

**BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO**  
**TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC QUẢN LÝ VÀ CÔNG NGHỆ HẢI PHÒNG**

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# **KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP**

**NGÀNH : NGÔN NGỮ ANH**

**Sinh viên : Đặng Anh Thư**

**HẢI PHÒNG – 2025**

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**A STUDY ON IDIOMS AND PROVERBS  
CONTAINING WORDS DENOTING COLORS IN  
ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE: CULTURAL AND  
PRAGMATIC PERSPECTIVES**

**KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP ĐẠI HỌC HỆ CHÍNH QUY  
NGÀNH: NGÔN NGỮ ANH**

**Sinh viên : Đặng Anh Thư  
Giảng viên hướng dẫn: ThS. Nguyễn Thị Thu Huyền**

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*Hải Phòng, ngày      tháng      năm 2025*

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Được bảo vệ ☐ Không được bảo vệ ☐ Điểm hướng dẫn ☐

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Họ và tên sinh viên: Đặng Anh Thư

Chuyên ngành: Ngôn ngữ Anh

Đề tài tốt nghiệp: A study on idioms and proverbs containing words denoting colors in English and Vietnamese: cultural and pragmatic perspectives.

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

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**2. Những mặt còn hạn chế**

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

Được bảo vệ ☐

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**Giảng viên chấm phản biện**

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## ABSTRACT

This graduation thesis entitled "*A Study on Idioms and Proverbs Containing Words Denoting Colors in English and Vietnamese: Cultural and Pragmatic Perspectives*" aims to examine how color-related idioms and proverbs function in the two languages in terms of their meanings, cultural values, and pragmatic usage. The study focuses on five commonly used colors: red, black, white, green, and yellow, and analyzes their symbolic meanings in idiomatic expressions in both English and Vietnamese.

Through qualitative analysis and contrastive comparison, the thesis highlights both similarities and differences in the way each culture interprets color in idioms and proverbs. Findings show that while certain color associations overlap (e.g., red for passion or black for misfortune), many differences are rooted in cultural, historical, and religious backgrounds. Additionally, the pragmatic analysis shows how these expressions are flexibly applied in various communicative contexts, literature, media, and daily conversation.

The research also suggests implications for language teaching, translation, and intercultural communication, providing useful insights into how color symbolism affects expression and comprehension in different languages. Limitations and directions for further research are also discussed.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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# PART I: INTRODUCTION

## 1. Rationale

### The Prevalence and Role of Colors in Language

Colors are one of the most essential elements in human life, influencing not only vision but also emotions, psychology, and perception. Throughout history, people have used colors to express their thoughts, emotions, and psychological states. Each color carries its own symbolic value, which has been shaped over time and is closely tied to the cultural and social contexts of each nation.

In language, colors are not only used to describe the physical world but also convey abstract, metaphorical, and symbolic meanings. Certain colors can represent emotional states, levels of affection, or even moral values. As a result, they frequently appear in idioms and proverbs—fixed linguistic expressions that encapsulate human experiences in a concise and figurative manner.

For example:

- In English:

"Feeling blue" → Feeling sad or down.

"See red" → Becoming extremely angry.

- In Vietnamese:

"Xanh mặt" → Turning pale due to fear or anxiety.

"Đỏ tình, đỏ bạc" → Being lucky in both love and finances.

The widespread presence of colors in idioms and proverbs highlights their crucial role in the linguistic and cultural systems of different nations.

## **Practical Significance of the Study:**

This study holds not only theoretical value but also practical applications across various fields:

### ***A. Contribution to Contrastive Linguistics***

- Provides a comparative perspective on the use of colors in idioms and proverbs in English and Vietnamese.
- Helps identify common patterns and differences in the thought processes of the two cultures.

### ***B. Application in Language Teaching***

- Assists learners of English and Vietnamese in better understanding the nuanced meanings of idioms and proverbs.
- Helps prevent misunderstandings caused by cultural differences.

For example:

"White lie" (a harmless lie) might cause confusion since the color white in Vietnamese is not associated with this meaning.

### ***C. Application in Translation***

Idioms and proverbs are often difficult to translate literally, requiring a deep cultural understanding.

Example: "Once in a blue moon" → "Năm thì mười họa" (The translation does not retain the color reference but preserves the meaning of rarity).

## ***D. Contribution to Intercultural Communication Studies***

Enhances communication skills and helps avoid misunderstandings when using color-related idioms and proverbs.

Example: In Western culture, white is commonly associated with purity (as in wedding dresses), whereas in Vietnam, white is also linked to mourning and funerals.

## **2. Research Aims and Questions**

### **2.1 Research Aims**

This study aims to:

- Examine the similarities and differences in the use of idioms and proverbs containing color-related words in English and Vietnamese.
- Analyze the cultural and pragmatic factors influencing the expression of colors in both languages.
- Contribute to the study of contrastive linguistics, intercultural communication, and practical applications in language teaching and translation.

### **2.2 Research Questions**

2.2.1 What colors commonly appear in English and Vietnamese idioms and proverbs?

2.2.2 What are the similarities and differences in the meanings of colors in English and Vietnamese?

2.2.3 Cultural Factors Influencing the Use of Colors in Idioms and Proverbs

2.2.4 What are the pragmatic aspects of idioms and proverbs involving colors?

### **3. Scope of the Study**

#### **3.1 Subject of the Study**

This study focuses on exploring, analyzing, and comparing idioms and proverbs that contain color terms in both English and Vietnamese, specifically as follows:

##### ***A. Main Focus***

- The study centers on idioms and proverbs involving colors, which are fixed expressions rich in figurative meaning, symbolic connotation, and often non-literal interpretation.
- These expressions must:
  - + Have a fixed or established structure in usage.
  - + Carry figurative, metaphorical, or symbolic meanings, beyond literal color description.
  - + Reflect cultural perception and linguistic worldview of native speakers.

##### ***B. Excluded from the Scope***

- The study does not analyze common phrases that simply describe the physical color of objects or entities without any metaphorical or cultural implications.
- Technical terms, modern slang, or recently coined idioms that are not widely accepted or documented are also excluded.

##### ***C. Examples***

Included in the study:

- English:

“Once in a blue moon” (very rarely)

“See red” (to become angry)

- Vietnamese:

“Đỏ như son” (as red as vermilion – implying freshness or luck)

“Đen như mực” (black as ink – implying bad luck or darkness)

Literal descriptions like:

“Chiếc áo màu xanh” (“The blue shirt”)

“This car is red”

“She wore a green dress”

In summary, the study is clearly defined in scope to ensure a focused and in-depth analysis, aiming to highlight the cultural and semantic differences between English and Vietnamese in the use of colors in idioms and proverbs.

### **3.2 Scope of Colors Studied**

This study focuses on five prominent colors that are frequently used and carry distinct cultural meanings in both English and Vietnamese. These colors not only appear widely in idioms and proverbs but also reflect the unique worldviews, values, and cultural perceptions of each linguistic community.

#### ***1. Red***

Common meanings:

- Vietnamese: symbolizes luck, happiness, and is commonly associated with celebrations and weddings (influenced by Eastern traditions).
- English: conveys passion, but also carries negative connotations such as anger and danger (e.g., “see red”, “red alert”).

### Examples:

- Vietnamese: “Đỏ tình, đỏ bạc” (lucky in love and gambling), “Đỏ như son” (bright red).
- English: “See red”, “Red flag”, “Roll out the red carpet”.

## **2. Black**

### Common meanings:

- Associated with mystery, bad luck, darkness, and sometimes power or elegance.
- Often has negative undertones in both languages.

### Examples:

- Vietnamese: “Đen như mực” (as black as ink), “Đen đui” (unlucky).
- English: “Black sheep”, “Black market”, “Blacklist”.

## **3. White**

### Common meanings:

- Symbolizes purity, innocence (especially in Western cultures), but also represents death and mourning in Vietnamese culture.

### Examples:

- Vietnamese: “Áo trắng để tang” (wearing white for mourning), “Nói dối trắng trợn” (a blatant lie).
- English: “White lie”, “White wedding”, “Wave the white flag”.



#### **4. *Blue/Green***

Common meanings:

- Blue: often represents emotions, calmness, or sadness (e.g., “feeling blue” in English).
- Green: linked to nature, health, but can also signify jealousy (e.g., “green with envy”).

Examples:

- Vietnamese: “Xanh mặt” (turn pale), “Xanh như tàu lá” (pale and weak).
- English: “Green with envy”, “Feeling blue”, “Go green”.

#### **5. *Yellow/Gold***

Common meanings:

- Represents wealth, value, and glory. However, in some cases, it may carry negative meanings such as cowardice or betrayal (e.g., “yellow-bellied”).

Examples:

- Vietnamese: “Vàng thật không sợ lửa” (true gold fears no fire), “Đất lành chim đậu, vàng lành người ở” (good people are drawn to good places).
- English: “Golden opportunity”, “Yellow-bellied”.

**\*\* Note on scope:**

The study excludes less frequently used colors such as purple, brown, and orange in order to maintain a focused and manageable scope. Although these colors do

appear in language, they lack the cultural depth or frequency found in the five main colors listed above.

## **Comparison Criteria**

To ensure a comprehensive and meaningful analysis, the comparison of color-related idioms and proverbs in English and Vietnamese will be conducted from two key perspectives: cultural and pragmatic. These criteria allow for an in-depth understanding of both the symbolic meaning and practical use of colors in language.

### ***A. Cultural Perspective***

This aspect focuses on examining how historical, religious, and social factors influence the symbolic meanings of colors and how these are reflected in idiomatic expressions.

- Symbolic meaning of colors:

Analyze how each color represents certain concepts or values in English and Vietnamese cultures.

Example:

- Red symbolizes luck and happiness in Vietnam, while in Western cultures, it can signify danger or anger.

- Historical, religious, and traditional influences:

Identify how local traditions, belief systems, and historical backgrounds have shaped the development and interpretation of color idioms.

Example:

The use of white in Vietnamese mourning customs versus white weddings in Western traditions.

- Cross-cultural similarities and differences:

Highlight where the two languages align in terms of meaning, and where they diverge due to cultural differences.

Example:

Both languages use "red carpet" idioms to indicate honor or respect, but the symbolic connotation of other colors may vary significantly.

***B. Pragmatic Perspective***

This aspect aims to explore how color idioms and proverbs function in real-life communication, their context of use, emotional tone, and impact on interaction.

- Context of use:

Determine the typical social or situational contexts in which specific idioms are used.

Example:

“A red flag” is often used in business or politics, while “Mặt xanh như tàu lá” appears in informal, everyday conversation.

- Meaning nuances and expression styles:

Analyze how the tone, connotation (positive, neutral, or negative), and stylistic features of the idioms vary based on cultural expectations.

Example:

“White lie” has a positive tone in English, but a similar structure like “nói dối trắng trợn” in Vietnamese carries a strongly negative meaning.

- **Communicative effect and translation potential:**

Assess how these idioms influence the listener's perception, and how easily (or not) they can be translated across languages and cultures.

Consider challenges in cross-cultural communication and second language acquisition, such as misunderstanding metaphorical meanings or misapplying idioms in inappropriate contexts.

## **4. Research Methodology**

### **4.1 Data Collection Methods**

- **Primary data sources:**

- **Idioms and proverbs dictionaries in English and Vietnamese:**

Specialized dictionaries will be used to collect a wide range of idioms and proverbs that contain color terms commonly used in each language.

- **Scholarly books on contrastive linguistics, pragmatics, and cultural studies:**

Linguistic theories and frameworks will be applied to analyze similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese idiomatic color expressions from cultural and pragmatic perspectives.

- **Field survey and observation:**

- **Surveying native speakers:**

+ Questionnaires or interviews will be conducted with native English speakers (mainly British and American) and native Vietnamese speakers.

- **Analysis of authentic discourse:**

- Real-life language samples will be collected from movies, newspapers, advertisements, social media, and everyday conversations.
- This helps identify how color idioms and proverbs are actually used in natural communication contexts, contributing to the pragmatic analysis.

## **4.2 Data Analysis Methods**

- Content Analysis:
  - This method is used to identify and interpret the meanings of idioms and proverbs containing color terms in each language.
- Comparative Analysis:
  - Identify appropriate contexts of use: formal, informal, media, literature, etc. Analyze semantic nuances, levels of formality, and how meanings shift based on context.
  - Assess the translatability of these idioms: should they be kept literal, translated equivalently, or paraphrased?

## **PART II: DEVELOPMENT**

### **Chapter 1: Theoretical Background**

#### **1.1 Definition of Idioms and Proverbs**

##### ***a. Definition of Idioms***

Idioms are fixed expressions whose meanings cannot be deduced from the literal meanings of the individual words. They are often metaphorical and play an important role in everyday language, adding color and depth to communication.

##### Examples:

- English: “Once in a blue moon” – meaning something that happens very rarely.
- Vietnamese: “Nghèo rớt mồng tơi” – literally "poor as falling malabar spinach," figuratively means "extremely poor."

##### **• Key Characteristics of Idioms:**

- Fixed structure: The words in idioms usually cannot be altered or rearranged.
- Non-literal meaning: Understanding idioms requires knowledge of their figurative meanings.
- Frequent usage: Commonly used in both spoken and written language, especially in informal contexts.

##### ***b. Definition of Proverbs***

Proverbs are short, memorable sayings that express a truth, wisdom, or piece of advice, often based on common sense or cultural experience. They typically reflect the moral values and worldview of a society.

##### Examples:

- English: “Every cloud has a silver lining” – meaning there is always hope or something positive even in difficult situations.

- Vietnamese: “Có công mài sắt, có ngày nên kim” – meaning persistence leads to success (literally: "Keep grinding the iron, one day it becomes a needle").

• Key Characteristics of Proverbs:

- Moral or educational value: Teach lessons or share life experiences.

- Stand-alone form: They can be used independently and still retain full meaning.

- Rhythm or rhyme: Especially in Vietnamese, many proverbs are rhythmic or rhymed, aiding memorability.

*c. Comparison between Idioms and Proverbs*

Feature	Idioms	Proverbs
Structure	Fixed phrases, not complete sentences	Full, independent sentences
Meaning	Figurative, often unpredictable from individual words	Didactic, conveys a message or lesson
Usage	Used within sentences, not typically standalone	Can be used independently in conversation
Example (Eng)	See red (to become very angry)	A stitch in time saves nine (act early to prevent more work)
Example (Viet)	Đỏ mặt tía tai (blushing angrily)	Ăn quả nhớ kẻ trồng cây (be grateful to predecessors)

This distinction is crucial for this study, as it helps clarify the nature and function of the language units under analysis. Both idioms and proverbs involving color

terms will be examined from cultural and pragmatic perspectives, focusing on their meanings, usage, and symbolic significance.

## **1.2 Definition of Color and Its Symbolism**

### ***a. Color in Human Perception and Psychology***

Color plays a significant role in human perception, emotions, and cognition. In psychology, colors are known to trigger emotional responses and influence behavior. Research has shown that different colors can evoke distinct feelings and associations:

- Red is often linked with urgency, passion, energy, or danger. It can raise heart rate and create a sense of excitement. That's why red is commonly used in advertising and warning signs to grab attention.
- Blue conveys calmness, trust, and reliability. It is often associated with professionalism and safety, making it a popular color in fields such as finance and healthcare.

While individual reactions to colors may vary, general patterns are often shaped by cultural backgrounds and personal experiences. Hence, color is not only a visual element but also a powerful means of expressing emotion and conveying social messages.

### ***b. Influence of Color in Language and Culture***

In language, color goes beyond the literal function of describing visual appearance—it carries symbolic meanings tied to cultural values, beliefs, and traditions. These symbolic associations vary across cultures and can lead to significant differences in interpretation:

- White:



- In Western cultures: White symbolizes purity and innocence. For instance, the concept of a white wedding—a traditional ceremony with a white bridal dress—represents purity and new beginnings.

- In Vietnamese (and many other Asian cultures): White is associated with funerals, mourning, and sorrow. People wear white clothing to express grief, showing a cultural symbolism opposite to the West.

- Red:

- In Eastern cultures (e.g., China, Vietnam): Red stands for good luck, prosperity, and happiness. It is widely used in celebrations like Tet (Lunar New Year) and weddings.

- In Western cultures: Red often signifies danger or warning, as seen in expressions like red alert or see red (to be extremely angry).

Other colors also carry specific symbolic meanings that reflect each culture's worldview. The use of color in idioms and proverbs clearly illustrates the strong connection between language, culture, and cognition. These symbolic meanings not only express emotional states and characteristics but also reveal the cultural values and perspectives of a community.

Therefore, studying color from cultural and linguistic viewpoints provides valuable insights into how languages operate and how different societies perceive and express the world around them.

### **1.3 Pragmatics in Idioms and Proverbs**

#### ***a. Context of Usage***

Idioms and proverbs are not used randomly; their effectiveness and appropriateness depend heavily on contextual factors, including:

- Situational context: The social setting, topic of conversation, and formality level influence whether a certain idiom is suitable.

- Interpersonal relationship: The relationship between speakers (e.g., friends, colleagues, strangers) determines the tone and acceptability of certain expressions.

For example:

- In English, the idiom “green with envy” describes someone who is very jealous. While it is expressive and vivid, it may sound informal or even humorous, making it unsuitable for formal writing or professional communication.

- In Vietnamese, “bạc tình bạc nghĩa” conveys a strong negative emotional judgment about someone being unfaithful or ungrateful. The use of this idiom is emotionally charged and should be reserved for contexts where the speaker intends to express strong disapproval.

→ These examples demonstrate that idioms and proverbs are not only linguistic tools, but also pragmatic strategies that reflect speakers’ intentions, emotions, and social positioning.

### ***b. Connotative Meanings***

• Beyond their literal meanings, idioms and proverbs often carry connotative or affective meanings—subtle layers of emotion, evaluation, and attitude. These nuances add richness to communication but can also lead to misinterpretation if the listener is unfamiliar with the cultural or pragmatic implications.

For instance:

- In English, “golden opportunity” means a highly valuable or rare chance. It has a positive connotation, highlighting the desirability and timeliness of the opportunity.

- In Vietnamese, “đen như mực” literally means “black as ink,” but its figurative use implies extreme bad luck or misfortune, giving it a negative emotional tone.

- Thus, the pragmatic dimension of idioms and proverbs includes:

- Emotional intensity

- Degree of formality

- Cultural appropriateness

- Implicit speaker attitudes

Understanding these elements is crucial, especially in intercultural communication and language learning, where direct translation might fail to capture the intended nuance or could even lead to communication breakdowns.

# Chapter 2: Data analysis, findings and discussion

## 1. Data Analysis

### 1.1 Classification of Idioms and Proverbs by Color

To better understand how color is employed in idiomatic and proverbial expressions in both English and Vietnamese, the collected data will first be categorized according to the specific color terms they contain.

- Grouping by Color Categories:

- Idioms and proverbs will be grouped into five main color categories commonly found in both languages:

- + Red

- + Black

- + White

- + Blue/Green (merged or distinguished depending on linguistic relevance)

- + Yellow/Gold

- Quantitative Analysis:

- Count the total number of idioms and proverbs in each color group in both English and Vietnamese.

- This allows for a frequency comparison, highlighting:

- + Which colors are most frequently represented in idiomatic and proverbial usage.

- + Differences in the prevalence of specific color symbolism between the two languages.

- Purpose of Classification:

- To identify patterns in how certain colors are symbolically preferred or emphasized in cultural and linguistic expression.
- To prepare for deeper semantic, pragmatic, and cultural analysis in subsequent steps.

## **1.2 Analysis of Symbolic and Cultural Meanings**

In this step, the study focuses on decoding the symbolic meanings of colors in idioms and proverbs and clarifying how cultural factors shape and influence these meanings.

- Identifying symbolic meanings of each color:

- Each color (red, black, white, blue/green, yellow, etc.) is analyzed individually to determine its symbolic value in both English and Vietnamese.
- A distinction is made between positive, negative, and neutral or multidimensional connotations.

- Comparing cultural influences on color symbolism:

- The study compares the interpretation and use of color expressions in English and Vietnamese, highlighting how cultural background plays a crucial role.
- Cultural aspects considered include:
  - + Religion (e.g., Christianity in the West vs. folk beliefs in the East).
  - + Aesthetic perception.
  - + Historical and societal context.

+ Traditions and customs (e.g., white in Vietnamese funerals vs. black in Western funerals).

- Illustrative examples:

- Black:

- + In English: Associated with elegance, formality, or power (e.g., black tie event – a formal event requiring upscale attire).

- + In Vietnamese: Often connotes bad luck or negativity (e.g., đen như mực – pitch black or extremely unlucky, vận đen – bad luck).

- Red:

- + In Vietnamese: A symbol of happiness, luck, and prosperity (e.g., trải thảm đỏ – to give a warm welcome, ngày đỏ – a good day).

- + In English: Often linked to warnings, danger, or intense emotions (e.g., red alert, see red – to get angry).

- Purpose of the analysis:

- To reveal differences in color perception between the two cultures.

- To provide insights into translation and language teaching strategies that avoid misunderstandings caused by cultural variations in color symbolism.

### **1.3 Pragmatic Analysis**

The pragmatic analysis in this study aims to explore how and in what contexts color-related idioms and proverbs are actually used in English and Vietnamese. This includes examining their communicative effectiveness, connotative meanings, and frequency in modern usage.

### ***a. Identifying common usage contexts***

- This step involves analyzing specific communication settings in which color idioms and proverbs typically appear, such as:

- Informal communication (among friends, family).
- Formal or academic contexts (articles, presentations).
- Media and public discourse (films, journalism, social media).

#### Examples:

- “Once in a blue moon” is mostly used in casual spoken English.
- “Đỏ mặt tía tai” (turn red with anger) appears commonly in informal storytelling or everyday conversation in Vietnamese.

### ***b. Comparing levels of formality***

- Expressions are categorized according to their degree of formality:

- Formal expressions → appropriate for academic writing, media, or public speeches.
- Informal expressions → used in casual, everyday speech.

- Cross-linguistic observation:

- In English, many color idioms tend to be humorous or colloquial.
- In Vietnamese, color proverbs may serve didactic purposes and reflect folk wisdom, making them more solemn or reflective.

### *c. Analyzing frequency in modern communication*

- Surveys and data are used to determine whether certain idioms or proverbs remain commonly used or have become obsolete over time.
- For example, “Greenhorn” (a beginner) is now rarely used in everyday English.
- Vietnamese proverbs like “Đen bạc đỏ tình” (unlucky in gambling, lucky in love) still appear in traditional contexts but are less common among younger speakers.

This step helps evaluate the relevance and adaptability of these expressions in modern and intercultural communication.

## **2. Findings And Discussion**

### **2.1 Common colors in idioms and proverbs in English and Vietnamese**

#### **2.1.1. Overview of Color Usage in Idioms and Proverbs**

Color is a powerful linguistic and cultural tool that helps convey emotions, social attitudes, and worldview. Both English and Vietnamese make extensive use of colors in idioms and proverbs, but the meanings, associations, and frequency of use can differ due to cultural and historical contexts.

#### ***a. Color as a metaphorical device***

- In both languages, colors are frequently used to express emotions, moods, moral judgments, or social evaluations.

#### Example:

+ English: “To be green with envy” = Jealousy

+ Vietnamese: “Mặt đỏ như gấc” = Extreme anger or embarrassment



### ***b. Colors commonly found in idioms and proverbs***

The most frequently used colors in idiomatic and proverbial expressions in both English and Vietnamese include:

<b>Color</b>	<b>Common in English Idioms</b>	<b>Common in Vietnamese Idioms</b>
<b>Red</b>	Yes (e.g., red flag, see red)	Yes (e.g., đỏ mặt, đỏ như gấc)
<b>Black</b>	Yes (e.g., black sheep)	Yes (e.g., đen như mực)
<b>White</b>	Yes (e.g., white lie)	Yes (e.g., trắng tay)
<b>Blue</b>	Yes (e.g., feeling blue)	Less common
<b>Green</b>	Yes (e.g., green with envy)	Yes (e.g., còn xanh lắm)
<b>Yellow</b>	Less common	Yes (e.g., mặt vàng như nghệ)

→ Observation: While English idioms may emphasize symbolic or abstract emotions, Vietnamese idioms tend to lean heavily on visual imagery and folk metaphors.

### ***c. Cross-cultural variations***

The same color can carry different symbolic meanings:

- Red:

- In English: Associated with danger, anger, or warning (“red alert”, “see red”).

- In Vietnamese: Often represents luck, prosperity, or joy (“trái thảm đỏ”, “đỏ lộc đỏ tài”).

- Black:

- In English: Can denote mystery, elegance, or rebellion (“black tie”, “black sheep”).

- In Vietnamese: Typically relates to bad luck, negativity, or poverty (“đen như mực”, “đen bạc”).

#### ***d. Color frequency and cultural emphasis***

- English idioms show a balanced distribution of colors across idioms, with a focus on metaphorical/emotional meaning.
- Vietnamese idioms often favor a few dominant colors (especially đỏ, đen, trắng) with high cultural symbolism and vivid visual representations rooted in rural life and traditional beliefs.

### **2.1.2. Analysis of Common Colors in Idioms and Proverbs**

Colors are not only visual elements but also powerful tools for symbolic expression in language. Analyzing commonly used colors in idioms and proverbs allows us to understand how different cultures associate meanings with colors, leading to diverse idiomatic expressions.

#### ***A. Red***

- In English:
  - See red → To become very angry.
  - Red carpet treatment → A grand and respectful welcome.
  - Red tape → Bureaucratic procedures; excessive formality.
- In Vietnamese:
  - Đỏ như son (“as red as lipstick”) → Prosperity and happiness.
  - Trải thảm đỏ (“rolling out the red carpet”) → A warm welcome.
  - Vận đỏ (“red luck”) → Good fortune or luck.

- Comparison:

- In both languages, red is often associated with positive meanings such as honor or luck (trải thảm đỏ = red carpet treatment).
- However, in English, red can also convey negative emotions (e.g., see red, red tape), while in Vietnamese, red is mostly associated with good luck and celebration.

### ***B. Black***

- In English:

- Black sheep → A person who is different or rejected by a group.
- Black market → Illegal or unofficial trading.
- Blacklist → A list of people who are banned or disapproved of.

- In Vietnamese:

- Đen như mực (“black as ink”) → Unlucky.
- Đen tình đỏ bạc (“black in love, red in gambling”) → Unlucky in love, lucky in games.
- Mặt mày xám đen (“face turning dark”) → Anxious, worried.

- Comparison:

- Both languages associate black with negative connotations, such as misfortune or illegality.
- However, in English, black may imply being different (black sheep), while in Vietnamese, it more clearly reflects bad luck or sadness.

### ***C. White***

- In English:

- Wave a white flag → To surrender.
- White lie → A harmless lie, often told to avoid hurting someone.
- White-collar job → An office or professional job.

- In Vietnamese:

- Trắng tay (“white-handed”) → Losing everything, being broke.
- Trắng như ngọc (“white as jade”) → Pure and beautiful.
- Nói trắng ra (“speak in white”) → To speak bluntly or directly.

- Comparison:

- In both languages, white carries dual meanings: it may symbolize purity and honesty, or loss and hardship (trắng tay = losing everything).
- English uses white in a broader context (e.g., professional settings), while Vietnamese leans more toward symbolic or emotional usage.

### ***D. Blue/Green***

- In English:

- Feeling blue → Feeling sad.
- Green with envy → Extremely jealous.
- Once in a blue moon → Very rarely.

- In Vietnamese:

- Xanh như tàu lá (“as green as a banana leaf”) → Pale, weak.
- Xanh vỏ đỏ lòng (“green outside, red inside”) → Cold outside, warm-hearted inside.
- Thanh xuân (“spring youth”) → Youthfulness (associated with the color green).
- Comparison:
  - English distinguishes between blue and green, assigning specific meanings to each.
  - In Vietnamese, the term xanh covers both blue and green, resulting in broader and more metaphorical usage.
  - Feeling blue means sadness in English, while in Vietnamese, xanh may relate to youth, vitality, or weakness, depending on context.

### ***E. Yellow (Golden)***

- In English:
  - Yellow-bellied → Cowardly.
  - Golden opportunity → A valuable chance.
  - Golden age → A peak period of success or prosperity.
- In Vietnamese:
  - Giàu nứt đố đổ vách (“wealth cracking the walls”) → Extremely wealthy, full of gold and silver.

- Vàng thau lẫn lộn (“gold mixed with brass”) → Difficulty distinguishing between real and fake.
- Tốt gỗ hơn tốt nước sơn (“good wood is better than good paint”) → Inner value matters more than appearance.
- Comparison:
  - In both languages, yellow/gold symbolizes wealth, value, and prosperity (golden opportunity ↔ giàu nứt đố đổ vách).
  - In Vietnamese, yellow is more tangibly associated with money and material wealth, whereas in English, it is more abstract, often linked to success or potential.
  - Both cultures reflect the idea of true value beneath appearances (vàng thau lẫn lộn ↔ all that glitters is not gold).

### 2.1.3. Summary and Findings

- The most commonly used colors in idioms and proverbs in both English and Vietnamese are **red, black, white, blue/green, and yellow**.
- Some colors carry **similar symbolic meanings** in both languages. For example, **red** often symbolizes formality or celebration, while **black** tends to represent negative or unlucky aspects.

However, **cultural differences** lead to varied interpretations of certain colors. For instance, **blue** in English conveys sadness (feeling blue), whereas in Vietnamese, xanh (green/blue) is often associated with **youth and vitality** (thanh xuân).

**English idioms** frequently reflect themes related to **work, career, or finance** (e.g., white-collar job, golden opportunity), while **Vietnamese idioms** tend to emphasize **life experiences and moral values** (e.g., tốt gỗ hơn tốt nước sơn – “inner value is more important than appearance”).

## **2.2. Similarities and Differences in Meaning**

### **2.2.1. Overview of similarities and differences in the meanings of colors**

#### ***Similarities:***

Some colors share similar symbolic meanings in both English and Vietnamese due to universal human psychology and cross-cultural archetypes. For example:

- Red often symbolizes celebration, honor, or passion in both languages (red carpet treatment in English, trải thảm đỏ in Vietnamese).
- Black generally conveys negative connotations such as misfortune or secrecy (blacklist, đen như mực).

#### ***Differences:***

Cultural and historical contexts significantly influence the symbolic meanings of colors. These differences are evident in how some colors are interpreted and applied in idioms and proverbs:

- Blue in English typically expresses sadness (feeling blue), while xanh in Vietnamese is linked to vitality, youth (thanh xuân).
- Yellow in English is often associated with positivity and success (golden opportunity), whereas in Vietnamese, vàng often symbolizes material wealth or status (giàu nứt đố đổ vách).

#### ***Dual connotations:***

Each color may carry both positive and negative meanings, depending on context:

- White can imply purity (trắng như ngọc) but also loss (trắng tay).
- Red can mean excitement or luck, but in English, it may also imply danger (red alert) or bureaucracy (red tape).

### 2.2.2. Comparative Examples of Color Meanings in English and Vietnamese

#### *A. Red*

Language	Idiom/Proverb	Meaning
English	Red flag	A warning sign of danger or a bad situation
English	Red-handed	Caught in the act of doing something
Vietnamese	“Đỏ tình, đỏ bạc”	Lucky in both love and money
Vietnamese	“Trải thảm đỏ”	Warm, honorable welcome

- Similarity:

In both languages, red is associated with prominence and importance (red carpet treatment = trải thảm đỏ).

- Difference:

In English, red flag implies danger or caution.

In Vietnamese, red mainly symbolizes luck and prosperity.

#### *B. White*

Language	Idiom/Proverb	Meaning
English	White lie	A harmless lie to avoid hurting someone
English	Wave a white flag	To surrender, admit defeat
Vietnamese	“Áo trắng khăn tang”	White associated with mourning and death
Vietnamese	“Nói trắng ra”	To speak frankly, to be straightforward

- Similarity:



Both languages use white to express clarity and honesty (nói trắng ra = plain as day).

- Difference:

In English, white suggests peace and harmlessness (white lie, white flag).

In Vietnamese, white is often linked to mourning and loss (áo trắng khăn tang).

### ***C. Black***

Language	Idiom/Proverb	Meaning
English	Black market	Illegal, underground market
English	Black sheep	Someone seen as different or an outcast
Vietnamese	“Đen như mực”	Very unlucky, bad fortune
Vietnamese	“Đen bạc, đỏ tình”	Unlucky in money, lucky in love

- Similarity:

Both languages associate black with negative meanings (black market = chợ đen).

- Difference:

English uses black sheep to describe someone who stands out or doesn't fit in.

Vietnamese mainly relates black to misfortune and bad luck (đen như mực).

### ***D. Blue/Green***

Language	Idiom/Proverb	Meaning
English	Feeling blue	Feeling sad or depressed
English	Green with envy	Being jealous or envious
Vietnamese	“Xanh như tàu lá”	Pale, weak appearance
Vietnamese	“Thanh xuân”	Youth, vitality

- Similarity:

Both languages use green to reflect weakness or jealousy (green with envy = xanh mắt).

- Difference:

In English, blue refers to sadness (feeling blue), which doesn't exist in Vietnamese usage.

In Vietnamese, xanh is connected to youth and liveliness (thanh xuân), while English does not associate "blue" or "green" with this idea.

### *E. Yellow*

Language	Idiom/Proverb	Meaning
English	Yellow-bellied	Cowardly, lacking courage
English	Golden opportunity	A valuable or rare chance
Vietnamese	“Vàng thau lẫn lộn”	True and false mixed together (difficult to distinguish)
Vietnamese	“Giàu nứt đố đổ vách”	Extremely wealthy, owning much gold and assets

- Similarity:

Both associate yellow/gold with value and wealth (golden opportunity = giàu nứt đố đổ vách).

- Difference:

In English, yellow-bellied implies cowardice, which is not a meaning in Vietnamese.

Vietnamese also uses yellow to express the idea of real vs. fake (vàng thau lẫn lộn), which is not seen in English.

### 2.2.3. Summary and Findings

- Certain colors demonstrate similar meanings in both English and Vietnamese.

For example:

- Red is commonly associated with significance or importance (e.g., red carpet treatment, trải thảm đỏ).
  - Black often conveys negativity or misfortune in both languages (e.g., black market, đen như mực).
  - Yellow frequently symbolizes wealth or value, such as in golden opportunity (English) and giàu nứt đổ đổ vách (Vietnamese).
- However, there are also notable differences in color symbolism due to cultural influences:
    - White is linked to purity and peace in English (e.g., white lie, white flag), whereas in Vietnamese, it often represents mourning and loss (e.g., áo trắng khăn tang).
    - Blue/Green (xanh) carries the meaning of sadness in English (feeling blue), while in Vietnamese, xanh is associated with youth, vitality, and health (e.g., thanh xuân).
    - Yellow in English can have a negative connotation, indicating cowardice (yellow-bellied), but in Vietnamese, it is more commonly related to wealth, prosperity, or value judgment (e.g., vàng thau lẫn lộn).

These findings highlight both universal patterns in color semantics and cultural divergences, which reflect the distinct worldviews and values embedded in English and Vietnamese idiomatic expressions.

## 2.3. Cultural Reflections: Colors and Their Cultural Meanings

This section examines how belief systems, religions, history, and cultural values influence the use of colors in English and Vietnamese idioms and proverbs. It also analyzes the differences in color perception between the two cultures.

### 2.3.1. Influence of Beliefs, Religion, and History on Color Usage

#### *A. Red: A Contrast Between Eastern and Western Perspectives*

- In Eastern cultures (Vietnam):

- Red symbolizes luck, happiness, and success.
- Commonly used in festivals, weddings, and celebrations as a sign of good fortune and prosperity.

Example: “Trải thảm đỏ” (laying out the red carpet) — a gesture of honor, similar to “red carpet treatment” in English.

- In Western cultures (English):

- Red is often associated with danger, warning, or anger.

Examples:

“Seeing red” – being furious.

“Red flag” – a warning sign or signal of danger.

- Cultural Reasoning:

- In the East, red is connected with spiritual beliefs and feng shui, heavily influenced by Chinese traditions.

- In the West, red is used as a warning signal, linked to blood, war, and intense emotions rooted in historical and religious contexts.

## ***B. White: Opposing Symbols of Purity and Mourning***

- In Western cultures:

- White represents purity, innocence, and new beginnings.
- Commonly seen in weddings, where white dresses symbolize the bride’s purity.

Example: “Pure as white” – as pure as snow.

- In Vietnamese culture:

- White is strongly associated with death, mourning, and loss.
- Worn by mourners at funerals.

Example: “Áo trắng khăn tang” – white mourning attire, symbolizing death.

- Cultural Reasoning:

- In the West, white is linked to Christian beliefs, where it symbolizes angels, sanctity, and salvation.
- In Vietnam and many Asian cultures, white signifies spiritual detachment and the end of life, influenced by Buddhism and Confucianism.

### ***C. Black: A Symbol of Negativity***

- In both English and Vietnamese cultures:
- Black often conveys bad luck, negativity, illegality, or mystery.

#### Examples:

“Black market” – illegal trading (English).

“Đen như mực” – extremely unlucky (Vietnamese).

- However, in Western culture:
- Black can also symbolize elegance, formality, and power.

Example: “Black tie event” – a formal, upscale event.

- Cultural Reasoning:

- In the West, black is used in fashion and the arts to express sophistication and mystery.
- In Vietnam, black is traditionally linked to bad luck, danger, and is rarely used in positive contexts or celebrations.

### **2.3.2. Comparison of Color Perceptions in Two Cultures**

This section provides a comparison table illustrating how specific colors are perceived differently in Western (English) and Eastern (Vietnamese) cultures based on cultural values and symbolic meanings.

Color	Western Culture (English)	Eastern Culture (Vietnamese)
Red	Danger, warning (red flag); anger (seeing red).	Luck, happiness, success (đỏ tình, đỏ bạc).
White	Purity, innocence (white wedding dress).	Mourning, separation (áo trắng khăn tang).
Black	Mystery, elegance (black tie event); evil (blackmail – extortion).	Misfortune, bad luck (đen như mực).
Blue/Green	Sadness (feeling blue); envy (green with envy).	Youth, vitality (thanh xuân).
Yellow	Nobility, great opportunities (golden opportunity).	Wealth, blurred line between truth and falsity (vàng thau lẫn lộn).

### 2.3.3. Conclusion

Based on the above analysis, several key conclusions can be drawn:

- Culture plays a crucial role in shaping the use and meaning of colors in language. Idioms and proverbs are not only linguistic expressions but also cultural reflections that convey the values, beliefs, and historical experiences of a community.
- Religious beliefs, historical backgrounds, and cultural customs significantly influence the perception and use of colors. For instance, in Eastern cultures such as Vietnam, white is associated with mourning due to the influence of Buddhism and Confucianism. In contrast, in Western cultures, white symbolizes purity and innocence, rooted in Christian ideology.
- Certain colors such as black and yellow carry similar connotations in both cultures:
  - + Black is generally linked to negativity or misfortune.
  - + Yellow/gold often symbolizes wealth, value, or importance.

- However, some colors reflect completely opposite meanings between the two cultures:

+ Red: In Vietnamese culture, red symbolizes luck and happiness, while in English, it can represent anger or danger.

+ White: In the West, it connotes purity and sanctity, while in Vietnam, it is associated with death and separation.

=> Conclusion: Understanding the differences in color meanings between English and Vietnamese idioms and proverbs not only improves language learners' communicative competence but also promotes cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.

## **2.4. Pragmatic aspects**

Idioms and proverbs containing colors are not merely fixed expressions, but they serve specific communicative functions depending on the context, tone, and intention of the speaker. In this section, we analyze how these expressions function in daily communication, literature, and media, shedding light on pragmatic aspects such as context, implied meanings, and communicative effects.

### **2.4.1. Contexts of Using Color-related Idioms and Proverbs in Communication**

In reality, color-related idioms and proverbs are widely used in various social interactions, serving to express emotions, attitudes, evaluations, or social norms. Here are some common pragmatic contexts:

#### ***(1) In Daily Conversations***

Color idioms are frequently used in casual speech to convey emotional states, social judgment, or hidden warnings.

- To warn about risks or dangers:

- English: "That deal is a red flag."

→ Used to signal danger, caution, or something suspicious, especially in business or relationships.

- Vietnamese: “Điềm báo đỏ”

→ Similar usage to “red flag” – denotes an omen or warning of something bad to come.

• To express emotions or moods:

- English: “I’m feeling blue today.”

→ Conveys sadness, depression, or emotional fatigue.

- Vietnamese: “Mặt xanh như tàu lá chuối.”

→ Describes someone’s face turning pale from fear, anxiety, or sickness.

• To comment on honesty or deception:

- English: “That’s a white lie.”

→ Refers to a harmless lie told to avoid hurting someone’s feelings.

- Vietnamese: “Đen bạc, đỏ tình.”

→ Indicates a contrast in fortune, where one is unlucky in money but lucky in love.

## ***(2) In Business and Political Communication***

In more formal or professional contexts, color idioms carry implications related to strategy, opportunity, or manipulation.

• In business negotiation:

- English: “This is a golden opportunity.”

→ A rare and valuable chance for success.

- Vietnamese: “Thời cơ vàng.”

→ Equally denotes an exceptional opportunity, often used in economic or strategic discussions.



- In politics and media:
  - English: “Black propaganda.”
    - Refers to false or misleading information spread to manipulate public opinion.
  - Vietnamese: “Chiến dịch bôi đen.”
    - Literally “blackening campaign,” it similarly refers to spreading negative or slanderous information.

### **2.4.2. Applications in Daily Life, Literature, and Media**

Idioms and proverbs involving colors are not only present in everyday conversations but are also widely applied in literature, media, and advertising. These expressions play a significant role in constructing imagery, symbolism, and conveying emotions to the audience in a profound and vivid manner.

#### ***(1) In Literature***

In both English and Vietnamese literature, colors serve not only as descriptive elements but also as symbolic tools to evoke emotions and enhance thematic depth.

- In English literature:
  - Shakespeare often employed color symbolism to express complex emotions: “Green-eyed monster” in Othello represents jealousy—a powerful and destructive emotion.

- In modern literature:

In *The Great Gatsby*, the green light symbolizes unreachable hope, desire, and materialism—central themes in the story.

- In Vietnamese literature:

Colors appear frequently in folk poems and proverbs to reflect human fate and emotions:

“Thân em như tấm lụa đào, phất phơ giữa chợ biết vào tay ai.” – The color peach implies feminine beauty and the uncertainty of a woman’s destiny.

“Một màu xanh nhuộm bao la.” – The color blue/green symbolizes vastness and serenity, representing both nature and peace of mind.

- Remarks:

In Western literature, colors are often used metaphorically to build abstract symbols and thematic layers.

In Vietnamese literature, colors are more intimately connected to human feelings and fate, reflecting a more personal and emotional worldview.

## ***(2) In Media and Advertising***

Colors are also strategically utilized in media, advertising, and branding to influence emotions, psychology, and consumer behavior.

- In marketing:

- Global brands exploit the psychological effects of color in their logos and designs:

- Coca-Cola uses red to convey energy, excitement, and passion.

- Facebook uses blue to represent trust, stability, and approachability.

- In mass media:

- Newspapers and broadcast media often use color-based idioms to craft eye-catching headlines:

- “The red-hot stock market is cooling down.” – describing a once-booming market that is now slowing.

- “The dark side of the economy.” – referring to hidden or negative aspects of the economy.

- Remarks:

- In Western media, color idioms are used for strong visual and emotional impact.

- In Vietnamese media, color symbolism is often intertwined with cultural beliefs and social values.

### 2.4.3. Conclusion

A pragmatic approach reveals that idioms and proverbs related to colors are not merely fixed expressions with symbolic meanings, but are also used flexibly depending on the context of communication. Specifically:

- Contextual flexibility:

Color-related idioms and proverbs can appear in a variety of situations, including everyday conversation, business negotiations, political speeches, and media headlines. Their meanings often shift based on the context in which they are used and may carry different nuances.

- Colors and emotions:

Colors not only hold symbolic value but also serve as tools for expressing human emotions and attitudes. For instance, “feeling blue” conveys sadness, while “red flag” signals danger. Similarly, in Vietnamese, “xanh như tàu lá” (as pale as a banana leaf) expresses fear or anxiety, and “vàng thau lẫn lộn” (real gold mixed with fake) reflects skepticism or caution.

- Wide applications:

The frequent use of color-related idioms and proverbs in everyday life, literature, media, and advertising illustrates their high practical value. Familiar color imagery helps speakers and writers deliver concise, expressive, and impactful messages.

- Summary:

Color idioms and proverbs play a vital role in both English and Vietnamese, serving as powerful linguistic tools for conveying cultural, social, and emotional meanings. Studying the pragmatic aspects of these expressions not only deepens our understanding of how native speakers use language but also enhances learners’ ability to apply them effectively in real-life communication.

## Chapter 3: Summary of Findings

This section summarizes the main results of the study, highlighting important findings about the similarities and differences in the use of color idioms and proverbs in English and Vietnamese, along with cultural and pragmatic aspects previously analyzed.

### **3.1. Common Colors in Idioms and Proverbs**

The study identified five common colors that frequently appear in idioms and proverbs in both languages: red, black, white, blue/green, and yellow.

- Red

- English: Often associated with danger, love, and passion (e.g., red flag, paint the town red).

- Vietnamese: Related to luck, fortune, and romance (e.g., đỏ tình, đỏ bạc, cò đỏ sao vàng).

- Black

- English: Represents negativity and misfortune (e.g., blacklist, black sheep).

- Vietnamese: Also conveys bad luck or negative connotations, but sometimes in a more neutral tone (e.g., đen như mực, chợ đen).

- White

- English: Symbolizes purity and honesty, but can also imply harmless deceit (e.g., white lie, raise a white flag).

- Vietnamese: Often associated with mourning and loss (e.g., áo trắng khăn tang).

- Blue/Green

- English: Associated with calmness, peace, or envy (e.g., green with envy, the grass is always greener).

- Vietnamese: Typically symbolizes nature, health, and youth (e.g., mặt xanh như tàu lá, xanh như ngọc bích).

- Yellow

- English: Related to wealth, success, and value (e.g., golden opportunity, gold standard).
- Vietnamese: Similar connotations, but can also imply artificiality or impermanence (e.g., mèo mả gà đồng, vàng thau lẫn lộn).

- General Remarks:

- Both languages share some symbolic meanings of color in idioms and proverbs.
- However, connotative nuances vary depending on cultural context (e.g., white symbolizes purity in English but mourning in Vietnamese).

### **3.2. Cultural Similarities and Differences**

#### ***Similarities:***

- Both English and Vietnamese use color to express emotions, mental states, warnings, or describe human traits.
- Some colors like red, black, and yellow share relatively similar meanings in both languages.

#### ***Differences:***

- Religious and historical influences:
  - In Western culture, white symbolizes purity and peace.
  - In Vietnamese culture, white is associated with mourning and loss.
- Differences in social perspectives:
  - Green in English can imply negativity (e.g., green with envy).
  - In Vietnamese, green generally symbolizes peace and vitality (xanh như ngọc bích).

### **3.3. Pragmatic Aspects of Color Idioms and Proverbs**

- Color idioms and proverbs carry both literal and figurative meanings depending on context.
- English tends to use color metaphorically, while Vietnamese often ties color meanings to customs, lifestyle, and national history.
- Applications in daily communication, literature, and media:
  - In conversation: Used to comment, warn, or express emotions.
  - In literature: Enhance expressiveness and create symbolic imagery.
  - In media: Attract attention and convey strong effects.

## **PART III: CONCLUSION**

- The study clarified how colors are used in idioms and proverbs in both English and Vietnamese.
- Similarities and differences reflect the cultural, historical, and cognitive characteristics of each nation.
- Pragmatic analysis helps explain the flexible and effective use of color idioms and proverbs in real-life communication.

### **3.1. Implications**

#### **3.1.1. Suggestions for Language Teaching**

- Enhancing awareness of color word connotations
  - Color idioms and proverbs often carry metaphorical meanings and distinct cultural overtones.
  - Language learners should be guided not only on literal meanings but also figurative use in context.
- Integrating color idioms into vocabulary and pragmatics lessons
  - Design exercises to identify idiom meanings in context.
  - Organize discussions comparing color idioms in English and Vietnamese to deepen learners' cultural understanding.
- Application in communication and writing skills
  - In teaching speaking and writing, encourage learners to use color idioms for more natural and flexible expression.
  - For example: instead of saying "He is very lucky," teach "He was born with a silver spoon in his mouth."

### 3.1.2. Application in Translation

- Recognize meaning differences and choose appropriate translations
  - Due to cultural influences, some color idioms can't be translated literally and require contextual adaptation.
  - For example:  
“Green with envy” shouldn't be translated literally as “xanh với sự ghen tị”, but as “ghen ăn tức ở”.  
“Raise a white flag” should be interpreted as “đầu hàng”, not just “giương cờ trắng”.
- Use comparative and explanatory translation strategies
  - Equivalent translation: Use an idiom with the same meaning if available (e.g., out of the blue → từ trên trời rơi xuống).
  - Explanatory translation: When no equivalent exists, explain the meaning while preserving intent (e.g., once in a blue moon → rất hiếm khi xảy ra).

### 3.1.3. Suggestions for Intercultural Communication

- Help learners understand native cultural thinking

Color idioms reflect views on life, beliefs, history, and society.

For example:

In the West, white symbolizes purity (e.g., white wedding), while in Vietnam, it is linked to funerals.

- Avoid misunderstandings in cross-cultural interactions

Learners need to recognize cultural differences in color meanings to prevent miscommunication.



For instance:

Saying “wearing red” in English may evoke love or passion, whereas Vietnamese might think of luck or traditional festivals.

- Application in global business and media contexts

In branding, advertising, or product design, color symbolism can vary by culture.

Example: Yellow can represent wealth and nobility in the West, but might have negative implications in some Asian cultures.

- In summary:
  - In language teaching: Color idioms enhance vocabulary and natural expression.
  - In translation: Understanding nuances is crucial to avoid errors.
  - In cross-cultural communication: Grasping differences in color symbolism improves communication in fields like business, media, and education.

## **3.2. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research**

### **3.2.1. Limitations of the Study**

Despite aiming for a comprehensive analysis, the study faced several limitations:

- Data limitations
  - Based mainly on idiom dictionaries, academic sources, and small-scale surveys, which may not reflect all real-life variations.
  - Some idioms may be outdated or have evolving meanings not deeply examined in this study.
- Scope limitations
  - Focused only on five common colors (red, black, white, green/blue, yellow), while other colors (e.g., purple, orange, gray) also have important symbolic meanings.

- Emphasized cultural and pragmatic aspects but didn't explore grammatical, syntactic, or phonetic features of idioms.

- Methodological limitations

- Relied on contrastive analysis of collected data without experimental studies on real usage by native speakers.

- Native speaker surveys were limited in scale and not representative of the entire linguistic community.

### **3.2.2. Suggestions for Further Research**

- Expand the range of colors studied

Future studies could examine more colors, especially those with unique symbolic meanings in specific cultures (e.g., purple in Western royalty, green in Islamic culture).

- Conduct empirical research on idiom usage in real communication

Use large-scale surveys and interviews with native speakers of English and Vietnamese to observe how color idioms are used in context.

Apply discourse analysis to examine idioms in literature, journalism, and modern media.

- Explore applications in other fields

Analyze how color idioms are used in advertising, branding, and multimedia.

Compare usage in political language, literature, and cinema to discover deeper meanings.

- Adopt a cognitive linguistics approach

Investigate how people perceive and associate colors with emotions, thoughts, and behaviors.

Include languages beyond English and Vietnamese to explore universal and culture-specific ways of thinking about color.

- In summary:

Though this study offered in-depth insights into color idioms and proverbs in English and Vietnamese, further research can broaden the scope of colors, methods, and fields of application to better understand the link between color, language, and culture.

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## Appendix

### List of Color-related Idioms and Proverbs

#### Red (Đỏ)

English Idioms/Proverbs	Vietnamese Equivalents	Meaning
Red flag	Cờ đỏ	Dấu hiệu cảnh báo nguy hiểm
Paint the town red	Ăn chơi thả ga	Vui chơi hết mình
Be in the red	Thua lỗ, âm tiền	Tình trạng tài chính tồi
Red-letter day	Ngày đỏ	Ngày quan trọng, đáng nhớ
Red carpet treatment	Đón tiếp long trọng	Sự tiếp đãi trọng thể
Red-hot (news/stock)	Nóng hổi	Tin mới, rất nóng
Red as a beetroot	Đỏ như gấc	Xấu hổ đến đỏ mặt
Lucky in love, unlucky in gambling	Đỏ tình, đỏ bạc	Sự may mắn/tình cảm/lận đận
Red flag with yellow star	Cờ đỏ sao vàng	Biểu tượng dân tộc Việt Nam

#### Black (Đen)

English Idioms/Proverbs	Vietnamese Equivalents	Meaning
Black sheep	Con ghẻ, người bị xa lánh	Kẻ bị xem là tai tiếng trong gia đình
Blacklist	Danh sách đen	Danh sách cấm
Black market	Chợ đen	Thị trường bất hợp pháp
In the black	Có lời	Có lợi nhuận tài chính
As black as ink	Đen như mực	Rất đen, tối tăm
Bad luck	Vận đen	Gặp xui xẻo

#### White (Trắng)

English Idioms/Proverbs	Vietnamese Equivalents	Meaning
White lie	Lời nói dối vô hại	Nói dối để tránh tổn thương
Raise a white flag	Đầu hàng	Bỏ cuộc, chấp nhận thua
White as a sheet	Mặt trắng bệch	Sợ hãi hoặc ốm yếu
White wedding	Đám cưới thuần khiết	Biểu tượng sự tinh khôi
Funeral clothes	Áo trắng khăn tang	Tang lễ, mất mát
Empty-handed	Tay trắng	Không có gì trong tay

### Green (Xanh lá/Xanh)

English Idioms/Proverbs	Vietnamese Equivalents	Meaning
Green with envy	Ghen ăn tức ở	Rất ghen tị
The grass is always greener (on the other side)	Đứng núi này trông núi nọ	So sánh, không hài lòng
Green light	Đèn xanh	Sự cho phép bắt đầu
Greenhorn	Tay mơ, người mới	Thiếu kinh nghiệm
Green thumb	Tay trồng cây giỏi	Có khả năng trồng cây
Pale with fear	Mặt xanh như tàu lá	Hoảng sợ, lo lắng
As green as jade	Xanh như ngọc bích	Vẻ đẹp quý phái, thuần khiết
Vast green landscape	Một màu xanh nhuộm bao la	Biểu tượng của thiên nhiên rộng lớn

### Yellow (Vàng)

English Idioms/Proverbs	Vietnamese Equivalents	Meaning
Golden opportunity	Cơ hội vàng	Cơ hội hiếm có
Gold standard	Chuẩn mực vàng	Tiêu chuẩn cao nhất
Worth its weight in gold	Quý như vàng	Rất giá trị
Mixed gold and trash	Vàng thau lẫn lộn	Thật giả lẫn lộn
Burning fake money for the dead	Vàng mã không thật	Chỉ sự giả dối, không bền

### Blue (Xanh dương)

English Idioms/Proverbs	Vietnamese Equivalents	Meaning
Out of the blue	Từ trên trời rơi xuống	Đột ngột, bất ngờ
Once in a blue moon	Hiếm như sao buổi sáng	Cực kỳ hiếm khi xảy ra
Feel blue	Buồn bã	Cảm giác buồn
Blue-collar	Lao động chân tay	Công nhân, tầng lớp lao động