

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



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TECHNOLOGY

**A STUDY ON COLORS USED IN IDIOMATIC
EXPRESSIONS IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE
EQUIVALENTS**

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HẢI PHÒNG - 2023

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

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1. Nội dung và các yêu cầu cần giải quyết trong nhiệm vụ đề tài tốt nghiệp

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Đã nhận nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

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Độc lập - Tự do - Hạnh phúc

PHIẾU NHẬN XÉT CỦA GIẢNG VIÊN HƯỚNG DẪN TỐT NGHIỆP

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PART I: INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale.

In the 21st century, countries all over the world tend to develop basing on international cooperation. English has become crucial in the way people interact with different people around the world; not being able to communicate in English imposes what seem to be formidable limitations.

Therefore, English has been adopted as one of the most important subjects in many schools in Vietnam. As an English-majored student, the similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese cultures have been one of my concerns when studying at university. There are many differences between two languages, they are differences in grammar, lexicology, translation, phonetics and so on. However, there still exist plenty of similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese that can be demonstrated through metaphorical meaning especially in literature, idioms expression.

The research of English idioms has been traditionally associated with the study of literature, the use of idioms and is not restricted to this kind of language. A perfect understanding of how idioms are used in daily life language is not only important for English students to improve their vocabulary but also to understand new and original idioms when we hear and use them in daily life. However, it requires a lot of challenges for studies to speak and be able to understand the English language like a native tongue. One of the obstacles for learners is idioms.

Idioms are particularly useful because they give you a new, creative way to express yourself. Rather than saying 'You're correct', you could say 'You hit the nail on the head', which is a more complex and interesting expression. 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. Idioms help learners see the beauty as well as the cultural color of language which help us use and understand correctly and clearly.

The author hopes that learners will understand about idioms and proverbs in English, especially idioms related to colours description. Therefore, fascinated by the way English and Vietnamese people use idioms to express their daily communication. Especially, they could express their hidden words through color. Thus, the topic “A study on colors used in idiomatic expressions and Vietnamese equivalent” is chosen for my thesis.

2. Aim of the study

Idioms are extremely difficult topics and merely well-understood by foreign English learners and even native speakers of English who take the idioms and proverbs for granted because when they use idioms, they do not know if they are using them. The current study aims at identifying the strategies of learning English idioms among learners. It also aims to discover the difficulties and challenges that affect students' learning.

English is full of idioms. They come naturally for native speakers, so naturally. Most of the time the author or speaker doesn't even recognize their use. They are that commonly understood by the native. It starts to become more prevalent as a simpler way to express a complicated idea, sometimes to be more creative in using language. There are plenty of idioms that are color-based idioms.

The differences between Vietnamese and English culture resulted in many differences in their languages and idioms are not an exception. Although studying idioms is a very important language learner, many 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. Scope of the study.

During the research process, the author sees that English idioms, proverbs and expressions about colour are an interesting subject. Idioms and proverbs are a treasure of each country.

Because of its immensity, what have known about them is very little. Due to time allowance and limited knowledge, the author cannot cover all idioms on these issues, this study only focuses on idioms describing colour parts used in idiomatic expressions and their Vietnamese equivalents.

4. Methods of the study.

In order to study English idioms relating to colors and Vietnamese equivalence better, with a hope that learners could see the role of idioms in life, the following methods are used in the studying process:

The first is to having discussion with the supervisor, experts and friends.

Besides, idioms were collected from dictionaries and other sources of information to get valuable knowledge for this paper. This research is based on both theoretical discussion and data analysis. The theoretical background was selected with reference to many sources such as books, articles, and websites. All the data has been carefully collected and analyzed to compare and contrast the similarities and differences between the two languages and cultures.

Finally, valuable idioms were collected from dictionary and other sources of information to get for this paper, the author will analyze and compare these idioms.

5. Design of the study.

This paper gives a clear and brief organization including three main parts that contribute to an easy understanding and practical benefits gained for readers:

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 3

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 II : DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER 1 : Theoretical background

1.1 An overview of idiom.

Before researching in detail the use and the meaning of idioms relating to people description, it is important to understand the history and the use of idioms in daily life. Idioms are considered as special units of each language.

If English is not your first language, you should not be upset if you find yourself stumped when you hear something you respect, especially if it is an idiomatic expression. Learning about English idiomatic expressions will not only expose you to these "life lessons", but it will enrich your command of the English language.

Often, they offer advice or suggestions on better ways in which to live or interact with others. For this reason, the cryptic nature of idioms contributes to their depth and significance. Telling someone to simply "think innovatively might not be as effective as rehearsing the idiom "put the cart before the horse".

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 into your own English writing and speech- should you find an appealing situation in which to use one. They are often impressive and enjoyable to share.

Idioms honestly and exactly reflect the history, experience, spiritual values religious opinions of people.

1. 2 Definition of idiom - What are idioms?

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

First of all, we must understand what an idiom is? The word “idiom” comes from the Greek word “idiomatic,” meaning peculiar phrasing. 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.

In the definition of idioms, some scholars emphasize on the quantity of structure in idioms. That is to say how many language units to constitute the idioms? Is it except the phrases, words group, and words or sentences also can make up to the idioms? Others emphasize the single meanings of idioms it refers that the idiom's meaning is arbitrary.

The idiom's meanings cannot synthesize or cut apart. Different people hold the different opinions on the definition of idioms; they have different local points on the definition of idiom. So we must understand the definition of idioms exactly through the research.

Although we are unlikely to give an ideal definition to the idioms, but we should give a better definition of idioms before the research. "An idiom is an expression with the following features: It is fixed and is recognized by native speakers. You cannot make up your own; It uses language in a non-literal-metaphorical-way”.

(Jon Wright: Idioms organizer:2000:9)

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

An idiom is a group of words in current usage having a meaning that is not deducible from those of the individual words. Eg: "A couch potato" which means "someone who sits on a sofa or couch for several hours watching TV" is an idiom; and a big shot"- means "an important or influential person is another idiom, in both cases, we would have a hard time to understand the real meaning if we did not already know these idioms.

According to online dictionary Wikipedia: "An idiom is an expression whose meaning is not compositional – that is whose meaning does not follow from the meaning of which it is composed" Idioms are also defined as:

“Idiom is a set expression of two or more words that means something other than the literal meanings of its individual words” (Oxford advanced learner's dictionary:2000:564) Eg: Give a clown your finger and he will take your hand Fortune favors the brave Twiddle one's thumbs. There are many definitions of idiom in our society.

In short, the idioms consist of set phrases and short sentences, which are peculiar to the language in question and steeped in the national and religion, culture and ideas, thus being colorful, forcible and thought-provoking.

Strictly speaking, idioms are expressions that are not readily understandable from their literal meanings of individual constituents. In a broad sense, idioms may include colloquialism, catchphrases, slang expressions, proverbs and so on.

1.3. Idiom structural.

In daily life, we use idioms frequently in communication, in literature, and so on but we cannot classify structurals of idioms. There are many opinions about types of idioms, according to Tim_Nicolas at Essex University (Idioms: structural and psychological perspectives; 1995, 237-238), there are some kinds of idioms which are classified based on structure of sentence:

Verb + bare singular noun phrase	Ex: Chase rainbow
Verb + a + noun	Ex: Talk a blue streak
Verb +the +noun	Ex: See the colour (of someone money)
Verb + one's (own)+ noun	Ex: Blackmail someone
Verb + Noun phrase + noun	Ex: make yourself at home
Support-type verb + non definite noun phrase.	Ex: Give someone green light

1.4. Some common features of idioms.

There are many different definitions of idioms; however, we will find some similarities between them:

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

Eg: Black as night

*We had another power cut last night; it was as **black as night** in our house.*

- It tends to have some measures of internal cohesion such that it can often be replaced by a literal counterpart that is made up of a single word.

➤ An idiom has a nonproductive syntactic structure only single particular lexemes can collocate in an idiomatic construction. Substituting other words from the same generic lexical relation set will destroy the idiomatic meaning of the expression.

E.g: Put something down in black and white.

➤ It is anomalous syntactic. It has an unusual grammatical structure.

E.g: by and by

➤ Semantically, idioms have two layers of meaning. To decipher must recognize and understand the meaning of both layers:

- Literal meaning: the initial, basic meaning of the idioms, based on the words used and what they mean in a literal sense.

- Idiomatic meaning: the underlying message, lesson or device offered by the idiom; the meaning of the overall expression, in a broader sense.

E.g: To paint in bright/dark colours

To describe something in a flattering (bright) or unflattering (dark) way

- John was struggling financially after moving home, but he painted everything in the brightest colours, and made it look like he was absolutely fine!

- She only painted the venue in dark colours, because she wanted to use it for her wedding, and didn't want me to book it for my wedding!

1.5. 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 nonliteralness is evident, resulting in "a new meaning-different form 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-literalness, since one component generally keeps its direct meaning. For instance, in semiidioms 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).

1.6. Classifications of idioms.

- 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.

- 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 idiotic meaning. Lastly, idioms can be performed in many structures and some of them may be grammatically incorrect.

1.7. 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.

1.8. Colour Idioms versus compounds.

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

E.g: blackout

green with envy

Compounds are sequences of two or more words arranged in a grammatical construction and acting as a unit in a sentence. An idiom is (usually) a type of compound that has a meaning that may not relate to the meanings of its individual words.

It is a figure of speech. Compound words have many kinds, but classification according to the meaning, compounds have two types:

Non- idiomatic compounds (motivated)

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

Ex: Blackleg

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

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

The structural analysis of all the idiomatic compounds shows following grammatical combinations while forming idiomatic expression.

1.9 Idioms and proverbs about colour.

Although idioms and proverbs are used very much in life but there are many differences and similarities which we can distinct them.

Proverbs are brief memorable saying that offer ethical direction in specific situation from generation and generation, they are a feature of almost all cultures, historically as well as today.

Proverbs are tailor-made for primary oral culture where, with no system in scrimption, what cannot be remembered is lost, but even in contemporary literacy cultures, new sayings continue to be coined; therefore so much so that sometimes, their specific meaning is no longer relevant For instance, the proverb "penny wise, pound foolish" is a holdover from when America was British colony and use the pound as currency.

Culture and Translation

1.10 What is culture?

The question is straightforward, but providing a full and pleasant answer is complex.

The term "culture" is derived from the Latin word "colere," which means to construct, foster, encourage, and cultivate. Various scholars offer numerous definitions of culture with opposing opinions.

According to Moore (1985: 4), **Culture** is *"The whole of the knowledge, ideas and habits of society that are transmitted from one generation to the next."* Concurred with this point, saying that culture should be taken as "socially acquired knowledge".

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.

Culture, as stated by Fay *"is a complex set of shared beliefs, values, and concepts which enables a group to make sense of its life and which provides it with directions for how to live"* (Holliday, A et al. (2004:60)).

In relation to language, **Culture** is emphasized as *"the total set of beliefs, attitudes, customs, behaviors, social habits,... of the member of a particular society"* (in Richards et al. (1985:94)).

According to Cambridge English Dictionary Online, **culture** is, "the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time."

In Nguyen Quang's opinion (1998:3), **culture** is "a share background (for example, national, ethnic, religious) resulting from a common language and communication style, custom, beliefs, attitudes, and values. Culture in this text does not refer to art, music, literature, food, clothing styles, and so on. It refers to the informal and often hidden patterns of human interactions, expressions, and viewpoints that people in one culture share.

Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn (1952:47) also pointed out that "**Culture** consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior

acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, and on the other as conditioning elements of further action."

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.

1.11 What is language?

Language is described as "*the human faculty that enables us to exchange meaningful messages without fellow man being by means of discourse and texts, which are structured according to the rules and convention of the particular language that we share with them*" by Jackson and Stockwell (1996:2).

Another linguist, Widdowson (1996: 4) states that language is so uniquely human, and it distinguishes us so clearly from other animals. He also claims that what is particularly striking about language is the way it is fashioned as systems of signs to meet the elaborate cultural and communal needs of human societies. "A language is *distinctively human*", in Delahunty and Garvey's words (1994: 15).

Language is not only our main link with the outside world, it is also a marker that distinguishes us from the other animal creatures we share the world with. According to Crystal (1992: 212), language is "*the systematic, conventional use of sounds, or written symbols human society for communication and self-expression.*"

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.

1.12 The link between culture and language in colours idioms.

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). 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 2: SOME ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE IDIOMS RELATED TO COLOURS

2.1 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.

2.1.1 Black

Idioms	Meaning	Example
As black as night As black as coal As black as pitch As black as the ace of spades	Very black	It was as black as night. We could not see anything
Black market	The place where goods or money are illegal bought and sold	He bought that gun in the black market.
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.
To blackmail (someone)	To take money from someone by threatening	He has been blackmailing me for months with some photo he took

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.
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!
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.
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.

2.1.2 Red

Idioms	Meaning	Example
(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.
In the red	in debt	I've got three credit card bills to pay off at the moment. I hate being in the red.

(not to have) a red cent	have no money at all	He has a red cent. He paid too much on alcohol.
As red as cherry As red as poppy	Bright red	This dress is so beautiful. It's as red as a cherry.
As red as a ruby As red as blood	Deep red.	I don't like that shirt because I don't like anything that as red as blood.
(on) red alert	prepared for an emergency or something dangerous to happen	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.
red tape	complicated official rules that prevent things from being done	I just want to start my own business, but the amount of red tape involved is so frustrating.
(to) see red	to become very angry	He saw red when he lost his car.

2.1.3 White

Idioms	Meaning	Example
(As) white as a sheet/ghost	Extremely pale in the face because of fear, illness or shock	Are you alright? You're as white as a sheet, what's the matter?
A white Christmas	A Christmas when it snows	I hope it will be a white X-mas this year.
A white elephant	A useless, but very expensive thing or possession	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!
A white lie	A small or harmless lie said in order not to hurt somebody	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.
White collar	A term used for office workers that traditionally wear white shirts with a collar.	We have a lot of vacancies for white-collar workers at the moment, but hardly anyone is applying for them!

2.1.4 Green

Idioms	Meaning	Example
To give somebody/get the green light	To give somebody permission to do something, to be allowed to go ahead with the project.	We have been given the green the light by the Marketing Executive to go ahead with the new advertising campaign.
Green as grass	Inexperienced, naive	He can be as green as grass sometimes. I don't think he's ready to be promoted to a higher position yet.
Green finger/thumb	skill in gardening	This garden used to look so beautiful when my mum lived here. She definitely had a green thumb. I wish I did too!
	Jealous	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.
Be green Green with envy Green-eyed monster	Sick or immature	Are you ok? You look green!

2.1.5 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.

2.2 Vietnamese idioms related to colours

2.2.1 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.

2.2.2 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

2.2.3 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"> • Đổi trắng thay đen 	Tráo trở, lật lọng; Tốt xấu, thật giả đảo lộn.
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2.2.4 Green

Idioms	Meaning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Xanh như tàu lá 	Da mặt tái xanh, bị bệnh Sợ hãi tột độ.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mặt xanh, nanh vàng 	Người ốm yếu đến mức xanh xao, vàng vọt.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tóc xanh nanh sắc 	Còn trẻ tuổi, khoẻ mạnh làm việc gì cũng nhanh gọn
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kẻ đầu bạc tiền kẻ đầu xanh 	Người già chưa mất nhưng người trẻ đã qua đời.

2.2.5 Grey/gray

Idioms	Meaning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lo bạc râu, râu bạc tóc 	Tác hại của lo buồn, phiền muộn; quá lo lắng.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Xanh như lá, bạc như vôi 	Lúc yêu thương thì đầm thắm, thiết tha tương 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 3 : SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE IDIOMS OF COLOURS

3.1. 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.

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 cherry	- 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 a sheet	- Trắng như tờ giấy
- As good as gold	- tốt như vàng

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.

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
- To wave a white flag	- vẫy cờ trắng
- Black eyes	- Thâm mắt
- Get the green light	- Bật đèn xanh
- Red flat	- cờ đỏ cảnh báo

3.2 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.

3.3 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
Red tape	The term used for bureaucratic delay, or excessive formalities	Thủ tục quan liêu	do not have a color-based term to reflect the same meaning

White elephant	something costs a lot of money to keep in good condition, but that has no useful purpose and is no longer wanted	Vật vô dụng	do not have a color-based term to reflect the same meaning
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3.4 English translation

Vietnamese		English	
Số thằng 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 unfriendly, inside they're warm and kind	Green outside red inside	does not make any sense

3.5 .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.

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

Teaching idioms to foreign language learners is difficult because it needs particular knowledge about the words' context (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990, p. 210-211). According to Belousova (2015), learning idiomatic expressions is not easy and needs special attention. Even native speakers of English face difficulties in using and understanding idioms (Mäntylä 2004). Consequently, learners should learn them depending on their idiomatic knowledge which is essential to understand

and use idioms correctly and appropriately (Burke, 1998). Traditional idiomatic learning strategies focus on rote learning and memorization (Chen and Lai, 2013). In contrast, learners and instructors need more modern effective and efficient strategies when learning and teaching idioms (SelvaRaj and Hua, 2019)

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.

3.6 The difficulties of studying idioms.

Every language across the world contains idiomatic expressions which are easily understood by native speakers, but difficult for foreign language speakers to master. This is because they contain hidden meanings which when directly translated, makes no sense. An idiom, by definition, is a group of words the sense of which is established by native speakers of the language. The meaning of the phrase cannot be deduced from the individual words. In other words, idioms are descriptive phrases that really don't make a lot of sense if you think about their content. Learners probably don't have that much language experience to know the meaning in the blink of an eye. To natives, that means, fast, to someone who's trying to learn, they might know what it means to "blink" and they probably know "eye". In their minds they might be thinking "eyes blink." in the literal sense. And the actual meaning is lost.

Because of that reasons, many foreign English students find idioms quite difficult to use and understand, but it is well worth the effort spent on learning idioms as they give you fluency and make your conversations less formal.

The problem with idioms is that they can be hard to use. This is because:

- dropping or changing a word renders the idiom meaningless
- you can't translate an idiom because, by their very definition, they become meaningless when translated

- you have to know how to use the idiom appropriately. Suggesting, for instance, that someone has kicked the bucket when attending his funeral would raise eyebrows.

3.7 Some suggested solutions

This study investigated the difficulties that learners face when learning idiomatic expressions as well as the strategies that they use to understand such expressions. The findings of the study revealed that the participants faced several difficulties when learning idioms. These difficulties forced instructors to use different educational techniques and strategies to help students overcome such difficulties. 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. This is the reason why there are some key points that should be taken into consideration when we study idioms, especially colour idioms.

Immersing yourself in the local culture

Go to local concerts, operas, comedy shows, plays, musicals, and poetry readings. Read books and watch movies about the country you're in. Engage with the culture through artistic means. You will learn so much about the history and current lifestyle of a country with this method of cultural immersion could enrich your English idioms.

you should presenting idioms in a manner that mirrors real-life language use, understanding English figurative expressions, using idioms in oral communication, and practicing idioms in different communicative contexts

Learn idioms in context, never in isolation

It's important to learn and use idioms and expressions in context. Of course, idioms are not always easy to understand. There are idiom and expression resources that can help with definitions, but reading them in short stories can also provide context that makes them come more alive. Try reading the story one time to understand the gist without using the idiom definitions.

On your second reading, use the definitions to help you understand the text while learning new idioms. After you understand the story, take the quiz at the end of each reading to test your knowledge. Teachers can print out these short stories and use in class in combination with teaching ideas provided at the end of this resource list.

A most effective way to understand, remember and use them is observing them in context. Remembering idioms in context and a situation helps our brain put them in a file folder, so to speak, where we could find them again. Repeating this experience (observing them in the same context over and over) and then in a different context but same meaning, will help to reinforce meaning and memory.

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

An extremely effective and simple method of learning foreign idiom, all you need is a pen and a notebook.

First, you need to draw a table with 5 columns:

Column 1: idioms to memorize

Column 2: Vietnamese meaning

Column 3: synonyms, antonyms of idioms in column 1

Column 4: related idioms (belonging to their families)

Column 5: Example sentences containing idiom.

Next, you pre-define the topics you want to master to find compatible idiom.

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.

After completing your notebook, you should regularly practice communication reflexes, idiom reflexes. Re-read the book while saying aloud the new things you learn.

A lot of idioms can be found in songs or movies

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.

Watching movies helps me learn many good idioms. Besides great benefits in practicing English listening, learning through movies helps me accumulate useful idioms, make your speech more natural.

The movies are reflections of the daily life of native speakers. Therefore, the idioms used in the film have practical value and are not outdated.

To make idioms not just "abstract" statements on paper, movies and music will be an effective source for you to learn idioms.

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. Idioms can help improve your conversational skills because it shows native speakers that you understand the cultural meaning and context behind the idiom you're using. With regular practice, you will know the appropriate context to use that idiom. This keeps you from using the wrong context and increases memorability.

PART III: 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. The following are the books that the author recommends you read to enhance your knowledge of color idioms. “Collins - COBUILD Idioms Dictionary”, “Collins - Work On Your Idioms”, “English Idioms in Use Intermediate - Felicity O'Dell”, “Oxford Word Skills Idioms and Phrasal Verbs”.

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EXERCISES

A. Insert the words from above into the most appropriate sentences below.

black	blue (x3)	brown	colours(x2)	green (x2)
grey(2)	pink	red(x3)	silver	white (x2)
yellow				

1) That company has a bad history of late payments. We need to see the..... of their money before we deliver anything to them. (Evidence of intended payment)

2) They stole his bike and sold it on the..... market. (illegal point of sale)

3) I didn't know that she came from blood. Somebody told me she was 25 in line to the throne of England. (Noble birth)

4) We were convinced the killer was the butler because a silver tray was found near the body of the victim. However, that was a..... herring. The real killer was the Duke. (False clue. a distraction)

5) That bridge is aelephant. Nobody uses it because the road it connects to doesn't actually go anywhere of consequence. (Useless)

6) My grandmother is always on Facebook. She is a realsurfer. (Senior internet user)

7) My account is several hundred pounds in the..... and the bank manager wants to talk to me. (Overdrawn)

8) She was tickled..... when we told her that she had been chosen to represent the school in the competition. (Very pleased)

9) Tom has gone to the doctor. He has been looking rather offall week. (Looking ill)

10) The ethical argument for CCTV surveillance of a area. (Unclear)

- 11) I always see..... when people mistreat animals. (Get angry)
- 12) Your garden is beautifull | didn't know that you had suchfingers.
(Good at horticulture)
- 13) This is a tricky issue. It's going to take some considerable time and.....
matter to resolve the problem. (A lot of thinking)
- 14) She's taken her son to the doctor because he was looking a bit around the gills.
(Unwell)
- 15) I explained the problem until I wasin the face but she stil ignored
me and insisted we did it her way. (Pointlessly argue to somebody that doesn't
listen)
- 16) The cops found the body but there was nothing they could do. He had been
.....bread for at least a day. (Dead)
- 17) The news of the wedding was completely out of the(Unexpected)
- 18) When the meeting got heated and they started shouting, he disappeared. He
has always been a..... belly. (A coward)
- 19) We had to tell her a little..... lie when we said that Father Christmas
wasn't a made-up person. We didn't want to spoil her Christmas. (An innocent
untruth)

B.Match each idiom with its meaning

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

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

see red	in red
green with envy	have green fingers
black sheep of the family	black market
caught red handed	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 wasspraying 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 nonsmoking, 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

D. 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

Key to exercises

A.

- | | |
|-----------|------------|
| 1. colour | 11. red |
| 2. black | 12. green |
| 3. blue | 13. grey |
| 4. red | 14. green |
| 5. white | 15. blue |
| 6. silver | 16. brown |
| 7. red | 17. blue |
| 8. pink | 18. yellow |
| 9. colour | 19. white |
| 10. grey | |

B.

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

C.

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 martket

D.

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

Appendix

BLACK IDIOMS

1. Black and white

To take everything into consideration and oversimplify something. To judge everything as either one way or the other, good or bad.

- Our boss always thinks that everything is straightforward, but he doesn't realise that this whole situation is not as black and white as he thinks!

2. Put something down in black and white

To write or have something written down on paper for confirmation or evidence

- *I don't understand why you don't believe me! Look, it's written here **in black and white!***

3. Black as night

Somewhere is very dark, when it is hard to see anything

- *We had another power cut last night; it was as **black as night** in our house. We didn't even have any candles!*

4. Black and blue

Used to describe something that is badly bruised

- *John's face was **black and blue** after the boxing match.*

5. Black eye

A bruise near one's eye

- *Fred came home with a horrible **black eye** today, but he won't tell us what happened!*

6. Black out

This means to, either darken by putting out or dimming the lights, or to lose consciousness.

- *We had a huge **black out** here last night, the whole town was out of power for about 7 hours!*
- *I don't know what happened to him, he just **blacked out!** Maybe he banged his head.*

7. Black as a skillet

Used to describe something that is very dirty, black with dirt

- *My hands and clothes were as **black as a skillet**, and I was only halfway through cleaning your garage!*

8. Black market

A term used for places where goods are illegally bought and sold for a profit.

- *Jerry used to sell cigarettes from South America on the **black market**!*

9. Blackball someone

To exclude or ostracise someone socially, reject them

- *Their company has been **blackballed** ever since that scandal was all over the newspapers. No one wants to do business with them anymore.*

10. Blacklist someone

To write someone's name on a list if they break any rules, and ban them from having the opportunity to take part again

- *"I was in a lot of debt a while ago, and was unable to pay it all back, so I've been **blacklisted**. I'm not allowed to get a mortgage in my own name.*

11. Pot calling the kettle black (shorten version: pot kettle black)

This is used when the person who hypocritically criticises or accuses someone else is as guilty as the person he or she criticises or accuses

- *She kept telling me that I shouldn't do that, but that's like the **pot calling the kettle black**, as she does it herself too!*

12. Blackmail someone

To extort or take money from someone by using their secrets against them and threatening to reveal it to others

- *He has been **blackmailing me** for months with some photos that I didn't know he had. I need someone to help me stop him!*

13. In someone's black books

To be in disgrace or in disfavour with someone

- *After that argument yesterday, I assure you he will be **in a lot of people's black books** for quite some time!*

14. Black tie event/affair

A formal event where male guests wear black bow ties with tuxedos or dinner jackets

- *The award's ceremony will be a **black tie event**, so I'll have to buy a smart suit. My wife is going to wear her purple ball gown.*

15. Black sheep

Used to describe a person who is the 'odd one out' of a group, and doesn't fit in with others around them. This could also be used to talk about someone who is a disgrace or embarrassment to their group.

- *I have always been the **black sheep** in my family, I have a completely different personality to all of them, and we don't even look the same!*

16. In the black

Meaning successful or profitable

- *Their company has been **in the black** ever since the new CEO took over, and changed it all around!*

17. Pitch black

Another term for somewhere that is very dark, and you are unable to see anything

- *I was afraid to go downstairs, the whole house was **pitch black**, and very quiet.*

18. A black spot

If you describe a place, time, or part of a situation as a black spot, you mean that it is particularly bad or likely to cause problems.

- There are recognised black spots in marriages which can lead to trouble.

19. A black look

An expression on your face that is full of anger and hate

- She gave me a black look when I suggested she should clean her room.

BLUE IDIOMS

18. Out of the blue

To appear out of nowhere without any warning, to happen quite suddenly or randomly by surprise

- *You won't believe it but Sarah called me **out of the blue** yesterday, and told me she's coming to visit! How unexpected!*
- *Greg has decided to quit his job **out of the blue**, and go travelling for a year!*

19. Blue pencil

To censor something, or limit the information that is shared

- *The reports about how soldiers were being treated abroad had been **blue-pencilled** by the authorities.*

20. A blue-eyed boy

A critical description of a boy or young man who is always picked for special favours by someone in a position of higher authority.

- *He is such a **blue-eyed boy**! I don't like that the manager always treats him as if he is special, it is not fair on the rest of us!*

21. A bolt from the blue

When some unexpected bad news is received

- *It was a complete **bolt from the blue** for us, we had no idea that they were having problems, let alone getting divorced!*

22. Blue blood

Used to describe someone from a noble, aristocratic or wealthy family

- *Many of the **blue bloods** in our town were invited to the royal wedding.*

23. Blue ribbon

To be of superior quality or distinction, the best of a group

- *A **blue ribbon** panel of experts were invited to investigate the extraordinary remains.*

24. Talk a blue streak

When someone talks very much and very rapidly

- *The woman in the hospital bed next to me **talked a blue streak** all day. I don't where she got the energy from!*

25. Feel blue

When someone looks or feels depressed or discontented

- *What's that the matter with you today? **You seem really blue**. Is there something you'd like to talk about?*

26. Blue in the face

To try really hard to win someone's agreement, but usually end unsuccessfully

- *I kept trying to convince him that it was a good idea until I was **blue in the face**, but he's so stubborn, he just kept disagreeing with me!*

27. Once in a blue moon

To occur extremely rarely, or only once in a lifetime

- *My sister is working in Africa, she hardly ever has the time to call us. My parents only hear from her **once in a blue moon**.*

28. Men/boys in blue

Used to describe the police, because of the colour of their uniforms

- *I saw the **boys in blue** outside our neighbour's house last night. I hope everything is okay.*

29. Blue collar

Used to describe men used as labourers, or factory workers

- *The got rid of a lot of the **blue-collar** workers during the recession. I would say they definitely suffered the most.*

BROWN IDIOMS

30. Browned off

To be bored or annoyed with someone or something

- *I'm always **browned off** when he comes to visit. He doesn't like doing anything, and he hardly ever talks to anyone!*

COLOURLESS IDIOMS

31. To be colourless

Used to describe someone who lacks personality, and is really boring

- *It's really hard to make conversation with her. She's just really dull and **colourless**.*

32. Off colour

When someone is not feeling their best, quite ill or uneasy

- *He's been really **off colour** for the past few days, I think I might have to take him to the doctor.*

33. To give/lend colour to

To help make a story or an explanation more credible and easier to believe, or accompany something

- *The broken window and missing items **lent colour** to her story that someone had robbed her house.*
- *The music in the play helped to **lend colour** to the performance of the actors.*

34. Sail under false colours

To pretend to be something that one is not

- *Our team leader seems to be **sailing under false colours**, I don't think he really understands what he's supposed to be doing!"*

35. Local colour

Used to describe the traditional features of a place that give it its own character

- *The weekend vegetable market added much **local colour** to the small town.*

36. A highly coloured report

Refers to a report that is exaggerated or has a biased view

- *The **highly coloured burglary report** had to be rewritten when they found out that the police officer who wrote it was a relative of the family.*

37. See someone's true colours

To understand someone's actual character, often for the first time

- *I thought I knew her so well, but it was only until I asked her for the money she owed me that I saw **her true colours**.*

39. See the colour of someone's money

To prove that someone has enough money for something

- *The antiques dealer wouldn't let me touch the items I'd agreed to purchase, until he saw **the colour of my money**.*

40. Chase rainbows

When someone tries to get or achieve something that is difficult or impossible

- *My brother doesn't think realistically. He'll never get a decent job if he just **chases rainbows** all the time.*

41. To show one's true colours

To reveal one's true nature

- *When he got so angry at her in front of everybody, he **showed his true colours**.*

42. With flying colours

To complete something with great distinction, and excellent results

- *I didn't think she would do so well in the final exam, but she passed it **with flying colours!***

43. Dyed-in-the-wool

Used to describe someone or something that is permanent (like wool that is dyed a certain colour)

- *My father has always been a **dyed-in-the-wool** conservative, and I know he will never change.*

44. To paint in bright/dark colours

To describe something in a flattering (bright) or unflattering (dark) way

- *John was struggling financially after moving home, but he **painting everything in the brightest colours**, and made it look like he was absolutely fine!*
- *She **only painted the venue in dark colours**, because she wanted to use it for her wedding, and didn't want me to book it for my wedding!*

45. To be kept in the dark

Keeping a secret from someone, shielding the truth

- *He kept everyone in the dark about the true extent of his illness.*

YELLOW IDIOMS

89. Yellow-bellied

Someone who is seen as a coward or extremely timid

- *There is no point in asking him what to do. He is a yellow-bellied coward, and won't stand up for what is right!*

90. A yellow streak

Someone who has cowardice in their character

- *He has always had a big yellow streak running down his back, don't expect him to change now!*

GREEN IDIOMS

46. To be green

Used to describe someone who is immature, or inexperienced

- *He can be rather green sometimes. I don't think he's ready to be promoted to a higher position yet.*

47. Green with envy

Used to describe someone who is extremely jealous, full of envy

- *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.*

48. Give someone the green light / get the green light

When someone receives, or is given, permission to go ahead with something

- *We have been given the green the light by the Marketing Executive to go ahead with the new advertising campaign.*

49. Grass is always greener on the other side

Used to describe a place that is far away, and better than, where you are now, or another person's situation that is very different from your own

- *He realised that **the grass is always greener on the other side** when he saw that his new job wasn't perfect, and had its own problems too.*

50. Green belt

An area of fields and trees around a town

- *Our city has a policy of increasing the **green belt** around it.*

51. Green thumb/green finger

Used to describe someone with a talent for gardening, having the ability to make plants grow

- *This garden used to look so beautiful when my mum lived here. She definitely had a **green thumb**. I wish I did too!*

GREY IDIOMS

52. A grey area

Something that is not clearly defined, and there is still debate as to whether it is 'black or 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.*

GOLD IDIOMS

53. A golden opportunity

An opportunity that may never present itself again

- *Think carefully about what you're going to do, this is a **golden opportunity**, and you don't want to mess it up!*

54. A golden handshake

A large sum of money that is paid to a retiring manager or director, or to a redundant worker

- *The company Chairman received a **huge golden handshake** when he retired.*

55. Golden boy

The term given to a young man idolised for a great skill, usually in sport.

- *By many of his fans, Wayne Rooney is seen as the **golden boy** of his football team.*

PINK IDIOMS

56. Tickled pink

To be very pleased, thrilled or delighted about something

- *Anna was **tickled pink** that her fiancé had made such an effort for her birthday.*

57. See pink elephants

When someone sees things that are not really there, because they are in their imagination

- *Anyone who hears his story thinks **he sees pink elephants**. It's just such a far-fetched story, and very hard to believe.*

58. Pink Slip

A termination notice received from a job

- *They gave me my **pink slip** last week, so I've got to find a new job now.*

59. In the pink of something

Meaning in very good health

- *My grandmother looked ever so well when I saw her, **she was in the pink of condition**.*

RED IDIOMS

60. To be shown the red card

This derives from football terminology, and means to be dismissed from your job

- *The company Accountant **was shown the red card**, after they found out he was using company money for personal gain.*

61. To be in the red

To have an overdraft, be in debt to your bank, or owe an institution some money

- *I've got three credit card bills to pay off at the moment. **I hate being in the red!***

62. To be out of the red

To be out of debt

- ***Our company is finally out of the red now.** We've managed to pay back our loan, and now we're making profit!*

63. A red flag

A signal that something is not working properly or correctly

- *The fallen trees along the road raised **a red flag** for the safety inspectors.*

64. Blood red

Used to describe the deep red colour of something

- *She was wearing a beautiful cocktail dress with **blood red** lipstick to match.*

65. Beet red

Also used to describe dark red, usually the colour of a face (derives from beetroot)

- *I could see my son up on the stage, his little face was **beet red!***

66. Red hot

Something new and exciting, creating much demand

- *The new video game is **red-hot**. Some fans have been waiting outside stores for days, to get a hold of them!*

67. Red herring

An unimportant matter that misleads everyone and draws attention away from the main subject

- *Unfortunately that witness was just **a red herring**. She had no justification to her story, and it was a waste of valuable time.*

68. Catch someone red-handed

To catch someone in the act of committing a crime, or doing something wrong that they shouldn't be doing

- *He kept lying to me about where he was going in the evenings, so yesterday I followed him and **caught him red-handed**. He was with another woman!*

69. Red in the face

To become embarrassed

- *I went **red in the face** when the teacher told me off in front of everyone for arriving late!*

70. Red-eye

A journey that leaves late at night and arrives early in the morning

- *We had to catch the **red-eye** flight last night, and I'm completely **exhausted** now.*

71. Red-letter day

A day that is memorable because of some important event

- *The day I graduated was **a red-letter day** for my mum, she still talks about it today!*

72. To look through rose-coloured/tinted spectacles/glasses

When someone sees things in an overly flattering or over-optimistic light

- *Sarah doesn't understand what it's like for us. She has always **seen everything through rose-tinted glasses** because her parents spoilt her so much when she was young.*

73. To see red

To react with uncontrollable rage against someone or something

- *John **saw red** when he heard someone shouting at his mother.*

74. Red tape

The term used for bureaucratic delay, or excessive formalities, and attention to rules and regulations, often resulting in injustice to the ordinary citizen

- *I just want to start my own business, but the amount of **red tape** involved is so frustrating, that it almost makes me want to give up!*

75. To see the red light

To recognise approaching danger. The red light is referred to as a danger signal

- *The doctor warned me for so many years that I should stop smoking, but I didn't listen. When I had a minor heart attack last year, **I saw the red light** and realised that I had to quit smoking, and improve my health.*

76. Paint the town red

To go out and have a really good time at a party

- *I've managed to get a babysitter for this weekend. Let's go and **paint the town red!***

77. Roll out the red carpet

To greet a person with great respect, and give them a big, warm welcome

- *When Barack Obama came to visit our school, we **rolled out the red carpet** for him.*

78. Red-carpet treatment

(Similar to the one above) To receive special or royal treatment, and be received with a big, warm welcome

- *My aunt always gives us the **red-carpet treatment** when we go to visit her.*
- *Anyone who hears his story thinks **he sees pink elephants**. It's just such a far-fetched story, and very hard to believe.*

SILVER IDIOMS

79. The silver screen

A term for the cinema

- *Do you fancy going to watch that movie on **the silver screen** tonight?*

80. Born with a silver spoon in one's mouth

Meaning born into a rich family

- *I don't think Kelly has ever had a job. She was **born with a silver spoon** in her mouth.*

81. To be given something on a silver plate/platter

When something is offered to someone whole-heartedly (in a metaphorical sense)

- ***I offered my heart to him on a silver platter**, and he turned it down.*

WHITE IDIOMS

82. As white as a sheet

When someone is in a state of great fear or anxiety

- *Harold are you alright? You're **as white as a sheet**, what's the matter?*

83. Raise a white flag

This indicates that one has accepted defeat and surrenders to the other party

- *There was such a heated debate going on in the conference room, they wouldn't back down! **I just raised my white flag** in the end.*

84. Whitewash something

To cover up or gloss over faults or wrongdoings

- *The government was accused of trying **to whitewash the scandal** over charity pay-outs.*

85. White elephant

A term used for a useless possession, something that is of no use

- *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.*

86. White as a ghost

Used to describe someone who is very pale because of pain, fear, shock or illness

- *I didn't think the movie was that scary, but my sister was **as white as a ghost!***

87. A white lie

A 'little' or 'harmless' lie told in order to be polite and avoid hurting someone's feelings, or do something that is not seriously wrong

- *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.*

88. White collar

A term used for office workers that traditionally wear white shirts with a collar.

- *We have a lot of vacancies for **white-collar** workers at the moment, but hardly anyone is applying for them.*