

**BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO**  
**TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC DÂN LẬP HẢI PHÒNG**

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# **GRADUATION PAPER**

**A STUDY ON TECHNIQUES TO DEAL WITH  
NON-EQUIVALENCE IN TRANSLATING ENGLISH  
IDIOMS INTO VIETNAMESE**

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**BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO**  
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**NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP**

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Tên đề tài : **A STUDY ON TECHNIQUES TO DEAL WITH NON-EQUIVALENCE  
IN TRANSLATING ENGLISH IDIOMS INTO VIETNAMESE**

# NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI

1. Nội dung các yêu cầu cần giải quyết trong nhiệm vụ đề tài tốt nghiệp  
(về lý luận, thực tiễn, các số liệu cần tính toán và các bản vẽ).

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2. Các số liệu cần thiết để thiết kế, tính toán.

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3. Địa điểm thực tập.

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# CÁN BỘ HƯỚNG DẪN ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP

## Người hướng dẫn thứ nhất

Họ và tên :Phan Thị Mai Hương

Học hàm, học vị :Cử nhân

Cơ quan công tác :Đại học dân lập Hải Phòng

Nội dung hướng dẫn :A study on techniques to deal with non-equivalence in translating English idioms into Vietnamese

## Người hướng dẫn thứ hai:

Họ và tên :.....

Học hàm, học vị :.....

Cơ quan công tác :.....

Nội dung hướng dẫn: .....

Đề tài tốt nghiệp được giao ngày .....tháng..... năm 2010

Yêu cầu phải hoàn thành trước ngày.....tháng.....năm 2010

**Đã nhận nhiệm vụ Đ.T.T.N**

**SINH VIÊN**

**Đã giao nhiệm vụ Đ.T.T.N**

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*Hải Phòng, ngày.....tháng.....năm 2010*

**HIỆU TRƯỞNG**

**GS.TS.NGƯT. Trần Hữu Nghị**

## PHẦN NHẬN XÉT TÓM TẮT CỦA CÁN BỘ HƯỚNG DẪN

1. Tinh thần, thái độ của sinh viên trong quá trình làm đề tài tốt nghiệp:

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2. Đánh giá chất lượng Đ.T.T.N (So với nội dung yêu cầu đã đề ra trong nhiệm vụ Đ.T.T.N trên các mặt lý luận, thực tiễn, tính toán giá trị sử dụng, chất lượng các bản vẽ).

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3. Cho điểm của cán bộ hướng dẫn : .....

(Điểm ghi bằng số và chữ).....

.....

*Hải Phòng, ngày.....tháng.....năm 2010*

Cán bộ hướng dẫn chính  
(Họ tên và chữ kí)

# NHẬN XÉT ĐÁNH GIÁ CỦA CÁN BỘ CHẤM PHẢN BIỆN ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP

1. Đánh giá chất lượng đề tài tốt nghiệp về các mặt thu thập và phân tích số liệu ban đầu, cơ sở lý luận chọn phương án tối ưu, cách tính toán chất lượng thuyết minh và bản vẽ, giá trị lý luận và thực tiễn đề tài.

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2. Cho điểm của cán bộ phản biện:.....  
(Điểm ghi bằng số và chữ).....  
.....

*Ngày .....tháng.....năm 2010*  
**Người chấm phản biện**

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## **PART I: INTRODUCTION**

### **1. Rationale of the study**

In recent years, English learners have witnessed a further expansion of Vietnam's exchanging with other countries in the world, providing a good basic for a further boarding of international cooperation with many achievements. The developments also harmonize with the increasing globalization in which communication is paid attention to during establishing relation among nations and people. However, communication, which consist of using idioms, within only one-speech community is not enough. There has been situation in which individuals are unable to understand words and expression of some other or what they are uttering about. This phenomenon creates a barrier to common understanding whenever man tries to communicate across a great distance of space as well as a great interval of time.

To curb this problem, translation is used as a solution. However, it is difficult to translate English idioms into Vietnamese because of non-equivalence between English and Vietnamese idioms. Therefore, strategies to deal with non-equivalence in translating English idioms into Vietnamese which help translators to translate effectively idioms from English into Vietnamese are very important. From the awareness of the importance of this problem, and with the knowledge after years in university, researcher determine to choose this study as the research proposal to study more on translation skill in English idioms and to improve knowledge about non-equivalence in translation.

### **2. Scope of the study**

The research proposal focuses on general view of translation, non-equivalence in translation and idioms. Besides, researcher gives techniques to deal with non-equivalence in translating English idioms into Vietnamese. However, due to the limited time and the researcher's knowledge , all the

techniques could not taken but some only. In addition, some popular idioms are illustrated.

### **3. Methods of the study**

This study is carried out basing on two methods: material collection and comparative and contrastive analysis. First, the data are collected from various sources: English and Vietnamese dictionaries, Internet and other relevant materials. Then the data are analyzed and some examples are illustrated to help the learners understand deeply about the tips to deal with the non-equivalence in translating English idioms into Vietnamese.

### **4. Aims of the study**

The aims of this study is firstly understanding thoroughly theoretical translation, idioms and non-equivalence in translation and practice flexibly, creatively and exactly on specific English.

Secondly, enriching the knowledge as well as the vocabulary of idioms is also the main purpose of this study. There are many idiomatic words with multi-lexical meaning, used like communication languages but they have completely new concepts requiring translators to have knowledge about them.

### **5. Design of the study**

This study is divided into 3 parts:

Part I: INTRODUCTION states rationale, scopes, methods, aims and design of the study.

Part II: DEVELOPMENT consists of three chapters:

- Chapter I presents theoretical background with overview of translation subject, idiom and non-equivalence in translating.
- Chapter II mentions the study on difficulties caused by the non-equivalence in translating English idioms into Vietnamese.
- Chapter III suggests some techniques to deal with non-equivalence in translating English idioms into Vietnamese with detail examples.

Part III: CONCLUSION summarizes the study mentioned above and some suggestions for further study.

**PART II: DEVELOPMENT**  
**CHAPTER I: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

**1. Translation**

***1.1. Definition***

Though translation is no longer a strange terminology in daily life, there is hardly any agreement on its definition. A great number of books and articles have been written about this debatable subject. Each author or expert tried to prove his statement to be true. That is why “What is translation?” is still a big question in linguistic area. In the study, the researcher has no ambition to my own definition of translation ; the researcher just pick up and support one of revealed concepts of translation which is considered the most suitable to the study.

According to Bui Tien Bao and Dang Xuan Thu , “*Translation is rendering a written text into another language in the way that the author intended*”.(Bui Tien Bao and Dang Xuan Thu (1999), *Interpreting and translation course book*, Education Publishing House, Ha Noi.)

***1.2. Types of translation:***

There are two kinds of translation: literal and idiomatic translation .

Literal translation is form-based.

Idiomatic translation is meaning-based.

Literal translation is only used when the meaning of the Source language (SL) is transparent or explicit. However, a good translator would aim to an idiomatic translation since it uses natural form of receptor language, both in the grammar and in the choice of lexical items. It, in fact, looks like it is written originally in receptor language. And it is clear that idiomatic translation is the only way that can help to translate fixed expressions like

idioms from one language into another because an idiom’s meaning can not be derived from the conjoined meaning of its components.

For example, the idioms “*It rains dogs and cats*” would be nonsense if it is translated literally into Vietnamese as “*Trời mưa chã và mỗ*” because Vietnamese people do not use such animals to refer to a heavy rain , so the idiom should be translated into Vietnamese as “*Trời mưa như trút nước*”.

### ***1.3. Methods of translation:***

According to Bui Tien Bao and Dang Xuan Thu, it is important to introduce the two main methods: semantic translation and communicative translation with their striking features as follows (Bui Tien Bao and Dang Xuan Thu (1999), *Interpreting and translation course book*, Education Publishing House, Ha Noi.)

Semantic translation	Communicative translation
The stress lies on: Meaning Author Thought process	The stress lies on: Message Reader Utterance
Mostly inferior to its original. Wide and universal, responds to the author and address itself to all readers.	Often better than its original. “Tailor made” for one category of readership, does one job.
No such right here.	Right to: - Correct or improve logic. - Replace clumsy with elegant - Remove obscurities - Eliminate repetition and tautology - Modify and clarify jargon - Normalize idiolect

	- Correct mistakes of fact
Secure truth: Reduce unit of translation	Secure truth: Extend unit of translation
Text will be: More idiosyncratic More “sensitive”	Text will be: Smoother More idiomatic Easier to read
Text categories: 1. Texts of original expression 2. Any important statement 3. Autobiographies 4. Private correspondence 5. Any personal effusion 6. High literature 7. Drama	Text categories: 1. Most non-literal writing 2. Journalism 3. Informative articles and books 4. Textbooks 5. Reports 6. Scientific and technological writing 7. Non-personal correspondence 8. Propaganda 9. Publicity 10. Public notices 11. Popular fiction
	Religions, philosophical, artistic, scientific, legal texts.

According to Peter Newmark, there are other translation methods (Newmark, Peter (1995), *A text book of translation*, phoenix ELT).



Source language (SL) emphasis:	Target language (TL) emphasis:
Word-for-word translation	Adaptation
Literal translation	Free translation
Faithful translation	Idiomatic translation
Semantic translation	Communicative translation

**\*Word-for-word translation:**

This is often demonstrated as interlinear translation, with the TL immediately below the SL words. The SL word order is preserved and the word translated singly by their most common meanings, out of context. Cultural words are translated literally. The main use of word-for-word translation is either to understand the mechanics of the source language or to construe a difficult text as a pre-translation process.

**\*Literal translation:**

The SL grammatical constructions are converted to their nearest TL equivalents but the lexical words are again translated singly, out of context. As a pre-translation process, this indicates the problems to be solved.

**\*Faithful translation:**

A faithful translation attempts to reproduce the precise contextual meaning of the original within the constraints of the TL grammatical structures. It “transfers” cultural words and preserves the degree of grammatical and lexical “abnormality” (deviation from SL norms) in the translation. It attempts to be completely faithful to the intentions and the text-realization of SL writer.

**\*Semantic translation:**

This type of translation is different from faithful translation in term of the aesthetic value (that is the beautiful and natural sound) of the SL text. The distinction between “faithful” and “semantic” translation is that the first is uncompromising and dogmatic, while the second is more flexible.

**\*Adaptation:**

This is the “freest” form of translation. It is used mainly for plays and poetry; the themes, characters, plots are usually preserved, the SL culture converted to the TL culture and the text rewritten.

**\*Free translation:**

Free translation reproduces the matter without the manner, or the content without the form of the original. Usually it is a paraphrased much longer than the original, a so-called “intralingua translation”, not translation at all.

**\*Idiomatic translation**

Idiomatic translation reproduces the “message” of the original but tends to distort nuances of meaning by preferring colloquialism and idioms where there do not exist in the original.

**\*Communicative translation:**

Communicative translation attempts to render the precise contextual meaning of the original in such a way that both content and language are acceptable and understandable to the readership.

## **2. Idioms**

Idiom as special forms of language carry a large amount of culture information, such as history, geography, religion, custom, thinking pattern and so on. So what is an idiom?

## 2.1. Definition

To do research into idioms, first of all, the learners must understand what an idiom is. In the definition of English idioms, some scholars emphasize on the words quantity of structure in idioms. Others emphasize the single meaning of English idioms, it refers that the English idioms' meaning is arbitrary. The English idioms' meaning can not be synthesized or cut apart. Different people hold the different opinions on the definition of English idioms; they have different focal point on the definition of English idioms. Although there are many concepts of idioms, in the scope of this study, I only mention some concepts in English and Vietnamese.

In Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, the idiom is also defined as: "*a phrase or sentence whose meaning is not clear from the meaning of its individual words and which must be learnt as a whole unit*". (Hornby, A.S (1995), *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, Oxford University Press)

For instance: "*Smell a Rat*" doesn't have the meaning of "*Người thấy một con chuột*" but the meaning of "*Nghi ngờ có chuyện không hay*". Another example is the idiom "*After a storm comes a calm*". The meaning of the idiom isn't "*Sự yên ả đến sau cơn bão*" but it has the meaning of "*Bĩ cực thái lai*".

Not only British scholars but Vietnamese ones also give the different ways of the definition of the idiom. In "*Từ điển thành ngữ và tục ngữ Việt Nam*", Nguyen Lan – Vietnamese scholar stated that: "*Thành ngữ là những cụm từ cố định dùng để diễn đạt một khái niệm*". (Nguyễn Lan (1997), *Từ điển thành ngữ và tục ngữ Việt nam*, NXB Khoa học Xã hội)

(Idioms are fixed expressions used to express a concept).

For example, "*Hữu xạ tự nhiên hương*" ( *Good wine needs no bush*).

*“ Dục tốc bất đạt” ( Slow and steady wins the race).*

This concept of the idiom seems to be general and abstract to readers, so we may not make a clear distinction between idiom and other fixed expression like proverb.

Another definition, and may be the most satisfactory one is made by Nguyen Van Hang in *“Thành ngữ bốn yếu tố trong tiếng Việt hiện đại”* that is *“ Thành ngữ là một cụm từ đặc biệt có cấu trúc cố định , có vần điệu và thành phần ngữ âm đặc biệt; có thể suy ra từ tổng số nghĩa của các yếu tố cấu thành nó; thành ngữ có nghĩa bóng, nghĩa hình ảnh khái quát, thường kèm theo giá trị biểu cảm; thành ngữ thường dùng để định danh những hiện tượng của hiện thực và thường hoạt động trong câu với tư cách là một bộ phận cấu thành của nó”*. (Nguyễn Văn Hùng (1999), *Thành ngữ bốn yếu tố trong tiếng Việt hiện đại*, NXB Khoa học Xã hội)

(Idiom is a special phrase which allows very little or no variation in form; it is formed with rhythm and special phonetic elements; its meaning can not be deduced from its individual components; it expresses figurative and general meaning and normally comes along with emotive values; it is used to denote real phenomena and it often functions as a sentence element).

From the above definitions of English idioms, it can be defined that English idioms are some special language structure units- phrases, words groups and expressions, their meanings always can not be inferred from the literal meanings of the constitute-words of idioms, their meanings should be understood from the conventional form of whole idioms. From the sense, the idioms are short sayings which are characterized by the fact that their meaning can not be deduced from their components. They are non-motivated or partially motivated set expressions.

## 2.2. Some common features of idioms:

The definitions of the English idioms have been discussed in the above; an English idiom has its different characters from other words and expressions. The English idioms mainly have two aspect characters: semantic features and structural stability.

First of all, semantic features of idioms consist of literal meaning and figurative meaning.

The literal meaning creates a simple picture in our mind. For example, when the learners are reminded the expression “*walls have ears*” we think of “*continuous vertical narrow structure of brick or stone esp. enclosing or dividing a space or supporting a roof*” and “*the organ of hearing*”, simply.

The figurative meaning means using an image to stand for another idea. For instance, “*walls have ears*” doesn’t denote “*continuous vertical narrow structure of brick or stone esp. enclosing or dividing a space or supporting a roof*” and “*the organ of hearing*” but it means “*we may be overheard*”.

The semantic unity of idioms is reflected in the illogical relationship between the literal meaning of each constituent and the meaning of the idiom.

For example:

- 1) “*Take the bull by the horns*” (Can đảm đối đầu với khó khăn) . The literal meaning of its is “*hold the uncast rated male bovine animal by it horns*”, which is far from the expression’s idiomatic meaning “*take decisive action in a difficult situation*”.
- 2) “*For the birds*” (vớ vẩn, ảm ớ). The literal meaning of the idiom is “*something is only for birds*”. However, the figurative meaning of its is “*totally uninteresting and meaningless*”

Second of all, the idioms have the character of structural stability. The structure of an idiom is to a large extent invariable, unlike free phrases. The constituent of idioms can not be changed, inverted, deleted or added.

For example, the idiom “*Tongue-in-cheek*” (bõn cõt, mĩa mai) can not be inverted into “*Cheek-in-tongue*” and the idiom “*Mind one’s P’s and Q’s*” (Thận trọng trong từng lời ăn tiếng nói) can not be turned into “*Mind one’s Q’s and P’s*”.

Take one more the idiom “*On the line*” (có nguy cơ bị mất) for example, it means “*in danger of being lost*”. If the article “*the*” is deleted, the idiomatic meaning will be lost so the idiom will have the meaning of “on a row of things”, instead of.

Syntactical feature with form of idioms consist of short form and long form.

Some idioms only consist of one word. For example, “*fishy*” (bất thường và khả nghi).

Some idioms consist of more than one word which play as a phrase in the sentence or a sentence. For instance, “*all thumbs*” (vụng về) plays as a phrase in the sentence and “*Practice makes perfect*” (Cãi công mài sắt có ngày nên kim) plays as a sentence.

Many idioms are fixed, long sentence. For example, “*A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush*” (Thà rằng được sỏ trên tay, còn hơn được hứa trên mây hạc vàng) or “*It’s no use shutting the stable door after the horse is stolen*” (Mất bò mới lo làm chuồng).

### **2.3. Classification of idioms:**

Idioms can be classified by different ways but in this paper idioms are classified by two main ways: syntactic classification and semantic classification .

#### ***Syntactic classification:***

According to the syntactic classification, the idioms are divided into six groups: verb phrases, preposition phrases, adjective phrases, adverb phrases, noun phrases and sentence.

#### **\*Verb phrases:**

For example:

- “ John doesn’t play tennis very much, but he’s always *shooting off his mouth* about how good he is”.

In the example, the idiom “*shoot off one’s mouth*” (ba hoa, khoác lác) is a verb phrase referring to “*express one’s opinions loudly*”.

- “You don’t have to *jump down my throat*”.

The idiom “*jump down someone’s throat*” (nói chặn họng, trách mắng ai một cách giận dữ) in the above example is a verb phrase and it refer to “*become angry with somebody*”.

#### **\*Preposition phrases:**

For example:

- “Let’s put the report *on ice* awhile and grab a bite to eat”.

The idiom “*on ice*” (tạm gác lại rồi tính sau) in the example is a preposition phrase and it has the meaning of “*set aside for future use*”.

- “I will tell you what I have *up my sleeve*”.

In the sentence, the expression “*up one’s sleeve*”(thủ sẵn, chuẩn bị sẵn một cách bí mật) is a preposition phrase and it has the meaning of “*concealed*”.

### **\*Adjective phrases:**

For example:

- “He said that he was *hot under the collar* because he got stuck in slow-moving traffic”.

Here, “*hot under the collar*” (giận dữ, tức tối) is an adjective phrase that expresses the “*extremely angry*”.

- “Marry was not invited to the party of the group because she is such a *wet blanket*”.

In the sentence, the expression “*wet blanket*” (người phá đám làm mất cuộc vui) is an adjective phrase with the meaning of “*dull or boring person who spoils the happiness of others*”.

### **\*Adverb phrases:**

For example:

- In hospital, the nurse always takes your temperature *as a matter of course*”.

“*As a matter of course*”(thường) is an adverb phrase with the meaning of “*normally*”.

- “I go to the cinema *once for a while*”

Here, the expression “*once for a while*” (thỉnh thoảng) is an idiom with the function as an adverb phrase and it has the meaning of “*occasionally*”.

### **\*Noun phrases:**

For example:

- “No one bought anything from him because they felt he was giving them a *snow job*”.

The idiom “*snow job*” (chuyện bịp, chuyện dối trá) in the above sentence is a noun phrase which means “*insincere talk*”.

- “It’s nice of you to ask me out to dinner”, she said, “but could we make it a *Dutch treat*?”.



“*Dutch treat*” (bữa ăn mà tiền ai người ấy trả) in the sentence is an idiom formed in a noun phrase and it means “*a social occasion where one pays for oneself*”.

**\*Sentences:**

For example:

- “*Handsome is as handsome does*. Jim is good-looking, but he will need to convince Sally’s father that he can support a wife”.

“*Handsome is a handsome dose*” (tốt gỗ hơn tốt nước sơn) is a sentence meaning that it is all very well to be good-looking, but good looks have their limitations and one really needs other qualities.

- “When Bill helped me with geometry, I really learned the meaning of “*A friend in need is a friend indeed*””.

In the example the idiom “*A friend in need is a friend indeed*” (bạn khi hoạn nạn mới là bạn tốt) as a sentence means that a true friend is a person who will help you when you really need someone.

***Semantic classification:***

Many idioms seem to be compositional and the learners consider that the words in the idioms have non-standard meaning. Thus, in this analysis, we assume that these idioms, known as semantically decomposable idioms, can be paraphrased in a way that assigns a meaning to individual words, even if some of them are non-standard, as examples:

- “*leads a dog’s life*” in which “*lead*” is paraphrased as “live” and “*dog’s life*” as “the life of difficulties, miserableness” so the meaning of the idiom can be understood as “*live a miserable life*”- “sống một cuộc sống khổ cực”.
- When we see the word of “*Mecca*” in the idiom “*Mecca for someone*” is the centre of Islam which refers to a place where frequently visited by a particular group of people because it is important to them for some reason, we can realize the meaning of its as “thánh địa”.

### **3. Non-equivalence of translation:**

#### ***3.1. Non-equivalence:***

It is often the case that no direct equivalents can be found in Vietnamese for English Words. It may be that the concept or idea is new to the Vietnamese. Or, it may be that the concept is known or readily understood but there is no specific word in Vietnamese to express it. Another difficulty is that, in addition to their concrete meaning, some words have special connotations that are not conveyed by the Vietnamese words for the same meaning.

#### ***3.2. Common non-equivalence:***

In this session, I introduce the situations of non-equivalence in translating English idioms into Vietnamese as Culture-specific concepts; the SL concept is not lexicalized in the TL; the SL word is semantically complex; the SL and TL make different distinction in meaning; the TL lacks a super-ordinate; the TL lacks a hyponym; differences in physical or interpersonal perspective; difference in experience in expressing meaning; difference in form; differences in frequency and purpose of using specific forms; the use of loan words in the SL.

#### **\*Culture-specific concepts**

In this situation, the SL language word may express a concept which is totally unknown in the TL culture. The concept may relate to a religious belief or a type of food and as a result it should not be translated into the TL.

For example, the word of “*bánh chưng*” in Vietnamese refers to a special food used in Tet of Vietnam so that it should not be translated into English.

Another example is the word “*áo dài*” referring to a kind of traditional custom of Vietnamese people so it can not be translated into English.

**\* The SL concept is not lexicalized in the TL**

In this situation, the learners can see that the SL language may express a concept which is known in the TL culture but simply not lexicalized. The learners know the concept but they do not have the word to translate them. For instance, the learners know that “*Lễ dạm ngõ*” in Vietnamese is a ceremony before official marriage but the learners do not have the word to translate into English.

**\* The SL word is semantically complex**

The situation of the non-equivalence refers to a phenomenon that the SL may express a concept which is known in the TL culture but simply not lexicalized because the word in the SL is semantically complex. For example, “*A whistle-stop*” in English is not lexicalized in Vietnamese so that it may be translated into Vietnamese: “*Bài diễn văn đọc khi dừng lại trên đường đi tranh cử của các tổng thống Mỹ*”.

**\* The SL and TL make different distinction in meaning**

The SL word and the TL word are completely distinctions in two different cultures.

For instance:

In Vietnamese the word “*Yes*” expresses an agreement to a negative question: “*Haven’t you got lunch?*” – “*Yes, I haven’t*” (Vietnamese answer)

However, in English the word “*No*” expresses an agreement to a negative question:

“*Haven’t you got lunch?*” – “*No, I haven’t*” (English answer)

**\*The TL lacks a super-ordinate (or lacks of general word)**

In translation process, the translators often avoid the repetition by using the word or situation. However they often get some problems when the TL has only hyponyms but no general words.

For example, “*animal*” (super-ordinate) can be understood as “dog, cat...” (hyponym).

**\*The TL lacks a hyponym**

For example:

In Vietnamese the learners have problems with tenses, articles, or in using some verbs as “to ride & drive”, “to wear”...

In English the learners have problems with “bày/ đàn”... because the learners lack Vietnamese hyponym of the same occur when the way that Vietnamese addresses is mentioned.

**\*Differences in physical or interpersonal perspective**

The physical perspective has to do with where things or people are in relation with/to one another or to a place.

For example.

The English makes a distinction:

come here

go there

arrive

depart

The Vietnamese makes a distinction:

vào Nam

ra Bắc

lên rừng

xuống biển...

**\*Differences in experiences in expressing meaning**

Some Vietnamese words have same propositional meaning but different expressive meaning with that English.

For example:

*To batter & to beat* (đánh)

*To batter* = *to beat savagely* (đánh dã man)

Between the SL and the TL have different words. The learners need to add an equivalent modifier such as “*savagely*”

Similarly in English “to dine” is used but in Vietnamese “ăn” is used. There is no correspondence because “to dine” is very formal in English.

**\*Differences in form**

Vietnamese is an isolated language while English is an inflectional language. In English, the learners can make use of affixes, i.e. a meaningful element can be expressed/represented by a prefix, suffix/morpheme.

But in Vietnamese a meaningful element is represented by a separate word. There must be differences in forms.

For example: employee	employer
trainee	trainer...

**\*Differences in frequency and purpose of using specific forms**

Frequency forms used in:

English:	Vietnamese:
Noun	Verb

For example:

Your attention!	Xin chú ý!
Yours sincerely!	Trân trọng cảm ơn!

**\*The use of loan words in the SL**

The learners are confused by borrowed/loan words. Words or expressions which have the same form in two or more languages but convey different meanings.

For example: To demand/ to request (in English):yêu cầu, yêu sách.  
                          To demand   (in France):yêu sách.

## CHAPTER II

### DIFFICULTIES CAUSED BY THE NON-EQUIVALENCE IN TRANSLATING ENGLISH IDIOMS INTO VIETNAMESE

#### 1. Tips of translating English idioms into Vietnamese

In fact, many Vietnamese people want to learn English idioms and translate them into their native language but they have to deal with a lot of difficulties. And how to overcome them is still a great question. The following methods are referred to help Vietnamese learners in their English idioms studying and translating them into Vietnamese.

##### *1.1. The culture, manufacturing habits, language and the social condition*

Because of different geography, the difference between the cultures of two countries, Vietnam and England, is unavoidable, especially in the idioms system. Therefore, Vietnamese learners should understand about the culture, belief, regions, habit of both the countries. Then, they can compare and understand the meaning of the English idioms in Vietnamese.

- **Culture**

Firstly, when Vietnamese translators want to translate the English idioms into Vietnamese, they should understand the culture of the two countries.

Culture is useful tool to improve the understanding and knowledge of other nations and their people. Because of cultural differences reflected in idiomatic expressions, the translators sometimes find it extremely difficult to understand a foreign idiomatic expression.

For example, when translators want to translate the English idiom

*“Love me love my dog”*

The learners have to know about the culture of England.

It is said that the English often treat their animals especially dogs as if they were people. Nearly half of the households in England keep at least one domestic pet. When their pets die, many people even pay quite large sum of money to give their pets a decent burial. And the desire for animal welfare has official recognition. Cruelty to animals of any kind is a criminal offence.

So, “dog” in “Love me love my dog” seems not only to indicate a kind of animal and the idiom can be translated into Vietnamese as:

*“Yêu nhau yêu cả đường đi*

*Ghét nhau ghét cả tông ti họ hàng”*

- **Manufacturing habits**

Secondly, the learners should understand the manufacturing habits of the two countries so that the learners can translate the English idioms into Vietnamese better.

Manufacturing habits are factors that effect translating English idioms into Vietnamese very much.

In any meals of the English, cake and bread with butter or cheese and many kinds of meat are popular, meanwhile Vietnamese people are used to eating rice in their meals. So, the image of “cake” is often used in their metaphorical sentences.

For example, “Sell like hot cake” in Vietnamese should not be translated into “Bán như bánh rán nóng” but “Bán chạy như tôm tươi”.

On hearing “You can not have the cake and eat it too!”, Vietnamese translators can think of “Anh không thể vừa có cái này vừa có cái kia được”.

And when the learners see the idioms “*bread and butter*” in English, they have to think of “*kế sinh nhai*” in Vietnamese.

- **Language**

Thirdly, the learners should understand the ways of using languages in both Vietnamese and English.

People usually use languages to express their opinions, exchange their ideas, share their emotions and feelings, etc when they contact with others. However, it is not easy to accept languages in literal meanings of idioms from foreign ones.

English people usually use languages in a succinct style but Vietnamese people use language in long way to express their opinions, ideas as well as emotions and feelings.

For example, the English idiom

*“Two heads are better than one”*

should be translated into Vietnamese:

*“Một cây làm chẳng nên non*

*Ba cây chụm lại nên hòn núi cao”*

Another example,

*“The time is not on your side”*

and it is translated into Vietnamese as:

*“Thời gian thấm thoắt thoi đưa*

*Nó đi đi mãi chẳng chờ đợi ai”*



- **Social condition**

Fourthly, if the Vietnamese learners want to translate the English idioms into their language, they should understand the social condition of the two countries.

Each society has its own outstanding events, phenomenon, characters. The people in the society are effected by them. They tend to compare it to express their ideas, feelings, emotions. So, translation is more difficult because it demands the learners to get knowledge on not only culture but also social events.

For example, the translation for the English idiom “*To carry coals to Newcastle*” is “*Chở củi về rừng*”. But why the idiom is not “To carry firewood to the forest”?

In fact, the meaning here is clearly the same for both idioms: to bring something to a place that already has an abundance of that thing. The learners should know that Newcastle is well-known coal-producing city in England. So, a similar Vietnamese idiom should be “*Chở củi về rừng*”.

Besides, each society has its own outstanding characters whose names are so popular that they often appear in ordinary conversation. In this case, the learners do not need to recall who they are. Indeed, on hearing “*Sherlock Holmes*”, “*Robinson Crusoe*”, one can easily understand what they imply, no matter what nationality he bears.

Likewise, Vietnamese and Chinese characters often come into real life conversations as a part of Vietnamese language. “*Tính Hoạn Thư*”, “*tính Chí Phèo*”... are common idioms known to all Vietnamese people but not to English people.

## ***1.2. Identifying idioms***

Identifying idioms is not easy so that learners should study the features of idioms carefully, and distinguish them from other kinds of set expression to identify idioms better.

Linguists believe that language is a tool for human beings to process the existing world and their own experiences. However, because of cultural differences, some languages have strong ability to process words, while some have poor ability. As to the processing ways, some are easy, some are complicated. Therefore, though things or phenomena can be expressed in one language, there may be lack of equivalences in other languages.

For example: the English idiom “*Heart and Oak*” reflects the English fleet and crew that only exist in England so the learners can only translate it with the literal meaning as “*Đội tàu và thủy thủ của Anh*”.

Another example, the English idiom “*a stag-party*” means the party for men only, especially one for a man just before he gets married. So, the learners can translate the idiom into Vietnamese as “*bữa tiệc chỉ giành cho đàn ông*” One more example, the learners can translate the idiom “*a hen party*” meaning a party for women only, especially one for a woman about to get married into “*Bữa tiệc chỉ giành cho đàn bà*”

## ***1.3. Guessing the meaning***

Before translating English idioms into Vietnamese, the learners should guess the meaning of the idioms. Then they can collect their ideas and choose the best one to translate the English idioms into their language.

In fact, however, guessing the meaning of the idioms is very difficult because there is an association with the ordinary meaning of the individual words. The idioms can be guessed if they were used in a certain context, that is, when the learners know they are used in a particular situations. Therefore, to

translate the English idioms into Vietnamese well, the learners can analyze the meaning of all components and the relationship among the components or study the meaning in the certain context or ask the native speakers.

For example, when the learners meet the English idiom “*salt of the earth*”, we can guess the meaning of the idiom like that “salt” is the chloride of sodium, a substance used for seasoning food, for the preservation of meat, etc. It is found native in the earth, and is also produced, by evaporation and crystallization from sea water and other water impregnated with saline particles, and “earth” is the globe or planet which we inhabit; the world, in distinction from the sun, moon, or stars, also, this world as the dwelling place of mortals, in distinction from the dwelling place of spirits. “Salt” is very useful for our health and it is very valuable in our lives. Therefore, “*salt of the earth*” may denote something or someone good and worthy. If we meet the idiom in a certain context, the learners will translate it correctly.

For instance, “Mrs. Jones is the *salt of the earth*. She is the first to help anyone in trouble”. The learners can see that a person who is the first to help anyone in trouble must be very kind and worthy. So, the idiom “*salt of the earth*” means a very good or worthy person and it should be translated into Vietnamese as “*người tốt*”

#### ***1.4. Translating idioms in the suitable situation***

The main difficulty is that the learners do not know the level of the style, that is, they do not know whether an idiom can be translated in a formal or informal situation. The idioms should be translated informally when the learners do not know very well the person we are translating to or the occasion is public, in that case, words must be chosen more carefully. It would be wrong if we chose an informal expression in some rather formal situation and it would be worse to choose a slang expression. This means that

the learners can express the same information or ideas in more than one way using different levels of style.

For example, when the learners want to translate the English idiom “*People who live in the glass houses shouldn’t throw stones*” into Vietnamese they can translate it in many different ways with the same information that “one should not criticize when one is equal at fault”. When the learners translate the idiom to the person who they do not know well or in the public occasion, the idiom should be translated in the formal way as “*Ta không nên chỉ trích ai khi chính ta cũng mắc khuyết điểm như vậy*”. However, when the translators know the person who they are translating to very well or in an informal situation, the idiom can be translated as “*Đừng có chó chê mèo lảm lông*”

However, it is advisable not to make frequency use of slang expressions because it is easy to sound strange. And translating the idioms with neutral style is a good idea.

For instance, the idiom “*Go to bat for someone*” should not be translated by using slang expression frequently as “*Chịu thế*” because it sounds strange. It should be translated into “*Ra tay bênh vực*” in Vietnamese, instead of. Or, the idiom “*tight-fisted*” means being mean, stingy, misery and it should not be translated into “*kÑo*”, a slang expression in Vietnamese referring to mean characteristic, because it sounds very strange to many people. Therefore, it should be translated into “*keo kiệt*” in Vietnamese.

One more example, the idiom “*the life and soul of something*” means the most lively and amusing person present at a party, etc. However, it should not be translated into slang expression as “*cây quây*” or “*cái đình*” in Vietnamese. It should be translated into “*hoạt náo viên*”.

Besides, translating an idiom is natural or appropriate in a certain situation is also a difficulty. This can only be learnt by carefully reading of English texts which contain idioms.

### ***1.5. Finding Vietnamese equivalence***

When translating English idioms, it is not easy for Vietnamese equivalence suitable to the nuance of meaning of English idioms. Some English idioms have more than one Vietnamese equivalence so the learners should be careful when choosing them because if the learners choose the idioms which reflect the specialties of Vietnamese nature and society too much, the unity of English style will be lost.

Besides, some English idioms have no Vietnamese equivalence, the learners can translate them into their language but they must keep the suitable nuance of meaning of the English idioms.

For example, the English idiom “*When the cat’s away the mice will play*” means that some people will get into mischief when they are not being watched so it can be translated into “*Chủ vắng nhà gà vọc niêu tôm*”.

Another example, the idiom “*One good turn deserves another*” means one should help or be kind to other who have been kind to one in the past and the learners can translate it in to Vietnamese with the meaning as

*“Uống nước nhớ nguồn  
Ăn quả nhớ kẻ trồng cây.”*

Or, the idiom “*A new broom sweeps clean*” which means a new boss is likely to make changes to try to improve the efficiency of the company he or she is now in charge of can be translated into “*Lãnh đạo mới tác phong mới*”.

Another example, the English idiom “*Out of sight, out of mind*” means if you do not see something, you will not think about it. And, it can be translated into Vietnamese with the meaning of “*Xa mắt cách lòng*”.

The idiom “*Too many cooks spoil the broth*” means that too many people trying to manage something simply spoil it. When translating this idiom, the learners can use their language with the same nuance as the root one as “*Lắm thầy nhiều ma*”

Or, the English idiom “*Where there’s a will, there’s a way*” can be translated into Vietnamese as “*Có chí thì nên*”.

The idiom “*Necessity is the mother of invention*” should be translated into Vietnamese with the suitable nuance as “*Khó sinh khéo*”.

When translating the idiom “*Empty vessels make most sounds*” , the learners can use their language to translate it with the suitable nuance as “*Thùng rỗng kêu to*”

## **2. Difficulties caused by non-equivalence in translating English idioms into Vietnamese**

In the above, the researcher mentioned some methods to translate English idioms into Vietnamese. However, sometimes it is very difficult to translate them correctly and effectively because of non-equivalence between English and Vietnamese. In this section, the researcher would like to mention some difficulties caused by the non-equivalence in translating the English idioms into Vietnamese as the English idioms express culture-specific concepts, the concepts in the English idioms are general words and the words in the English idioms are semantically complex.

## ***2.1. The English idioms express culture-specific concepts***

Countries in the world have different cultures. Sometimes, the culture in this country is completely strange to people in the others. Of course, the English also have cultures that are strange to the Vietnamese, even they are unknown by the Vietnamese. Therefore, expressing the culture-specific concepts in the English idioms causes the learners many difficulties to translate them into Vietnamese.

For example, the English idiom “*Don’t look a gift horse in the mouth*” reflects the Western custom of presenting a horse as a meaningful and valuable gift. The age of a horse and, therefore, its usefulness can be determined by looking at its teeth. And it would be greedy to inspect the teeth of the horse given as gift to make certain the horse is of the best quality. However, this custom is strange to the Vietnamese so it is difficult for the learners to translate it.

Another example, the idiom “*doubting Thomas*” expresses someone who will not easily believe something without strong proof or evidence. This idiom is from the biblical account of the apostle Thomas, who would not believe that Christ had risen from the grave until he had touched him. This story of culture is rather strange to most of the Vietnamese so the learners get some difficulties when translating the idiom into Vietnamese.

Or, the idiom “*It rains cats and dogs*” means heavy rain, relating to a religious belief. In the North of Europe, people believe that a cat is capable of controlling the weather and a witch can disguise herself as a cat riding on a flying broom when it is stormy. And a dog has a relation with the genie of storm, Odin. However, this belief is very strange to the Vietnamese, so it is difficult for the learners to translate it into Vietnamese.

The English idiom “*Achilles’ heel*” meaning a weak point or fault in someone or something otherwise perfect or excellent is from the Greek hero Achilles, who had only one vulnerable part of his body, his heel, by which his mother helped him to dip him in the River Styx to make him invulnerable. This idiom also expresses a culture-specific concept, it is necessary for the learners to know about this story of Achilles, otherwise the learners will not be able to understand the idiom and translate it into Vietnamese.

Through the above examples, we can see that when the English idioms express the cultural-specific concepts, it is rather difficult for the learners to translate them into Vietnamese because of the differences between the culture of the two countries.

## ***2.2. The concept in the English idioms are general words.***

There are many general categories or meanings expressed by the English idioms while there may be many Vietnamese words that correspond to them. Therefore, it takes the learners a lot of time to choose among several different words in Vietnamese to translate the super-ordinates in the English.

For example, “*to call*” is a general word in English and the learners have to choose different words in Vietnamese to translate it depending on its objects. Therefore, to translate the word “call” in the idiom “*Call the shoots*”, the learners choose the word meaning “to make” in Vietnamese. So, “call the shoots” meaning to make the decisions and be translated into Vietnamese as “*điều hành*”.

However, to translate the word “*call*” in the idiom “*call the meeting to order*”, the learners choose the Vietnamese word meaning “to ask”. Therefore, the idiom “*call the meeting to order*” which means formally to ask the members of a group to be silent and orderly so that the meeting may



start or continue can be translated into Vietnamese with the meaning as “*mời họp*”.

Another example, the word “*book*” is also a general word with the meaning of written or printed word with pages bound along one side, bound blank sheets for notes, set of records or accounts or magazine and so on... Therefore, it is difficult for the translators to translate the idioms “*bring to book*” and “*go by the book*” because they have to choose what words in Vietnamese can be used to translate the words “book” in the idioms. With the word “*book*” in the idiom “*bring to book*”, the translators choose the meaning of “set a record”, so that “*bring to book*” meaning to call account is translated into Vietnamese with the meaning as “*bắt phải báo cáo sổ sách*”. Meanwhile, with the word “*book*” in the idiom “*go by the book*”, they choose the word meaning “rule”, so the idiom can be translated into Vietnamese as “*làm theo quy tắc*”

### ***2.3. The words in the English idioms are semantically complex***

In fact, many English idioms contain words that are semantically complex. Consequently, the translators feel that it is so difficult to translate them into Vietnamese.

For example, the translators can find that it is difficult to translate the idiom “*Dutch uncle*” meaning a man who gives frank and direct advice to someone in the manner of a parent or a relative. Because the idiom is semantically complex, the translators can not find any words in Vietnamese that lexicalized. So, they can translate it into Vietnamese with the meaning as “*Người răn dạy nghiêm nghị nhưng hiền từ*”.

Another example, the idiom “*face the music*” meaning to take unpleasant consequences without flinching is semantically complex. The

translators can not find Vietnamese lexicalized to translate the idiom. Therefore, it may be translated into Vietnamese with the meaning “*Giáp mặt với khó khăn mà không hề nao núng*”.

Or, in the English the idiom “*Dutch auction*” refers to an auction or sale which starts off with a high price which is then reduced until a buyer is found. In Vietnamese the idiom can be translated into “*Cuộc đấu giá trong đó giá món hàng giảm dần cho đến khi có người mua*”.

### CHAPTER III

## TECHNIQUES TO DEAL WITH NON-EQUIVALENCE IN TRANSLATING ENGLISH IDIOMS INTO VIETNAMESE

In chapter II, the researcher has mentioned some difficulties caused by non-equivalence in translating English idioms into Vietnamese. So, how to deal with the non-equivalence and how to translate the English idioms into Vietnamese effectively? In this chapter, the researcher would like to suggest some techniques to deal with the non-equivalence in translating the English idioms into Vietnamese by using a more specific word, more general word, y paraphrase, omission and cultural substitution.

### **1. Translation by using a more specific word**

In some cases, it may be appropriate or necessary to use a more specific word to translate an English idiom into Vietnamese. This usually involves choosing among several different words as there may be many Vietnamese words that correspond to the general category or meaning expressed by the English term. However, in these cases, the English idiom alone is not enough to determine the appropriate Vietnamese translation, and it is necessary to examine the English context in deciding which Vietnamese word is to be used.

For example, in English the word “*get*” includes many different meanings such as “*receive*”, “*earn*”, “*go to reach*”, “*catch*” and so on... Therefore, when translating English idioms containing the word “*get*” into Vietnamese, the learners have to use a more specific word basing on the other components and the contexts of the idioms.

✓ In the English idiom “*get lost*”, the word “*get*” can be translated into a more specific word as “*become*”. So, the idiom means that “*become lost*” or “*lạc đường*” in Vietnamese.

“Follow the path, or you might get lost”. The sentence means that if “you” do not follow the path, he will lose his way.

- ✓ However, the word “*get*” in the English idiom “*get lost*” used in another situation as “Get lost! I don’t need your help” should not be translated by a more specific word like “*become*” but “*go*”. Therefore, the idiom “*get lost*” in this context has the meaning as “*go away*” or “*biến đi*” as in Vietnamese. Consequently, the sentence means that “I” don not need any help from “you”, so “you” should go away.

Another example, the word “*give*” in English referring to many different meaning such as “*transfer the possession of freely*”, “*provide with*”, “*make over in exchange or payment*”, “*pledge*” and so on...can be translated into Vietnamese by many different words. Therefore, when translating the English idiom containing the word “*give*”, we also have to choose one more specific word, which makes our translation more appropriate and effective. However, the choice must be based on the other components and the context of the idiom.

- ✓ The word “*give*” in the English idiom “*give the game away*” can be translated by a more specific word as “*reveal*”, so the idiom can be translated by “*tiết lộ bí mật*” in Vietnamese.

“Now all of you have to keep quiet. Please don’t give the game away”.  
The sentence means that people must not say anything to reveal the plan or strategy.

- ✓ In the English idiom “*get up*”, the word “*get*” can be translated by a more specific word “*surrender*”. Therefore, the idiom can be translated into Vietnamese with the meaning as “*từ bỏ*”.

“Although the soldiers were surrounded, they didn’t give up”. The sentence means that the soldiers did not surrender though they were encircled.

Or, the word “*take*” in English has many meaning as “*lay hold of*”, “*earn*”, “*hire*”, “*use*”, or “*buy*” and so on...Therefore the word “*take*” can

be translated into Vietnamese by many different words. As a result, the learners have to choose a more specific word to translate it in each certain idiom.

- ✓ The word “*take*” in the English idiom “*take ill*” can be translated by a more specific word as “*become*”. So, we have the idiom translated into Vietnamese as “*bị ốm*”.

“I hope I don’t take ill before final exam”. The sentence means that “I” hope he do not become ill before the final exam.

- ✓ We can use a more specific word to translate the word “*take*” in the English idiom “*take heart*” as “*have*”. By this translation, we have the meaning of the idiom as “*dũng cảm*” in Vietnamese.

“Things could be worse so you have to take heart” means that because things could be worse, you must have courage to overcome the bad things.

- ✓ In the English idiom “*take after*”, the word “*take*” can be translated by a more specific word as “*resemble*”. So, the idiom means “*giống*” in Vietnamese.

“Sally takes after her aunt”. The sentence means that Sally resembles her aunt.

## **2. Translation by using a more general word**

In other cases, it may be appropriate to use a more general word to translate a English word with no specific Vietnamese equivalence.

For example, the English idiom “*Darby and Joan*” refers to an old married couple living happily together. It is from a couple so-called in eighteenth century ballads. Because there are not any character called Darby and Joan in Vietnam, the idiom is not translated into Vietnamese as “*Darby và Joan*” but “*Đôi vợ chồng già chung thủy hạnh phúc*”, which not only refers to Darby and Joan individually but all of the old couple who live together happily and faithfully.

Another example, in English there is an idiom as *“Box and Cox”* meaning two people who keep failing to meet although they both sometimes go to the same place. The idiom is from characters in a nineteenth-century comedy, one of whom rented a room by day, the other the same room by night. When translating the idiom into Vietnamese, if we do it as *“Box và Cox”*, the Vietnamese reader will not understand. Instead of, we should translate it as *“Hai người trọ chung thay phiên nhau”*.

In English, the idiom *“Tom, Dick and Harry”* means that everyone without discrimination or ordinary people. However, we can not translate it as *“Tom, Dick và Harry”* but *“bất cứ ai”*.

Or, in the English idiom *“Mecca for someone”*, the word *“Mecca”* is from the city of Mecca, the centre of Islam. When the idiom is translated into Vietnamese, *“Mecca”* is not the centre of Islam but the place which is frequently visited by a particular group of people because it is so important to them for some reasons. So, in Vietnamese the idiom should be translated as *“Thánh địa”*.

### **3. Translation by paraphrase**

This is by far the most common way of translating English idioms when we can not find their equivalences in Vietnamese or when we find that it inappropriate to use such idioms in Vietnamese because of differences in stylistic preferences between the source language, English, and the target language, Vietnamese.

Besides, this technique can be used when translating an English idiom that does not exist in Vietnamese, or when Vietnamese term for it does not include all the meaning conveyed by the English term for the same concepts.

For instance, the English idiom

*“look before you leap”*

should not be translated into “*nhìn trước khi bạn nhảy*” because it is not appropriate in Vietnamese. In this case, the learners have to translate the idiom by using a paraphrase as

*“Đi đâu mà vội mà vàng*

*Mà vấp phải đá mà quàng phải dây”*

Another example, the English idiom

*“Too many cooks spoil the broth”*

should not be translated by “*Quá nhiều đầu bếp làm hỏng nước lèo*” in Vietnamese because it sounds very strange to the Vietnamese. Instead of, the idiom must be translated into Vietnamese as

*“Lắm thầy nhiều ma*

*Lắm cha con khó lấy chồng”.*

Or, when translating the English idiom

*“There are plenty of other fish in the sea”,*

The learners should not translate it as “*Có nhiều cá ở biển*”, which make the Vietnamese so confused and not understand clearly. In this case, the idiom should be translated into Vietnamese with the meaning as

*“Không cô thì chợ vẫn đông*

*Cô đi lấy chồng thì chợ vẫn vui”*

Likewise, the English idiom

*“charity begins at home”*

should not be translated by “*Việc từ thiện bắt đầu từ nhà*” but

*“Thứ nhất tu tại gia*

*Thứ nhì tu chợ*

*Thứ ba tu chùa”,*

which helps the Vietnamese feel more easy to understand content of the idiom.

The idiom “*Still water runs deep*” should not be translated into Vietnamese as “*Nước đều thì chảy sâu*” because it is not suitable with Vietnamese stylistic preferences. Therefore, the learners should translate the idiom by using a paraphrase as “*Tâm ngấm tâm ngấm mà đấm chết voi*”

On hearing the English idiom

*“Bend the twig bend the tree”,*

the learners should not think of the sentence as “*Uốn cành non, uốn cây*” in Vietnamese. However, the learners should think of the another sentence as

*“Dạy con từ thuở còn thơ*

*Dạy vợ từ thuở bơ vơ mới về”.*

Likewise, the English idiom “*money talks*” should not be translated as “*şàng ti Òn nãi chuy Òn*” because it sounds very strange to the Vietnamese. Instead of, the idiom should be translated as “*Cã ti Òn mua ti<sup>n</sup> còng ®-íc*” in Vietnamese.

#### **4. Translation by omission**

It is sometimes appropriate to omit words or phrases that are not essential to the meaning or impact of the English idioms. This is especially true for words that would require lengthy explanation, awkward paraphrase or literal and unnatural translation, which would interrupt the flow of the idioms and could distract the readers from overall meaning.



For instance, the English idiom “*A good face is a letter of recommendation*” has the literal meaning as “*Một khuôn mặt đẹp là sự khẳng định cho một lời giới thiệu tốt*”. However, this translation makes the Vietnamese confused because it is lengthy and not attractive. Therefore, the learners should use translation by omission, and the idiom can be translated into Vietnamese as “*Nhân hiền tại mạo*”.

Another example, the English idiom “*After a storm comes a calm*” has the literal meaning as “*Sau cơn bão sự yên ả đến*”. However, it should be translated by omission so as to make it more effective and clearer. Then, the idiom can be translated into Vietnamese as “”.

Or, when translating the English idiom “*Where there is a will, there is a way*”, we should not translate it as “*Nơi nào có ý chí thì sẽ có một con đường*” which is not attractive. Instead of, the learners should translate it into Vietnamese with the meaning as “*Có chí thì nên*”. This translation is very clear for the Vietnamese people to understand.

In England, people have an idiom as “*Everyone gives a push to a falling man*”. If we translate the idiom into Vietnamese as its literal meaning “*Mọi người đẩy người đang ngã*”, the idiom will be lengthy and not attractive. Therefore, the idiom should be translated as “*Dậu đổ bìm leo*”.

When the learners translate the English idiom “*An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth*” by omission, the learners will have the meaning of its in Vietnamese as “*Dĩ oán báo oán*”, not “*Một con mắt cho một con mắt. Một cái răng cho một cái răng*”.

The English have an idiom as

*“Little rain lays great dust  
Little strokes fell great oaks”.*

When translating the idiom into Vietnamese, it should not be translated as “*Những đợt mưa nhỏ làm lắng nhiều bụi. Những cái cọ nhỏ làm đổ cây sồi*” because it is very lengthy and could distract the Vietnamese readers from the overall meaning of the idiom. It should be translated as

*“Kiến tha lâu cũng đầy tổ”*

in Vietnamese, instead of.

Likewise, the English idiom “*Many a little makes a mickle*” can be translated into Vietnamese as “*Tích tiểu thành đại*” not “*Nhiều cái nhỏ , làm thành cái lớn*”.

On hearing the English idiom “*As a man makes his bed so must he lie*”, the learners should not think of the sentence as “*Một người đàn ông làm cái giường của ông ta vì vậy ông ta phải nằm*”. The learners should think to the way of translation the idiom by omission so that the learners have the idiom as “*Mình làm mình chịu*”.

With the English idiom “*Empty vessel makes most sounds*”, the learners should not translate as its literal meaning “*Thùng rỗng t'ò nhi'ou ©m thanh nh'Êt*”. In this case, the learner should use the way of translation by omission so the learners have the idiom translated into Vietnamese as “*Thùng rỗng kêu to*”.

Likewise, the English idiom “*Necessity is the mother of invention*” should not be translated as “*Sự khó khăn là mẹ của những phát minh*” but “*Khó sinh khéo*” in Vietnamese.

Or, the idiom “*The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak*” has the literal meaning as “*Tinh thần thì sẵn sàng nhưng thể xác thì yếu đuối*”. However, if the learners keep this way of translation, the Vietnamese will not understand well. Instead of, the learners should translate it into Vietnamese as “*Lực bất tòng tâm*”.

## 5. Translation by cultural substitution

This method involves replacing a culture-specific item or expression related in the English idioms with one of different meaning but similar impact in Vietnamese.

For example, in English, the idiom *“It rains cats and dogs”* meaning heavy rain or pour refers to the religious belief of the European. However, when translating the idiom into Vietnamese, we should not have its meaning as *“Trêi m-a chã mỗ”* because this is completely strange to the Vietnamese. In this case, the learners should use the translation by cultural substitution. In Vietnam, people use the word *“trút nước”* to refer to the heavy rain. So, with this method of translation by cultural substitution, the idiom can be translated into Vietnamese as *“Trời mưa như trút nước”*.

Another example, in English, the idiom *“Don’t look a gift horse in the mouth”* means that some one should not expect perfect gifts. This idiom reflects a custom of presenting a horse as a meaningful and great present. However, this custom is completely strange to the Vietnamese, so if we translate the idiom as *“đừng nhìn vào miệng con ngựa được tặng”*, the Vietnamese readers will not understand. In this case, we should choose the technique of translation by cultural substitution. In Vietnam, people suppose that the meaningful and great present is an elephant, and the most meaningful and greatest present must be a Fairy. And, it would be very greedy if someone wanted to be presented a Fairy after being received an elephant. Therefore, the idiom should be translated into Vietnamese by cultural substitution as *“Đừng có được voi đòi tiên”*.

Or, every English people know that the idiom *“Doubling Thomas”* meaning someone who will not easily believe something without strong evidence refers to a biblical account of the apostle Thomas, who would not believe that Chris had risen from the grave until he had touched him.

However, “Thomas” is completely strange to the Vietnamese, so they can not understand clearly the meaning of the idiom if we do not translate it by cultural substitution here. In Vietnamese, a person who does not believe in anything without certain evidence is called “*Tào Tháo*”, a character in history of China. Therefore, the idiom should be translated by “*Đa nghi Tào Tháo*” in Vietnamese.

Likewise, the English suppose that rose is the symbol of the beauty. Nevertheless, the Vietnamese choose the image of the Fairy to compare with the person who is very beautiful. Therefore, the English has the idiom as “*as fair as rose*”. And, in Vietnamese it can be translated as “*Đẹp như tiên*”.

“*Carry coals to Newcastle*” is the English idiom meaning doing something unnecessary or doing something which is redundant. It is from the truth that Newcastle is a famous coal producing city of England. In fact, there are no places named Newcastle in Vietnam, so the Vietnamese will not understand the idiom. In Vietnam, to refer to doing something that is not necessary people use “*củ*” (firewood) and “*rừng*” (forest). And, carrying the firewood to the forest is redundant. So, the learners can translate the idiom into Vietnamese as “*Chở củ về rừng*”.

Or, the idiom “*Achilles’ heel*” relating to the Greek hero, Achilles who had the only vulnerable part of the body is his heel reflects the weak point in somebody without which he would be perfect. Although the learners understand that the idiom is about the weak point in somebody, it should not be kept the same nuance as “*Gót chân Asin*”. It should be translated as “*Điểm yếu*” in Vietnamese , instead of.

## **PART III: CONCLUSION**

### **1. Summary**

Thanks to the help of my supervisor, teachers, the encouragement of my friends and my family, I have finally finished the research study. Once more, I would like to impress on readers the importance of English if you want to go to any countries in the world, accept job anywhere and settle down. When you communicate with the foreigners, English, especially the English idiom, is a means of expression of thought, emotions, actions, etc...I try my best to research the graduation paper “A study on techniques to deal with non-equivalence in translating English idioms into Vietnamese”. I really hope that my study, to some extent, will help the readers who want to learn more about translation English idioms into Vietnamese, especially the translation English idioms into Vietnamese without non-equivalence between the two languages. Besides, I also point out some difficulties caused by the non-equivalence in translating English into Vietnamese. In part, I give some solutions to overcome.

Each part in my graduation paper is mentioned its content. The theoretical background knowledge about definitions of translation, idiom, and non-equivalence as well as kinds of translation, methods of translation, some common features of idioms, classification of idioms, common non-equivalence in chapter I. In chapter II, I have suggested methods of translating English idioms into Vietnamese and difficulties caused by the non-equivalence in translating English idioms into Vietnamese. In chapter III, I have mentioned some techniques to deal with non-equivalence in translating English idioms into Vietnamese.

In summary, understanding all the methods of translation, especially translation English idioms into Vietnamese is very difficult, but it not impossible. We should spend much time on practicing daily and keep on

studying. I really would like readers to be interested in my study and the research study can help readers to get more knowledge to translate better.

## **2. Suggestion for further study**

Due to limitation of my knowledge and time, this paper could not go through all the aspects of translation, just the techniques to deal with the non-equivalence in translation English idioms into Vietnamese. So, in order to get a more comprehensive understanding, I hope that in the future I would like to continue studying translation but in other aspects that is “methods of advertising language translation”.

## GLOSSARY

(A list of mentioned idioms)

English idioms	Vietnamese meaning
A friend in need is a friend indeed	Bạn lúc khó khăn mới là bạn tốt
A good face is a letter of recommendation	Nhân hiền tại mạo
A hen part	Bữa tiệc chỉ giành cho đàn bà
A new broom sweeps clean	Lãnh đạo mới tác phong mới
A stag-party	Bữa tiệc chỉ giành cho đàn ông
Achilles' heel	Điểm yếu
After a storm comes a calm	Bĩ cực thái lai
All thumbs	Vụng về
An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth	Dĩ oán b oán oán
As a man makes his bed so must he lie	Mình làm mình chịu
As a matter of course	Thường
As fair as rose	Đẹp như tiên
Bend the twig bend the tree	Dạy con từ thuở còn thơ Dạy vợ từ thuở bơ vơ mới về
Box and Cox	Hai người ở tr ọ thay phiên nhau
Bread and butter	Kế sinh nhai
Bring to book	Bắt phải báo cáo sổ sách
Charity begins at home	Thứ nhất tu tại gia Thứ nhì tu chợ Thứ ba tu chùa Mời họp
Call the meeting to order	Điều hành

Call the shoots	Chở củi về rừng
Carry coals to Newcastle	Đừng có được oi đòi tiên
Don't look a gift horse in the mouth	Đa nghi Tào Tháo
Doubling Thomas	Cuộc đấu giá trong đó giá giảm dần cho đến khi có người mua
Dutch auction	Người răn dạy nghiêm nghị nhưng hiền từ
Dutch uncle	Thung rỗng kêu to
Empty vessel makes most sounds	Dậu đổ bìm leo
Everyone gives a push to a falling man	Đổi mặt với khó khăn mà không nao núng
Face the music	Vớ vẩn
For the birds	Lạc đur ờng
Get lost	Từ bỏ
Get up	Làm theo sách
Go by the book	Giúp ai
Go to bat for someone	Hữu xạ tự nhiên hương
Good wine need no bush	Giận dữ
Hot under the collar	ội t àu và thủy thủ của Anh
Heart and Oak	Trời mưa như trút nư ớc
It rains cats and dogs	Chặn họng ai
Jump down someone's throat	Sống một cuộc sống khổ cực
Lead a dog's life	Kiến tha lâu cũng đầy tổ
Little rain lays great dust	
Little strokes fell great oaks	Đi đâu mà vội mà vàng
Look before you leap	Mà vấp phải đá mà quàng phải dây
Love me love my dog	Yêu nhau yêu cả đường đi Ghét nhau ghét cả tông ti họ hàng



Many a little makes a mickle	Tích tiểu thành đại
Mecca for someone	Thánh địa
Money talks	Có tiền mua tiên cũng được
Necessity is the mother if invention	Khó sinh khéo
On ice	Tạm gác lại
On the line	Có nguy cơ bị mất
One good turn deserves another	Uống nước nhớ nguồn
	Ăn quả nhớ kẻ trồng cây
One for a while	Thỉnh thoảng
Ought of sight, out of mind	Xa mặt cách lòng
People who live in the glass houses shouldn't throw stones	Không chỉ chích ngư ời khác khi mình cũng có khuy ết điếm
Practice makes perfect	Có công mài sắt có ngày nên kim
Salt of the earth	Người tốt
Sell like hot cakes	Bán chạy như tôm tươi
Shoot off one's mouth	Ba hoa
Slow and steady wins the race	Dục tốc bất đạt
Snow job	chuyện bịp
Smell a rat	Nghi ngờ có chuyện không hay
Still water runs deep	Tầm ngậm tầm ngậm mà đắm chết voi
	Giống
Take after	Dũng cảm
Take heart	Bị ốm
Take ill	Can đảm đương đầu với khó khăn
Take the bull by the horns	Hoạt náo viên
The life and soul of something	Thời gian thấm thoắt thoi đưa
The time is not on your side	Nó đi đi mãi chẳng chờ đợi ai

The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak	Lực bất tòng tâm
There are plenty of other fish in the sea",	Không cô thì chợ vẫn đông Cô đi lấy chồng thì chợ vẫn vui
Tight-fisted	Keo kiệt
Tom, Dick and Harry	Bất cứ ai
Tongue-in-check	Bõn cợt
Too many cooks spoil the broth	Lắm thầy nhiều ma Lắm cha con khó lấy chồng
Two heads are better than one	Một cây làm chẳng nên non Ba cây chụm lại nên hòn núi cao
Up one's sleeve	Thủ sẵn
Walls have ears	Tai vách mạch rừng
Wet blanket	Người phá đám cuộc vui
When the cat's away the mice will play	Vắng chủ nhà gà vọc niêu tôm
Where there's a will, there's a way	Có chí thì nên
You can not have a cake and eat it too	Anh không thể vừa có cái này vừa có cái kia đư ợc

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