

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

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**KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP**

**NGÀNH: NGÔN NGỮ ANH**

**Sinh viên : Nguyễn Hoài Nam**  
**Giảng viên hướng dẫn : TS Trần Thị Ngọc Liên**

**HẢI PHÒNG - 2019**

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**A STUDY ON  
IDIOMS USED IN SOME FAMOUS  
ENGLISH SHORT STORIES**

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

**Sinh viên : Nguyễn Hoài Nam  
Giảng viên hướng dẫn : T.S Trần Thị Ngọc Liên**

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TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC DÂN LẬP HẢI PHÒNG**

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**NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP**

Sinh viên: Nguyễn Hoài Nam.

Mã SV: 1412751117

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Tên đề tài: A study on idioms used in some famous English short stories

# 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

### Người hướng dẫn thứ nhất:

Họ và tên: Trần Thị Ngọc Liên.

Học hàm, học vị: Tiến Sĩ.

Cơ quan công tác: Trường Đại học Dân lập Hải Phòng.

Nội dung hướng dẫn: A study on idioms used in some famous English short stories.

### Người hướng dẫn thứ hai:

Họ và tên:.....

Học hàm, học vị:.....

Cơ quan công tác:.....

Nội dung hướng dẫn:.....

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

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

Đã nhận nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

*Sinh viên*

Nguyễn Hoài Nam

Đã giao nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

*Người hướng dẫn*

TS. Trần Thị Ngọc Liên

*Hải Phòng, ngày ..... tháng.....năm 20..*

**Hiệu trưởng**

**GS.TS.NGƯT Trần Hữu Nghị**

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

**PHIẾU NHẬN XÉT CỦA GIẢNG VIÊN HƯỚNG DẪN TỐT NGHIỆP**

Họ và tên giảng viên: .....

Đơn vị công tác: .....

Họ và tên sinh viên: ..... Chuyên ngành: .....

Nội dung hướng dẫn: .....

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

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**2. Đánh giá chất lượng của đồ án/khóa luận (so với nội dung yêu cầu đã đề ra trong nhiệm vụ Đ.T. T.N trên các mặt lý luận, thực tiễn, tính toán số liệu...)**

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**3. Ý kiến của giảng viên hướng dẫn tốt nghiệp**

Được bảo vệ  Không được bảo vệ  Điểm hướng dẫn

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

**Giảng viên hướng dẫn**  
*(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 CHĂM 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 chăm phản biện**

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**2. Những mặt còn hạn chế**

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**3. Ý kiến của giảng viênchăm phản biện**

Được bảo vệ  Không được bảo vệ  Điểm hướng dẫn

*Hải Phòng, ngày ... tháng ... năm .....*  
**Giảng viênchăm phản biện**  
*(Ký và ghi rõ họ tên)*

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Moreover, the shortcomings in this study are unavoidable. Therefore, I hope to receive the sympathy from teachers and friends.

Hai Phong, 2019

# PART I. INTRODUCTION

## 1. Rationale of the study

Nowadays, English is the most widely used in the world. Although ranking still 2<sup>nd</sup> in terms of the number of users after Chinese, English is still the language we can use most widely in most countries. Outside of the UK, 60 out of 196 countries consider English as the official language. It is estimated that about 1,5 billion people are speaking globally, and about 1 billion other are in process of learning it. This is the reason why English has more benefits than the languages with less chance to use.

One of the most interesting ways to learn English is reading literature which provides a method of learning about vocabulary, cultures and beliefs other than our own. It allows you to understand and experience these other systems of living and other worlds. We get a view of the inside looking out a personal view and insight into the minds and reasoning of someone else.

There are many types of literature such as novel, poem, prose, drama... But short story is the shortest way to approach English. Reading short story can help you get a feel for pacing and plot development. You can see how the writers weave together complete characters in such small spaces. A good way to think about short stories is to view them as snapshots of what a writer can do. You get a brief taste of that writers' abilities and style.

But it is not easy to read and understand short stories because of differences in culture between two languages, so we cannot understand all the meaning of short story when we see idioms in them.

Nattinger, De Carrico, (1992) cited in Tajali&Tehrani (2009) considers idioms as most important subcategory of lexical phenomenon of formulaic language). The argument here is that, ability to use formulaic language (including idioms) appropriately is a key to native like fluency. In fact, according to Fernando (1996), "No translator or language teacher can afford to ignore idioms or idiomaticity if a natural use of the target language is an aim" (p.234). Wray supported Fernando's claim adds that the absence of formulaic sequence in learners' speech results in unidiomatic sounding speech.

Crick, Pawley and Syder (1983) cited in Tajali&Tehrani (2009) argued that native speakers' fluency not only depends on vocabulary which is stored as individual words , but also as part of phrases and larger chunks , which can be

retrieved from memory as a whole, reducing processing difficulties. On the other hand, ESL learners who only learn individual words will need a lot more time and effort to express themselves. Consequently, it is essential to make students aware of chunks and their usage in language production.

There is a common assumption that the more words a learner knows, the larger the learner's vocabulary knowledge. However, there is another dimension to vocabulary knowledge that should be considered, namely how far a learner knows the combinatory possibilities of a word. Some linguists call them 'lexical phrases' or 'lexical items', others prefer the term 'multi-word chunks' or just 'chunks' of language (Moon, 2001). Miller (1956) cited in Ellis (2001) coined the term 'chunking'. It is the development of permanent sets of associative connections in long term memory and is the process which underlines the attainment of automaticity and fluency in language. Whatever the term, they are an important feature both in language use and language acquisition. These multi-word chunks or expressions are namely: idioms, proverbs, sayings, phrasal verbs and collocations. This aspect of vocabulary knowledge has until recently been largely ignored.

Idioms understanding and comprehension are really challenging in every conversations let alone in literature appreciation. However, it is still really necessary for learners and researchers to pay more attention to this.

This study of English idioms in some famous short stories is expected to shed light on the understanding of idioms in general and the comprehension and interpretation of idioms in short stories in particular. A good understanding of how idioms are used in literature is not only important for students of English to increase their vocabulary, but also to understand new and original idioms when we hear and see them. Most language users make use of idioms but the way individual words used varies from one language to another and each language has its own system and that they cannot always transfer the metaphorical use of a word from one language to another.

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

### **2.1. Aims**

The study is aimed at investigating the grammatical and semantic features of idioms in some famous English short stories.

### **2.2. Objectives**

In order to achieve the aforementioned aim, the researcher has set the following specific objectives:

- to describe the grammatical and semantics features of idioms.
- to find out the difficulties encountered by students in reading idioms in short stories
- to offer some suggestions for learning idioms in English short stories.

## **3. Scope of the study**

Due to the limitation of time and ability, the researcher just focuses on studying idioms and idiomatic expressions collected from 10 famous English short stories as listed in the appendix.

## **4. Design of the study**

The study is divided into three parts:

**Part I** is the Introduction in which rationale, aim of the study, method of the study and design of the study are presented.

**Part II** is the Development that includes four chapters:

*Chapter I* is an overview of theoretical background which includes definition, formation and meaning of idioms; definition and some necessary factor affecting short story; and translation of short story.

Chapter II is a preparation of data collection procedures.

Chapter III is an investigating into the grammatical and semantic feature of idioms.

Chapter IV: finds out some difficulties faced and give suggestion to solve them.

**Part III** is Conclusion that indicates strengths and weaknesses of the study as well as some suggestions for further research.

## **PART II: DEVELOPMENT**

### **CHAPTER I: LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **1.1. Idiom**

##### **1.1.1 What is idiom?**

Idioms are widely known to be words which constitute the genesis of all languages, and learning any language either the first or any subsequent one is deemed pointless without learning words. Moreover, the coining of new words never stops, nor does the acquisition of words.

This process is evident even in our first language; we are continually learning new words and adding new meanings to the old ones we already know. However, there are some word categories like idioms, collocations, proverbs and fixed expressions which are neglected by language teachers. Idioms, collocations and proverbs are word expressions that have specific meaning (i.e cultural specific) and choice of words. Much of this lexis consists of sequences of words that have a strong tendency to occur together in discourse, including a wide and motley range of expressions such as phrasal verbs, compounds, idioms, and collocations referred to collectively as multiword lexical items, prefabricated units, prefabs, phraseological units, fixed phrases, formulaic sequences, etc. We find these expressions mostly in native speakers' language. Among all above mentioned multiword expressions idioms are more neglected word expressions in language use and learning.

According to Sinclair (1991:172) idiom is “a group of two or more words which are chosen together in order to produce a specific meaning or effect in speech or writing”. In other words, an idiom is an expression, which is a term or a phrase whose meaning cannot be deduced from the literal definitions and the arrangement of its parts, but refers instead to a figurative meaning that is known only through common use.

In Webster's Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language (1989) idiom refers to an institutionalized multiword construction; the meaning of this cannot be fully deduced from the meaning of its constituent words, and which may be regarded as a self contained lexical item.

From The Oxford English Dictionary (1933) idiom is known as a form of expression, grammatical construction, phrase, etc, peculiar to a language; a peculiarity of phraseology approved by the usage of a language, and having a signification other than its grammatical or logical one.

In this study idioms and idiomatic expressions are defined as a group of words in a fixed order that have a particular meaning that is different from the meaning of each word on its own.

### **1.1.2 Formation of idiom**

According to Stathi (2006:27), the term ‘idiom’ can refer to two types of fixed expressions. First, in a narrow sense, idioms are ‘expressions whose idiomaticity is semantic; typical expressions are kick the bucket, spill the beans etc. Second, idiomaticity is a formal property of expressions and is more or less equated with the fixedness of form; for example, by and large. According to McCarthy & O’Dell (2008) idioms are connected with the themes of animals, the sea, sports, parts of the body, food and drink, colours, names of people and places, sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch. We use idioms to describe physical appearance, character and personality, work and success, health and illness. The origin of idiom as stated in different sources is as follows.

#### ***a) Idioms are formed from work and technology***

In fact, a large number of idioms come from a time when far more people worked on the land, there are many idioms which refer to farm animals, for example, the black sheep of the family, take the bull by the horns, don’t count your chickens, etc.

#### ***b) Idioms are formed from rural life or transport***

Many idioms originate from the daily life in rural area or from the daily routine of taking a certain means of transport, for example, strike while the iron is hot, put somebody through the mill, eat like a horse, put the cart before the horse, etc.

#### ***c) Idioms are formed in science and technology***

Many idioms came into existence from science and technology, for example, she has a short fuse, we are on the same wave length, I need to recharge my batteries etc.

#### ***d) Idioms are formed from sports and entertainment world***

Every year many idioms enter into the English language from the world of sports and entertainment, for example, have a good innings, dice with death, behind the scenes, play the second fiddle, etc.

#### ***e) Idioms are formed from literature and history***

Many idioms have entered English from literature and history, for example, sour grapes, the goose that laid the golden eggs, the streets are paved



with gold, etc. 6) Idioms came from the Bible, Shakespeare's works, for example, the salt of the earth, fall by the way side, your pound of flesh, ships that pass in the night, etc.

*f) Idioms are formed from the meaning of human parts*

There are a large number of idioms in which a part of the body represents particular quality or ability, for example, use your head, the idea never entered my head, she broke his heart, he opened his heart, I speak from the bottom of my heart, the news finally reached her ears, keep your mouth shut, etc.

*g) Idioms are formed from human emotions*

Many idioms come from feelings and emotions, for example, give him a black look, lose your bearings, in seventh heaven, in high spirits, it was love at first sight, come out of your shell.

### **1.1.3. Grammar and meaning of idioms**

#### **1.1.3.1. Grammar of idioms**

Many idioms have unusual grammar. In some cases a word that is usually a verb, adjective, conjunction or preposition appears as a noun:

- a) Adjectives as nouns, for example, all of a sudden, through thick and thin,
- b) Verbs as nouns, for example, the do's and don'ts, on the make
- c) Conjunctions and prepositions as nouns, for example, ifs and buts, on the up and up, the ins and outs,
- d) Uncountable nouns seeming to be countable, for example, the living daylights and in all weathers.

According to Stathi (2006) Idiom is "a phrase which doesn't mean anything literally by itself, but can be used in a sentence to mean something indirectly. It is specific kind of vocabulary or jargon which is used in specific contexts." (Gumpel, 1974: 12 as cited in Fernando & Flavell, 1981;28-28) . For example, a blessing in disguise (to be something which has a good effect, although at first it seemed that it would be bad or not lucky), Blood is thicker than water ( which means family relations are closest) , Once in a blue moon ( which indicates rare occurrences ) , Break a Leg( wishing good luck), Dry Run ( rehearse).

Idioms are thought to be relatively frozen and to have severe grammatical restriction' (Moon, 1997:47), and so it might be generally taken that they do not

permit any lexical or syntactic modification, but they have greater possibilities of modification than might be expected (Mostafa, 2010)

Most of the Scholars discussed above- conclude that:

1) The meaning of an idiom is not the result of the compositional function of its constituents; If the idioms meaning predictable from constituent words, then it is decomposable idioms (e.g., pop the question, spill the beans) if meaning is not predictable from idioms constituent parts, such idioms are non-decomposable idioms ( Gibbs et al 1999)

2) An idiom is a unit that either has a homonymous literal counterpart or at least individual constituents that are literal, though the expression as a whole word need not be interpreted literally;

3) Idioms constitute set expressions in a given language, these set expressions are fixed in a language, here, set expressions are peculiar to particular language but we may see similar idioms in other language.

4) Idioms are institutionalized (specific to culture or language).

#### **1.1.3.2. Meaning of idioms**

If we classify idioms in meaning, there are 2 type of idiom:

- Idiomatic meaning: readers can't guess the meaning of the idiom from the words around. They must learn by heart the meaning, otherwise they will find it impossible to understand this idiom.

- Non-Idiomatic meaning means the reader can easily guess the meaning of one idiom while they read in the short story. They just needs to depend on the preceding or the following words around this idiom.

### **1.2. Short story**

#### **1.2.1. What is short story?**

From the most common website - the Wikipedia: "A short story is a piece of prose fiction that typically can be read in one sitting and focuses on a self-contained incident or series of linked incidents, with the intent of evoking a "single effect" or mood, however there are many exceptions to this.

A dictionary definition is "an invented prose narrative shorter than a novel usually dealing with a few characters and aiming at unity of effect and often concentrating on the creation of mood rather than plot."

The short story is a crafted form in its own right. Short stories make use of plot, resonance, and other dynamic components as in a novel, but typically to a

lesser degree. While the short story is largely distinct from the novel or novella (a shorter novel), authors generally draw from a common pool of literary techniques.

Short story writers may define their works as part of the artistic and personal expression of the form. They may also attempt to resist categorization by genre and fixed formation.

Short stories have deep roots and the power of short fiction has been recognized in modern society for hundreds of years. The short form is, conceivably, more natural to us than longer forms. We are drawn to short stories as the well-told story, and as William Boyd, the award-winning British author and short story writer has said:

"[short stories] seem to answer something very deep in our nature as if, for the duration of its telling, something special has been created, some essence of our experience extrapolated, some temporary sense has been made of our common, turbulent journey towards the grave and oblivion".

In terms of length, word count is typically anywhere from 1,000 to 4,000 for short stories, however some have 20,000 words and are still classed as short stories. Stories of fewer than 1,000 words are sometimes referred to as "short short stories", or "flash fiction".

William Trevor believes that "If the novel is like an intricate Renaissance painting, the short story is an impressionist painting. It should be an explosion of truth. Its strength lies in what it leaves out just as much as what it puts in, if not more. It is concerned with the total exclusion of meaninglessness. Life, on the other hand, is meaningless most of the time. The novel imitates life, where the short story is bony, and cannot wander. It is essential art."

**(William Trevor, 1989)**

Raymond Carver writes: "My stories and my poems are both short. (Laughs) I write them the same way, and I'd say the effects are similar. There's a compression of language, of emotion, that isn't to be found in the novel. The short story and the poem, I've often said, are closer to each other than the short story and the novel."

**(Raymond Carver, 1986)**

According to Lorris Moore “The short story needs to get to the point or the question of the point or the question of its several points and then flip things upside down. It makes skepticism into an art form. It has a deeper but narrower mission than longer narratives, one that requires drilling down rather than lighting out. Like poetry, it takes care with every line. Like a play, it moves in a deliberate fashion, scene by scene. Although a story may want to be pungent and real and sizzling, still there should be as little fat as possible.”

**(Lorris Moore, 2015)**

Flannery O’Connor assumes that “Perhaps the central question to be considered in any discussion of the short story is what do we mean by short. Being short does not mean being slight. A short story should be long in depth and should give us an experience of meaning...A story is a way to say something that can’t be said any other way, and it takes every word in the story to say what the meaning is. You tell a story because a statement would be inadequate. When anybody asks what a story is about, the only proper thing is to tell him to read the story. The meaning of fiction is not abstract meaning but experienced meaning, and the purpose of making statement about the meaning of a story is only to help you to experience that meaning more fully.”

**(Flannery O’Connor, 1962)**

Russ Hills, however, emphasizes the chain of events in a short story, highlighting that “Something happens, however slight it may be—and it isn’t something that happened over and over before and is going to happen again and again in the future. It is assumed that the events of a story take place only once, that whatever “happens” to the character as a result of the action of the story alters or “moves” him in such a way, again however slight it may be, that he would never experience or do the same thing in exactly the same way.”

**(Russ Hills, 1977)**

In his selected short stories, Alice Munro writes “a story is not like a road to follow ... it’s more like a house. You go inside and stay there for a while, wandering back and forth and settling where you like and discovering how the room and corridors relate to each other, how the world outside is altered by being viewed from these windows. And you, the visitor, the reader, are altered as well by being in this enclosed space, whether it is ample and easy or full of

crooked turns, or sparsely or opulently furnished. You can go back again and again, and the house, the story, always contains more than you saw the last time. It also has a sturdy sense of itself of being built out of its own necessity, not just to shelter or beguile you.”

(Alice Munro, 1996)

Sharing a similar point of view, Meg Wolitzer confirms that “in short stories, I don’t think characters or their situation or their surrounding change as frequently as they turn.”

(Meg Wolitzer, 2017)

### 1.2.2. Necessary factors for a successful short story

- The first factor that influences the success of a short story is *Subtext*. In fact, each story has their own subtext—the sense of the “untold” in a story—the sense that there is more beneath the surface. But beyond just that sense, the story also needs to offer solid hints, solid questions that can guide readers to using their own imaginations to fill in some of those blanks. In short, you have to create depth—and then take advantage of it.

- The second factor that decides the success of a short story is Passage of Time. Not that you can’t tell a powerful story in a very short amount of time, but as a general rule, the more time in which you have to develop the plot, the more significant the character development will seem. Although it’s possible for people to be transformed quickly, most evolutions are the process of much time, if only because we need more than one catalyst to prompt the change. Consider how much more weight you gain from sticking a character in prison for a year versus imprisoning him for only a week or two.

- The third factor which helps to make sure that a short story will become successful is *Multiple Settings*. It’s totally possible to tell a powerful and meaningful story that remains primarily in just one setting. But you can often create a more impressive sense of depth and importance by making sure your plot will affect your characters in more than just one place.

- *Subplot* is another key factor that decides the success. Facts indicate that Big stories are just that: big. As such, they’re about more than just one thing.

The character's primary conflict will be supported and contrasted by other concerns—just as our own major problems in real life usually spawn smaller problems. When we reduce a story to a single issue, we eliminate its context—and therefore its subtext. Subplots allow us to explore multiple facets of our characters' lives and struggles. Every subplot needs to be pertinent to the main plot, but don't feel that a small amount of divergence, for the sake of thematic exploration, is something to be avoided.

- The last factor to be mentioned in this study is *Emotional and Intellectual Sequel Scenes*. Every scene in your story is made of two halves: scene (action) and sequel (reaction). The action in the scene is what moves the plot. But the reaction in the sequel is where the character development and the thematic depth will almost always be found. Never neglect your sequels. For every important event in your story, you must take the time to demonstrate your character's reactions—both intellectually and emotionally. If readers don't know how your characters feel about events, they won't be able to properly draw their own conclusions about what to think.

If you can implement just these five factors in your story—whatever your theme or subject—you'll be able to bring instant weight to your plot. The result will be a story that is much more likely to matter to your readers than the vast majority of what they read.

In conclusion, to understand the meaning of short story, readers should have enough vocabulary, especially know the meaning of idioms in its. Authors like to use idioms because idioms will make the story be more interesting than using usual words. But if the readers want to understand idioms is not easy. They have to have little knowledge about culture and background of the story.

### **1.3. Translation of short story**

The definition of translation varies upon linguists all around the world. There are some typical concepts as follow:

- Translation can be defined as the result of a linguistic – textual operation in which a text in one language is re-contextualized in another language. As a linguistic-textual operation, translation is, however, subject to, and substantially influenced by, a variety of extra-linguistic factors and conditions. It is this interaction between ‘inner’ linguistic-textual and ‘outer’ extra-linguistic, contextual factors that makes translation such a complex phenomenon (House.J, 2015).

- Translation is the replacement of the textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL) (Catford, 1965).

- Translation is made possible by an equivalent of thought that lies behind its different verbal expressions (Savory, 1968).

- Translation is to be understood as the process whereby a message expressed in a specific source language is linguistically transformed in order to be understood by readers of the target language (Houbert, 1998).

- Translation is the transformation of a text originally in one language into an equivalent in the content of the message and the formal features and the roles of the original (Bell, 1991).

- Translation is the interpretation of the meaning of a text in one language (the source text) and the production, in another language of an equivalent text (the target text) that communicates the same message (Nida,E.A, 1959).

#### **1.3.1. Semantic losses**

The reason behind the semantic loss in translation is that when a single word is attached in a sentence or phrase, it commutates a different meaning according to the context, in which the word may have more than one meaning (Almasaeid, 2013). In other words, there are two types of meaning; denotative meaning, which is the direct dictionary meaning disposed of any overtones or emotions (Elewa, 2015), and the connotative meaning, according to Lyons (1977: 176), is “the connotation of a word is thought of as emotive or effective component additional to its central meaning”.

To identify the semantic loss in the translation of the story, the researcher will follow Baker’s typology of equivalence between Arabic and English. This

theory has been chosen because it discusses in detail the non-equivalence problem at different levels, especially at the word level. Additionally, it sheds the light on the equivalence problems between English and Arabic. Baker (1992) believes that the concept of equivalence is relative because it is affected by many linguistic and cultural factors. She classifies non-equivalence of the word level into 11 types, but this study will focus on four types. The semantic loss in the translation of the story will be addressed under these types:

(a) Culture – Specific terms in two languages; after analyzing the story in both languages, there are some word culturally bound, there are no equivalent words in the target language.

(b) The terms that are not lexicalized in the target language like These words can't be represented by using a single word in the target language, but by using a phrase. Yet, this phrase can't be convey the implicit meaning of the word

(c) English lacks a specific term (hyponym).

(d) The target language lacks a super-ordinate.

### 1.3.2. Syntactic losses

The syntactic loss that occurs in the translating from Vietnamese to English and vice versa and this could be attributed to the syntactic complexity. Al-Jabr, (2006) stated that this complexity occurs in accordance to the inherent linguistic features of the given language(s).

In analyzing the inherent linguistic features of the source language and the target language, the order of sentence in Vietnamese language is different from the order of sentence in the target language.

For example, in an English idiom, the order of its element is not the same as the one in Vietnamese when being translated.

English: Fell in love, as if truck by a pistol shot.

Vietnamese: Phải long em như thể bị bắn bởi khẩu súng. (*Literal translation*)

Vietnamese: Yêu em như thể tôi vừa bị trúng phải tiếng sét ái tình. (*Communicative translation*)

The difference in syntactic features causes syntactic loss.



### 1.3.3. Cultural losses

The cultural loss in translation could occur when there are culture – specific idiomatic expressions, or metaphors, which are culturally bound. Nida (1964: 130) points out “differences between cultures may cause more severe complications for the translator than do differences in language structure.”

In translating the metaphor or the idiomatic expression in the story from English into Vietnamese, it can be seen that translation fails to convey the meaning, and the reader in target language cannot get the intended meaning. The following two examples highlight these cultural losses.

For example

English : Jack Frost.

Vietnamese : Tên của người hoặc nhân vật là Jack Frost.

Vietnamese : Nhân vật biểu tượng cho mùa đông ở các nước phương Tây.

The difference in cultural features causes cultural loss.

In both examples above, the literal translation of the metaphor, or the idiomatic expression do not convey the intended meaning because they are culturally bound expressions, hence, this may prevent the reader from understanding the true meaning of the context as a whole. Consequently, these issues cause cultural losses in the translation. However; the intended meaning in the both examples is to imply that the girl is so thin and poor.

## CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY

### 2.1. Data collection procedures

During the research, I chose 10 short stories which were written by many famous authors. Below are names and plots or summaries of them.

- **The Story of B24** is a short story written by Arthur Conan Doyle first published in *The Strand Magazine* in March 1899. Written in the first person in the form of a letter, a man who has been in jail for three years professes his innocence of murder. In so doing he reveals a fascinating story of burglary and murder and a possible travesty of justice.

- "**The Tell-Tale Heart**" is a short story by American writer Edgar Allan Poe, first published in 1843. It is relayed by an unnamed narrator who endeavors to convince the reader of his sanity while simultaneously describing a murder he committed. The victim was an old man with a filmy "vulture-eye", as the narrator calls it. The narrator emphasizes the careful calculation of the murder, and he hides the body by dismembering it, and hiding it under the floorboards. Ultimately, the narrator's feelings of guilt, or a mental disturbance, result in him hearing a thumping sound, which he interprets as the dead man's beating heart.

- **Desiree's Baby** is the story which opens with Madame Valmonde visiting Desiree and her baby. On her way to L'Abri, she reminisces about Desiree's childhood. Desiree was a foundling discovered by Monsieur Valmonde. He found her "lying in the shadow of the big stone pillar," as he was galloping through the gateway to Valmonde. The general opinion was that she was left behind by a "party of Texans," but Madame Valmonde believed Desiree was sent to her by God as she was not able to have her own children. Eighteen years later, Armand Aubigny all of a sudden falls in love with Desiree when he sees her standing against the stone pillar, even though they knew each other since they were small children, ever since Armand and his father came from Paris, after his mother died. Monsieur Valmonde proposes that before their relationship becomes more serious, Desiree's origin should be examined. However, Armand is so in love that he does not care about Desiree's ancestors and decides it does not matter that she does not have a family name of her own, if he can give her a perfectly good one, and so they get married.

Madame Valmonde has a surprise awaiting her. She has not seen the baby for a month and when she arrives to L'Abri she is shocked to see the

baby's appearance. Desiree remarks about how much he has grown. However, it is apparent that she does not see anything wrong with her son. She is very happy. Ever since the baby was born, her husband Armand, who was very strict and harsh, has softened a great deal.

When the baby was three months old, the situation in the house changed. Desiree senses there is something wrong. On top of that, Armand becomes cold and avoids both Desiree and the baby. One afternoon Desiree is sitting in her room and starts observing her child and a little quadroon boy who was fanning it. The similarity between them frightens her and she sends the boy away.

When Armand arrives back home, Desiree asks him about the baby. He responds that indeed the baby is not white, which means that she is not white either. Desiree points out all her physical features that strongly suggest that she is white, but her angry husband tells her she is as white as their mixed-race slaves.

Desperate, Desiree writes to her mother, Madame Valmonde, asking for help. Madame Valmonde tells her to come back home because she still loves her. Afterwards, Desiree asks her husband about his opinion and he sends her away. As a result of that, Desiree takes her baby and leaves the house. However, she does not take the road leading to the Valmonde, but instead she disappears in the bayou.

Several weeks after, Armand sets up a bonfire to get rid of Desiree's belongings. Among the stuff he decides to throw away, Armand finds several letters. Most of them are "little scribblings" Desiree sent him in the days of their engagement, but he also finds one that is addressed from his mother to his father. In the letter, his mother thanks God for her husband's love, but she also reveals that she is grateful that her son will never know that his mother "belongs to the race that is cursed by slavery."

- **"The Gift of the Magi"** is a short story by O. Henry first published in 1905. The story tells of a young husband and wife and how they deal with the challenge of buying secret Christmas gifts for each other with very little money. As a sentimental story with a moral lesson about gift-giving, it has been popular for adaptation, especially for presentation at Christmas time. The plot and its twist ending are well-known, and the ending is generally considered an

example of comic irony. It was allegedly written at Pete's Tavern[2] on Irving Place in New York City.

The story was initially published in The New York Sunday World under the title "Gifts of the Magi" on December 10, 1905. It was first published in book form in the O. Henry Anthology The Four Million in April 1906.

- In "**After Twenty Years**" by O. Henry we have the theme of friendship, change, guilt and dedication or loyalty. Taken from his Selected Stories collection the story is narrated in the third person by an unnamed narrator and after reading the story the reader realizes that Henry may be exploring the theme of friendship. Bob has kept his word twenty years after promising Jimmy that he would meet him at the old restaurant in New York. Such dedication suggests that Bob has never forgotten his friendship with Jimmy and it is possible that their friendship has had a deep impact on Bob's life. As he is talking to the policeman (who in reality is Jimmy) there is a strong sense of camaraderie between Bob and Jimmy. Even if Bob tends to think that Jimmy may not have progressed in life. Though he has no real reason to believe this and is basing his opinion on Jimmy's life from twenty years ago. This may be important as Bob is not allowing Jimmy the opportunity to change judging him on past experiences. It may also be significant that the setting of the story is night time as by setting the story in the dark Henry may be attempting to mirror the setting with Bob's knowledge of what Jimmy might be doing now. Bob in reality is very much in the dark about Jimmy's life. Something that becomes clearer to the reader near the end of the story.

The end of the story is also interesting as Henry appears to be not only further exploring the theme of dedication but he may also be exploring the theme of guilt. Rather than arresting Bob himself Jimmy sends another policeman to arrest Bob. It is possible that Jimmy still feels a strong bond towards Bob and may have felt guilty should he have been the one who was to arrest an old friend. It is also noticeable that the friendship that exists or existed between Bob and Jimmy does not take precedence over Jimmy's job as a policeman. Just as he was dedicated to his friendship with Bob when they were younger likewise he is now dedicated to his job as a policeman. Upholding the law is more important to Jimmy than any friendship he may have had with Bob. Which may be important as it suggests that rather than Bob being the one who

has changed it is Jimmy who has changed. He views his past as just that his past without getting emotionally attached to it. Unlike Bob who has spent the evening reminiscing and hoping that Jimmy will show up so that they can rekindle their friendship. By the end of the story the reader realizes that Jimmy's job is more important to him than having a friendship with an individual (Bob) who lives his life contrary to how Jimmy lives his.

- "**The Cop and the Anthem**" is a December 1904 short story by the United States author O. Henry. It includes several of the classic elements of an O. Henry story, including a setting in New York City, an empathetic look at the state of mind of a member of the lower class, and an ironic ending.

"The Cop and the Anthem" has only one character who is given a name, the protagonist "Soapy." Furthermore, no last name is given. It is made clear that Soapy is homeless, a member of the substantial army of underclass men and women who flocked to New York City during the earliest years of the twentieth century.

The short story's narrative is set in an unstated day in late fall. Because the city trees' deciduous leaves are falling and there is a hint of frost in the air, Soapy faces the urgent necessity of finding some sort of shelter for the winter. He is psychologically experienced in thinking of Blackwell's Island, the local jail, as a de facto winter homeless shelter, and the narrative shows him developing a series of tactics intended to encourage the police to classify him as a criminal and arrest him.

Soapy's ploys include swindling a restaurant into serving him an expensive meal, vandalizing the plate-glass window of a luxury shop, repeating his eatery exploit at a humble diner, sexually harassing a young woman, pretending to be publicly intoxicated, and stealing another man's umbrella.

However, all of these attempts are quickly exposed as failures. The upper-class restaurant looks at Soapy's threadbare clothes and refuses to serve him. A police officer responds to the broken window but decides to pursue an innocent bystander. The diner refuses to have Soapy arrested, and instead has two servers throw Soapy out onto a concrete pavement.

Soapy's failures to earn his desired arrest continue. The young woman, far from feeling harassed, proves to be more than ready for action. Another police officer observes Soapy impersonating a drunk and disorderly man, but assumes that the exhibitionistic conduct is that of a Yale student

celebrating a victory over "Hartford College" in football. Finally, the victim of the umbrella theft relinquishes the item without a struggle.

Based on these events, Soapy despairs of his goal of getting arrested and imprisoned. With the autumn sun gone and night having fallen, Soapy lingers by a small Christian church, considering his plight.

As O. Henry describes events, the small church has a working organ and a practicing organist. As Soapy listens to the church organ play an anthem, he experiences a spiritual epiphany in which he resolves to cease to be homeless, end his life as a tramp afflicted with unemployment, and regain his self-respect. Soapy recalls that a successful businessman had once offered him a job. Lost in a reverie, Soapy decides that on the very next day he will seek out this potential mentor and apply for employment.

As Soapy stands on the street and considers this plan for his future, however, a "cop" (policeman) taps him on the shoulder and asks him what he is doing. When Soapy answers "Nothing," his fate is sealed: he has been arrested for loitering. In the magistrate's court on the following day, he is convicted of a misdemeanor and is sentenced to three months in Blackwell's Island, the New York City jail.

- "**The Skylight Room**" is a short story by author William Sydney Porter under pen name O. Henry. The story is about a young woman, Miss Leeson, and her stay at one of Mrs. Parker's parlours. During her stay, Miss Leeson experiences hard times and is later rescued by a star.

The story was published in *The Four Million*, a collection of short stories by O. Henry that was first published in 1906.

The protagonist, Miss Leeson, is a typist who rents a room in Mrs. Parker's boarding house. Miss Leeson does not have much money to spare, so she rents the smallest room available. The room is located on the top floor, is quite small, and has a skylight.

Guests of the parlor often collect on the porch in the evenings and chat. One evening, Miss Leeson, who is young and pretty, points out a star in the sky and declares she has named it Billy Jackson. One of the other women correct her sharply. One of the admiring men defend her made-up name as far better. So goes the conversations.

Later in the story the reader finds Miss Leeson on hard times and unable to pay for both rent and food. She returns home to the parlor one day after searching for work. She is weak from lack of food, which she cannot afford. One of the guests offers to marry her, but Miss Leeson declines the offer of rescue, staying true to herself. She makes it to her room and collapses on her bed staring at star Billy Jackson through the skylight as she falls unconscious.

The following day, the maid forces Miss Leeson's door open when she does not respond. Attempts to revive Miss Leeson fail. An ambulance is called and a dashing physician whisks Miss Leeson away to the hospital. The reader then discovers that the physician was able to save Miss Leeson. In O. Henry fashion, the name of the physician is Dr. William (Billy) Jackson.

- "**Moon-face**": The title story is a short story by Jack London, on the subject of extreme antipathy. The unnamed protagonist of the story has an irrational hatred of John Claverhouse, the moon-face man. He hates really everything about him: his face, his laugh, his entire life, and when he finds out that Claverhouse engages in illegal fishing with dynamite, he works out a scheme to kill him while making it look like an accident...

- "**To the man on trail**": In northern Canada, a solitary hiker and his dog depart from the main Yukon trail. At the end of their day hike, the man will be reunited with his traveling companions, who he refers to as "the boys," at the Henderson Camp. The man is a newcomer to this area and unfamiliar with the extreme cold temperatures. A weather forecast of fifty degrees below zero does not mean much to the man, who is competent but lacks imagination. Such extreme temperatures promise discomfort, but do not cause him to reflect on the risks, his own death, and his role in the natural world.

The man, therefore, thinks very little as he walks, considering only his destination for the evening, and his lunch, which he carries inside his jacket against his skin to keep it from freezing. He chews tobacco as he walks, and his spit freezes in an icicle from his mouth in the extreme cold. The temperature is, in fact, seventy-five degrees below zero.

- "**The Monkey's Paw**" is a supernatural short story by author W. W. Jacobs first published in England in the collection *The Lady of the Barge* in

1902. In the story, three wishes are granted to the owner of the monkey's paw, but the wishes come with an enormous price for interfering with fate.

The short story involves Mr. and Mrs. White and their adult son, Herbert. Sergeant-Major Morris, a friend who served with the British Army in India, introduces them to a mummified monkey's paw. An old fakir placed a spell on the paw, so that it would grant three wishes. The wishes are granted but always with hellish consequences as punishment for tampering with fate. Morris, having had a horrific experience using the paw, throws the monkey's paw into the fire but Mr. White retrieves it. Before leaving, Morris warns Mr. White that if he does use the paw, then it will be on his own head.

At Herbert's suggestion, Mr. White flippantly wishes for £200, which will enable him to make the final mortgage payment for his house, even though he believes he has everything he wants. The next day his son Herbert leaves for work at a local factory. Later that day, word comes to the White home that Herbert has been killed in a terrible machinery accident. Although the employer denies responsibility for the incident, the firm has decided to make a goodwill payment to the family of the deceased. The payment, of £200, exactly matches the amount Herbert suggested his father should wish for.

Ten days after their son's death and a week after the funeral, Mrs. White, mad with grief, insists that her husband use the paw to wish Herbert back to life. Reluctantly he does so, despite a premonition of summoning his son's mutilated and decomposing body. An hour or so later—the cemetery being two miles away—there is a knock at the door. As Mrs. White fumbles at the locks in a desperate attempt to open the door, Mr. White, terrified of "the thing outside", retrieves the paw and makes his third wish. The knocking suddenly stops. Mrs. White opens the door to find no one is there. She wails in disappointment and misery.



From 10 short-stories above, there are 48 idioms were found.

<b>Serial No</b>	<b>Short-stories</b>	<b>Idioms</b>
1	<b>B24 Arthur Conan Doyle 1899</b>	Rots in gaol
2		Which way the wind blows
3		The end of the string in your hand
4		Had a hand in
5		God's hand strike me down
6		Keep off the cross
7		Yarning about the neighbors
8		Talk as the devil would have it
9		Eating her head out
10		The iron should be on my wrist once more
11		Had a job to get over it
12		All plain sailing
13		Did not met a soul
14		Stood in the shadow
15		Had some starts in my life
16		Lending me a hand to rob
17		Stout-hearted
18		Fainted-hearted
19		An apple of his eyes
20		The ring of truth
21	<b>The tell – Tale Heart Edgar Alan Poe 1843</b>	Take the life of the old man
22		hearkening to the death watches in the wall
23		the hellish tattoo of the heart increased
24	<b>To the man on the trail Jack London</b>	A Christmas without punch is sinking a hole to bed rock with nary a pay-streak
25		Stack up on that fer a high card
26		harking back to childhood memories
27	<b>Désirée's Baby Kate Chopin 1893</b>	Fell in love, as if truck by a pistol shot

28	<b>After 20 years</b> <b>O'Henry</b> <b>1906</b>	Make my fortune
29		Lost track
30		The sharpest wits
31		Get pile
32		Put a razor-edge on
33		Bless one's heart
34	<b>Moon-face</b> <b>Jack London</b>	Moon-faced
35		Offence to my eyes
36		Be the death of me
37		Blood of Judas
38		Closed-mouth
39		Join in his infernal glee
40	<b>Skylight room</b> <b>O'Henry</b> <b>1906</b>	Look green
41	<b>The cop and the anthem</b> <b>O'Henry</b> <b>1904</b>	Near at hand
42		Jack Frost
43		Bluecoat
44		The goose egg
45		Lay hand in
46	<b>The gift of Magi</b> <b>O'Henri</b> <b>1905</b>	Stripped by on rosing wings
47	<b>The monkey's paw</b> <b>William Wymark Jacob</b> <b>1902</b>	Hark at the Wind
48		Steeped in shadow and silence

**Table 1: List of short story and idioms**

## 2.2. Analytical framework

Based on the aims set for the study, which is to figure out the grammatical and semantic features of idioms in English short stories, the researcher counts on Quirk's classification of part of speech to form the analytical framework for analysis.

First, idioms are first classified according to grammatical features. They are divided into:

- Phrase:     Noun Phrase  
                  Verb Phrase  
                  Adjective Phrase
- Clause:     Finite clause (S + V)  
                  Non-Finite Clause ( $V_{ing}/ To V/ V_{bare}/ V_{ed}$ )  
                  Adverbial Clause  
                  Nominal Clause  
                  Relative Clause  
                  Comment Clause

Secondly, idioms are classified according to their meaning. They are divided into two different types: idiomatic and non-idiomatic meanings.

### Based on grammatical

Serial No	Idiom	Phrase			Clause			
		N	V	Adj	Nominal	Relative	Adverbial	Comment
1	Rots in goal		X					
2	Which way the wind blows						X	
3	The end of the string in your hand						X	
4	Had a hand in		X					
5	God's hand strike me down	X						
6	Keep off the cross		X					
7	Yarning about the neighbors		X					
8	Talk as the devil would have it		X					
9	Eating her head out	X						
10	The iron should be on my wrist once more						X	
11	Had a job to get over it		X					
12	All plain sailing			X				
13	Did not met a soul		X					
14	Stood in the shadow		X					
15	Had some starts in my life		X					
16	Lending me a hand to rob	X						
17	Stout-hearted			X				
18	Fainted-hearted			X				
19	An apple of his eyes	X						
20	The ring of truth	X						
21	Take the life of the old man		X					
22	hearkening to the death watches in the wall		X					
23	the hellish tattoo of the heart increased			X				
24	A Christmas without punch is sinking a hole to bed rock with nary a pay-streak				X			
25	Stack up on that fer a high card		X					
26	harking back to childhood memories		X					

27	Fell in love, as if truck by a pistol shot		X					
28	Make my fortune		X					
29	Lost track		X					
30	The sharpest wits			X				
31	Get pile		X					
32	Put a razor-edge on		X					
33	Bless one's heart		X					
34	Moon-faced			X				
35	Offence to my eyes			X				
36	Be the death of me	X						
37	Blood of Judas	X						
38	Closed-mouth			X				
39	Join in his infernal glee		X					
40	Look green			X				
41	Near at hand			X				
42	Jack Frost	X						
43	Bluecoat	X						
44	The goose egg	X						
45	Lay hand in		X					
46	Stripped by on rosing wings			X				
47	Hark at the Wind		X					
48	Steeped in shadow and silence		X					

**Table 2: Idioms classified based on grammatical features**

**Based on semantic features:**

Serial No	Idiom	Meaning	
		Idiomatic	Non-idiomatic
1	Rots in gaol		X
2	Which way the wind blows	X	
3	The end of the string in your hand		X
4	Had a hand in		X
5	God's hand strike me down		X
6	Keep off the cross		X
7	Yarning about the neighbors		X
8	Talk as the devil would have it		X
9	Eating her head out	X	
10	The iron should be on my wrist once more		X
11	Had a job to get over it		X
12	All plain sailing		X
13	Did not met a soul		X
14	Stood in the shadow		X
15	Had some starts in my life		X
16	Lending me a hand to rob		X
17	Stout-hearted		X
18	Fainted-hearted		X
19	An apple of his eyes	X	
20	The ring of truth		X
21	Take the life of the old man		X
22	hearkening to the death watches in the wall		X
23	the hellish tattoo of the heart increased		X
24	A Christmas without punch is sinking a hole to bed rock with nary a pay-streak	X	
25	Stack up on that fer a high card	X	
26	harking back to childhood memories	X	
27	Fell in love, as if truck by a pistol shot		X
28	Make my fortune		X
29	Lost track		X
30	The sharpest wits		X
31	Get pile		X

32	Put a razor-edge on		X
33	Bless one's heart		X
34	Moon-faced		X
35	Offence to my eyes	X	
36	Be the death of me	X	
37	Blood of Judas		X
38	Closed-mouth		X
39	Join in his infernal glee	X	
40	Look green		X
41	Near at hand		X
42	Jack Frost		X
43	Bluecoat		X
44	The goose egg		X
45	Lay hand in		X
46	Stripped by on rosing wings		X
47	Hark at the Wind	X	
48	Steeped in shadow and silence	X	

**Table 3: Idioms classified based on semantic features**

### 2.3. Preparing data

Data can be defined as the quantitative or qualitative values of a variable. Data is thought to be the lowest unit of information from which other measurements and analysis can be done. It plays the most important and vital role in any research studies as it helps to bring about the quantitative evidence for a hypothesis or supports the justification for a qualitative study. Within this study, data is collected from a number of famous literary works in English and Vietnamese. To be specific, 3 well-known English novels are selected and their Vietnamese translated versions are carefully chosen so that the researcher can work out their appropriate equivalents.

The first English novel to be selected is *Wuthering Heights*, Emily Brontë's only novel, being widely regarded as a classic of English literature.

## **2.4. Research methods**

Generally, the study is conducted with two main research methods: the quantitative and the qualitative. While the former helps me to collect data and find out the frequency at which idioms can be found in the selected short stories, the latter enables me to provide justifications for the grammatical and semantic features found with idiomatic expressions in the study.

More specifically, different research methods are used.

First, descriptive method enables the researcher to figure out typical linguistic features of idioms in English literature works. After data are collected, all the short stories are read through to find out the theme, plot, characters and their ideological value. Simultaneously, the context in which idioms occur is described in terms of the topic of the communicative event, the purpose, the participants and their social relationship and status as defined in Nunan (1993, p.8) to prepare the ground for the interpretation of prominent linguistic features of idioms in chosen English literature works. Second, syntactic and semantic features of these idioms are described so that the researcher can have an insightful consideration into how and why they are present in these works. This job enables her to work out the most common linguistic features of these idioms.

Second, interpretative method provides justifications for the occurrence of typical linguistic features of idioms in selected English short stories. Specifically, this method is first used to justify the manipulation of various syntactic functions of idioms in the selected data. Also, from the collected data, it is possible to find evidence for the occurrence of different semantic features of such idioms. Secondly, based on the existing social, cultural and linguistic knowledge as well as the contextual cues, the researcher can explain what expressions in Vietnamese can be the equivalents of these idioms and why.

The next method to be mentioned is the synthetic method which is applied to help the researcher categorize the linguistic features found in the analysis of



idioms in the collected English literature works. After these features are described, the typical ones are synthesized and categorized.

Finally, comparative method is employed to find out the similarities and differences in the syntactic and semantic features of idioms in English literature works and their Vietnamese equivalents.

In addition to the major methods elaborated above, statistical analysis is conducted to get statistic evidence for the study. After data are collected and described, syntactical and semantic properties of idioms in English literature works are manually counted to find the frequency or the proportion of occurrence. Statistical findings help to provide justification for the assumption or conclusion made pending the linguistic and behavioral features recognized.

## CHAPTER III: INVESTIGATION INTO THE GRAMMATICAL AND SEMANTIC FEATURES OF IDIOMS IN SOME ENGLISH SHORT STORIES

### 3.1. Grammatical features

There are 48 idioms in 10 famous short stories were found. In there, authors used 44 idioms by using phrase verb about more than 91% and only 4 idioms are clause (about 9% of all). Therefore, we can realize that idioms which are formed by using phrases are more popular in short story than clauses. Authors used idioms from phrase more usually because it is shorter and easier to understand.

#### 3.1.1. Idioms forming a phrase

##### 3.1.1.1. Idioms forming a verb phrase

The most popular grammatical feature of idioms is forming a verb phrase (52%). In most of the stories which are analysed, the authors use verb phrase as idioms.

For example:

(1) Keep off the cross (*B24* – Arthur Conan Doyle).

This means that “Stay away from sins/ prison/sorrow”.

The phrase is formed with a verb “Keep” as the main part of the idiomatic expression. It is combined with a prepositional phrase “off the cross”.

(2) Take the life of the old man (*The tell – Tale heart* -Edgar Alan Poe).

This means that “kill someone”.

The phrase is formed with a verb “Take” as the main part of the idiomatic expression. It is combined with a noun phrase “the life of the old man”.

(3) He had to find some way to take care of himself during the cold weather. (*The cop and the anthem*, Hemingway)

In this example, two different idiomatic expressions are formed “find some way” and “take care of” with the main parts being the verbs “find” and “take”

##### 3.1.1.2. Idioms forming a noun phrase

The second most popular grammatical feature of idioms is forming a noun phrase (21%).

For example:

(1) Eating her head out (*B24* – Arthur Conan Doyle)

This means that “emaciated/sorrow”

The phrase is formed with a noun “Eating” as the main part of the idiomatic expression. It is combined with a possessive adjective “her head out”.

(2) Bluecoat (*The cop and the anthem* - O’Henry)

This means that “Police”

The phrase is formed with a noun “coat” as the main part of the idiomatic expression. It is combined with an adjective “blue”

### 3.1.1.3. Idioms forming an adjective phrase

This kind of grammatical feature of idioms is about 21%.

For example:

(1) Stout-hearted (*B24* – Arthur Conan Doyle)

This means that “Brave”

The phrase is formed with an adjective “Stout” as the main part of the idiomatic expression. It is combined with a noun “hearted”

(2) Moon-faced (*Moon face* - Jack London)

This means that “The person who has a round shape of face”

The phrase is formed with a compound adjective “Faced” as the main part of the idiomatic expression. It is combined with a noun “Moon”.

### 3.1.2. Idioms forming a clause

#### 3.1.2. 1. Idioms forming a noun clause

A nominal clause is a clause (a group of words containing its own subject and verb) that is taking the place of a noun or pronoun in a sentence.

For example:

*“A Christmas without punch is sinking a hole to bed rock with nary a pay-streak”*

*(To the man on the trail* – Jack London)

This means lacks of something make people feel uncomfortable.

#### 3.1.2. 2. Idioms forming an adverbial clause

An adverbial clause is a dependent clause that functions as an adverb; that is, the entire clause modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. As with all clauses, it contains a subject and predicate, although the subject as well as the (predicate) verb may sometimes be omitted and implied.

There is 6% of adverbial clause in 10 short stories.

For example:

(1) “Which way the wind blows”.

*(B24* – Arthur Conan Doyle)

This means “To wait until you have more information before making a decision”.

(2) “The iron should be on my wrist once more”.

(B24 – Arthur Conan Doyle)

This means “Arrested again”.

### 3.2. Semantic features of idioms in some English short stories

#### 3.2.1 Idiomatic meaning

Idiomatic meaning means that readers can not guess the meaning of the idiom from the words around. They must learn by heart the meaning, otherwise they will find it impossible to understand this idiom.

For example:

(1) *You can take these medals. I should be glad if you would begin at this end. I suppose they will all be the same value when melted down, but these are the ones which are the rarest, and therefore, the most precious to him. It is not necessary to break the locks. If you press that brass knob you will find that there is a secret spring. So! Take that small one first—it is the very **apple of his eye**.*”

(B24 – Arthur Conan Doyle)

The idiom “Apple of his eye” means the person who someone loves most and is very proud of. If you don’t know the meaning you cannot guess it.

This idiom originated in the early 9th century, in an article of King Alfred. At that time, pupil of the eye is thought to be a solid, round object. The apple is a very popular fruit and it has round shape too, because of its similar appearance, the central part of the eye is known as the "apple". The word “pupil” is actually derived from Latin, appearing in English from around the 16th century. The root of the word is “papilla”, meaning “little doll”. Why is that meaningful? Because the word “pupil” is used to refer to your “little doll”, or your miniature image when you look into someone's eyes. Our vision is very important to each person and it is necessary to protect it, calling someone “the apple of my eye” to mean someone whom we are very respect and precious and we can do anything for them, because they are one of the most important things in our lives.

(2) Some say that she loved another man, and that it was just the riches of the old Lord which tempted her to be false to her lover, and that now she is *eating her heart out* because she has lost the one without being any nearer to the

other, for she might be the poorest woman in the parish for all the money that she has the handling of.”

(**B24** – Arthur Conan Doyle)

To “eat her heart out” is to feel jealous or envious of someone else’s achievements or good fortune. Occasionally, it means to feel other strong emotions, especially grief, bitterness, or worry over something

The idiom is most often used in an exaggerated gloating but humorous way, although sometimes it is boastful and rude. When someone tells you to “eat your heart out” they are saying “you are going to be jealous (or envious).”

Eat your heart out has its root in a Latin saying, “*cor ne edito*”, which Plutarch gave as a Parable of Pythagoras, meaning “eat not thy heart.” The warning can be interpreted to mean “do not torture your soul with worry.” It entered into general English usage by the 1500s to mean being consumed with worry or strong feelings. How it became a humorous taunt is unclear

(3) Just make one or two inquiries, and you will soon find ***which way the wind blows***. Remember, also, that the only person who profited by the crime was herself, since it changed her from an unhappy wife to a rich young widow.

(**B24** – Arthur Conan Doyle)

This means: To understand what is happening in changing circumstances and to be able to anticipate the future.

The weather or windward side is the side from which the wind blows. For sailors, huntsmen and farmers knowing where the windward was at any time was obviously important, and it isn't difficult to see why 'knowing which way the wind blows' came to be synonymous with skill and understanding.

The figurative sense of 'the way the wind blows', that is, meaning the tide of opinion, was in use by the early 19th century. In November 1819, The Times published an advert for a forthcoming book - The Political House that Jack Built, which was said to be "A straw - thrown up to show which way the wind blows".

Bob Dylan's Subterranean Homesick Blues, 1965, encouraged the young to make their own decisions with the lines:

“You don't need a weather man  
To know which way the wind blows”

### 3.2.2 Non-Idiomatic meaning

- Non-Idiomatic meaning means the reader can easily guess the meaning of one idiom while they read in the short story. He or she just needs to depend on the preceding or the following words around this idiom

For example:

(1) *There was a high wall round this garden, and I had a job to get over it, but once on the other side it was **all plain sailing**. I did not meet a soul upon the road, and the iron gate of the avenue was open. (B24 – Arthur Conan Doyle)*

If you don't know the meaning of idiom "plain sailing" in B24 of Conan Doyle, you have to read the pre-sentence: "There was a high wall round this garden" that mean the wall very high and hard to get over it but the character still get over the wall and he "did not meet a soul upon the road"; nobody saw him get in and his job was successful without detected. So I guess idiom "plain sailing" is describe a process or activity that goes well and is easy and uncomplicated.

(2) *John Claverhouse was a moon-faced man. You know the kind, cheek-bones wide apart, chin and forehead melting into the cheeks to complete the perfect round, and the nose, broad and pudgy, equidistant from the circumference, flattened against the very centre of the face like a dough-ball upon the ceiling.*

(**Moon-face** – Jack London)

Even you don't know the meaning of word "moon-face", at the first time when you saw this word, I'm sure that you will imagine the shape of full moon that mean the person who been describe has "moon-face" is extremely round shape. These next sentences are further clarifies the meaning of this word: "cheek-bones wide apart", "chin and forehead melting into the cheeks to complete the perfect round" ...

(3) *On his bench in Madison Square Soapy moved uneasily. When wild geese honk high of nights, and when women without sealskin coats grow kind to their husbands, and when Soapy moves uneasily on his bench in the park, you may know that winter is near at hand. A dead leaf fell in Soapy's lap. That was **Jack Frost's** card. Jack is kind to the regular denizens of Madison Square, and gives fair warning of his annual call. At the corners of four streets he hands his pasteboard to the North Wind, footman of the mansion of All Outdoors, so that the inhabitants thereof may make ready.*

*(The cop and the anthem - O'Henry)*

Jack Frost means “winter”

Appearing in 17th-century folk tales, Jack Frost bears the image of a leprechaun representing winter and snow. In fact, the myths about Jack Frost in the legend often illustrate an ugly cottage with a pointed nose, spikes that ripple around the body or an old man with a beard covered with ice.

The legend of Jack Frost is also not consistent and unclear. In each country there is their own story about this young man, but almost no one has recorded his true origin. The most plausible hypothesis is that Jack Frost originated in Norse mythology, the cold Scandinavian region. Jack Frost's Viking language is Jokul Frosti, an ice giant, son of the wind goddess Kari. The version of Jack Frost in Russia is Morozko - an old man who is considered a snow god, and in Germany it is Frau Holle - a grandmother who is said to be the goddess of winter and weather, often appears to help good people and punish bad guys.

However, the most common image we know of Jack Frost is a tiny goblin with gray skin and drops of ice on his hair and nose. He was a mischievous person, often teasing and making people cold by the cold wind he created. Not only has the power to control ice and snow, some stories also describe Jack Frost's ability to freeze and separate a person's shadow, then arbitrarily manipulate the shadow as a control of a living entity.

As mentioned above, there are many different anecdotes about Jack Frost, when he talks about him as a mischievous little love, when he is a cruel soul, once again a hero. But whatever version Jack Frost deserves to be considered an artist of true nature. He often created beautiful patterns from snow and ice on the windows of the family, where he went, the place was covered with a layer of snow and white cotton. Not only responsible in the winter, it is said that Jack Frost also contributes to adorning the spring by creating puddles of melted snow, and in the autumn he uses power covered with a bright yellow, dazzling the foliage, signaling another winter coming.

To summary, Jack is the simple of the winter, just need to see or hear “Jack Frost” people can think immediately to cold, freeze and winter.

## CHAPTER IV: DIFFICULTIES AND SUGGESTIONS

### 4.1 Difficulties

#### 4.1.1. Difficulties caused by differences in syntactic features

Because of the differences in the syntactic system, the formation of idiomatic expressions in English short stories is sometimes different from that in Vietnamese. This may lead to the challenges in understanding the idioms.

For example:

English: Take the life of the old man (*The tell – Tale heart* - Edgar Alan Poe).

Vietnamese: Giết gã đàn ông này.

It is obvious that students will find it difficult to comprehend and translate this idiom from English into Vietnamese because of the difference in syntactic structure.

#### 4.1.2. Difficulties caused by differences in semantic features

The difference in meaning also leads to some problems in understanding and using the idiom. For example, it is impossible for learners and readers to understand that “*The iron should be on my wrist once more*” means that “*arrested again*” because the readers may not share the same cultural understanding as the writer. Also, the difference in the context in which the story is created also prohibits the readers from comprehending this idiom.

Another example to prove the readers may not share the same cultural understanding as the writer: “*Keep of the cross*” means that: “*Stay away from sins/prison/sorrow*”.

To sum up, because idioms are formed from the similarities of 2 things as metaphor and students often do not have the habit of learning about the history, the context of the short stories, they do not know the culture of the time. They haven't known whether a famous events or characters were taken as a symbolic image at that time. So it is difficult to guess the meaning of the idiom used.

#### 4.1.3. Difficulties caused by syntactic loss, semantic loss and cultural loss in the translation of idioms in short stories from English into Vietnamese.

Translation of stories is difficult. Translation of idioms in stories is even more difficult. Because of the differences in language and culture, so during translating idioms there are many difficulties such as semantic loss, syntactic loss or cultural loss. For example,



English:	Fell in love, as if truck by a pistol shot.
Vietnamese:	Yêu em như thể tôi vừa bị trúng phải tiếng sét ái tình.
English:	Offence to my eyes.
Vietnamese:	Cái gai trong mắt.

## **4.2. Suggestions**

### **4.2.1. For learners**

Idioms have never been an easy topic but it is extremely interesting profound. So the ways to learn English idioms are not easy too. Mostly due to the differences of syntactic and semantic between the two languages, readers are difficult to understand the meaning of idiomatic; especially idioms used in short stories with specific contexts. Therefore, readers should improve their knowledge of grammar as well as vocabulary, and also learn more about cultural characteristics of western countries.

Furthermore, the readers should try to guess the meaning of idioms before search them, this way will help the reader remember idiom much longer. They should also regularly create a habit of using idioms in daily communication.

### **4.2.1. For translators**

In translating short stories, translators will face many difficulties when translating for example: syntactic loss, semantic loss, cultural loss... Therefore, it is impossible to translate idioms in short stories effectively.

So to translate great stories, translators need to have sufficient knowledge about culture and history as well as be sure of grammar, and know how to flexibly apply reasonable translation methods in translating idioms.

Before translating, it is necessary to consult a lot of books about the meaning of idioms to see which case is the most appropriate use of idioms.

### **Part III: CONCLUSION**

In linguistic, idiom is a characteristic unit. So idioms are not only an important part of the lexicon of a language, but also a valuable source of cultural knowledge of the nation which own it. With a wealth of knowledge that idiomatic treasures store, people can approach it in many different ways, especially research and learning idioms through famous short stories. By researching idioms, we will have a better insight into the cultures of other countries, thereby learning about customs, culture and civilization.

During the research, I chose 10 short stories from many famous authors then then read and filter idioms used. Thence, I studied the grammatical and semantic features, made statistics and detailed analysis.

After completing the study, I found that studying idioms is not easy. The readers and learners will hard to understand the author's implication when they using idioms in their short stories. Because of the difference between the 2 languages of 2 countries, will lead to differences in translation such as syntactic loss, semantic loss, cultural loss or difference in syntactic, semantic features.

In order to improve their own knowledge when learning a foreign language, students need to create their own habit of reading books especially foreign short stories because this is the easiest way to access new languages.

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