

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



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GRADUATION PAPER

**A STUDY ON ENGLISH IDIOMS AND PROVERBS RELATING
TO COLORS IN COMPARISION WITH VIETNAMESE**

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Class:

NA1202

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

Nhiệm vụ đề tài tốt nghiệp

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

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CÁN BỘ HƯỚNG DẪN ĐỀ TÀI

Người hướng dẫn thứ nhất:

Họ và tên:.....

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Nội dung hướng dẫn:.....

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Nội dung hướng dẫn:.....

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Yêu cầu phải hoàn thành xong trước ngày..... tháng năm 20....

Đã nhận nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

Đã giao nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

Sinh viên

Người hướng dẫn

Hải Phòng, ngày.... Tháng..... năm 20....

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2. Cho điểm của người chăm phản biện :

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Ngày..... tháng..... năm 20...

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Table of content

Acknowledgment

PART 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1. Rationale	1
2. Scope of the study	2
3. Aims of the study	2
4. Methods of the study	3
5. Design of the study	3
PART 2: DEVELOPMENT	4
CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND	4
1. Language and Culture	4
1.1. What is language?	4
1.2. What is culture ?.....	6
1.3. Language and Culture	9
2. An overview of idioms	10
2.1. What is an idiom?	10
2.2. Some common features of idioms	13
3. An overview of proverbs	14
3.1. What is a proverb?	14

3.2. Some common features of proverbs	15
4. The distinction between idioms and proverbs	16
5. The groups of idioms and proverbs	16
CHAPTER II: ENGLISH IDIOMS AND PROVERBS RELATING TO SIX MAIN COLOR: BLACK, WHITE, RED, BLUE, GREEN, PINK	18
1. English idioms and proverbs relating to black.....	18
1.1. “Black sheep”	18
1.2. “Black mail”	20
1.3. “In the black”	221
2. English idioms and proverbs relating to white	23
2.1. “White lie”	23
2.2. “As white as a ghost”	24
3. English idioms and proverbs relating to green	26
3.1. “Green light”	26
3.2. “Grass is always greener on the other side”	28
4. English Idioms and proverbs relating to blue	29
4.1. “Feeling blue”	30
4.2. “Once in a blue moon”	31
5. English idioms and proverbs relating to red	33
5.1. “Red letter day”	33
5.2. “Red neck”	34
6. English idioms and proverbs relating to pink	36
6.1. “Tickled pink”	36
6.2. “To see pink elephant”	37

CHAPTER III: RELATED PROBLEMS FACED BY ENGLISH LEARNERS AND SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS	40
1. Some difficulties in studying idioms and proverbs	40
2. Suggested solutions	41
PART 3: CONCLUSION	43
REFERENCES	44

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale

Nowadays, English is the most widely used in the world and plays an important role in the development of the society. English is not only the effective means of communication but also shows its progressive effects in many aspects of life.

Idioms and proverbs are one of the most important parts of English. It was used in all kinds formal and informal, spoken and written to “make our observation and explanations more lively and interesting” (Horby, Idiom dictionary). A good understanding of how idioms and proverbs are used in everyday language is important for students of English not only to increase vocabulary, but also to understand the language deeply when we hear or speak about them. In spoken English, they are used in most situations, from friendly conversations to business meetings. In written English, they are especially common in newspapers because the writers want to make the headlines and articles interesting and lively.

This interesting topic has attracted a large number of scientific researchers as well as numerous students. Even little children are interested in learning idioms, as they teach them a lot about life and the way some people behave. I learned so many interesting and useful things from this topic: understanding profound aspects of culture of both English and Vietnamese nations. Most native English speech is idiomatic. Furthermore, learning and using idioms helps us to remember well what we have learned. The wise men like using idioms so that their daily communication and speech become more natural, interesting and effective. For such these reasons I decided to choose idioms and proverbs for my study. There are many sources of English idioms including: animals, fruits,

money, numbers and so on; however, I only take English color idioms and proverbs into consideration. Thus, I would like to study about it in my paper. I hope with this study, readers can know them well and apply in communication successfully.

2. Scope of the study

Idioms and proverbs are so large and difficult aspect of each language so my graduation paper cannot cover all color idioms and proverbs; it only focuses on some main colors such as: black, white, red, blue, green, pink.

3. Aims of the study

Idioms and proverbs are an extremely difficult topic, which is hardly understood by foreign learners of English, and even native speakers. Being aware of this fact, I appreciate the idioms and proverbs associated to attitude and behavior of the speakers. Sometimes we can ignore the spelling mistakes because we still understand, but if someone uses the wrong idioms or proverbs, we cannot understand. Therefore, my research is aimed at:

- Collecting and classifying some idioms and proverbs which are usually used in Vietnamese and English language.
- Comparing and contrasting some similarities and differences between these two cultures.
- Giving some techniques to help learner use idioms and proverbs in a correct way.

4. Methods of the study

In order to learn English and Vietnamese idioms and proverbs relating to some main colors and to make learners recognize the important roles of idioms and proverbs in life, the following methods are used in the studying process:

- Material analysis: reading reference books to find and collect needed information. On the other hand, collecting the specific examples for study.
- Consultations: having discussion with the supervisor, experts and friends.
- Comparison and contrast: selecting, comparing and contrasting examples in English idioms and proverbs and Vietnamese ones in order to find the similarities and differences.

5. Design of the study

This paper provides a clear organization consisting three main parts, which are very easy to explore and learn. Part I- Introduction, consists of five small parts namely Rationale, Scope of the study, Aims of the study, Methods of the study and Design of the study. Part II – Development, consists of three chapters: Chapter 1, Theoretical background. In these sub-divisions I present some background information about language and culture, idioms, proverbs definition and their some common features. Chapter 2, Idioms and proverbs relating to colors in English and Vietnamese. Due to the limitation of time and knowledge, I just do research on seven main colors: black, white, red, blue, green, pink. Chapter 3 is "Related problems faced by English learners and suggested solutions". And the last part is Part III, Conclusion which summaries and restates the issues mentioned through three chapters above.

PART 2: DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER I: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1. Language and Culture

1.1. What is language?

Language has been studied for many years and in different perspectives. Ancient Greek philosophers elaborated on its proper use and purpose, modern scholars analyzed how it is produced and perceived. However, in order to understand this term completely, we must answer the question: "what is language?"

Many scholars did give the definition for the term of language. Language as a social phenomenon was first described by Ferdinand de Saussure who claimed that providing only historical description of languages (as it was done at his time) should not be only approach to this complex entity. He maintained that crucial information about language could be obtained from its common users, who in most cases do not hold practically any theoretical knowledge about their native tongue and yet are competent speakers. Moreover, as Saussure assumed, language use reflects the contemporary structure, which should enable synchronic language analysis (language used at a given point in time) in addition to diachronic analysis concerned with the past linguistic forms. The aspect of using language or speech was called *parole* by Saussure. While the underlying knowledge of linguistic structure was known as *langue*.

Another view on language, mainly language as behavior partially from the behaviorist psychology and philosophy. Linguistic presenting this attitude focused on different languages used by various people rather than on linguistic

universal, as they assumed that linguistic data is best gathered by observation of human behavior and interaction. Apart from that, it was assumed that meaning of sentences is not observable, thus it must be analyzed referring to introspective judgments. What follows this assumption is the definition of *language* provided by linguists who represent this approach. They maintain that "*language is the totality of utterances that can be made in a speech community*".

On one approach, language can be understood as what people say (and write); a language, in other words, is an "external" object, a set of utterances (spoken and written). The other approach sees a language as an "internal" object, that is, as a body of knowledge residing in the brains of its speakers.

Basing on the Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary, we have a definition about *language* like:

"Language is the system of communication in speech and writing that is used by people of a particular country or area."

(Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary, the 7th edition, 1948: page 862)

Each country has its own communication style. People of a particular region communicate with one another through their native language. People belonging to a particular country communicate with one another through the widely used language in that country. Different countries communicate with each other through language only. International communities exchange their views through English language because English is an international language. There exist many languages in the world. According to online statistics, there are over "6000 living languages in the world".

In short, language is the specifically human capacity for acquiring and using complex systems of communication, other way, it is the tool for communication, which enables human beings to communicate and cooperate with two styles: style of speaking and style of writing. Each language is the property of a single social community. Even though some languages cannot be developed and be primitive, and even until now there is no written language due to historical reasons, these languages are still wonderful communication tool of man, as a means of idea and transmission of human culture.

1.2. What is culture?

Everyone talks about his or her culture with very high regard. However, do we know exactly what culture is? Let us discover the meaning of culture and its significance in the life of an individual and society.

Culture is an integral part of every society. It is a learned pattern of behavior and ways in which a person lives his or her life. Culture is essential for the existence of a society, because it binds people together. In the explicit sense of the term, culture constitutes the music, food, art and literature of a society. However, these are only the products of culture followed by the society and cannot be defined as *culture*.

The term was first used in this way by the pioneer English Anthropologist Edward B. Taylor's book, *Primitive Culture*, (1871: page 4). Taylor said that "*Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society*"

In other words, culture is a patterned way of life shared by a group of people. Culture includes all that human beings have and do to produce, relate to each other and adapt to the physical environment. It includes agreed-upon principles of human existence (values, norms and sanctions) as well as techniques of survival (technology). Culture is also that aspect of our existence which makes us similar to some people, yet different from the majority of the people in the world... it is the way of life common to a group of people, a collection of beliefs and attitudes, shared understandings and patterns of behavior that allow those people to live together in relative harmony, but set them apart from other peoples..

Besides, many other scholars have defined "what is culture? ". According to Kluckhohn, C., & Kelly, W.H. (1945). The concept of culture. In R. Linton (Ed.). *The Science of Man in the World Culture*. New York, (page 78-105). "*By culture we mean all those historically created designs for living, explicit and implicit, rational, irrational, and no rational, which exist at any given time as potential guides for the behavior of men.*"

Basing on Parson, T. (1949). *Essays in Sociological Theory*. Glencoe, IL, (page 8) "*Culture...consists in those patterns relative to behavior and the products of human action which may be inherited, that is, passed on from generation to generation independently of the biological genes*". Children do not automatically inherit their parent's cultural experiences, but acquire these through socialization processes.

As said by Nguyen Quang, *Intercultural Communication*, Vietnam national university, Hanoi college of foreign languages press, page 3: "*Culture: a shared*

background (for example, national, ethnic, religious) resulting from a common language and communication style, customs, belief, attitude and values. "Culture" in this text is not referring to art, music, literature, food, clothing style and so on. It refers to the informal and often hidden patterns of human interactions, expressions, and viewpoints that people in one culture share. The hidden nature of culture has been compared to an iceberg, most of which is hidden underwater. Like the iceberg, much of the influence of culture on an individual cannot be seen. The part of culture that is exposed is not always that which creates cross-cultural difficulties; the hidden aspects of culture have significant effects on behavior and on interactions with others".

Culture is something that a person learns from his family and surroundings, and is not ingrained in him from birth. It does not have any biological connection because even if a person is brought up in a culture different from that in which he was born, he absorbs the culture of the society where he grows up. It is also not a hidden fact that some people feel the need to follow the beliefs and traditions of their own culture, even though they might be not subscribing to certain ideologies inside.

Culture is a complex tool which every individual has to learn to survive in a society. It is the means through which people interact with others in the society. It acts in a subconscious way and whatever we see and perceive, seems to be normal and natural. Sometimes, other societies and people seem to be a little odd because they have a different culture from ours. We must remember that every society has a distinct culture that forms the backbone of the society. Culture does not remain stagnant; on the other hand, it is evolving constantly and is in fact somewhat influenced by the other cultures and societies.

Every society has a different culture, where people share a specific language, traditions, behavior, perceptions and beliefs. Culture gives them an identity that makes them unique and different from people of other cultures. When people of different cultures migrate and settle in another society, the culture of that society becomes the dominant culture and those of the immigrants from the subculture of the community. Usually, people who settle in other nations imbibe the new culture; while at the same time strive to preserve their own.

Although every society has a specific culture, there are certain elements of culture that are universal. They are known as cultural universals, in which there are certain behavioral traits and patterns that are shared by all cultures around the world. For instance, classifying relations based on blood relations and marriage, differentiating between good and bad, having some form of art, use of jewelry, classifying people according to gender and age, etc., are common in all cultures of the world.

Some people believe that humans are the only living beings who have a culture. Nevertheless, there is a group of people who believe in the existence of culture even in animals. It is said that animals have certain social rules that they teach their young ones as a medium for survival.

Culture is necessary to establish an order and discipline in the society. It is not only a means of communication between people, but also creates a feeling of belonging and togetherness among people in the society.

1.3. Language and Culture

Language and culture have the unseparated connection. Language is means of transporting of culture and also, culture belongs to language. It is said that,

written language (script) and spoken language are quintessence of a single cultural nation, and the culture is developed and preserved for other generation by both spoken language and written language. The changed and developed of the language always keep abreast with the culture's change and development. Therefore, to study culture deeply we are sure to research the language deeply as well and vice versa. This is expressed clearly in case of two people have contact or communication but they are belong to different nations and culture background. In general, ability of using a foreign language, which consists the skillful of listening, writing, reading and speaking, is determined by two factors as: expert in the language and knowledgeable about the culture. When a man who is well- informed about a foreign language but cannot explain that language clearly; because he is not having a thorough knowledge of that language's culture context.

In short, we can understand that, language is a part of culture and reflects culture while culture determines the meaning and the use of language. Thus we need to confirm that they are closely interrelated.

2. An overview of idioms

2.1. What is an idiom?

It is important to recognize that idioms are not only colloquial expression, as many people believe. Idioms as a special form of language that carries a large amount of cultural information, such as history, geography, religion, custom and so on. They appear in formal style, in slang, in poetry...

To research idioms, first of all, we must well understand idiom's definition. There are many scholars defining what an idiom is. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary:

"A group of words whose meaning is different from the meanings of the individual words"

(Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary, 1948: page 707)

An idiom is a chain of words or phrase that means something different from what it says- it is usually metaphor. Only people who are very good at speaking the language of the idiom will know what an idiom means. That is, in order to understand an idiom, you usually need to know the culture the idiom comes from.

We also can know it more clearly by reviewing the following definition from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia:

"An idiom is an expression (i.e.term or phrase) whose meaning cannot be deduced from the literal definition and the agreement of its parts, but refers instead to a figurative meaning that is known only through conventional use. In linguistic, idioms are widely assumed to be figures of speech that contradict the principle of compositionality, however some debate has recently arisen on this subject".

For instance, in the English expression **"to kick the bucket"** a listener knowing only the meaning of **kick** and **bucket** would be unable to deduce the expression's actual meaning, which is "to die". Although it can refer literally to the act of striking a bucket with a foot, native speakers rarely use it that way. It cannot be directly translated to other languages – for example, the same

expression in Polish is “**to kick the calendar**”, with the calendar being as detached from its usual meaning as the bucket in the English phrase is.

Idioms are words, phrases, or expressions that are unusual grammatically, as in "*under the weather*" or there is a meaning that cannot be derived from the conjoined meaning of its elements, as in "*storm in a teacup*". It means making a small problem seem far greater than it really is. Every language has idioms, and they are challenging foreign students to learn.

In fact, this is what makes idioms all more confusing.

E.g.: "*Save for the rainy day*"

This idiom means preparing for the rainy day, literally. However, it means building up a fund to meet emergencies, idiomatically.

The definitions of idiom are many in our society. In my opinion, idioms consist of set phrases and short sentences, which are peculiar to the language in question and stepped in the national and regional culture and ideals, thus being colorful, forcible and true to life. Strictly speaking, idioms are expressions that are not readily understandable from their literal meaning of individual parts. In a broad sense, idioms may include colloquialisms, catchphrase, slang expressions, proverbs and so on.

To sum up, an idiom is a phrase where the words together have a meaning that is different from the dictionary definition of the individual words, which can make idiom hard for English learners to understand.

2.2. Some common features of idioms

There are many different features of idioms but we can find some similarities between them.

Firstly, an idiom is a multiword expression. Individual components of an idiom can often be inflected in the same way individual words in a phrase can be inflected. This inflection usually follows the same pattern of inflection as the idiom's literal counterpart.

E.g.: *"have a bee in one's bonnet"* = feeling anxious

Second, an idiom behaves as a single semantic unit

It tends to have some measure of internal cohesion such that a literal counterpart that is made up of a single word can often replace it.

E.g.: *"kick the bucket"* = die

It resists interruption by other words whether they are semantically compatible or not.

E.g.: *"do a bunk"* = *"do a bunk with sb"*

Or *"be sulky as a bear"* = *"be as sulky as a bear"*

It resists reordering of its component parts.

E.g.: *"let the cat out of the bag"* = *"the cat got left out the bag"*

Third, an idiom has a non-productive syntactic structure. Only single particular lexemes can collocate in an idiomatic. Substituting other words from the same generic lexical relation set will destroy the idiomatic meaning of the expression.

E.g.: *"eat one's words"* = *"eat one's sentence"*

Lastly, it is syntactic anomalous. It has unusual grammatical structure.

E.g.: *"by and large"*

In conclusion, idiom contains many common features such as: multiword expression, single semantic unit, non-productive syntactic structure and unusual grammatical structure.

3. An overview of proverbs

3.1. What is a proverb?

Proverbs are used by speakers for a variety of purposes. Sometimes they are used as a way of saying something gently, in a veiled way (Obeng 1996). Other times, they are used to carry more weight in a discussion; awake person is able to enlist the tradition of the ancestors to support his position. Proverbs can also be used to simply make a conversation/discussion livelier. In, any part of the world, the use of proverbs is a mark of being a good orator. So what is a proverb?

Theoretically, there are lots of different ways to define what a proverb is.

A proverb is a short saying or sentence that is generally known by many people. The saying usually contains words of wisdom, truth or morals that are based on common sense or practical experience. It is often a description of a basic rule of conduct that all people generally follow or should follow. Proverbs can be found in all languages.

E.g: *Every day is not Saturday*

Paul Hermadi and Francis Steen make it clear by considering proverbs "*brief, memorable, and intuitively convincing formulations of socially sanctioned advice*". The concept of proverb is, however, a bit different from Vietnamese. In *Từ điển Tiếng Việt*, proverbs are defined as "*short statements, often expressed*

with rhythm, which sum up knowledge, life experience and moral lessons of people".

Eg: All lay loads on the willing horse or all men do not follow in the footsteps of their forbears

[\(http://www.english2share.net/studyvoca/\)](http://www.english2share.net/studyvoca/)

According to Oxford Advanced learner Dictionary (1995: 98): "*Proverb is a short well-known sentence or phrase that states a general truth about life or gives advice*".

Eg: "All cats are grey in the dark"

This proverb means when in the dark, appearances are meaningless, since everything is hard to see or be unseen.

To sum up, proverbs are often borrowed from different languages and cultures and sometimes come down to the present through more than one language.

3.2. Some common features of proverbs

Even though each specialist has his own definition on proverb, we also can indicate some following common characters of proverbs

The first, proverbs are passed down through time with little change in form.

The second, proverbs are often used metaphorically and it is understood their metaphorical nature that we can unravel their meaning. While "a stitch in time saves nine", "don't count your chickens before they've hatched", "don't throw the baby out with the bathwater" are common proverb, few of us stitch clothes, count the chickens, or throw out bathwater.

The third, proverbs often make use of grammatical and theoretical devices that help to make them memorable. Including alliteration, rhyme, and parallel structure, repetition of key words or phrases, and strong imagery.

4. The distinction between idioms and proverbs

If you say: "*Let the cat out of the bag*" instead of **the secret revealed**, you're using an idiom. But "*An apple a day keeps the doctor away*" is a proverb. Proverbs are old but familiar sayings that usually give advice unlike idioms.

The proverb is a complete sentence with a firm structure that is based on an unchangeable foundation, like "*where there's a will there's a way*", or "*one who seeks will find*". Proverbs represent a complete piece of information because they can occur as a sentence. They are meaningful by themselves.

In contrast, idioms are not syntactically independent because they cannot always occur as full sentences, but as a part of a sentence. As it was said, the difference between proverbs and idioms pertains to their form, structure, and function. Contrary to the proverbs, idioms are the general and current phrases that must be substituted in sentences so as to obtain a complete sense. These phrases can change according to time adverb, subject, and object. Explanation of an idiom is possible in the sentence with some additions. In other words the meaning of sentence is not perceived from its component words. The idioms carry the substance of speech. They must be used in a complete idiom.

5. The groups of Idioms and Proverbs

There are many groups of idioms and proverbs in English as following:

1.1. Idioms and proverbs from cognition of animals

Eg: "*have a bee in one's bonnet*" = feeling anxious

1.2. Idioms and proverbs from cognition of customs

Eg: “*take your hat off to somebody*”=to express your admiration and respect what someone has done

1.3. Idioms and proverbs from cognition of natural environment

Eg: “*A drop in the ocean*”=a very small portion of the amount that we need.

1.4. Idioms and proverbs from cognition of living circumstance

Eg: “*Under certain circumstances*”= depending on or influenced by something; because of something

1.5. Idioms and proverbs from cognition of colors

Eg: “*As white as the driven snow*”= very white

1.6. Idioms and proverbs from cognition of numbers

Eg: “*a one-track mind*”= spend most of time thinking about one subject.

1.7. Idioms and proverbs from cognition of amusement

Eg: “*To make a clown of yourself*”= to make yourself appear foolish or stupid.

1.8. Idioms and proverbs from cognition of food and fruits

Eg: “*As cool as a cucumber*”= to be calm, to be not nervous or anxious

1.9. Idioms and proverbs from cognition of laboring

Eg: “*Labor of love*”= Work done for one's satisfaction rather than monetary reward

Due to my limitation of time as well as my knowledge, I only focus on idioms and proverbs relating to some main colors: black white, green, blue, red, and pink.

CHAPTER II

ENGLISH IDIOMS AND PROVERBS RELATING TO SIX MAIN COLOR: BLACK, WHITE, RED , BLUE, GREEN, PINK

1. English idioms and proverbs relating to black

Black is the color of coal, ebony, and the night sky. It is the very darkest color, the result of the absence of or complete absorption of light. It is the opposite of white.

In the Western World, it is the color most commonly associated with mourning, the end, secrets, magic, power, violence, evil, and elegance.

To talk about these features, there are some famous idioms:

1.1. “BLACK SHEEP”



In the English language, **black sheep** is an idiom used to describe an odd or disreputable member of a group, especially within a family. It is usually given to

the member of a group who has certain characteristics or lack thereof deemed undesirable by that group. The term stems from the genetic effect in sheep whereby a recessive gene occasionally manifests in the birth of a sheep with black rather than white coloring; these sheep stand out in the flock. This metaphor is based on the idea that black sheep were less valuable than white ones because it was more difficult to dye their wool different colors.

The term has typically been given negative implications, implying waywardness. It derived from the atypical and unwanted presence of other black individuals in flocks of white sheep.

Eg: He is the black sheep in his family.

(<http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/>)

In his family, “he” is always considered bad or embarrassing. He always causes troubles or be complained by other people.

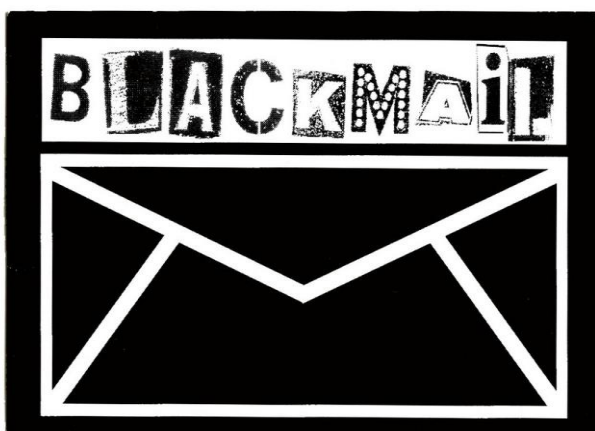


In Vietnamese, the native speakers already do use this feature of black to indicate a person: “*kẻ ăn hại*”, “*người vô dụng*”, “*người chuyên gây rắc rối*”. In contrast, by using another word, Vietnamese people also have the similar

saying “*phá gia chi tử*”. This idiom also talks about characteristics of someone who does not fit into a group or family because their behavior or character is bad, odd or disgraces the group or a person who is different from the rest of their family. The term also used to describe someone who feels left out in a family. Basically, the outcast of the family because they choose to do other things than live up to their parents' standards.

Based on the characteristic of black, Vietnamese people have some other sayings such as “*đen như than*” or “*đen như mực*”. They indicate the maximum level of black. They can be understood in English “as black as coal” and “as black as ink”. When we say something “*đen như than*” or “*đen như mực*”, it means they are extremely black and extremely dark.

1.2. “BLACK MAIL”



Black is often compared with evil, violence or something bad. Therefore, in common usage, **blackmail** is a crime involving unjustified threats to make a gain or cause loss to another unless a demand is met. It may be defined as coercion involving threats of physical harm, threat of criminal prosecution, or threats for the purposes of taking the person's money or property.

Blackmail may also be considered a form of extortion. Although the two are generally synonymous, extortion is the taking of personal property by threat of future harm. It is the use of threats to prevent another from engaging in a lawful occupation and writing libelous letters or letters that tend to provoke a breach of the peace, as well as use of intimidation for purposes of collecting an unpaid debt. Some US states distinguish the offenses by requiring that blackmail be in writing. In some jurisdictions, the offence of blackmail is often carried out during the act of robbery. This occurs when an offender makes a threat of immediate violence towards someone in order to make a gain as part of a theft. For example, the threat of "Give me your money or I will shoot you" is an unlawful threat of violence in order to gain property.

In this situation, Vietnamese people do not use the color “black” to describe the action of threatening to gain property. Different from that English idiom but with the same meaning, Vietnamese people have another phrase “*thư đe dọa tống tiền*”. It is actions which force or threaten someone by sending them a letter with bad threat words in order to urge them into doing something you want them to do especially gaining money.

1.3. “IN THE BALCK”

The phrase "in the black" is often used to refer to personal or corporate finances that are in a positive state. Essentially, it means that the individual, corporation, or non-profit organization currently has more assets than abilities. A number of factors go into determining if the current financial status is in the black, or if circumstances dictate actions that will help to lead to that condition.

In many instances, people or companies always want to be in the black. When a business has more debt than money to pay it, it is said to be "in the red." This

dates back to the old accounting process of recording credits in black ink, while debits were recorded in red ink. At the end of the day, the balance sheet was expected to show a final tally that was written in black ink, indicating a profit or at least a state of breaking even.

Eg: *The Company has been in the black since they began to adopt many new ideas to cut costs.*

(<http://www.urbandictionary.com>)

For people and businessmen that find themselves struggling to operate in the black, immediate actions must be taken in order to reverse the situation and restore profitability. This will often involve cutting expenses, which helps to free up funds that can be applied to existing debt, as well as limiting the creation of new debt. Often, the measures required call for sacrifices, but these are often temporary and once the budget is balanced once again, it is possible to loosen restrictions on spending slightly. Care should be taken to avoid future financial periods where revenue does not exceed expenses, or staying out of debt will often prove difficult.

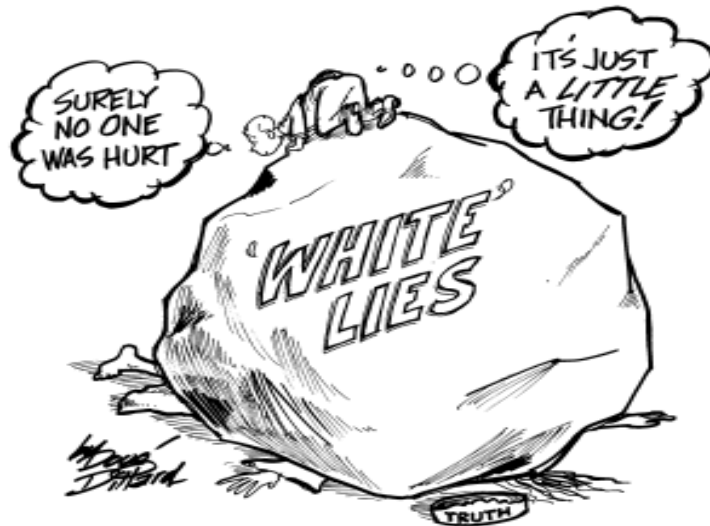
According to Vietnamese language and culture, the native speakers do not use “black” to talk about the profit or any positive aspect of finance in business because “black” is often related to bad and unlucky things. However, with the nearly the same meaning, they also have a phrase “*gặt hái nhiều lợi nhuận*”. It indicates a positive net income; having greater income than expenses or making a profit.

2. English idioms and proverbs relating to white

White

the color of pure snow; of the margins of this page, etc.; reflecting nearly all the rays of sunlight or a similar light, the opposite of black or dark; as, whitepaper; a white skin.

2.1. “WHITE LIE”



White lies are minor lies which could be considered to be harmless, or even beneficial, in the long term. White lies are also considered to be used for greater good. A common version of a white lie is to tell only part of the truth, therefore not be suspected of lying, and yet also conceal something else, to avoid awkward questions. White lie is an innocent lie to protect another person's feelings. If you tell a white lie, you lie in order not to hurt anyone even save their feeling and make them happy.

Different from English, in Vietnamese, “white” does not go with “lie” to make a “harmless untruth”. However, Vietnamese people have another term which contains a similar meaning “**lời nói dối vô hại**”. It is also a lie which is a small

untruth or harmless, often done to spare someone's feelings or for some other diplomatic reason.

Eg: We told Grandma that her cake was delicious, which was actually a white lie.

(<http://www.abaenglish.com/>)

In this situation, an example of a white lie is when you tell your Grandma her cake is good even when it tastes terrible in order to make her happy. Your main purpose here is not telling lie although it is untruth. In this case, if you say the truth that your Grandma's cake is terrible, it will make her very sad and disappointed. This “**white lie**” doesn't hurt anyone even it makes Grandma feel happy and encouraged as well.

Talking about the two opposite colors “white” and “black”, we have a very popular saying in Vietnamese “doi trang thay den”. This idiom means turning white to black, literally. However, idiomatically, it means replacing the truth by something untruth according to the opposite characteristics of two colors. Based on the Vietnamese belief, “black” is related to something bad or unlucky. On the other hand, “white” is often compared with something good, pure and lucky.

2.2. “AS WHITE AS A GHOST”



In traditional belief and fiction, a ghost is the soul or spirit of a deceased person or animal that can appear, in visible form or other manifestation, to the living. Descriptions of the apparition of ghosts vary widely from an invisible presence to translucent or barely visible wispy shapes, to realistic, lifelike visions. In English, people use the idiom “as white as a ghost” to describe someone’s appearance because of her or his illness, shock or fear. When a person is frightened, or sick, the blood drains from their face, leaving them looking very white.

Obviously, we can find the similarity between two countries in this idiom. Vietnamese people also have the similar idiom relating to “white”: “*trắng bệch như ma*”. In Vietnamese culture, “white” is considered as a color of death as well as usually used in funeral. Besides, according to Vietnamese belief and imagination, “ghost” or “spirits” often appear with the white face and white clothes and make people scared when imagine about them. We can understand more clearly by following example:

Eg: My sister became white as a ghost when she saw the man at the window.

(http://www.learn4good.com/languages/evrd_idioms/id-c.htm)

In this case, my sister saw a man at the window and she felt very scared and shock. May be she imaged that that man can be a thief or ghost who could harm her. He appeared suddenly that make her frighten. As a common phenomenon, the blood drains from her face and makes it look very white.

3. English idioms and proverbs relating to green

Green is the color of emeralds, jade, and growing grass. In the continuum of colors of visible light it is located between yellow and blue. Green is the color most commonly associated with nature and the environmental movement, spring, hope and envy.

3.1. “GREEN LIGHT”



To **green-light** is to give permission or a go ahead to move forward with a project. The term is a reference to the green traffic signal, indicating "go ahead."

If you are given the **green light**, you are given approval and permission to do something.

In the context of the film and television industries, to green-light something is to formally approve its production finance, and to commit to this financing, thereby allowing the project to move forward from the development phase to pre-production and photography. The power to green-light a project is generally reserved to those in a project or financial management role within an organization. In organized crime, gang and prison slang to green-light a person is to authorize the assassination of this person. In baseball, the term green-light is when the player is given permission from the manager to be aggressive. The green light famously symbolized hope and the American dream, a struggle for success and happiness.

*Eg: She's waiting for her doctor to give her the **green light** to play in Saturday's game.*

(<http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/give+the+green+light>)

“She waiting for her doctor to give her the **green light**” means that she needs the permission from the doctor to play game. May be, she gets illness or another disease which is not safe for playing games. Thus, unless her doctor gives her the permission, she cannot take part in the Saturday’s game.

We also can more clearly understand “**green light**” by another following example:

*Eg: The builders were given the **green light** to begin the tower.*

(<http://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/idioms-colour.htm>)

The phrase “**green light**” in this sentence can be understood as “finance and legal approval”. The builders begin the tower whenever they are got approval from people of higher position such as: director, investors or others authorities. Therefore, they do not have to worry about anything relating to laws and finance when implementing their project.

Once again, via this idiom, we can see clearly the equivalent between two languages as well as two cultures English and Vietnamese. In Vietnamese traffic system, when “**green light**” is turned on, it means that people can pass the road. Idiomatically, “**green light**” is considered as a signal of agreement or approval to do anything. Thus, Vietnamese people also have the same idiom with **green** “*bật đèn xanh*” to describe that action.

3.2. “GRASS IS ALWAYS GREENER ON THE OTHER SIDE”



You use this proverb to say that the things other people have or their situations always look better than your own, even when they are not really so. Coming from the idea of looking at a neighbor’s lawn and seeing it as better looking, healthier and overall greener than your own when in reality you’re just ignoring anything negative about it and downplaying everything positive about your own.

We can understand easily the meaning of this proverb by the metaphor of “grass” and “green”. However, with the nearly same meaning, Vietnamese people have another saying “*đứng núi này trông núi nọ*”. It can be literally understood in English as “stand on this mountain but look at another mountain”. Obviously, Vietnamese people do not use the color “green” here but they also can express the similar meaning of the proverb “*grass is always greener on the other side*”. It talks about people who always do not satisfied with what they recently have and consider the others things are better. Thus, they want to own everything which other people have.

Eg:

A: Have you seen my new neighbor? He’s good-looking!

B: So are you.

A: He drives a Ferrari!

B: So do you.

A: He has a sexy wife!

B: Your wife is good-looking as well. Don’t you think that maybe **the grass is always greener on the other side**? You are jealous just because he’s your neighbor.

A: You’re right, thanks. Stay away from my wife.

(<http://www.idiomeanings.com/idioms/>)

The man in this example always thinks that everything of his neighbor is better than his although his conditions are as good as his neighbor’s even something is better. He often considers “**the grass is always greener on the other side**” by seeing the things which other people have better than his own.

Relating to “green”, Vietnamese people have some popular idioms such as: “mặt xanh nanh vàng” to describe people’s scare or sickness. At that time, their face become very green. And another idiom “mặt xanh mỡ đỏ” which describe women who very like making up with green color of eye-shadow and red color of lipstick.

4. Idioms and proverbs relating to Blue

Blue is the color of the clear sky and the deep sea. On the optical spectrum, blue is located between violet and green. Blue is often symbol for soft and peace, sometimes sadness. In English, there are many idioms and proverbs relating to blue as following:

4.1. “FEELING BLUE”



If you **feel blue**, you are feeling unwell, mainly associated with depression or unhappiness. **Feeling blue** means literally depression arising out of sadness sometimes. Depression is one of the human body's normal and natural responses

to crisis, transition, or change. Most people are depressed at some point following the death of a loved one, the loss of a job, even at the birth of a child! These depressions tend to be short-term, lasting for a period of days, or in extreme cases, weeks. However, the individual who is depressed often acquires or develops coping mechanisms to deal with the crisis or change, and the depression lifts as they develop more and more ability in the new situation. As in following example:

Eg: She always feels blue during the winter time.

(<http://www.idiomeanings.com/idioms/>)

Many people find that their moods are affected by the weather. Warm and sunny days generally make people feel happy and lift their spirits, while darker and colder days can make people feel tired and down. These responses to weather may occur at any time of year, but people tend to be more frequently down or especially tired in the winter time. The winter blues refer to a period when people generally feel down and depressed. In addition, people also can be affected by some unhappy memories such as love or maybe they feel lonely in winter. In this example, “she always feels blue during the winter time” means that in winter, “she” often has sad and depressed feeling because of her different own reasons.

According to English culture, the native speakers often mention to “blue” as sadness. In contrast, for Vietnamese culture, “blue” is not used to talk about the unhappy and depressed feeling. They often use “blue” to describe peace because “blue” is color of sea and sky. However, Vietnamese people have other terms which contain the similar meaning “*buồn man mác*” or “*buồn thiu buồn thiu*”.

4.2. “ONCE IN A BLUE MOON”



The Moon is rarely visually blue. The term **blue moon** is the name for the third full moon in a season that has four full moons, instead of the usual three. The second full moon in one calendar month is also sometimes called a **blue moon**. This usage results from a misinterpretation of the traditional definition of **blue moon** in the March 1946 issue of *Sky and Telescope*.

A blue moon occurs only every two or three years, and the term **blue moon** is used colloquially to mean a rare event, as in the phrase "**once in a blue moon**". On average, there will be 41 months that have two Full Moons in every century, so you could say that **once in a blue moon** actually means *once every two-and-a-half years*. It is a common way of saying not very often. When we say that something happens once in a blue moon, what we mean is that it **happens very rarely**.

Based on

*Eg: They only go out for dinner **once in a blue moon**.*

(<http://www.englishclub.com/>)

This sentence means that we very rarely go out for dinner because may be they don't like going out or they don't have much money for dinner outside. This

activity seems to be happened one or two times a year. It likes the occurring of blue moon one every two-and-a-half years.

The same with Vietnamese culture, they also believe that the “blue moon” seldom appears in the sky but they do not use “blue” to describe something happen very rarely. With the nearly same meaning, they give another saying “*trăm năm được trận vua vời*”.

5. English idioms and proverb relating to red

Red is the color of blood, a ruby, and strawberries. It is next to orange at the end of the visible spectrum of light, and is commonly associated with danger, sacrifice, passion, fire, beauty, blood, anger, socialism and communism, and in China and many other cultures, with happiness.

5.1. “RED-LETTER DAY”



A **red letter day** is any day of special significance or an unforgettable day. The term originates from Medieval church calendars. Illuminated manuscripts often marked initial capitals and highlighted words in red ink, known as rubrics. The First Council of Nicaea in 325 decreed the saints' days, feasts and other holy days, which came to be printed on church calendars in red. The term came into

wider usage with the appearance in 1549 of the first Book of Common Prayer in which the calendar showed special holy days in red ink. Many current calendars have special dates and holidays such as Sundays, Christmas Day and Midsummer Day rendered in red color instead of black. Some important occasion such as: birthday, wedding, graduation or company opening... also often called **Red-letter Day**.

In both two countries, “red” color is often used to express something which is important, outstanding, significant and lucky. Therefore, English people have the idiom “red-letter day” in order to indicate a very special day with a lot of significance. However, Vietnamese people also talk about this idiom but in another way “*ngày trọng đại*” or “*dịp đáng nhớ*”. We can understand it clearly in the following example:

*Eg: My grandmother recently turned 90 years old. It was a **Red-letter Day**, complete with a big family party held in her honor.*

(<http://lopngoingu.com/Words-and-Idioms/>)

This sentence can be understood that my grandmother 90th birthday has special significant. It is not only an anniversary of the day when she was born but also a big holiday of family because she turned 90 years old. Thus, her birthday was “completed with a big family party held in her honor”.

Based on the characteristics of “red”, Vietnamese native speakers have a very popular idiom “*số đỏ*” to indicate the lucky and fortune but in case of English, this idiom cannot be translated as “lucky number” because it will cause the misunderstanding of the meaning of origin idiom. However, “*số đỏ*” can be understood in English as “good luck” or “good fortune”.

5.2.“REDNECK”

Redneck is used in reference to poor, uneducated white farmers, especially from the southern United States. It is similar in meaning to *cracker*. The term “redneck” comes from the fact that farmers got sunburn on the backs of their necks from being outside all day. Farmers tend to live outside of urban areas, so the definition then widened to include anyone who lived out in the country or in a small town away from a city. Now, a redneck is someone who is uncouth and uncultured because they grew up in a working class family, far from the cultural influence of an urban area. There are plenty of Southern Americans who fit this description, but by this definition, there are also rednecks in all rural areas - even in England.

In English, this term describes rude person but it is can be understood in Vietnamese with another phrase “*kẻ lỗ mãng*”, “*người thô bỉ*” because Vietnamese people do not use the “red” color to talk about bad behaviors.



*Eg: Our new co-worker is a **real redneck**. He doesn't seem to know anything about life.*

In the example we understand simply that this co-worker can be a lower-class person from a rural background so he has less chance to approach everything in

modern life than others who come from urban background. Therefore, obviously that he seem to know not many thing about life, especially the life in city. Besides, he cannot also get well educated. It leads to be confused with some strange things even have bad behaviors. He could be judged badly by other people because he is a **redneck**.

6. Idioms and proverbs relating to pink

Pink are any of the colors between bluish red (purple) and red, of medium to high brightness and of low to moderate saturation. Commonly used for Valentine's Day and Easter, pink is sometimes referred to as "the color of love." The use of the word for the color "pink" was first recorded in the late 17th century.

6.1. "TICKLED PINK"



The tickling here isn't the light stroking of the skin - it's the figurative sense of the word that means 'to give pleasure or gratify'. The **tickling pink** concept is of enjoyment great enough to make the recipient glow with pleasure. Thus, we can understand "tickled pink" as to be very pleased or delighted by someone or something.

*Eg: My mom was **tickled pink** when my father brought roses home for her.*

My mom expressed her very pleasure feeling when receiving roses from my dad. Her heart was full of happiness at that time. That emotion may be cannot express by words but from bottom of her heart she felt delighted as well as got a lot of fun.

We also can see this idiom clearly by following example:

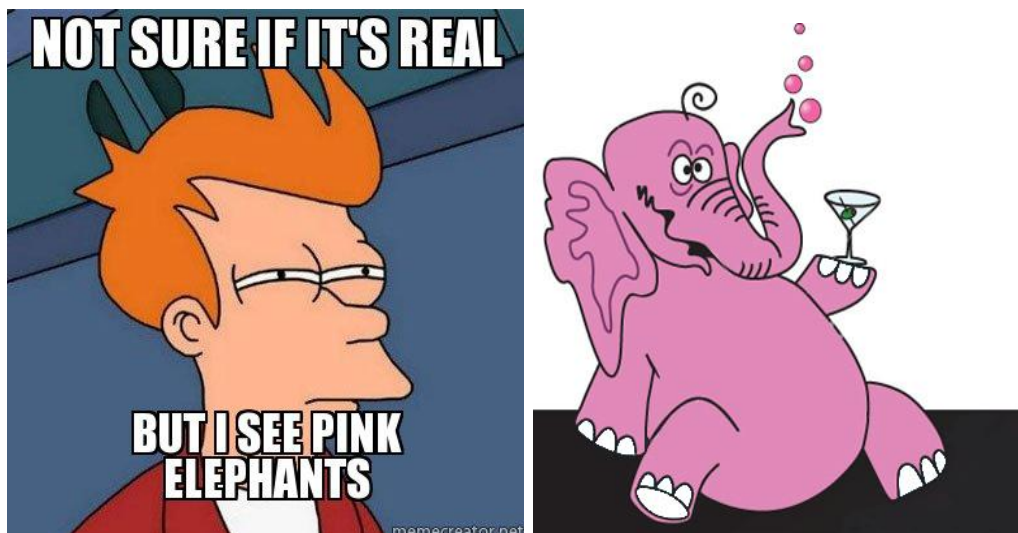
*Eg: "My grandmother was **tickled pink** that you visited her when you were in town."*

<http://www.idiomconnection.com/color.html#A5>)

All the emotions here are expressed by the phrase “**tickled pink**”. You made my grandmother be very happy when you visited her in town. She would feel cozy and cheerful that she could meet you as well as talk with you.

Compare with English, Vietnamese people have different phrases but contain the same meaning with that idiom such as: “*vui vẻ hồ hởi*” or “*vui tươi phấn khởi*”. We see that there is not any color words in both two phrase but they still express the similar meaning with the English idiom.

6.2. “TO SEE PINK ELEPHANT”



It's a common proverb that you would **see pink elephants** if you drink too much because in reality, the elephants are never pink color. Drunks see things that aren't there. Because of this, having consumed alcohol is often a reason to discount eyewitness testimony. The standard meaning is “imagination caused by excessive alcohol intake”, usually used in the phrase "to see pink elephants" meaning 'to be very drunk'. Once defined in terms of hallucinations, the origin is clear: if you're so drunk that you're seeing pink elephants before your eyes, you are quite drunk indeed. Therefore, this idiom shows the meaning that seeing thing which is not really there because they are only in your imagination.

“Pink” is usually appear in fantasy or some fancy things. Thus, it is not surprise that English people use it in this idiom in to describe unreal and strange things which appear when we are drunk. In Vietnamese, native speakers do not mention “pink” in this situation. However, we can find another term with nearly same meaning “*lúc tỉnh lúc say*” or “*nhìn gà hóa cuốc*”.

Eg: *He had so much to drink he must have been **seeing pink elephants**.*

Or

*When he started **seeing pink elephants** he knew he had to control my drinking.*

<http://www.english-test.net/forum/ftopic69021.html>

It is easy to understand that when he got drunk he started “**seeing pink elephants**” _seeing many things which are not true and only appear in his imagination or his dream. At that time everything around drunker become fantasy and they seem to see and touch all the things which are not in real life such as: fairy...

With color of beauty, love and fantasy likes “pink”, there is also a related idiom in Vietnamese “ *hồng nhan bạc phận*”. However, it does not have the equivalent in English. This idiom talks about women who have wonderful beauty but their fates is very bad and unlucky.

In conclusion, from all of the idioms above, we can see many differences between English and Vietnamese. However, they also have some similarity which we can find in some idioms. From that, learners can understand more about the similarities and differences between two culture as well.

CHAPTER 3: RELATED PROBLEMS FACED BY ENGLISH LEARNERS AND SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

1. Some difficulties in studying idioms and proverbs

In fact, many people want to learn English idioms and proverbs, but they face to many difficulties. The following are some difficulties I have had in the process of researching on these papers:

Firstly, because of different geography, the differences between the cultures of two countries are unavoidable, especially the idiom and proverb system.

Secondly, idiom, proverb, saying, quotation, slang and so on are similar to each other, thus identifying idioms and proverbs among them is not an easy job.

Thirdly, most of idioms and proverbs are difficult to guess the meaning correctly, because they have association with the ordinary meaning of the individual words or phrase. They can be guessed if they are in the context, that is, when we know the particular situation they are.

Eg: Red letter day

It's difficult for you to guess the meaning of this idiom correctly but when it is put in context: "*My grandmother recently turned 90 years old. It was a **Red-letter Day**, complete with a big family party held in her honor.*" you can more easily to guess its meaning as "a special significant or an unforgettable day".

Fourthly, the main difficulties are that learners do not know the levels of styles, that is, whether an idiom or proverb can be used in informal situation or not.

Lastly, when translating English idioms or proverbs, it is not easy to for Vietnamese equivalent suitable to the meaning of English idioms and proverbs.

Eg: Black market

This idiom can be found the similarity in Vietnamese “*chợ đen*”

However this idiom “*blackleg*” we cannot find the equivalent in Vietnamese. It means a person who continues working when fellow workers are on strike

2. Suggested solutions

With the above difficulties, how to overcome them is still a great question. The following tips are referred to help Vietnamese learners in their English studying:

Firstly, the learners should understand about the culture, belief, region, habit, and so on of both Vietnam and England, thus they could compare and guess the meaning of the idioms or proverbs and finally check their meanings in reliable dictionaries such as: *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary* by Sally Wehmeier; *Collection of Vietnamese - English common idioms, proverbs and folks* by Nguyễn Đình Hùng (2007, Youth publisher, Ho Chi Minh city); *Comparative proverbs* by Phạm Văn Vĩnh (2003, Hanoi publisher) and so on.

Secondly, the learners should study the features of idioms and proverbs carefully and distinguish them from other kinds of set expressions to identify the idioms and proverbs better.

Thirdly, the learners can analyze the meaning of all components and the relationships among the components or study the meaning in the context or can ask native speaker.

Fourthly, it is advisable not to make frequent use of slang expression because it is easy to sound strange.

Fifthly, the learner should put idioms and proverbs in context. It is easier to translate them as well as guess the meaning correctly.

Lastly, some English idioms and proverbs have more than one equivalent so the learners should care when choosing them. Some English idioms and proverbs have no Vietnamese equivalents, so we should paraphrase them or find similar ones.

PART 3: CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there are a lot of idioms and proverbs relating to colors. However, due to my limitation of time as well as my knowledge I have just only mentioned some idioms and proverbs that are supposed to be the most popular and important. The similarities and differences between such features of two countries have great effect on life experience idioms and proverbs both semantically and lexically.

The development is the main part the study. It consists of three chapters in which the general knowledge about idioms and proverbs in both Vietnamese and English are introduced in chapter 1: "Theoretical background" which provides learners of English some general information on language, and culture and an overview of idioms and proverbs.

In chapter 2 and chapter 3, we have "Idioms and proverbs relating to colors in English and Vietnamese" and " Related problems faced by English learners and suggested solutions". In this chapter, I gave some idioms and proverbs, which were having its examples in order to make the process of learning English idioms and proverbs effectively, an analysis on some English idioms and proverbs in comparison with their Vietnamese equivalents is draw with the aim at helping learners of English understand cultural characteristics of each image.

Part 3 is mentioned to give some difficulties in learning English idioms and proverbs about idioms and proverbs relating to colors.

Lastly, because of the limited time as well as my limited knowledge, only idioms and proverbs relating to some main colors in comparison with Vietnamese equivalents and some difficulties in translation were focused, study on other aspects will be left for further study.

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