

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

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ISO 9001:2015

**KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP**

**NGÀNH: NGÔN NGỮ ANH**

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**HẢI PHÒNG - 2019**

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
HAIPHONG PRIVATE UNIVERSITY**

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**A STUDY ON ENGLISH IDIOMS RELATED TO  
PARTS OF BODY**

# **GRADUATION PAPER**

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Class : NA1802  
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**HAI PHONG - 2019**

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TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC DÂN LẬP HẢI PHÒNG**

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**NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP**

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Tên đề tài: A study on English idioms related to parts of body

# NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI

1. Nội dung và 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 tốt nghiệp.

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Đã nhận nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

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Được bảo vệ  Không được bảo vệ  Điểm hướng dẫn

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**Giảng viên hướng dẫn**

*(Ký và ghi rõ họ tên)*

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**1. Phần nhận xét của giáo viên chấm phản biện**

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**3. Ý kiến của giảng viên chấm phản biện**

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

**Giảng viên chấm phản biện**

*(Ký và ghi rõ họ tên)*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the process of doing the graduation paper, I have received a lot of assistance, guidance and encouragement from my teachers, family and friends.

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest thanks to my research supervisor Ms. Vu Thi Thu Trang, MBA, the lecturer of foreign language faculty, Haiphong Private University in every step throughout the process. Without her invaluable suggestions and advice, this paper would have never been accomplished.

I would also like to show my sincere gratitude to all the teachers of English department at Haiphong Private University for their help as well as useful lectures during my four-year university life at Haiphong Private University, which have been then the foundation and inspiration for my research paper.

Most importantly, none of this could have happened without my family and my friends who fully supported me while I was doing this graduation paper. Every time I was ready to quit, they were always beside me and encouraged me and I am forever grateful. This graduation paper stands as a statement to their unconditional love and encouragement.

Hai Phong, April 2019

Nguyen Thi Thu Huong



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## **PART I INTRODUCTION**

### **1. Rationale**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, countries all over the world tend to develop basing on international cooperation. English has become crucial in the way people interact with different people around the world; not being able to communicate in English imposes what seem to be formidable limitations. Therefore, English has been adopted as one of the most important subjects in many schools in Vietnam. As an English-majored student, the similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese cultures have been one of my concerns when studying at university. There are many differences between two languages, they are differences in grammar, lexicology, translation, phonetics and so on. However, there still exist plenty of similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese that can be demonstrated through metaphorical meaning especially in literature, idioms expression.

The research of English idioms has been traditionally associated with the study of literature, the use of idioms and is not restricted to this kind of language. A perfect understanding of how idioms are used in daily life language is not only important for English students to improve their vocabulary, but also to understand new and original idioms when we hear and use them in daily life.

However, what the author wants to express here is that idioms are the precious treasure of national languages that is the key to help learners know about nation, as well as custom and culture of each country all over the world. Therefore, it is the motivation for me to study idioms relating body parts that have made such a deep expression on the author for a long time that she finds it so interesting and useful. Most languages make use of

idioms but the way individual words used varies from one language to another and each language has its own system and that they cannot always transfer the metaphorical use of a word from one language to another.

Idioms help learners see the interest, the beauty as well as the cultural color of language which help us use and understand correctly and clearly. The author hopes that learners will understand about idioms and proverbs in English, especially idioms related to people description.

## **2. Aims of the study**

Idioms are extremely difficult topics and merely well-understood by foreign English learners and even native speakers of English who take the idioms and proverbs for granted because when they use idioms, they do not know if they are using them. However, they really appreciate the idioms associated to attitudes and behaviors of speakers, so when they hear foreigners make grammatical or pronunciation mistakes, they are quite willing to accept and understand them, they might not understand what that person means and that leads to a misunderstanding and boring conversation. Therefore, this study aims at:

- Clarifying meanings of some English idioms expressions.
- Helping the learners use right idioms in right situations.

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

Considering all the characteristics, this paper made great use of qualitative method.

A qualitative approach allowed the researcher to gather non-numerical data from the supervisor, experts and friends, which provided more opportunities for explorations. Idioms were collected from dictionary and other sources of information to get valuable knowledge for this paper

#### **4. Scope of the study**

During the research process, the author sees that English idioms, proverbs and expressions about body parts are an interesting subject. Idioms and proverbs are a treasure of each country. Because of its immensity, what have known about them is very little. Due to time allowance and limited knowledge, the author cannot cover all idioms on these issues, this study only focuses on idioms describing human body parts.

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

This study is composed of three main parts:

- Part I is the introduction which consists of rationale, aims, study methods, the scope and design of the study.
- Part II is the development - the main part of this paper which is divided into three chapters:
  - Chapter one is theoretical background of English idioms, definitions of idioms, how different idioms versus compounds, proverbs and slangs.
  - Chapter two shows some English idioms relating to human body parts.
  - Chapter three indicates some difficulties for learners of English in studying idioms relating to human body parts, suggested solutions and exercises for practicing.
- Part III is the conclusion which summarizes what is given in previous parts.

## **PART II. DEVELOPMENT**

### **CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **1. An overview**

English conversation in human daily speech is full of expressions or phrases that are characteristics of the spoken and written language. These phrases make the native speakers' language richly idiomatic and it will be a matter of puzzle to many users and students of English.

Until now, there is no complete guide to the large number of phrases that are peculiar to everyday conversation. Any idioms, whatever its types, is deceptive. Its real meaning is not what it appears to be on the surface. Idioms provide an opaque connection between the surface sense of the words and their real individual meaning (Manser:1992).

It is important to understand the history and the use of idioms in daily life before researching in detail the use and the meaning of idioms relating to body parts. Idioms exist in every language and are one of the most magical parts of learning a language. That is because idioms, also known as idiomatic expressions, are a type of formulaic language in which the exact meaning of the expression cannot be derived from direct translation. Though different in structure, all examples of different languages have a few things in common. All are fixed expressions that cannot be translated literally or significantly altered, and are often used in everyday speech by native speakers.

Idioms require a moment of hesitation, to ponder their meaning. Once the underlying message behind an idiom emerges, it causes one to pause and consider the truth behind the saying. The more familiar with idiomatic expressions you become, the more likely you can incorporate them in to your own English writing and speech- should you find an appealing

situation in which to use one. They are often impressive and enjoyable to share.

Idioms honestly and exactly reflect history, experience, spiritual value, religious opinion of people.

### **1.1. Definition of Idioms**

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, religious, custom, thinking pattern and so on. They appear in formal style, in slang, in poetry,... To research idioms, first of all, we must understand what an idiom is? This is the old theme that we discuss it. Because to define the idiom exactly is a difficult question. In the definition of idioms, some scholars emphasize on the quantity of structure in idioms. That is to say how many language units to constitute the idioms? Is it except the phrases, words group, and words or sentences also can make up to the idioms? Others emphasize the single meanings of idioms it refers that the idiom's meaning is arbitrary. The idiom's meanings cannot synthesize or cut apart. Different people hold the different opinions on the definition of idioms; they have different local points on the definition of idiom. So we must understand the definition of idioms exactly through the research.

Although we are unlikely to give an ideal definition to the idioms, but we should give a better definition of idioms before the research.

According to Richards and Schmidt (2002, p. 246), an idiom is "an expression which functions as a single unit and whose meaning cannot be worked out from its separate parts". Makkai (1972, p. 122) defines "idiom" as multiword expressions whose meaning is not predictable from their

component parts. So, for example, although you might know the meaning of the words “storm” and “teacup”, it would be very difficult to guess the meaning of the idiom “a storm in a teacup”, which is a situation where people get very upset or angry over something that is not important.

*“An idiom is an expression with the following features: It is fixed and is recognized by native speakers. You cannot make up your own; It uses language in a non-literal-metaphorical- way”.*

(Jon Wright: Idioms organizer:2000:9)

Idioms are phrases that do not mean exactly what they say. They have "hidden" meanings, like the idiom "to let the cat out of the bag" really means “to tell a secret”. Idioms are like sayings.

An idiom is a group of words in current usage having a meaning that is not deducible from those of the individual words. Eg:

“Behind one’s back”- which means “ when one is not present” is an idiom; and “face to face”- means “confronting each other”- is another idiom, in both cases, we would have a hard time to understand the real meaning if we did not already know these idioms.

According to online dictionary Wikipedia:

*“An idiom is an expression whose meaning is not compositional – that is whose meaning does not follow from the meaning of which it is composed”*

There are many definitions of idiom in our society. In short, the idioms consist of set phrases and short sentences, which are peculiar to the language in question and steeped in the national and religion, culture and ideas, thus being colorful, forcible and thought – provoking. Strictly speaking, idioms are expressions that are not readily understandable from their literal meanings of individual constituents. In a broad sense, idioms



may include colloquialism, catchphrases, slang expressions, proverbs and so on.

## 1.2. Types of idioms

There are many opinions about types of idioms, according to *Tim Nicolas at Essex University structural and psychological perspectives;1995;237-238*), there are some kinds of idioms which are classified based on structure of sentence:

- **Verb + bare singular noun phrase**

Ex: *carry weight*

- **Verb + non definite plural noun phrase**

Ex: *speak volumes*

- **Verb + a + noun**

Ex: *come a cropper*

- **Verb +the +noun**

Ex: *bite the dust*

- **Verb + one's (own)+ noun**

Ex: *change one's tune*

- **Verb + noun phrase +noun**

Ex: *pull somebody's leg*

- **Support-type verb + non definite noun phrase**

Ex: *make a splash*

## 1.3. Features of idioms

Idiomatic expressions can be diagnosed by some properties that are extracted from its practical use in variable discourses. The features that are set below are extracted from an article labeled “Czech and English Idioms of Body Parts: A View from Cognitive Semantics, EnglishLanguage”:

1. Idioms are conventional, i.e. they are well- established style.
2. Idioms have paradigmatic fixity, i.e. The individual elements of idioms are unable to be substituted in the same place of its context.
3. Idioms are transformationally anomalous, i.e. they are a unique group of words that cannot be created according to a specific pattern.
4. From the formal viewpoint, idioms have combinatory abilities that are not identical with the combinatory abilities of a regular language.
5. From the semantic point of view, idioms have no compositional function, i.e. The total meaning of an idiom cannot be predicted from the meaning of its individual parts.
6. Idioms have compositeness, i.e. an idiom is a combination of two or more words which function as a unit of meaning and that exactly what is called semantic unity.
7. Idioms have a special nature that makes them unique; they are richer than the literal language in terms of their structure and semantic features.
8. Idioms cause a high degree of disinformation potential, i.e. the individual parts of idioms are polysemous and can be misunderstood by the listener.
9. Idioms are institutionalized, i.e. they are conventionalized and cannot be changed.

#### **1.4. Idioms versus proverbs**

There are many differences and similarities which we can distinct idioms and proverbs.

A proverb is a short, famous saying, giving a piece of advice. A proverb generally states the general truth based on common sense or practical experience of humanity. Almost every language has their own proverbs, and some proverbs can be observed in many languages. Even if are hearing a certain proverb for the first time, it is not very difficult to interpret its meaning by looking at the context. However, different people can interpret a proverb in different ways, especially when the proverb is borrowed from a foreign culture. Given below are some proverbs in the English language.

*Honesty is the best policy.*

*An apple a day keeps the doctor away.*

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

There are some distinctions between idioms and proverbs:

1. Proverbs are full statements with their correct grammar but idioms are not.

For example: True love never grows old versus kick the habit

2. Unlike idiom, the meaning of proverbs can be deduced from the meaning of constituents.

For example:

*The belly is not filled with fair word **versus** Skin and bones.*

According to Pham Van Binh (1999:12), proverbs are section of folklore, that is, they are a “complete words of literature”. Therefore, proverbs have all fundamental functions of literature such as the apprehension aesthetic, education and so on. On the contrary, idioms are only section of language and idioms alone cannot express an idea completely, so it equals to words

only. Hence, they do not have function as proverb do and are often used to replace words so that expression effects of the sentient can be strengthened.

Idioms and proverbs are considered as special units of each language. They honestly and exactly reflect history experiences, spiritual valuable, religious option. They make people's languages more beautiful and lifelike in literature as well as communication.

### **1.5. Idioms versus compounds**

Compound word (or just "compound" for short) is therefore a word that consists of at least two root morphemes. It is clear that the components of a compound may be either simple or derived words or even other compound words.

E.g: grapefruit juice, school teacher, sister-in-law, lady-killer

Compounds are sequences of two or more words arranged in a grammatical construction and acting as a unit in a sentence.

An idiom is (usually) a type of compound that has a meaning that may not relate to the meanings of its individual words. It is a figure of speech.

Compound words have many kinds, but classification according to the meaning, compounds have two types:

- ◆ **Non- idiomatic compounds** (motivated): the meaning of the whole word is easily deduced from the meanings of the components.

Ex: Goal- keeper, love story

- ◆ **Idiomatic compounds** (non- motivated): the meaning of the whole word is not the total, sum of meanings of the components.

Ex: Lip-service, blackleg

Some idiomatic usages are compounds and some compounds that are not idioms convey idiomatic meaning also. That is all idiomatic usages are not compounds, but some compounds are idioms. The compounds with an

idiomatic sense are also used to convey the undertone or sarcastic sense. This type of compounds is commonly used in newspapers to sarcastically criticize the government and the political leaders.

### **1.6. Idioms versus slangs**

Slangs prefer to the terms that are recognized as casual or playful. Idioms are yesterday's slang and slang is tomorrow's idioms which have through use and over time become acceptable to be used in the informal language. Thus, we cannot use this idiom in writing or in formal spoken English. This expression is idiomatic because we can not guess its total meaning from its separate parts or words.

### **1.7. Phrasal Verbs**

A phrasal verb is a combination of a verb plus an adverb, like "make up" and "put down". We can know its possible idiomaticity by putting those examples under specific exam. For example, we have the verb "make up" that has the meaning of the verb "invent", we can consider it as an idiomatic verb because the total meaning of "make up" is different from the meaning of the verb "make" and the adverb "up". This phrasal verb is high in the ladder of idiomaticity. (Palmer:1981)

### **1.8. Partial Idioms**

These are type of idioms which appear when the meaning of one of the words has its usual meaning, while the other has a meaning that is peculiar or unusual to the particular sequence; for example the idiom "red hair" refers to hair, but not the red one in strict. We have another partial idiom like "make your bed". This idiom can be used as a comic expression by

comedians when is said in a play, the reaction will be bringing a set of carpenter's tools in order to produce a funny situation.

### **1.9. Syntactic Restrictions**

There are some syntactic restrictions concerning the idioms for example, we cannot change the number of the nouns of idioms that is why we cannot say, "spill the bean" instead of "spill the beans" . In addition, we cannot give the comparative and superlative form of the adjectives in idioms. Thus, we cannot say "redder herring" instead of "red herring". We have some syntactic restrictions of idioms we cannot passives some idioms like "the bucket was kicked". So idioms have some restriction in their use we rather use them as they are with stability and fixity (Palmer, 1981:43).

### **1.10. Strategies of Interpreting Idioms**

Idioms and their interpretation depend on a conceptual theory, which is developed by the cognitive linguists who are concerned with the fact that our thinking in idiom interpretation is metaphorical and that is reflected in its use. The explanation of idioms are rendered in terms of three cognitive strategies:

1. Conceptual metaphor,
2. General conventional knowledge
3. Metonymies

The general conventional knowledge refers to all the information that people have about the world around them, it is somehow unconscious, because people do not recall the general conventional knowledge when they are speaking, thus the process is usually done unconsciously.

Conceptual metaphors and metonymies are the cognitive devices which provide a link between the concrete knowledge of the world people hold in their memory and the figurative meaning of a given idiom. That means, we have an abstract area in our mind which needs to be brought into our everyday use.

From the cognitive viewpoint, idioms are considered as a product of our conceptual system. Idioms are just expressions that carry meaning which is different from the meaning of its individual parts, but it comes from our general knowledge of the world that is embodied in our conceptual system. That shows when a number of people share the same experience in life or the same culture. Those who share the same stories, traditions, and experiences can understand and interpret them easily rather than those who are not native speaker. That is because people of the same culture share the same images that are stored in their memory and that are gathered through their life. Some linguists like Tylia, Bragina, and Oparina suggest that culture is like a channel through which language is passed from one community to another and that what is called "cultural connotation" (<http://www.bohemica.com>)

Idioms seem to be difficult lexical items to interpret, but if we look at the conceptual metaphors which underlie idioms, we will be much closer to understand them. It is indicated that conceptual thinking of understanding idioms is like a vehicle which connects the literal meaning of the words to their idiomatic meaning. Thus, with idioms that revolve round "head" native speakers are able to infer the idiomatic meaning because they subconsciously know what the word "head" means. So the process of interpreting idioms is conducted successfully when the three cognitive strategies, i.e. conventional knowledge, conceptual metaphors and metonymies are at work. Those can easily simplify most of the inferences about the meaning of idiomatic expressions.

Another factor that helps us to understand and infer idioms, is "context" in the sense that the surrounding co-text has a strong effect on what we think the word means. Context helps to interpret the meaning of idiomatic phrases. We cannot infer the meaning of an idiom unless we know the context by which we can comprehend the total meaning. Context is very important for the interpretation of literal language and more important to interpret idioms, which have figurative meaning. Palmer (1981: 43) argues that misinformation and confusion often result from our inability to infer the meanings of idioms, which are contextually misplaced.

Idioms have function in human discourse. Idioms focus on the message content including actions. Idioms are interactional including greetings and farewells so that they can secure the cohesion of discourse. The discursual cohesion seems to rely semantically on idioms. People use idiomatic expressions in order to express their opinion, feeling, emotions, evaluation of events, agreement with or rejection of, other people's statements. Those expressions also show whether this message can be understood, and predicted or not. Although idioms behave as semantic units, their syntactic behavior poses problems. Thus, the sentence "he kick the bucketed yesterday" sounds awkward. Thus the only correct form of past tense is "kicked the bucket", so we cannot consider an idiom like a single word but they are sequence of grammatical words.



## CHAPTER 2: ENGLISH IDIOMS RELATED TO BODY PARTS

### 2. English idioms related to body parts

In all types of idioms, idioms related to human body parts are frequently used in daily life. We use them to tell, assess, judge or criticize people through their appearance and characters in different contexts. With human's body parts, the author have a special attention to idioms related to parts of body's people because of its variety in English. Each part of body, there are many idioms describing them and they are often used in living language. In this research, the researcher wants to give some idioms relating to human body parts. They are interesting idioms which the researcher collected and analyzed to find out their popularity and effectiveness when using them in literature and daily communication. They are only compounds, phrases or words but they make your conversations or work better much more who read your work will be satisfied that they had when they talk to you or read your works. This chapter consists of the analysis of some common English idioms related to human body parts which the reseacher collected.

#### 2.1 Idioms about head (face, lips, mouth, nose, head, breath)

No	Idiom	Meaning	Example
1	Get out of someone's face	To go away or leave someone	I wish that my friend would get out of my face
2	Swelled head	When someone has the feeling of being more	My sister has a swelled head

		important then he really is	
3	At the top of one's throat	With a very loud voice	I screamed at the top of my throat to get the man's attention
4	Save one's breath	Keep silent because talking will not do any good	You can save your breath and not bother talking to him. He never listens to anyone.
5	Face to face	Confronting each other	I want to talk to you face-to-face
6	In one's ear and out the other	Does not pay attention	I don't understand, it just goes in one ear and out the other.
7	Be all ears	Listen attentively	You've got an idea. I'm all ears.
8	Keep an eye out for	Watch for someone or something	Trang is keeping an eye out for the next game
9	Tongue-tied	When you can't say anything because you feel shy	She's tongue-tied when she has to speak in public.
10	Have a cheek	Be disrespectful	He's got a cheek saying you never help him.
11	Head to head	In a race, when 2 contestants are	They are head to head in the polls

		doing as well as each other	
12	Keep your head	Stay calm	He always keeps his head in an argument.
13.	Go over my head	Not understand something	The lesson went over my head.
14	See eye to eye	agree	My friend and I don't see eye to eye on how to train the dogs
15	Thick in the head	Not very intelligent	I'm a bit thick in the head when it comes to reading a map
16	Head over heels	Very deeply in love	My friend is head over heels for his new girlfriend.
17	Head start	An earlier start	The kids gave Phuong a head start in the bicycle race because he was the youngest.
18	(by the ) skin of one's teeth	just barely	I passed my exam by the skin of my teeth
19	stick your nose in	get involved in something or someone else's business	"I wish she wouldn't stick her nose in like that - I really don't want anyone else's help."
20	be up to one's neck in	be in a difficult situation	He's up to his neck in debt.

## 2.2 Idioms about hand ( arms, finger, hands)

No	Idioms	Meaning	Examples
1	Hand over	Pass something on	Before you go, you have to hand over all your work
2	Get out of hand	Become impossible to manage	You'll have to deal with this problem before it gets out of hand.
3	have your hands full	be very busy	I can't do anything about it now - my hands are full.
4	in hand	under control	The company report is in hand - you'll have it next week
5	live hand to mouth	only earn enough money for food	After he lost his job, he had to live hand to mouth for a couple of months.
6	give someone a hand	help someone	He always gives me a hand with the housework.
7	have someone in the palm of your hand	have influence over someone	He's got her in the palm of his hand
8	butter fingers	be clumsy and drop things	You've dropped my vase! Butter fingers!

9	under your thumb	control someone	She's got him under her thumb
10	twist someone's arm	persuade someone	I didn't want to go out, but he twisted my arm.
11	cost an arm and a leg	cost a fortune	The car costs an arm and a leg.

### 2.3 Idioms about foot and legs

No	Idioms	Meaning	Examples
1	have itchy feet	not able to settle down in one place	She's going off travelling again - she's got really itchy feet.
2	keep someone on their toes	keep someone alert	Our teacher keeps us on our toes - we have to pay attention in class
3	stand on your own two feet	be independent	I don't need your help - I can stand on my own two feet.
4	foot the bill	pay the bill	He had to foot the bill for the party
5	pull one's leg	joke or tease someone	I was just pulling your leg.

6	put your foot in it	say or do something you shouldn't	I think I've put my foot in it - I told her about the party.
7	cold feet	nervous just before a big event	My sister didn't get cold feet until she put her wedding dress on.
8	break a leg	good-luck	Today's the big game, eh? Break a leg!
9	back on one`s feet	to recover from sickness or trouble, to become independent again	Our teacher was back on her feet shortly after her accident.
10	from head to toe	from the top of one's head to one's feet	I dressed warmly from head to toe before I went outside.
11	go down on bended knee	to show a lot of emotion when you are asking someone for something, to act like a servant	The man had to go down on bended knee to ask for the job.
12	have legs	likely to succeed or to continue	The news story has legs. People will be talking about it for a long time.

## 2.4 Idioms about heart

No	Idioms	Meaning	Examples
1	cry your heart out	cry very hard	I cried my heart out when my best friend moved away.
2	learn by heart	memorize	I learned my multiplication tables by heart in the fourth grade.
3	Break someone's heart	Cause a great sorrow, disappoint someone	He broke my heart when he left
4	To follow your heart	to act according to your emotions and desires and not necessarily in the most rational, sensible way	If you think it's right, just follow your heart.
5	In a heartbeat	immediately	He wants to talk to you in a heartbeat.

6	From the bottom of my heart	with utmost sincerity (and usually regret)	I'm so sorry from the bottom of my heart.
7	To have a change of heart	to change your mind	I have a change of heart of my decision.
8	To lose heart	to give up, to feel discouraged, to lose hope	I lose heart on my current job.
9	To not have your heart in something	Not really want to do something	I don't have my heart in the new job.
10	To take something to heart	To take something seriously	I want to take this to heart.



## **CHAPTER 3 : SOME DIFFICULTIES FACED BY VIETNAMESE LEARNERS IN STUDYING IDIOMS RELATED TO BODY PARTS**

### **3.1. Some difficulties in studying idioms related to body parts**

In fact, many people want to learn English idioms but they have a lot of difficulties. The following are some difficulties the author have had in the process of researching this graduation paper:

Firstly, most of idioms are difficult to guess the meaning correctly because they have an association with the ordinary meaning of the individual words or phrases. They can be guessed if they were heard in the context that is, when we know they are used in a particular situation.

Secondly, the main difficulty is that learners do not know the level of style; that is, whether an idiom can be used in a formal or an informal situation. In the formal situation, when we do not know the person who we are talking to very well or the occasion is in public places, we choose words much more carefully. It would be inappropriate to choose a slang expression. This means that we can express the same information or idea in more than one way using different levels of style.

Thirdly, when translating English idioms, it is not easy for Vietnamese people to find suitable equivalence to the nuance of English idioms. An idiom may be used in the text in both the literal and idiomatic senses at the same time. Hence, if an idiom in the target language does not correspond to the source language of idiom in form and meaning, the role of idiom cannot be successfully translated.

### **3.2 Suggested solutions**

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

Firstly, the learners can analyze the meaning of all components or study the meaning in the context or refer to the native speakers.

Secondly, it is advisable not to make frequent use of slang expressions because it is easy to sound strange. Moreover, using idioms with neutral style is a good idea. Besides, knowing an idiom is neutral or appreciate it in a certain situation is also difficult. This can only be learnt by careful reading of English books which contain idioms. The learners should take careful note of examples of usage in typical situation.

Lastly, some English idioms have more than one Vietnamese equivalent, so the learners should be careful when choosing them because if they choose the idioms which reflect the specialties of Vietnamese nature and society too much, the unity of English style will be lost, some English idioms have no Vietnamese equivalent, we can translate them into our language but we must keep the suitable nuance of meaning.

As far as the writer has experienced, the best way to study idioms is learning by heart and applying them in the suitable context. Besides, we can find an interesting way to learn them through reading books, newspapers and magazines in order to understand more about English culture, people and society.

## **PART III: CONCLUSION**

### **1. Summary**

To sum up, we can say that idioms are distinctive and colorful expressions which have no literal meaning. Linguistically speaking, idioms are defined as "multi-word lexemes", whose meaning is not a compositional function of the meaning of the component words. In spite of all the research done in this area, there is no complete guide to the large number of phrases that are peculiar to everyday conversation. Any idiom, whatever type it is, is perplexing. Its real meaning is not what it appears to be on the surface. Idioms provide an opaque connection between the surface sense of the words and their real individual meaning and it is this feature what makes an idiom difficult to understand and it is this feature what has made about half of the sample of this study fail to guess and use the right position to give the right meaning.

The researcher found this topic is very interesting and we would know more idioms from its usages, culture and life in each. Studying some English idioms relating to body parts, we can find the similarities and difficulties in the way of the using metaphor but each of them express one meaning, sometimes two idioms have the same meaning and this brings learners interesting things.

Learning idioms is not an easy task, so students often get confused in defining, memorizing and using them. To overcome, some solutions are introduced in chapter III such as learning by heart, reading books, magazines, stories, pictures and studying culture of each country.

## **2. Limitations of the study**

Although this paper was carefully prepared, the author was still aware of its limitations and shortcomings.

Firstly, the researcher has just mentioned some certain aspects of theory of idioms presented in chapter I with the hope that readers can have the basic knowledge of them and identify them better.

Secondly, because of the limited time, it was not possible for the researcher to focus on all idioms related human body parts, therefore, the researcher mostly focused on the common idioms about human body parts.

## **3. Recommendations for further study**

From the limitations of this study, the researcher would like to give some suggestions for further study. The forthcoming research should be conducted over a longer time period that should cover more English idioms for those who are interested in English as well as English culture can explore about English.

All what has been referred to in this paper come from the limited understanding and ability. The author, however, hopes that this study will be a small contribution to figure out the interesting significance of the idioms of the international language and a reference to open other topics for further study.

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## APPENDICES

### 1. Exercises

#### A. Match the sentences with the right meaning

1. You did it. You have to face the music	a. You have to memorize it.
2. Yes. You hit the nail on the head.	b. You're experienced.
3. You two don't see eye to eye	c. You have control of the situation.
4. You have to learn it by heart.	d. You don't want to take the risk.
5. You are an old hand at teaching.	e. You have to accept the consequences of you actions.
6. That's great! You keep everything under your thumb.	f. You don't agree with each other.
7. You don't want to stick your neck out, do you?	g. You're absolutely right.

## **B. Choose the right answer**

1. It was such a sad movie that I \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. cried my heart out
  - b. got cold feet
  - c. was in over my head
2. He's got long hair because the hairdresser costs \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. an old hand
  - b. an arm and a leg
  - c. a head start
3. I'm sure someone will find your kitten, so \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. see eye to eye
  - b. stick your neck out
  - c. keep your chin up
4. She loves cakes and ice-cream. She's got a real sweet \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. mouth
  - b. tongue
  - c. tooth
5. I'm just \_\_\_\_\_ your leg. I didn't really dye my hair blue.
  - a. shaking
  - b. breaking
  - c. pulling
6. I like to drink wine and \_\_\_\_\_ on Saturday nights.
  - a. make my blood boil
  - b. go head over heels
  - c. let my hair down
7. Let's get together in my \_\_\_\_\_ of the woods for once.
  - a. neck

b. hand

c. foot

8. We're going away for the week. Can you keep \_\_\_\_\_ on our house?

a. an eye

b. a hair

c. a foot

9. It makes my \_\_\_\_\_ when people try to cheat.

a. teeth ache

b. head start

c. blood boil

10. She knows of all her friends' phone numbers by \_\_\_\_\_

a. mind

b. heart

c. eye

11. Tom and Anna never quarrel. They see \_\_\_\_\_ on everything.

a. eye to eye

b. face to face

c. head to head

12. It will be difficult for him to save \_\_\_\_\_ after such a terrible blunder.

a. body

b. face

c. hair

13. Mike put his best \_\_\_\_\_ forward during his first meeting with Ella's parents.

a. arm

b. foot

c. hand

14. A bunch of teenagers got out of \_\_\_\_\_ and smashed several windows.



a. arms

b. hand

c. hands

15. She has a good \_\_\_\_\_ for music.

a. ear

b. eye

c. finger

16. I didn't mean it! It was just a slip of the \_\_\_\_\_! Please forgive me.

a. hand

b. mouth

c. tongue

17. He had to fight them because he had his \_\_\_\_\_ to the wall.

a. back

b. body

c. chest

18. It crossed my \_\_\_\_\_ that I had seen him somewhere.

a. head

b. heart

c. mind

19. She has a sweet \_\_\_\_\_. She eats a lot of sweets every day.

a. heart

b. mouth

c. tooth

20. This is a difficult puzzle. I racked my \_\_\_\_\_ for two hours, but I couldn't solve it.

a. head

b. mind

c. skull

**C. Look at the table of idioms and definitions. Choose idiom goes with the correct definition**

1. Get it off your chest	a. Be involved with many projects simultaneously.
2. Have your finger in many pies.	b. Be sensible, wise, reasonable.
3. Have your head in the clouds	c. Have a superior attitude towards others.
4. Have your head screwed on (straight)	d. Lead/advantage
5. Head over heels in love	e. Listen out for news about something
6. Head start	f. Try and stay happy and think positively
7. Keep your chin up	j. Not to concentrate, dream about something else.
8. Keep your ear to the ground	h. Talk to someone to about problem you have
9. Look down your nose at people	i. Totally in love with someone

## **2. Key to exercises**

### **A.**

1E 2G 3F 4A 5B 6C 7d

### **B.**

1A 2B 3C 4C 5C 6C 7A 8A 9C 10 B

11A 12B 13B 14B 15A 16C 17A 18C 19C 20B

### **C.**

1H 2A 3J 4B 5I 6D 7F 8E 9C