + N/ NP
[23] N + PP	[32] V + A + như + N
[24] (not) + V + N	[33] VP + Clause
[25] V + S.one + NP	[34] V + N/ NP + PP
[26] V + N + and + N	[35] V + A + V + N
[27] V + S.th + PP	[36] A+ như + N/ NP
[28] V + NP + to.inf	∅
[29] V + NP + Clause	∅
[30] V + like + N	∅
[31] V + Prep + N	∅
[32] (as) + A + as + NP	∅
[33] Prep + N/ NP	∅

**4.2.7. IsRTFs Expressing Advantageous/ Disadvantageous Situation**

English idioms contributing to this semantic field are up to 31 idioms (#22.1%) whereas Vietnamese idioms have 17 idioms (# 12.1%).

**Table 4.7: Frequency of Semantic and Syntactic Features of IsRTFs Expressing Advantageous/ Disadvantageous Situation in English and Vietnamese**

ENGLISH	VIETNAMESE
[34] art + N + N	[37] N + V / N + V
[35] (art) + A + N + (to.inf)	[38] N + A / N + A
[36] (art) + N/ NP + PP	[39] không/ chẳng + V + Clause
[37] art + A + N + PP	[40] V + NP
[38] V + NP + PP	[41] V + N/ NP / V + N/ NP
[39] as + A + as + NP	[42] Adv + Clause
[40] (as) + A + as + Clause	∅
[41] Prep + NP	∅

**4.2.8. IsRTFs Expressing Poverty**

English IsRTFs expressing *poverty* only appear in a prepositional phrase form (N=1). Meanwhile, Vietnamese idioms make up 7 items only appearing in form of noun phrases and verb phrases.

**Table 4.8: Frequency of Semantic and Syntactic Features of IsRTFs Expressing Poverty in English and Vietnamese**

ENGLISH	VIETNAMESE
[42] Prep + NP	[43] NP + NP
∅	[44] N + A / N + A
∅	[45] VP + NP
∅	[46] VP + VP + VP

**4.2.9. IsRTFs Expressing Geography**

Table 4.9 exposes that there is no Vietnamese IsRTFs expressing *geography* (0%). However, 1.4% (N=2) collected idioms of this semantic field are found in English IsRTFs.

**Table 4.9: Frequency of Semantic and Syntactic Features of IsRTFs Expressing Geography in English and Vietnamese**

ENGLISH	VIETNAMESE
[43] art + N + N	∅
[44] A + N	∅

A statistic summary of syntactic features of idioms relating to *fruits* in English and Vietnamese is presented in the following table.

**Table 4.12: Statistical Summary of Syntactic Features of Idioms Relating To Fruits in English and Vietnamese**

Idioms Relating To Fruits in English and Vietnamese		ENGLISH		VIETNAMESE		
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Syntactical Analysis	Phrase Structures	Noun Phrases	60	42.8%	42	30%
		Verb Phrases	47	33.6%	65	46.4%
		Adjective Phrases	27	19.3%	33	23.6%
		Adverb Phrases	0	0%	0	0%
		Prepositional Phrases	6	4.3%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>		<b>140</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100%</b>	

### 4.3. SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN SEMANTIC AND SYNTACTIC FEATURES OF IDIOMS RELATING TO FRUITS

It is undeniable that idioms in general and English and Vietnamese idioms relating to *fruits* in particular always attract great

attention of all linguists and readers as well. However, each language has its profound cultural features related to its own physiology, convention, religious belief and so on. From the study, we could see that both languages share similarities and differences in semantic and syntactic features. What is more, basing on this comparison, we can discover underlying cultural characteristics of English and Vietnamese idioms relating to *fruits*.

#### 4.3.1. Similarities

##### • Semantic Features

It can be seen clearly that apart from the semantic field of *geography*, both English and Vietnamese IsRTFs are employed for the same semantic fields such as *appearance, moods and feelings, honesty/ dishonesty, love affairs/ relationship, success/ failure, behavior/ attitude/ activity/ action, advantageous/ disadvantageous situation*.

Furthermore, both languages use certain familiar images, daily events and phenomena to express the abstract sense thanks to the means of metaphor, simile.

In the same transference of meaning of metaphor, “*Metaphor is the transference of meaning (name) from one object to another based on similarity between two objects*” Nguyen Hoa [21, p.35]. Especially, metaphor is chiefly used in the meaning transfer of idioms. In fact, metaphor is the concept of understanding one thing in terms of another. Interestingly, metaphor is used in the two languages as IsRTFs of our corpus namely *rotten apple, a real peach, bowl of cherries, play gooseberry, belt the grape ...* in English and *com sung cháo dền, buồn buồn bán bông, trầu héo cau ôi, có cam phụ quýt...* in Vietnamese. Metaphors help idioms express their figurative

meanings under the consideration of similar characteristics of people or objects. Let's examine the following example to clarify the above ideas, *com sung cháo dền* does not describe the meal with figs and amaranth, but this idiom describes the poverty of farmers in Vietnam.

(4.116) Đào tơ, liễu yếu gửi thân anh hùng.

Xưa nay gái đội ơn chồng,

Hiển vinh bở lúc *com sung cháo dền*.

Ơn trời công đã được đền,

Chàng nên quan cả, thiếp nên hầu bà! [117]

(4.117) The government retorts that Mr Fedorov's criticism is mere *sour grapes*. [5, p.168]

With the above example, the literal meaning of idiom *sour grapes* is the grapes that have an unpleasant taste or smell but its metaphoric meaning is jealous feeling.

In addition, simile as another way of meaning transfer is mainly employed in English and Vietnamese IsRTFs. Simile is a stylistic device which is used to make a comparison of two things based on one shared quality by using the comparative words such as *as, like* or *than* in English and *như, bằng, không bằng* in Vietnamese.

For examples:

(4.118) *Round as an apple,*

Yellow as gold

With more things in it

Than you're years old. [109]

(4.119) Xa quê, mỗi khi người ta khen con gái Hưng Yên *mắt đen như hạt nhãn* lòng là lại tùm tùm cười vui. [116]

• *Syntactic Features*

From our study, we could see that both English and Vietnamese IsRTFs share certain patterns in common in the form of noun phrases, verb phrases and adjective phrases. Firstly, in the form of noun phrases, both English and Vietnamese IsRTFs are under the pattern of N + N. Secondly, both languages share the similar pattern V + *like* + N and V + N/ NP in the form of verb phrases in English and V + *như* + N and V + NP in Vietnamese. Thirdly, in the structure of comparison in the form of adjective phrases (*as*) + A + *as* + NP and (*as*) + A + *as* + Clause in English have the similar one A + *như* + N/NP and A + *như* + Clause in Vietnamese. Fourthly, parallel structures appear in both English and Vietnamese IsRTFs such as *peaches and cream, prunes and prisms* and *có khế ế chanh, buôn bưởi bán bòng, ăn táo trả hạt, mắt ốc nhồi môi chuối mắt, răng chuối tiêu lưỡi núc nác*, etc. Lastly, the metaphorically descriptive structures can be found in both languages such as *go banana, a banana kingdom, a bowl of cherries* in English and *com hằm cà thiu, đút chuối vào miệng voi, chợ trưa dưa héo* in Vietnamese.

4.3.2. Differences

• *Semantic Features*

Language cannot exist without culture as its component. According to Trần Ngọc Thêm “*Văn hóa bao gồm tất cả những gì làm cho dân tộc này khác với dân tộc khác*” (Culture includes all things which make this nation different from other nations) [72, p.21]. In fact, Vietnamese and English people have different cultural tradition, cultural backgrounds, customs, religious belief and different geographical environment. Therefore, the language

Vietnamese and English people use reflects their different lifestyle and thought.

Firstly, the difference of geographical environment makes different cultures. The West with the dry, cold climate and vast grasslands which is suitable for animal husbandry establishes the trend of the nomadic life. So, the Westerners in general and English people in particular, appreciate individualism and reasons and have ambition to conquer the nature. Meanwhile, the East has the hot, humid climate and a lot of delta which are good conditions for cultivation. Because of such different characteristics of the East, Vietnamese people tend to live in harmony with their environment, have the great respect for their community leading a flexible and harmonious life. Therefore, in communication Vietnamese people do not want to trouble anyone. They always keep their inner feelings to remain a peaceful coexistence. For example, *ngâm bồ hòn làm ngọt, cay đắng như ngâm bồ hòn, như ngâm bồ hòn*. In England, they have a tendency to speak out nearly all personal problems and criticize frankly. For instance *have a plum in one's mouth* (talk to someone with superior behavior), *give someone the raspberry* (to make a rude noise with the lips at someone), *bad apple* (a person who is bad and makes others bad).

Secondly, Vietnamese civilization is considered “*nền văn minh thực vật*” [P. Gourou, cited [74, p.35] (“*plant civilization*”). Furthermore, Vietnam, among the countries in the Southeast Asian region, is believed to be the cradle of agricultural civilization. Also, natural history surrounding the society forms Vietnamese cultural characteristics. For these reasons, Vietnamese idioms contain a variety of kinds of tropical fruits such as *cau, dưa gang, mít, chuối,*

*cà chua, cà, quýt, đào, dứa, na, nhãn, cau, bồ quân, dưa, bồ hòn, ớt, sung, gấc, thị, táo, lựu, cam, chanh, khế, hồng, bông, bưởi, vả, ổi, cà* whereas the number of fruits in English idioms is not so abundant as that in Vietnamese idioms. For example *apple, banana, blackberry, strawberry, cranberry, huckleberry, pineapple, nut, cherry, chili, plum, olive, prune, lime, peach, fig, raspberry, orange, walnut, grape*.

Thirdly, another straightforward difference of these two languages is living environment. In fact, people are not only the subject of culture but also the embodiment of the reflection of culture on living environment. Thus, Vietnamese people tend to use popular fruits of tropical area in their idioms such as *bồ quân, dưa, bồ hòn, chanh, khế, vả, ổi* with high frequency. In English IsRTFs, *apple* is the most typical fruit found in our corpus. For instance, when you refer to someone who is a difficult person to deal with, English people use the idiom *a hard nut to crack* but Vietnamese people use a familiar fruit *ổi* in *wong như ổi*. In order to express deep affection for someone, English people usually use the fruit *apple* in *apple of discord* or *apple of your eye*. In contrast, because of the life style and the trend of society, Vietnamese people with agricultural origin pay a respectful attitude towards community spirit and affection. The social norms of behavior are based on their affection hence a lot of Vietnamese IsRTFs appeared in our collected data with various kinds of fruits such as *mít (ăn mít bỏ xơ), cam, quýt (có cam phụ quýt), khế, chanh (có khế ế chanh), vả, sung (ăn quả vả trả quả sung)*, etc. Especially, *trầu, cau* are two traditional images in Vietnamese marriages. These specific cultural symbols can be found in Vietnamese IsRTFs *trầu héo cau ổi*, for example.

Phan Ngọc (2000) with “*Thử xét văn hóa, văn học bằng ngôn ngữ học*” asserted that “*văn hóa Việt Nam là văn hóa bốn F: Tổ quốc (Fatherland), Gia đình (Family), Thân phận (Fate) và Diện mạo (Face)*” [67, p.24]. This is why only Vietnamese IsRTFs describe people’s physical states copiously with all human body parts such as *vú thông dưa gang, mủi cà chua, rốn lồi quả quýt, tóc trái đào, mắt ốc nhồi môi chuối mắn, răng chuối tiêu lưỡi núc nác*.

In addition, different cultures have different viewpoints toward the same thing. To describe the round shape, English and Vietnamese people use different images. For example:

English idioms: *as round as an orange, as round as an apple*

Vietnamese idioms: *béo tròn như hạt mít, tròn như hạt mít*

In a tropical country like Vietnam, there is a deeply rooted wet rice civilization which has affected the life style of Vietnamese people. Vietnam is a typical agricultural nation with a large population of peasants. For this reason, whenever people talk about the Vietnamese meal, there are typical foods such as rice, vegetables and fruits. The poverty of Vietnamese people could be expressed through the IsRTFs in the images such as *cà, sung, dền, com hẩm*. For example *com sung cháo dền, cà chua mắm mặn, com hẩm cà thiu*...English idioms, on the other hand, use only the fruit *chili* and *bean* to refer to the poverty such as *down to chili and beans*.

One further different characteristic between English and Vietnamese IsRTFs is their traditional religion. In collected English IsRTFs, some of them originate from Bibles such as *as sure as God made little apples, apple of Sodom* (Sodom is the name of city in the Bible which was destroyed by God to punish the people for their sexually immoral behaviour) or in the Bible *apple of your eye* is used

by some translations of the original Holy Scriptures for two different Hebrew words, one meaning *a reflection*, the other meaning *a daughter*. This is just because most of English people are Christians who believe God. In Vietnam, Buddhism is considered the most common religious belief. So, the philosophies of Buddhism have affected Vietnamese people’s thought. For instance, *trồng dưa được dưa* or *trồng cà được cà*.

English people, with the origins of nomadic culture, have individual features that give them the will of independence and the determination. They are willing to face their failure and try to get another opportunity as *a second bite at the cherry, get another bite at/ of the cherry*. Nevertheless, Vietnamese people with the communal features which discourage people’s competitive spirits are usually in favour of enduring and stable life. So when they failed at the first time, they always take all reasonable precautions to protect themselves as *đạp võ dưa thấy võ dĩa sợ*.

Last but not least, the way of life roots in mind of agricultural Vietnamese people, the style of synthetic thought and the idea of settlement lead to the respectful trend of equilibrium and harmony in speech. Trần Ngọc Thêm stated that “*tính cân xứng là một đặc tính rất điển hình của tiếng Việt*” [72, p.317] (“*The symmetry is a typical property of Vietnamese*”). Consequently, symmetry is a way of meaning transfer which mostly appears in Vietnamese IsRTFs. Also, Vietnamese IsRTFs in this meaning transfer are much more numerous than in English. For example, *lợn đầu/cau cuối, quýt ngọt/cam chua, quýt làm/cam chịu, mua khế/bán chanh, trồng dưa/được dưa, trồng cà/được cà*, etc. This way makes Vietnamese idioms smooth and has good rhythm.

• **Syntactic Features**

“The flexibility of Vietnamese is also expressed in Vietnamese’s speech and by Vietnamese people who like using verb phrases very much” [72, p.324]. This characteristic can be seen clearly in the table 4.12. In English, noun phrases make the biggest proportion of frequency (42.8%) whereas verb phrases are the most frequent in Vietnamese (46.4%).

Besides, among the total samples studied, there are no cases of English idioms in adverb phrases form as well as there are no Vietnamese ones in prepositional phrases form.

What is more, the comparative structures in Vietnamese IsRTFs are rather diversified: N + như + NP (*đầu như trái ké*), N + A + như + NP (*người tròn như hạt mít*), A/ AP + như + NP (*lớn như chuối hột*), V + như + VP (*áp úng như ngậm hột thị*), V + như + Clause (*roi như sung rụng*), A + như + Clause (*lơ láo như bù nhìn giữ dưa*), A + như/ hơn + VP (*cay đắng như ngậm bồ hòn*), A + như + N / A + như + N (*xót như muối, rầu như dưa*), NP + như + N (*chấy rận như sung*), V + A + như + N (*đẽ dầy như sung*).

In English, an adjective is often used to modify for a noun and it usually stands before nouns but in Vietnamese IsRTFs in vice versa

**4.4. SUMMARY**

In short, in this chapter, we have described and analyzed the semantic and syntactic features of English and Vietnamese idioms relating to *fruits*. For each part, a comparison between English and Vietnamese IsRTFs in terms above has been made to discover the similarities and differences in the semantic and syntactic features. Moreover, idioms could mirror our life from every dimension. Therefore, basing on these similarities and differences, we can find out

that the words in idioms and their meaning can not only expose the way people speak that language in their daily life but also reveal the underlying cultural characteristics such as geographical conditions, historical backgrounds, habits, culture, customs, religious beliefs and so on.

**CHAPTER 5**

**CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

**5.1. OVERVIEW**

In this chapter, we will present a brief review of what has been studied through out the section of conclusion. Furthermore, with the analyzed findings withdrawn in the chapter 4, we also suggest some implications in teaching and learning idioms in English as a foreign language. Finally, the limitations of the study and some suggestions for further studies will be also mentioned.

**5.2. CONCLUSIONS**

The primary intent of the study is to show the semantic and syntactic features of English and Vietnamese IsRTFs in order to find out the similarities as well as differences in constructions and various meanings possessed by IsRTFs and the way English and Vietnamese speakers use them in their daily life. These are the results:

Firstly, in term of semantics, in the total of 9 groups of semantic fields categorized in collected corpus in both languages, there are the same 8 topics approached by both English and Vietnamese IsRTFs such as *appearance, moods and feelings, honesty/ dishonesty, love affairs/ relationship, success/ failure, behavior/ attitude/ activity/ action, advantageous/ disadvantageous situation, poverty*. Moreover, the meaning of all idioms in data

collection is expressed through semantic transfer devices such as metaphor, simile and symmetry.

Secondly, in term of syntax, English and Vietnamese IsRTFs are analyzed under phrasal structures such as noun phrase, verb phrase, adjective phrase, adverb phrase and prepositional phrase. In the limit of collected corpus, the number of noun phrases is the most popular in the total of English IsRTFs whereas verb phrases occupy the biggest number in Vietnamese IsRTFs. Besides, English and Vietnamese IsRTFs tend to be in symmetry structures, comparative structures and metaphorically descriptive structures.

What is more, idioms arrests linguistics' attention not only in semantic and syntactic features but also in implied cultural characteristics of English and Vietnamese IsRTFs based on the similarities and differences of semantic and syntactic features of IsRTFs in both languages.

### **5.3. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY**

In reality, we cannot teach a foreign language without teaching idioms because they are not a separate part of the language which we can choose either to use or omit. However, idioms are semantic ambiguity. They not only represent one concept in terms of another that may be thought of as analogous but also are usually based on highly specialized local customs or habits. Therefore, it is not surprising that idioms are frequently omitted in the speech addressed to second- language learners. Importantly, a good knowledge of idioms will help students to communicate better or more effectively. We hereafter would like to suggest some implications:

#### ***- To teachers:***

The adopted teaching strategy is expected to play a significant

role during lesson planning. Firstly in idiom teaching, teachers should keep in mind that language learners at different levels should be taught idioms in different ways.

For elementary levels, students might come up with problems concerning the used vocabulary. So, teachers should attract students' attention by introducing commonly used idioms. However, in this level, because they do not have the linguistic competence of higher levels nor do they know as many idioms, the teachers should avoid presenting infrequent and highly colloquial words. Importantly, children tend to demonstrate preference for thinking in metonymic terms before they think metaphorically. The teachers can change all activities from lower to higher requirements. Besides, idioms can be added to vocabulary being learned by including them in short dialogues and stories with teachers' explanations in an explicit way to avoid misunderstanding the figurative meaning of idioms. Giving the idioms in general themes such as works, animals, plants, flowers, food and so on to help students memorize easily is also one of the best ways to teach at elementary level.

For intermediate and advanced level, the cognitive linguistic approach is the most promising way to learn idioms. The teachers try to train students to infer meaning from context and to deal with figurative speech. Having activities to aid both comprehension and production of idioms through conversations help learners realize the absurdity of literal meaning and provide them a link from literal to non-literal meanings. The teachers should equip students with knowledge of syntactic and semantic features of idioms to use them effectively in communication.

It is very necessary for teachers to expose learners to idioms in context for contextual clues which are useful to them in comprehending unknown idioms. Moreover, the relationship between language and culture is deeply rooted so we can say that learning a new language involves the learning of a new culture. Teachers should have basic background of the culture to help students expand their knowledge of different cultures through learning idioms in general and idioms relating to *fruits* in particular. Presenting original meaning of an idiom and learning its derivation is an effective way to teach an idiom and a potential pathway for comprehension and the probability of retention as well. Also, authentic materials should be used to teach idioms.

**- To students:**

Most students are very interested in learning idiomatic language. However, they often recognize it as an area in which they have difficulties to grasp well. The following suggestions should be considered to get a good idiom learning results.

It is best for students to learn idioms in specific and real situations. In this way, they can find out underlying cultural features in these idioms. Another important thing is that learners should equip not only knowledge of language but also knowledge of customs, habits, religions, geographical condition and history relating to idioms to understand them better. Besides, learners also should pay attention to transfer meaning in process of translating idioms. To master endless source of idioms, learners can approach some documents containing a lot of idioms such as books, newspapers, novels, films and so on. It would be better for learners to compare and contrast literal and figurative meanings of idioms which enable

them to recognize idiomatic usage and to interpret idioms accordingly.

**5.4. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES**

**5.4.1. Limitations of the Study**

Despite a considerable effort that has been made, some limitations of this study cannot be avoided due to time, knowledge, reference material limitation. Besides, due to the limited sources of examples serving as the data for the study, some parts of the study have not accomplished a satisfactory depth as they should. For these reasons, this study cannot cover all features of idioms relating to *fruits* such as the pragmatic features of these idioms.

**5.4.2. Suggestions for Further Studies**

This thesis has focused only on studying the semantic and syntactic features of idioms relating to *fruits* in English and Vietnamese. Therefore, there are still some aspects related to this problem left for further researches:

- Study semantic and syntactic features of proverbs relating to *fruits* in English and Vietnamese.

- Study pragmatic features of idioms relating to *fruits* in English and Vietnamese.