

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



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**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND
TRAINING HAI PHONG PRIVATE
UNIVERSITY**

**A STUDY ON COLOURS USED IN
IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS IN ENGLISH
AND VIETNAMESE EQUIVALENT**

GRADUATION PAPER

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HAI PHONG – 2019

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TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC DÂN LẬP HẢI PHÒNG**

NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP

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Tên đề tài: A study on colors used in idiomatic expressions in English and Vietnamese equivalent.

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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CÁN BỘ HƯỚNG DẪN ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP

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Cơ quan công tác: Đại học Dân lập Hải Phòng

Nội dung hướng dẫn: A study on colors used in idiomatic expressions in English and Vietnamese equivalent.

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GS.TS.NGƯT Trần Hữu Nghị

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Độc lập - Tự do - Hạnh phúc

PHIẾU NHẬN XÉT CỦA GIẢNG VIÊN HƯỚNG DẪN TỐT NGHIỆP

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

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(Ký và ghi rõ họ tên)

CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM
Độc lập - Tự do - Hạnh phúc

PHIẾU NHẬN XÉT CỦA GIÁO VIÊN CHẤM PHẢN BIỆN

Họ và tên giảng

viên:

Đơn vị công tác:

Họ và tên sinh viên: Chuyên ngành:

Đề tài tốt nghiệp:

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1. Phần nhận xét của giáo viên chấm phản biện

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Được bảo vệ

Không được bảo vệ

Điểm phản biện

Hải Phòng, ngày ... tháng ... năm

Giảng viên chấm phản biện

(Ký và ghi rõ họ tên)

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PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale

Nowadays, together with growth of global connection, English language has become more and more important. Especially in Vietnam, learning English seems to be one of main tasks of students. In this process, they encounter a large number of difficulties. One of them is understanding idioms.

Idioms make a language more interesting and vibrant. Mastering idioms means you are using and understanding the language more like a native speaker would. As for English learners, effectively communicating with others especially native speakers is the ultimate goal. And we cannot reach that goal if we pay little or even no attention to the idioms. So grasping the use of idioms is an essential part of English study.

In each language, there are numerous expressions in which color plays an important role. In most cases there is no equivalent in other languages and when translating them literally the meaning is lost. Thus, Color idiomatic expressions are considered to be one of the most difficult problems that a translator may encounter. These expressions are often used beyond their original meaning. They are difficult because of their unpredictable meaning and grammar. Furthermore, color idiomatic expressions may be culture bound and this may cause greater problems for the translator. Thus, a translator must choose the most appropriate strategy when translating color idiomatic expressions. Color idiomatic expressions must be recognized, understood and analyzed before appropriate translation methods can be considered. The ability to identify color idiomatic expressions is of enormous importance, since their meaning may not be understood literally. In other words, the translator must first analyze what the writer has meant before s/he can even think of translating the expression.

I am interested in the way English and Vietnamese people use idioms to satisfy their own need in daily communication. Thus, the topic “A study on colours used in idiomatic expressions and Vietnamese equivalent” is chosen for my thesis.

2. Aims of the study

Idioms are used a lot in English language by native speakers, sometimes as a simpler way to express a complicated idea, sometimes to be more creative in using language. There is a great deal idioms that are color-based idioms. The differences

between Vietnamese and English culture resulted in many differences in their languages and idiom is not an exception. Although studying idioms is a very important for language learner, many of the learners cannot be able to know the meaning of an idiom correctly since they are not familiar with the differences and similarities in English and Vietnamese idioms. Therefore, my study is aimed at:

- Help readers to have better understanding about the basic background of idioms, its definition, types and classifications.
- Clarify the meaning of some English and Vietnamese idioms related to color.
- Research about the similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese idioms.

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 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 researching process, the author sees that English idioms related to colors are an interesting subject. Idioms and proverbs are a treasure of each country. Because of its immensity, what know 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 colors used in idiomatic expressions and Vietnamese equivalent.

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 the literature review

- Chapter two shows some English and Vietnamese idioms related to colours
- Chapter three indicates similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese color idioms and some suggested solutions
- ◆ Part III is the conclusion which summarizes what was given in previous parts.

PART TWO: DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER I: LITERATURE REVIEW

I. An overview of idiom

I.1. Definition of idiom

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 formulaic language 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.

The term idiom is generally used in a variety of different senses. Idioms can be considered an integral part of language, "they give information about conceptions of the world considered by linguistic communities" (Carine, 2005, p. 495). 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. Similarly, knowing the verb "to go" and the noun "song" will not help you to be able to understand the meaning of the idiom "to go for a song", which is when something is sold very cheaply. Idioms really have to be learnt by heart as a complete phrase.

I.2. Types of Idioms

Fernando (1996, pp. 60-63) distinguishes three different groups of idioms, as follows:

- ◆ Pure idioms – they are opaque to users of language with respect to all or some of the words that make them up. Formally such idioms are multiword expressions functioning as a single semantic unit whose meaning of individual words can not be summed together to produce the meaning of the whole. For instance, *smell the rat* meaning “becoming suspicious” but not “sense rodent with olfactory organs” is a totally pure idiom, where a feature of complete non-literality is evident, resulting in “a new meaning-different from what the same unit would have had if each word were void-is now associated with the idiom” (Fernando, 1996, pp. 60-63).

- ◆ Semi-idioms – the typical result of such idioms is partial non-literality, since one component generally keeps its direct meaning. For instance, in semi-idioms such as *rain cats and dogs* meaning “rain heavily” or *blue film* meaning “obscene film”, one component here “rain” and “film” sustains their direct meanings. Fernando (1996, p. 63) adds “what is evident in such idioms is that a single meaning different from the separate meanings of each word is imposed on the whole unit”

- ◆ Literal idioms – can be interpreted on the basis of their parts. Components of such idioms are always used in their direct meaning; although, such combination sometimes needs figurative sense. Regarding this type, Fernando deems that very often literal expressions are quite often considered idioms only on the grounds of compositeness and fixity (1996, p. 63)

I.3. Classifications of idioms

I.3.1 Semantic meaning

When we mention semantic features of idioms, we should focus on the idioms' figurative meaning. This meaning is the most important characteristic of idioms to know whether an expression is an idiom or not. For many people, in order to understand an idiom, they translate literally every component of the idiom into the target language and try to guess the meaning. This is not completely a wrong method to understand the meaning of idiom but this can only work with simple idioms such as "Rub someone the wrong way" which means annoy or bother somebody or "Tan đàn xẻ nhé" means the family or a group got separated. However, with some more complicated ones which the meaning of the idiom has nothing to do with its components; we cannot use this method to figure out the meaning of the idiom. This is the reason why we have to pay attention to the figurative meaning of idiom, an important part when we study about idiom, both in English and Vietnamese.

For example:

- spread oneself too thin → if you try to translate this literally, it may come out to nowhere as we cannot spread our body. The figurative meaning of this is to do so many things at one time that you can do none of them well.

In Vietnamese, we have:

- Quýt làm cam chịu → if we applied the technique of translating, we can hardly understand the meaning of this idiom as its meaning has nothing to do with "Quýt" or "Cam". The meaning of this idiom is someone did something bad but another person took the blame for him.

Another semantic aspect of idiom is that idiom can be used for different purposes. It can perform a positive meaning like "back on one's feet" (which means somebody has recovered after being sick); other times it can be present negative meaning, such as "ugly day" (an unlucky day). This is totally based on the expressing purpose of the authors.

In short, idioms should be understood figuratively and they can perform both negative and positive meanings to show the speaker's opinion about a specific matter.

I.3.2. Syntactic meaning

We can easily notice that idioms are mostly fixed phrases. We cannot simply change the order of the words, which will make the meaning of the idiom nonsense. The idiom “in black and white” which means “officially” is an example for this case. We cannot change it into “In white and black” because if we do, the idiom becomes meaningless. Furthermore, some idioms are complete sentences and they cannot be changed into passive voice form. We can take the idiom “A little bird told me” into consideration. The meaning of this idiom is “information gained from someone who you are not going to name”. The sentence “I know about it because a little bird told me” is a correct one, if this sentence is changed into “I know about it because I was told by a little bird”, the new sentence will sound really odd.

However, some other idioms are more flexible; we can make some changes as long as they don't lose their idiomatic meaning. This means that idioms are only fixed in some of their parts but not all of the idioms. A component words can be alternated with another word will form a different idiom of the same or different meaning. Mass media is the field where this technique is used plenty of times. They do not keep the full form of the idiom and add some more components to make it more vivid. This is particularly effective when we write articles. For instance, we can change the tense of the verb “give” in the idiom to “give someone the cold shoulder” which means “to treat someone in a cold or unfriendly” way”, or we can change the verb “have” in “to have the blues” into the verb “get” to make a new idiom “to get the blues” with the meaning remaining the same.

Moreover, idioms can vary in many different forms and structures. It can be a noun phrase such as “pink slip, a red flag, red-letter day, etc”, a verb phrase such as “sail under false colors, talk until one is blue in the face, get gray hair, etc” and some idioms are adjective phrase such as “hot under the collar, out-of-the-box, etc”. What we need to notice here is that an idiom can have a regular structure, an irregular or even a grammatically incorrect structure. Formally, in English, the structure of “Verb + preposition + adjective” appeared in the idiom “be at odd” is considered as a grammatical mistake since a preposition is not followed by an adjective. However, in this case, the idiom is accepted. It can be considered as an exception in language.

To sum up, when mentioning the syntactic feature of idioms, we need to know three

aspects. Firstly, most idioms are fixed phrases; we cannot change the order of the component or turn it into passive form, it will lose its meaning. Secondly, in some fields, such as mass media, an idiom does not need to be kept as a full form; we can make some changes as if it remains its idiomatic meaning. Lastly, idioms can be performed in many structures and some of them may be grammatically incorrect.

I.4. Interpreting Idioms

While doing a research on idioms, we have to distinguish between idiom and proverb as many people are confused about these two terms. Although they are similar as they are both expressed experiences and ethics to teach young generations to behave nicely in the society, they still have many differences. Idiom is just a phrase with rhythm, not a full sentence. It cannot perform the meaning of a concept thoroughly. Meanwhile, a proverb is a full sentence and it can express fully an idea, a philosophy or an experience.

The meaning of idioms should never be understood literally. That is to say the translator must first analyze what the writer has intended to say before s/he can even think of translating the expression. Larson (1984, p. 143) points out that the first crucial step in the translation of idioms is to be absolutely certain of the meaning of the source language idiom. Therefore the most important issue in translating idioms is the ability to distinguish the difference between the literal meaning and the real meaning of the expression. This is why recognizing and being able to use idioms appropriately requires excellent command over the source language.

From a practical point of view, Baker (1992, p. 65) points out that "the main problems that idiomatic and fixed expressions pose in translation relate to two main areas: "the ability to recognize and interpret the idiom correctly; and the difficulties involved in rendering the various aspects of meaning that an idiom or affixed expression conveys into the target language".

Furthermore, Baker (1992, pp. 68-71) deals with the difficulties in translating idioms and establishes the following categories:

- An idiom or fixed expression may have no equivalent in the target language.
- An idiom or fixed expression may have a similar counterpart in the target language, but its context of use may be different.

- An idiom may be used in the source text in both its literal and idiomatic senses at the same time.

- The very convention of using idioms in written discourse, the context in which they can be used, and their frequency of use may be different in the source language and in the target language.

Also, we cannot do any of the following with an idiom:

- Change the order of the word.
- Delete a word from it.
- Add a word to it.
- Replace its word with another.
- Change its grammatical structure.

II. Culture and Translation

II.1. What is culture?

The question is simple, yet it's not easy to offer a detailed and pleasing answer. "Culture" derives from the Latin word "colere", which means to build on, to foster, promote and cultivate. There are lots of ways to define culture given by different scholars with dissimilar viewpoints. As Edward Tylor, a famous British anthropologist, noted in his book "Primitive Culture" (1871), culture "is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, custom and any other capacities and habits acquired by man as a member of society"(p. 1). Geertz (1973) claimed that culture "denotes a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life." (p. 89).

To make it easier to understand, culture can be seen as "a set of widely accepted behaviour patterns, fundamental assumptions and values as well as common experience". It is said to profoundly shape or strongly influence social structures, communication styles and even stipulate behaviour or etiquette of all people in a particular society. Actually, it is culture that has an enormous influence on the way we

act and respond, the way we produce, send and normally interpret different kinds of information. According to many cultural experts, culture has these four basic and noteworthy attributes:

Firstly, culture is not a kind of biological and natural inheritance but is learnt or inherited socially and gradually. Hudson (1980, p.74) concurred with this point, saying that culture should be taken as “socially acquired knowledge”.

Secondly, culture does not ever belong to any individuals in particular. Absolutely, it's shared by all members of a community.

In addition, as buttressed by Geertz (1973, p. 89), culture is “a symbolic meaning system”. In that special system, language is one of the most crucial parts which can be likened as a key factor, playing the role of an essential medium to transmit much of culture.

Last but not least, culture is a “unified system”, which means that the integral parts of it are closely related and linked to one another.

To sum up, culture is the pattern, the norms of behavior, thinking and interpreting that all members in a social group frame, then learn and share. It is “what binds men together... the ideas and the standards they have in common” (Benedict, 1934, p. 16). More specifically, a group of people's culture may consist of many things, such as their beliefs, language, rules of demeanor or actions, art, dressing ways, ways of producing goods, methods of cooking food, religion and even economic systems. Beyond doubt, culture is a remarkably special attribute of human society. It's one significant factor that helps to sharply distinguish one human group from the others as well as clearly differentiate human beings from other animals.

II.2. What is language?

According to Oxford dictionary, language is defined as the method of human communication, either spoken or written, consisting of the use of words in a structured and conventional way. We use language as a mean to communicate with each other and it is also the factor that helps distinguish human beings from other kinds of animals or plants. The ability to create and use language is the most distinctive feature of humans.

Language is widely known as a “communication tool”, helping people to express opinions, thoughts as well as communicate information. Language carries out these three crucial functions:

- 1) Language is the primary vehicle of communication;
- 2) Language reflects both the personality of the individual and the culture of his history. In turn, it helps shape both personality and culture;
- 3) Language makes possible the growth and transmission of culture, the continuity of societies, and the effective functioning and control of social group

II.3. The relationship between culture and language

Language and culture are closely related and dependent on each other. Language is formed by culture, while culture is influenced and impacted by language.

Language and culture are cogently recapped to have an inextricable and dialectical relationship. Brown (1994) proposed that “language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of a language, the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture.” (p. 165). Kramsch (2000) also proclaimed, “language is the principle means whereby we conduct our social lives. When it is used in contexts of communication, it is bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways.” (p. 3).

To state it another way, culture and language, at all times, go hand in hand with each other. Language can be regarded as an essential and vital part of culture. It is the indispensable vehicle for transmitting a large amount of culture. On the other hand, culture, as the whole of human’s ways of living as well as a set of values, demeanors and patterns of perception, has become extremely crucial to language, having a great impact on the formation and development of language. Learning a language, whether it is a first, second or foreign one, usually appears to be an onerous task that entails the learning of a new culture. Language acquiring and culture learning always occur concurrently. There are hardly any altercations about that.

In short, culture has a significantly strong influence on language which on its part, faithfully acts as a mirror reflecting most of culture. They are closely and naturally interwoven. Because of that, if two countries have different cultures, there will be a

plenty of dissimilarities in the languages, indisputably and engrossingly. This, for instant, happens when English and Vietnamese are taken into account. However, it should be kept in mind that in reality, no culture is completely isolated and separately unique. People of various cultures can sometimes share the same ways of thinking and viewing in some matters. There are important resemblances that stem in part from diffusion and in part from the fact that all cultures are built around biological, psychological and social characteristics common to all mankind. Universal concepts and similar points among cultures certainly reflect in languages. That is to say, between two different languages, English and Vietnamese for example, we can find some concepts or cases that are coincidentally similar or even the same.

CHAPTER II: SOME ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE IDIOMS RELATED TO COLOURS

I. English idioms related to colours

We are surrounded by a very colorful world, so it is quite understandable that colors found their place in many idiomatic expressions. These idioms are of both, artistic and popular origin, and are, more or less, widely used in English language by native speakers and are often heard in movies and TV.

Color idioms are not only expressing color-meaning for different concepts, but they also have their own special meanings with every different colors. This paper will focus on the color idioms containing major colors such as “black, red, white, green, gray” to illustrate this point.

I.1. Black

Idioms	Meaning	Example
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As black as night • As black as coal • As black as pitch • As black as the ace of spades 	Very black	<p style="text-align: center;">It was as black as night. We could not see anything.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black market 	The place where goods or money are illegal bought and sold	He bought that gun in the black market.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black sheep (of a family) 	A person who is a disgrace to a family or group	I have always been the black sheep in my family.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To blackmail (someone) 	To take money from someone by threatening	He has been blackmailing me for
	him or her	months with some photos he took.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To blacklist (someone) 	To exclude or ostracize someone, to write someone's name on a list if they break some rules	I was in debt couple months ago, so I've been blacklisted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Black and/or white 	Good or bad, right or wrong	My boss always thinks he knows everything but he doesn't realise this situation is not as black and white as he thinks!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A black look 	An angry expression on somebody's face	He gave me a black look when he found out that I lost his keys.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A black spot 	A dangerous area, usually on a road where accidents often happen.	Don't go any further. There is a black spot in front of you.

I.2. Red

Red

Idioms	Meaning	Example
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •(As) red as a beetroot 	very red in the face, because you fell angry, embarrassed or hot	I could see my son up on the stage, his little face was as red as a beetroot.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •in the red 	in debt	I've got three credit card bills to pay off at the moment. I hate being in the red.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •(not to have) a red cent 	<p>have no money at all</p>	<p>He has a red cent. He paid too much on alcohol.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •as red as a cherry •as red as a poppy 	<p>Bright red</p>	<p>This dress is so beautiful. It's as red as a cherry.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •As red as a ruby •As red as blood 	<p>Deep red.</p>	<p>I don't like that shirt because I don't like anything that as red as blood.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •(on) red alert 	<p>prepared for an emergency or something dangerous to happen</p>	<p>When I had a minor heart attack last year, I saw the red alert and realised that I had to quit smoking, and improve my health.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •red tape 	<p>complicated official rules that prevent things from being done</p>	<p>I just want to start my own business, but the amount of red tape involved is so frustrating.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •(to) see red 	<p>to become very angry</p>	<p>He saw red when he lost his car.</p>

I.3. White

Idioms	Meaning	Example
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •(As) white as a sheet/ghost 	<p>Extremely pale in the face because of fear, illness or shock</p>	<p>Are you alright? You're as white as a sheet, what's the matter?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A white Christmas 	<p>A Christmas when it snows</p>	<p>I hope it will be a white X-mas this year.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A white elephant 	<p>A useless, but very expensive thing or possession</p>	<p>My mum bought a new CD player for me, but it's a white elephant. I don't need it, I don't even have any CDs!</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A white lie 	<p>A small or harmless lie said in order not to hurt somebody</p>	<p>I just wanted to get out of work so I told my boss a little white lie, and said I had a doctor's appointment.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •White collar 	<p>A term used for office workers that traditionally wear white shirts with a collar.</p>	<p>We have a lot of vacancies for white-collar workers at the moment, but hardly anyone is applying for them!</p>

I.4. Green

Idioms	Meaning	Example
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To give somebody/get the green light 	<p>To give somebody permission to do something, to be allowed to go ahead with the project.</p>	<p>We have been given the green the light by the Marketing Executive to go ahead with the new advertising campaign.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Green as grass 	<p>Inexperienced, naive</p>	<p>He can be as green as grass sometimes. I don't think he's ready to be promoted to a higher position yet.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Green finger/thumb 	<p>skill in gardening</p>	<p>This garden used to look so beautiful when my mum lived here. She definitely had a green thumb. I wish I did too!</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Green with envy •Green-eyed monster 	<p>Jealous</p>	<p>When we were children, my older brother always used to get green with envy if my dad bought something for me and not for him.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Be green 	<p>Sick or immature</p>	<p>Are you ok? You look green!</p>

I.5. Grey/gray

Idioms	Meaning	Example
• A grey area	Something that is not clearly defined, and there is still debate as to whether it is “back of white”, neither one way or another	Some of the current rules surrounding bedroom tax in the UK seem to be in a grey area, as many residents disagree with its determining factors.
• Gray matter	Describes a group of important cells that are found in the cerebral cortex	Trinh and Quynh are nice but they don't exactly stimulate the old grey matter.
• The man in grey suits	Men in business or politics who have a lot of power and influence although the public does not see them or know about them	It is the men in grey suits who will decide what we'll see in politics.
• To have/grey hair from	To be worried or upset by something	I have got grey hair from work.
• To give grey	To worry or upset someone	She gives her parents grey with all the drugs she's been using.
• The grey pound	In the UK, the grey pound is an idiom used for the economic power of elderly people.	My aunt spends her grey pound to travel around the world.

II. Vietnamese idioms related to colours

II.1. Black

Idioms	Meaning
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Đen như than•Đen như mực•Tối như đêm	Rất đen, và tối.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Gần mực thì đen, gần đèn thì rạng.	Ở gần cái tốt tất nhiên sẽ trở nên tốt hơn và ngược lại.

II.2. Red

Idioms	Meaning
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Đỏ da, thắm thịt	Người béo tốt, khoẻ mạnh, da dẻ hồng hào
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Đỏ như son	Màu đỏ tươi May mắn
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Đỏ mặt tía tai	Rất giận dữ

II.3. White

Idioms	Meaning
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trắng như tuyết	Rất trắng
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Như tờ giấy trắng	Ngây thơ, trong sáng
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Giấy trắng mực đen	Có chứng cứ, bằng chứng rõ ràng, không thể chối cãi được
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Đồi trắng thay đen	Tráo trở, lật lọng; Tốt xấu, thật giả đảo lộn.

II.4. Green

Idioms	Meaning
• Xanh như tàu lá	Da mặt tái xanh, bị bệnh Sợ hãi tột độ.
• Mặt xanh, nanh vàng	Người ốm yếu đến mức xanh xao, vàng vọt.
• Tóc xanh nanh sắc	Còn trẻ tuổi, khỏe mạnh làm việc gì cũng nhanh gọn
• Kẻ đầu bạc tiền kẻ đầu xanh	Người già chưa mất nhưng người trẻ đã qua đời.

II.5. Grey/gray

Idioms	Meaning
• Lo bạc râu, râu bạc tóc	Tác hại của lo buồn, phiền muộn; quá lo lắng.
• Xanh như lá, bạc như vôi	Lúc yêu thương thì đắm thắm, thiết tha tưởng như không gì chia cắt được; khi ruồng rẫy thì tuyệt tình, tuyệt nghĩa như những kẻ xa lạ chưa bao giờ gặp mặt.

CHAPTER III : SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE IDIOMS OF COLOURS

I. Similarities between English and Vietnamese idioms of colours

Although Vietnamese and English have many differences in the society, culture and language, there are still some similar perspective in the people's minds of the two countries. This similarity reflects in many aspects of the language and the color idioms pattern is not an exception. Let's take a look at some of the correlations between color idioms in English and Vietnamese.

1/ Color idioms in both languages are used to convey the color tone of something. They are used to describe things in a fascinating way and they commonly appear in literary works. Here are some examples to clarify this point.

English	Vietnamese
- As red as blood	- Đỏ như máu
- As black as soot	- Đen như bồ hóng
- As red as a beetroot - As red as lipstick	- Đỏ như gác
- As black as ink	- Đen như mực
- As black as coal	- Đen như than
- As white as the driven snow	- Trắng như tuyết
- As green as a leaf	- Xanh như lá
- As white as paper	- Trắng như tờ giấy

As we can see, there are lots of English idioms of comparison which have exact equivalents in Vietnamese language concerning not only meaning but also vocabulary.

An excellent example is “as good as gold” which means “Tốt như vàng”. In no uncertain terms, such coincident cases somehow make translation a little bit easier.

2/ Secondly, there are many particular colors used to express a particular idea. Some objects, animals or phenomena sometimes can be found in both nations, both cultures such as the following examples below:

English	Vietnamese
- Black market	- Chợ đen
- Red hot - To see red	- Đỏ mặt tía tai
- Be green	- Mặt nó xanh như tàu lá
- Green as grass	- Nó còn non và xanh lắm
- Silence is golden	- Im lặng là vàng
- As pale as ghost	- Xanh như tàu lá

II. Differences between English and Vietnamese idioms of colours

Despite some similarities, the color idioms in the languages still have some differences based on their cultural distinction. There are some colors that express this meaning in a language but we cannot find any equivalent in the other language.

E.g.: Red also reflects the luck in Vietnamese culture whereas the meaning of red in English idioms is not the same.

II.1. Vietnamese translation

English		Vietnamese	
Green-eyed monster	used to express the jealousy of a woman	Ghen như Hoạn Thư	do not have a color-based term to reflect the same meaning
White lie	A small or harmless lie said in order not to hurt somebody	Lời nói dối	do not have a color-based term to reflect the same meaning
Once in a blue moon	Very rare, rarely	Hiếm khi	do not have a color-based term to reflect the same meaning

II.2. English translation

Vietnamese		English	
Số thẳng Bi đỏ như son	means that he is very lucky	Bi's fate is as red as a rose	does not make any sense
Hồng nhan bạc phận	Means good looking women are usually unlucky	Pink beauty silver fate	does not make any sense
Xanh vỏ đỏ lòng	Means though outside they don't look friendly, inside they're warm and kind	Green outside red inside	does not make any sense

III. Some difficulties in translating idioms related to colours

As we can see, although idioms of comparison are just a small part of language, there are lots of things for us to pay attention. Colors play a vital role in people's communication. They do not only express the colors themselves, but are also endowed with cultural characteristics of each nation. In other words, colors in different languages and cultures may convey different associative meaning and people from different cultures react to colors in different ways. 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:

• Idioms are not literal

They do not mean what they say. The meaning idioms convey is non-compositional. It implies that you cannot understand the meaning of the whole phrase putting the meanings of each word together. If you look at the individual words, it may not even make sense grammatically. Idiom has the meaning only as a unit

• It's difficult to use idioms correctively

To use idioms correctly and appropriately takes many years of experience with the language. An inappropriately-used or incorrectly-used idiom will simply draw attention to the fact that the speaker is not a native speaker. This is unfortunate since the ultimate goal of most learners of English to reach a level of language indistinguishable from that of the native speaker.

Even when learners do master the meanings of some English idioms, it is still very difficult to learn to use them correctly. Idioms vary in formality from slang and colloquialisms to those which can be used in formal situations

• Teaching materials are not much available

Another reason why second-language learners do not learn idioms is that many second-language teaching materials either ignore idioms entirely or relegate them to the other expressions' section of vocabulary lists, without providing exercises or other aids to learning. Typically, an idiom will appear in the introductory reading or dialogue, a definition, translation or example will be provided in the margin or notes, and the idiom will then appear again in the vocabulary list. These are obviously not

sufficient aids to learning, unless the teacher provides additional exercises and practice.

IV. Some suggested solutions

As an English learner, I have known about English idioms for quite a long time though I as well as many other Vietnamese students still do not understand thoroughly about English idioms. Despite the fact that we may not know about idioms clearly, we cannot deny that learning idioms is a very interesting part when we study languages. This is the reason why there are some key points that should be taken into consideration when we study idioms, especially colour idioms.

• Learn idioms in context, never in isolation

You must ensure that you not only understand idioms, but also learn to use them, present idiom examples in context, for example, in simple conversations where the meaning of the idiom is clear.

If you see an idiom in context i.e., in a magazine, newspaper or a book, try to understand the context and this will help you with the idiom. For example: my boss was as red as a beetroot: shouting and screaming until he tripped and fell over the table. Everyone laughed and I couldn't keep a straight face.

• Keep an 'Idioms' diary

Every time you hear an idiom or read one, write it down but then make sure that you can look it up at home in a dictionary (English dictionary for learners) and to write it in a sentence otherwise you will forget the meaning.

• A lot of idioms can be found in songs

If you can download the lyrics, have a look at the words and find the idioms – *remember an idiom does not make sense if you translate every word but more that you see it as a whole expression*

• Create conversations using idioms

Remember that the goal is to not only understand idioms, but also learn how to use them effectively. Find a partner to make a pair. Then each of you must write a conversation and use this idiom in it.

Use the idioms you have learnt in everyday life. Should you be in a certain situation then don't be afraid to use one either in writing or in speaking.

PART THREE: CONCLUSION

1. Summary

As referred in previous parts, according to Jenifer Seidl and W.Mc Mordie in *“English Idiom and How to Use”* “an idiom is a number of words which, taken together, mean something different from the individual words of the idiom when they stand alone.” (1978: page 20)The *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* regards an idiom as “an expression which function as a single unit and whose meaning cannot be worked out from its separate parts” (1992: page 198). The *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English* (Oxford University Press - 1995) defines idiom as “a phrase or sentence whose meaning is not clear from the meaning of its individual words and which must be learnt as a whole unit.” (1995: page 67).

Learning idioms plays an important part in advancing language skill. Many students have much difficulty in describing their own ideas and feel that they can’t speak fluently or write a complete essay. This happens because they all rely on using separate words leading to make such “fragment” or “run-on” sentences.

Therefore, in order to be confident in using foreign language, to understand and use idioms in right way would be good choice for those who have strong desire to advance their level of English. However, learning idioms could cause a lot of obstacles because of culture differences and other facts. To overcome, some solutions are introduced in chapter III such as learning idioms in context, never in isolation, keeping an ‘Idioms’ diary, learning Idioms through songs and creating conversations using idioms.

Despite the fact that we may not know about idioms clearly, we cannot deny that learning idioms is a very interesting part when we study languages.

2. Limitations of the study

Despite my considerable efforts, certain limitations could be detected in this study due to time constraint and other unexpected factors.

Firstly, the researcher have just mentioned some certain aspects of theory of idioms presented in chapter 1 with the hope that readers can have basic knowledge of them and identify them better.

Secondly, because of the limited time, the number English and Vietnamese idioms in the study remained relatively low in comparison with the enormous number of English and Vietnamese idioms. However, I hope that the serious work had well served the research questions as a contribution to the rich collection of other previous studies on the same area.

3. Recommendations for further study

From the limitations of this study, the author 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 and Vietnamese idioms for those who are interested in English as well as English culture can explore about this language.

In spite of above-mentioned shortcomings, it is hoped that the 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 each idiom with its meaning

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. red carpet | a. a white lie |
| 2. Green- eyed monster | b. Inexperienced, naive |
| 3. a black spot | c. in debt |
| 4. a black look | d. an impressive welcome given to an important visitor |
| 5. A white elephant | e. An angry expression on somebody's face |
| 6. to have grey/gray hair from | f. The place where goods or money are illegal bought and sold |
| 7. Green as grass | g. A useless, but very expensive thing or possession |
| 8. A small or harmless lie said in order not to hurt somebody | h. A dangerous area, usually on a road where accidents often happen. |
| 9. black market | i. used to express the jealousy of a woman |
| 10. in the red | j. To be worried or upset by something |

B. Choose the correct idioms from the table to fill the space in each sentences and change the verbs in the correct tense.

see red
green with envy
black sheep of the family
caught red handed

in red
have green fingers
black market
white lie

1. I cannot afford to go on that holiday anymore. My bank account is and my bank manager isn't the most flexible of people.

2. Police have found the town's infamous statue vandal. He was spraying paint on the statue of the town founder, Marshall Higgins, at about 2am last night.

3. Howard is always considered the but he has never actually done much wrong. I think his sister is worse!

4. When the man continued to smoke in the restaurant which is very much non-smoking, I and said something to him. He stopped immediately!

5. If you tell your father that you got the money off a friend, it's not being very dishonest, is it? It would just be a .

6. We told our neighbours about it this morning and I think they were a bit jealous. Mrs. Riley, in particular, was !

7. When we arrived at this house, it was a jungle in the garden but Peter has always and had it looking like the gardens of a palace within six months.

8. The normal price for a ticket for the championship final is about \$50 but they are selling for more than \$400 on the .

C. Choose the most appropriate answer

1. How many little..... lies do we tell every day?

A. Blue

B. Green

C. Red

D. White

2. Her father and mother saw.....when they found out that their daughter was dating that guy.

A. Blue

B. Green

C. Red

D. White

3. Lena and Nick will be.....with envy when they see my new car!

A. Blue

B. Green

C. Red

D. White

4. That expensive gift turned out to be a.....elephant. We didn't have any use for it, and we couldn't sell it either.

A. Blue

B. Green

C. Red

D. White

5. They have to sell their property because their business has been in.....for six years.

A. Blue

B. Green

C. Red

D. White

6. Her flower garden is fantastic. She loves gardening and has a.....thumb.

A. Blue

B. Green

C. Red

D. White

7. There was so much bureaucratic.....tape that we did not get the required papers in time.

A. Blue

B. Green

C. Red

D. White

8. What is.....area? – It is an intermediate area that is not clearly defined, for example, in legal or medical matters.

A. Black

B. Golden

C. Pink

D. Gray

2. Key to exercises

A.

1D 2I 3H 4E 5G 6J 7B 8A 9F 10C

B.

1. in red	5. white lie
2. caught red handed	6. green with envy
3. black sheep of the family	7. had green fingers
4. saw red	8. black market

C.

1D 2C 3C 4B 5C 6B 7C 8D