



A Study of Similarities and Differences of English and Vietnamese Idioms Containing the Word “Fire”

Tran Thi Thanh Loan

University of Transport and Communications, No.3 Cau Giay Street, Lang Thuong Ward, Dong Da District, Ha Noi, Vietnam

* Corresponding Author: **Tran Thi Thanh Loan**

Article Info

ISSN (online): 2582-7138

Volume: 06

Issue: 01

January-February 2025

Received: 20-12-2024

Accepted: 15-01-2025

Page No: 1635-1641

Abstract

English is now becoming a global language, especially in Vietnam where it is required in the curriculum. However, there are many challenges that students have to face when learning this language, and one of them is understanding idioms. An aim of our research was to determine the similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese idioms containing the word “fire” in syntactic and semantic features. A total of 116 English and Vietnamese idioms were collected from dictionaries, literature, and the Internet, and categorized according to their many syntactic and semantic features. The findings show that in syntactic features, Vietnamese idioms tend to use prepositional phrases and sentences more frequently than English idioms, which heavily rely on verb phrases and noun phrases, and there aren't many adjective and adverb phrases in either language. Furthermore, in semantic features, actions are the most prevalent theme in both English and Vietnamese idioms, whereas neither language uses mood frequently. This study also suggested some strategies to help English as second language learners improve their learning idiom process.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54660/IJMRGE.2025.6.1.1635-1641>

Keywords: idioms, fire, syntactic features, semantic features, similarities, differences

1. Introduction

In recent decades, researchers have endeavored to supply learners with indepth knowledge into idiomatic expressions through studies about the syntactic and semantic features of English and Vietnamese idioms related to education, plants, animals, and so on. But there is little information available on how English and Vietnamese idioms containing the word “fire” are related to each other. As a result, the objective of this report is to fill this research gap by investigating the differences and similarities in syntax and semantics of Vietnamese and English idioms containing the word “fire”. It will provide a deeper understanding of the linguistic features of idioms in these two languages and contribute to the field of idiomatic expression research by focusing specifically on the comparison of syntactic and semantic features. In addition, this research also suggests some effective learning idiom methods for English as second language learners.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Idioms containing the word “fire”

The English vernacular is replete with idiomatic expressions that are classified into several special categories based on their primary themes, according to the idiom list of Sidle & Mordie in "Pocket English Idioms" (1992). These categories include idioms related to body parts, animals, and numbers. Of note, “fire” idioms are regarded as rather distinctive given their multifaceted meanings, and the fire-related terms are believed to serve as the keywords. Thus, idiomatic expressions featuring the term “fire” represent a specific group that exemplifies how fire is utilized in these preconceived phrases and the way in which they are associated with other phenomena on our planet. Furthermore, Pham Vu Lua Ha's book "Mastering English Idioms" from 1996 describes idiomatic expressions that contain keywords from other special categories such as size, time, places, human body parts, and colors. Idioms that incorporate the term “fire” fall under the category of those that feature words or terms that are either the primary components or the critical elements integral to the expression's meaning. In essence, the idiomatic expressions that encompass “fire” as a keyword are a unique category that illustrates the ways in which fire is used in set

expressions and how it connects with other phenomena in the world.

2.2. Syntactic features of idioms

As the previous meanings of idioms show, an idiom is a fixed set group of words. It's additionally critical to remember that any word may be thought of as a possible part of an idiom, and that idioms, as a kind of linguistic construction, typically include at least two words. In addition, it is linguistically impossible to insert the speaker's intention into the idiom's components. The fundamental constituent of an idiom can pertain to a noun, such as in the case of "a baptism of fire," a verb, such as in "fight fire with fire," or an adjective, such as in "fired-up". In addition, each idiom has a stable structure and meaning; the use of idioms makes sentences more flexible and fluid. The use of idiomatic expressions results in sentences that are more fluid and adaptable. Noting that idiomatic expressions are subject to both structural and lexical constraints is crucial. Any endeavor of changing, eradicating, or substituting each of their components would invariably result in a loss or modification of their intended meaning. Another special feature should receive attention is that the idioms of English and Vietnamese are exceptionally parallel with one another, which is not always the case for other languages. There are, however, idioms whose structures are susceptible to disruption or modification. As is frequently observed in language, certain idiomatic expressions are frequently used in ordinary discourse. One such phrase is "có lửa mới có khói" ("không có lửa sao có khói"), which conveys the idea that where there is smoke, there is also fire. Another example of this phenomenon is the phrase "thêm dầu vào lửa" ("đổ dầu vào lửa"), which describes the act of aggravating an already tense or contentious situation. Similar to "như ngồi trên đống lửa" ("như ngồi đống lửa"), this idiom is used to depict a state of extreme anguish or distress.

2.3. Semantic features of idioms

Idioms, being a form of non-literal language, exhibit a considerable degree of utility in the vernacular of daily discourse. The utilization of metaphorical language presents a challenge in terms of comprehension, as its meaning cannot be readily inferred from the literal interpretation of its individual components. The semantic value of these lexical units transcends their compositional makeup. Regarding the degree of transparency, idiomatic expressions are classified along a spectrum ranging from transparent to opaque, which is commonly referred to as the spectrum of idiomaticity. Consequently, it is possible to categorize idioms into Transparent-Opaque Idioms, consisting of:

2.3.1 Transparent idioms

The idiomatic expressions in question exhibit a remarkable degree of semantic proximity to their literal counterparts. It can be observed that idioms which possess transparency are often devoid of complexity in terms of comprehension and translation. This is due to the fact that the meanings of their constituents can be readily deduced, as both elements retain a literal significance, while their amalgamation results in a figurative connotation. This category often includes phraseological combinations.

"There is no smoke without fire"

(if something bad is being said about somebody/something, it usually has some truth in it)

2.3.2. Semi-Transparent idioms

The idiom, as a linguistic construct, typically conveys a figurative meaning that is not readily apparent through ordinary usage. In other words, the meaning of its components plays a minor role in comprehending its overall significance.

"To fight fire with fire"

(to use similar methods in a fight or an argument to those your opponent is using)

2.3.3. Semi-Opaque idioms

This category describes idioms in which the figurative meaning is unrelated to the literal meaning of the constituent words. As a result, the term is divided into two parts: one with a literal meaning and one with a metaphorical one. Phraseological unities pertain to this particular category.

"Set the Thames on fire"

(to cause a lot of excitement or strong feelings)

2.3.4. Opaque idioms

The category of opaque idioms poses an enormous difficulty to language learners, as the significance of the idiom in dispute is not a mere accumulation of the denotations of its constituent components. It is noticeable that the identification of the precise connotation of an idiom cannot be understood from the literal definitions of its constituent parts, due to the existence of elements that possess cultural allusions. Having a variety of culture-specific items significantly impacts the degree to which idiomatic expressions can be understood. In general, an idiom is a type of lexical entity in which the total meaning of the expression is not evident from the meanings of its individual components.

"Last burst of fire"

(one last effort to make a change, usually before a defeat or failure)

3. Findings and discussion

There are 61 English samples and 55 Vietnamese samples being examined for the research. The idioms were gathered from dictionaries (Oxford Learner's Dictionary, Cambridge Dictionary, The Free Dictionary, "Từ điển thành ngữ & tục ngữ Việt Nam" by Vũ, D., Vũ, T. A., & Vũ, Q. H. (2000)), and the Internet (ucan.vn, enguroo.com, englishbyday.com). The entire collection of idioms will be organized and categorized according to their many syntactic and semantic features.

3.1. Syntactic features

3.1.1. Idioms containing the word "fire" with noun phrase structure

a. (Determiner) + Noun: English has one idiom, Vietnamese has none.

- English idiom: *Fire and brimstone*.

b. (Determiner) + Noun + Preposition + Noun: English has 9 idioms while Vietnamese has only one.

- English idioms: *A ball of fire, A baptism of fire, No smoke without fire, Trial by fire, Fire in the belly, Last burst of fire, No smoke without fire, Trial by fire, Fire in the hole*.

- Vietnamese idiom: *Cơm khô tại lửa*.

c. (Determiner) + Noun + Noun: English has two idioms, Vietnamese has five.

- English idioms: *A fire fit, A fire extinguisher.*

- Vietnamese idioms: *Ao cá lửa thành, Bình đao khói lửa, Cảnh bướm lửa đèn, Gáo nước lửa thành, Nắng lửa mưa dầm.*

d. (Determiner) + Adjective + Noun: both languages have only two idioms with this structure.

- English idioms: *A five-alarm fire, Chinese fire drill.*

- Vietnamese idioms: *Dầu sôi lửa bỏng, nước sôi lửa bỏng.*

e. (Determiner) + Noun + Comparative form + Noun: Vietnamese includes four idioms, English has none.

- Vietnamese idioms: *Lòng như lửa đốt, Nắng như đổ lửa, Ruột gan như lửa đốt, Ruột nóng như lửa đốt.*

3.1.2. Idioms containing the word “fire” with verb phrase structure

a. Verb + Noun Phrase: There are 6 idioms in English but Vietnamese has none.

- English idioms: *Catch fire, Breathe fire, Draw someone's fire, Hang fire, Miss fire, Rediscover fire.*

b. Verb + Preposition + Noun/ Noun Phrase: English includes three idioms, Vietnamese has five.

- English idioms: *Be put to fire and sword, Go through fire and water, Play with fire.*

- Vietnamese idioms: *Chơi với lửa, Đùa với lửa, Com khê tại lửa, Hết ra lửa, Thét ra lửa.*

c. Verb + Particle + Noun/ Noun Phrase: There is no idiom in Vietnamese, English has only one.

- English idiom: *Put out a fire.*

d. Verb + Noun/ Noun Phrase + Preposition + Noun/ Noun Phrase: English has the majority with 16 idioms while Vietnamese has only one.

- English idioms: *Add fuel to the fire, Pour oil on fire, Carry fire in one hand and water in the other, Fight fire with fire, Have many irons in the fire, Hold someone's feet to the fire light a fire under someone, Pull someone's bacon out of the fire, Pull someone's chestnuts out of fire, Set one's hair on fire, Set something /someone on fire, Set the heather on fire, Set the Thames on fire, Set the world on fire, Heap coals of fire on someone's head, Keep the home fires burning, Don't set yourself on fire to keep someone else warm.*

- Vietnamese idiom: *Quăng lửa vào gianh, quăng lửa xuống đất.*

e. Verb + Noun/ Noun Phrase + Verb + Noun/ Noun Phrase: Vietnamese has 8 idioms but English has none.

- Vietnamese idioms: *Cầm lửa đốt trời, Châm lửa đốt trời, Bốc lửa bỏ bàn tay, Đốt lửa chữa cháy, Gấp lửa bỏ tay người, Ôm rơm cứu lửa, Tránh lửa gặp nắng hè, Tối lửa tắt đèn.*

f. Be + Adjective: English has only one idiom, Vietnamese has none.

- English idiom: *Be (all) fired-up.*

g. Verb + (Particle) + Preposition + Noun/ Noun Phrase: There is no idiom in Vietnamese but English has two.

- English idioms: *Get on like a house on fire, Run around with (one's) hair on fire.*

3.1.3. Idioms containing the word “fire” with adjective phrase structure

(with this structure, English only has one case of equal comparison, Vietnamese doesn't have this form)

- English idiom: *As hot as fire.*

3.1.4. Idioms containing the word “fire” with prepositional phrase structure

a. Preposition + Noun/ Noun Phrase: English has 3 idioms, Vietnamese has none.

- English idioms: *Between two fires, On fire, Under fire.*

b. Preposition + Noun/ Noun Phrase + Preposition + Noun/ Noun Phrase: Vietnamese has 5 idioms, English has 3.

- English idioms: *In the line of fire, Out of the frying pan into the fire, Like drinking from a fire hose.*

- Vietnamese idioms: *Như đổ thêm dầu vào lửa, Như ngồi đồng lửa, Như nước với lửa, Nóng như lửa, Vênh như bánh đa phải lửa.*

c. Preposition + Noun/ Noun Phrase + Be + Adjective: Vietnamese has 2 idioms, English has none.

- Vietnamese idioms: *Gần lửa rất mặt; Gần lửa thì rát, sát cung quan thì khó.*

3.1.5. Idioms containing the word “fire” with adverbial phrase structure:

There is only one idiom in Vietnamese with the structure Adverb + Noun/ Noun phrase, English has none.

- Vietnamese idiom: *Sớm lửa tối đèn.*

3.1.6. Idioms containing the word “fire” with sentence structure:

a. Subject + Be + Adjective: English has two idioms, Vietnamese has none.

- English idioms: *Moving three times is as bad as a fire, The fat is in the fire.*

b. Subject + Be + Adverb: There is only one idiom in English, Vietnamese has none.

- English idiom: *The fat is in the fire.*

c. Subject + Adverb + Verb: Vietnamese has two idioms, English has only one.

- English idiom: *A little fire is quickly trodden out.*

- Vietnamese idioms: *Lửa gần rơm lâu ngày cũng bén, Nhà giàu ngày ăn ba bữa, nhà khó đồ lửa ba lần.*

d. Subject + Be + Noun/ Noun Phrase: There is only one idiom in English, Vietnamese has none.

- English idiom: *Fire is a good servant but a bad master.*

e. Subject + Verb + Noun/ Noun Phrase: There is a big difference between Vietnamese and English, Vietnamese has 12 idioms while English has only one.

- English idiom: *Soft fire makes sweet malt.*

- Vietnamese idioms: *Giấy không gói được lửa; Vàng thật chẳng sợ chi lửa; Lửa thử vàng, gian nan thử sức; Vàng thì thử lửa, thử than, chim khôn thử tiếng, người ngoan thử lời; Lòng ta muốn lấy thợ rèn, bề mà đồ lửa là tiền có ngay; Nước xa không cứu lửa gần; Com sôi cá lửa thì trào; Gậy đập lửa nóng, bắt bóng chim trời; Lửa lò thét ngọn, vàng càng nên trong; Com sôi bớt lửa, chồng giận bớt lời; Củi khô gặp lửa; Gái khôn xuôi lửa, trai khôn xuôi đèn.*

f. There + Be + Noun/ Noun Phrase: English has one idiom, Vietnamese has two.

- English idiom: *There's no smoke without fire.*

- Vietnamese idioms: *Có gió lung mới biết từng bách cứng, có ngọn lửa lừng mới rõ thức vàng cao; Không có lửa sao có khói.*

g. Subject + Verb + (Noun/ Noun Phrase) + Conjunction + Subject + Verb + (Noun/ Noun Phrase): English has two idioms, Vietnamese has one.

- *English idioms: You don't look at the mantelpiece when you're poking the fire, You should know a man seven years before you stir his fire.*
- *Vietnamese idiom: Chồng giận thì vợ bớt lời, cơm sôi nhỏ lửa chẳng đời nào khê.*

h. Subject + Verb + (Noun/ Noun Phrase) + Conjunction + Verb: Vietnamese has 4 idioms but English has none.

- *Vietnamese idioms: Lửa cháy lại tưới thêm dầu, Lửa đỏ lại bỏ thêm rom, Chờ đánh lửa mà đau lòng khói, Châu châu thấy đỏ lửa thì vào.*

i. Subject + Adjective Clause + Verb + Noun/ Noun Phrase: There is only one idiom in English, Vietnamese has none.

- *English idiom: The same fire that melts the butter hardens the egg.*

j. Question: English has one idiom, Vietnamese doesn't have any one.

- *English idiom: Where's the fire?*

Following the classification of idiomatic expressions containing the lexical item "fire" into various subcategories, a summary table presenting the corresponding figures is provided below.

Table 1: Statistical analysis of syntactic features of English and Vietnamese idioms containing the word "fire"

| | English idioms | | Vietnamese idioms | |
|----------------------|----------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Structure | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Noun Phrase | 14 | 22.95% | 12 | 21.82% |
| Verb Phrase | 29 | 47.54% | 14 | 25.45% |
| Adjective Phrase | 1 | 1.64% | 0 | 0% |
| Prepositional Phrase | 6 | 9.84% | 7 | 12.73% |
| Adverb Phrase | 0 | 0% | 1 | 1.82% |
| Sentence | 11 | 18.03% | 21 | 38.18% |
| Total | 61 | 100% | 55 | 100% |

3.2. Semantic features

As mentioned in earlier parts, it is the semantic opacity of idioms that makes it difficult for English language learners and translators to understand their meanings. Vietnamese people often encounter many difficulties. The degree of difficulties is determined by how opaque idioms' semantic meanings are. In this research, we simply look into a few of the major semantic factors that influence both English and Vietnamese idioms. These factors include: advice, characteristics (of humans, objects, actions, etc.), actions, lessons, life situations, mood, opinions and weather.

3.2.1. Advice: English has 5 idioms, Vietnamese has 4.

- *English idioms: Don't set yourself on fire to keep, someone else warm; Fire in the hole; Put out a fire; Soft fire makes sweet malt; You should know a man seven years before you stir his fire.*

- *Vietnamese idioms: Chờ đánh lửa mà đau lòng khói; Chồng giận thì vợ bớt lời, cơm sôi nhỏ lửa chẳng đời nào khê; Cơm sôi bớt lửa, chồng giận bớt lời; Gái khôn sưởi lửa, trai khôn sưởi đèn.*

3.2.2. Characteristics (of humans, objects, actions, etc)

For this form, in English and Vietnamese both have the same number of idioms with 10.

- *English idioms: A ball of fire, A baptism of fire, A fire fit, As hot as fire, Fire in one's/the belly, In the line of fire, Out of the frying pan into the fire, Run around with (one's) hair on fire, Where's the fire?, A fire extinguisher.*

- *Vietnamese idioms: Cánh bướm lửa đèn, Châu châu*

thấy đỏ lửa thì vào, Gáo nước lửa thành, Hét ra lửa, Thét ra lửa, Như đổ thêm dầu vào lửa, Như nước với lửa, Nóng như lửa, Sớm lửa tối đèn, Vênh như bánh đa phải lửa.

3.2.3. Actions

English has 24 idioms, double the 12 idioms in Vietnamese.

- *English idioms: Add fuel to the fire, Pour oil on fire, Be put to fire and sword, Carry fire in one hand and water in the other, Draw someone's fire, Fight fire with fire, Go through fire and water, Hang fire, Heap coals of fire on someone's head, Hold someone's feet to the fire, Keep the home fires burning, Light a fire under someone, Miss fire, On fire, Play with fire, Pull out of the fire, Pull someone's bacon out of the fire, Pull someone's chestnuts out of fire, Rediscover fire, Set one's hair on fire, Set something/someone on fire, Set the heather on fire, Set the Thames on fire, Set the world on fire.*

- *Vietnamese idioms: Cầm lửa đốt trời, Hâm lửa đốt trời, Bốc lửa bỏ bàn tay, Chơi với lửa, Đùa với lửa, Đốt lửa chữa cháy, Gấp lửa bỏ tay người; Gậy đập lửa nóng, bắt bóng chim trời; Lửa cháy lại tưới thêm dầu, Lửa đỏ lại bỏ thêm rom, Ôm rom cứu lửa; Quăng lửa vào gianh, quăng lửa xuống đất.*

3.2.4. Lessons

Vietnamese has 10 idioms, English has 7.

- *English idioms: Fire is a good servant but a bad master, Moving three times is as bad as a fire, No smoke without fire, There's no smoke without fire, You don't look at the mantelpiece when you're poking the fire, A little fire is quickly trodden out.*

- *Vietnamese idioms: Có gió lung mới biết từng bách cứng, có ngọn lửa lừng mới rõ thức vàng cao; Giấy không gói được lửa; Lửa lò thét ngọn, vàng càng nên trong; Nước xa không cứu lửa gần; Lửa thử vàng, gian nan thử sức; Vàng thật chẳng sợ chì lửa; Vàng thì thử lửa, thử than, chim khôn, thử tiếng, người ngoan thử lời; Cơm khê tại lửa, Cơm sôi cả lửa thì trào, Không có lửa sao có khói.*

3.2.5. Life situations

English includes 8 idioms, Vietnamese has 11.

- *English idioms: Between two fires, Get on like a house on fire, Have many irons in the fire, Last burst of fire, The fat is in the fire, Trial by fire, Under fire, A burnt child dreads the fire.*

- *Vietnamese idioms: Cùi khô gặp lửa, Dầu sôi lửa bỏng, Gân lửa rất mặt; Gân lửa thì rất, sát cung quan thì khó; Lửa gân rom lâu ngày cũng bén; Nhà giàu ngày ăn ba bữa, nhà khó đỏ lửa ba lần; Nước sôi lửa bỏng, Tránh lửa gặp nắng hè, Tỏi lửa tắt đèn, Bình đao khói lửa, Ao cá lửa thành.*

3.2.6. Mood

There are 6 idioms in English and 5 idioms in Vietnamese.

- *English idioms: A five-alarm fire, Be (all) fired-up, Be like drinking from a fire hose, Breathe fire, Catch fire, Chinese fire drill.*

- *Vietnamese idioms: Lòng như lửa đốt, Lửa đốt dầu sôi, Như ngồi đồng lửa, Ruột gan như lửa đốt, Ruột nóng như lửa đốt.*

3.2.7. Opinions

This form in both languages only appears one idiom.

- *English idiom: The same fire that melts the butter hardens the egg.*

- *Vietnamese idiom: Lòng ta muốn lấy thợ rèn, bể mà đỏ lửa là tiền có ngay.*

3.2.8. Weather

Vietnamese has two idioms, English has none.

- *Vietnamese idioms: Nắng lửa mưa dầm, Nắng như đổ lửa.*

Following the classification of idiomatic expressions

containing the lexical item "fire" into various subcategories, a summary table presenting the corresponding figures is provided below.

Table 2: Statistical analysis of semantic features of English and Vietnamese idioms containing the word "fire"

| Structure | English idioms | | Vietnamese idioms | |
|---|----------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Advice | 5 | 8.20% | 4 | 7.27% |
| Characteristics (Of Humans, Objects, Actions, Etc.) | 10 | 16.39% | 10 | 18.18% |
| Actions | 24 | 34.43% | 12 | 21.82% |
| Lessons | 7 | 11.48% | 10 | 18.18% |
| Life Situations | 8 | 13.12% | 11 | 20.00% |
| Mood | 6 | 9.84% | 5 | 9.09% |
| Opinions | 1 | 1.64% | 1 | 1.82% |
| Weather | 0 | 0% | 2 | 3.64% |
| Total | 61 | 100% | 55 | 100% |

4. Similarities and differences of English and Vietnamese idioms containing the word "fire":

4.1. Syntactic features

4.1.1. Similarities

This section has examined the syntactic structures of idioms containing the word "fire" in both English and Vietnamese. Table 1 exhibits the syntactic qualities of idioms, with all characteristics systematically arranged into common configurations. The findings reveal some common characteristics between English and Vietnamese idioms containing the word "fire".

Firstly, according to what we can see from the given chart, the prepositional phrase structure plays an equally vital role in both English and Vietnamese idioms containing the word "fire," with 9.84% of the idioms being found in the former and 12.73% being recorded in the latter. In detail, *Preposition + Noun/ Noun Phrase + Preposition + Noun/ Noun Phrase* is preferred by both of them when there is a relatively equal number of them (3 English and 5 Vietnamese idioms). It is not considered difficult to comprehend the significance of the prepositional phrase structure used in idioms. It appears that the two languages have discovered a mutual benefit in utilizing prepositional phrases as a fundamental means of conveying advice and expressing personal experiences. It can be observed that the prepositional phrase exerts a significant impact on the English and Vietnamese idioms including the word "fire".

In the second instance, it is remarkable that among the seven distinct categories, the adjective phrases and adverbial phrases exhibit the most minimal proportion. This percentage tends to fluctuate, ranging from 0% to slightly below 2%, as observed in idiomatic expressions featuring the term "fire" derived from both English and Vietnamese languages. To be more precise, as for adjective phrases, it is noteworthy that in English idiomatic expressions containing the term "fire," the proportion of adjective phrases is a mere 1.64%, whereas in their Vietnamese equivalents, this figure is a resounding 0%. Conversely, regarding adverbial phrases, it is interesting to observe that there are no idioms featuring the term "fire" in the Vietnamese language, while in English, the corresponding percentage is exactly 1.82%. Upon conducting a thorough analysis of the data, it has been observed that the aforementioned structures, namely the adjective and adverbial phrases, exhibit a relatively lower frequency of occurrence in idiomatic expressions featuring the lexical item "fire" within the two languages under scrutiny. The potential rationale underlying this phenomenon is that typically, individuals do not employ an excessive amount of modifiers to interject supplementary information in their oral discourse

or nonverbal exchanges.

In conclusion, it can be inferred that the idioms consisting of the word "fire" of these two nations exhibit resemblance in terms of the quantification of noun phrases, the adjective and adverbial phrases.

4.1.2. Differences

The data presented in the table above highlights significant differences in syntactic features between English and Vietnamese idioms incorporating the word "fire." The findings reveal that English idioms tend to have a higher percentage of verb phrase structures (47.54%) than Vietnamese idioms (25.45%). This difference can be attributed to the cultural preference of using verbs to refer to actions in any given circumstance, which is more prevalent in English than in Vietnamese.

Furthermore, the analysis indicates that Vietnamese idioms are more likely to appear in sentence structures (38.18%) compared to English idioms (18.03%). This disparity can be explained by the tendency of Vietnamese people to describe a circumstance using the connotation meaning of words. This approach to language use is different from that of English speakers, who may be more focused on literal interpretations. It is important to note that these findings are based on a limited sample of idioms and may not necessarily be representative of the entire language or culture.

However, they do offer valuable insights into the differences in language use between English and Vietnamese speakers. Future research could expand the sample size and explore other aspects of language use, such as semantic features or cultural associations, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the differences and similarities between these two languages. Such research could be particularly useful for language learners and educators who are interested in developing cross-cultural communicative competence.

4.2. Semantic features

4.2.1. Similarities

Language is widely regarded as a complex system of communication utilized by individuals to convey meaning, ideas, and thoughts through the use of sounds, symbols, and words. The versatility of this language is evidenced by its ability to be employed in various modalities, namely oral and written discourse, as well as nonverbal cues conveyed through bodily movements and facial expressions.

Furthermore, language is considered as a means of effectively expressing ideas between individuals in a manner that enables the recipient to act with precision. An idiom is a fascinating and widely used linguistic phenomenon.

Consequently, in order to acquire proficiency in a given language, an individual must acquire a comprehensive lexicon of said language, as well as a nuanced understanding of the appropriate contexts and usages for each word. It is imperative for individuals to acquire knowledge of idiomatic expressions as a distinct aspect of language acquisition. Idioms, as linguistic expressions, are indicative of the collective human experience and are predicated upon recurrent circumstances that exemplify human conduct, societal characteristics, particular customs, or national traditions. The utilization of idiomatic expressions and phrasal verbs is ubiquitous and can prove to be exceedingly frustrating when one finds oneself comprehending a discourse or a commercial transaction in the English language, only to be puzzled by the introduction of a few idiomatic expressions. English and Vietnamese idioms consisting of the word "fire" express similar ideas across ten topics, including Advice, Characteristics (Of Humans, Objects, Actions, Etc.), Actions, Lessons, Life Situations, Mood, Opinions, Weather.

Nevertheless, organizing all English and Vietnamese idioms into semantic categories can be a challenging undertaking. According to my research, both English and Vietnamese idioms containing the word "fire" employ specific characters, objects, and concrete events to disclose or illustrate abstract concepts or phenomena through metaphor, hyperbole, and simile.

As illustrated in the chart above, it is rather obvious that English and Vietnamese idioms including the word "fire" have the nearly equal share of Characteristics fields, in which the percentage of each language is 16.39% and 18.18%. The idioms containing the word "fire" which has the semantic meaning of showing characteristics of human and objects as well accounts for a medium number in the total of investigated idioms.

The second agreement of English and Vietnamese idioms containing the word "fire" is the approximately equal rate of idioms expressing life situations (with 13.12% in English idioms and precisely 20% in Vietnamese ones). Furthermore, in terms of Advice and Lessons, the proportion of English idioms are recorded to be 8.20% and 11.48%, respectively, which are somewhat equivalent to the respective figures of their Vietnamese counterparts, with 7.27% being recorded in Advice and 18.18% being utilized in giving Lessons. The possible reason is that regardless of the countries people come from, they tend to give advice and lessons as a source of support for other people, as humans do from time to time, which helps pass the knowledge down to the next generations from the dawn of man.

Last but not least, with regard to the remaining shared fields, English idioms containing the word "fire" describing Mood account for 9.84%, compared to share of 9.09% of Vietnamese ones. In addition, there are 1.64% of English idioms and 1.82% of Vietnamese ones in the field of opinions, whereas 0% and 3.64% can be reported in Weather field of English and Vietnamese idioms consisting of the word "fire", in that order. This could be elucidated by the fact that these topics mentioned in this paragraph are considered common topics for people to converse with each other about, no matter what language they use.

4.2.2. Differences

The analysis presented in the table above provides valuable insights into the differences between English and Vietnamese idiomatic expressions, particularly with respect to the use of the word "fire." These differences can be attributed to the divergent cultural norms and practices of the two nations. It

is important to note that the formation of idiomatic expressions and the semantic transmission of these expressions are closely intertwined with cultural norms and practices. As such, the differences observed in the use of idiomatic expressions between English and Vietnamese speakers can provide insight into the underlying cultural differences between the two nations. One of the most significant differences observed in the table is the rate of idioms containing the word "fire" used to describe actions. Vietnamese speakers use only 21.82% of idioms containing the word "fire" in this manner, while English speakers tend to use a higher percentage, with 34.43% of idioms containing the word "fire" used to describe actions. Categorizing idiomatic expressions can be a challenging task due to their contextual ambiguity. However, situating idiomatic expressions within their respective contexts or providing the necessary background information can facilitate their comprehension and aid in determining the semantic domain to which they pertain.

Moreover, cultural differences in the use of idiomatic expressions can also reflect differences in values and beliefs. For instance, the use of idiomatic expressions related to fire may be more prevalent in English-speaking cultures due to the historical significance of fire in their culture, such as the importance of fire in the Industrial Revolution. In contrast, Vietnamese culture may not have the same level of historical association with fire, which could explain the lower frequency of idiomatic expressions related to fire in Vietnamese language use. Further research on idiomatic expressions in English and Vietnamese could explore other aspects of language use, such as syntax and semantics, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the differences and similarities between the two languages. Such research could be particularly useful for language learners and educators who are interested in developing cross-cultural communicative competence.

In conclusion, the analysis of idiomatic expressions containing the word "fire" in English and Vietnamese reveals significant differences in language use between the two cultures. These differences can provide insights into underlying cultural differences and can aid in the development of cross-cultural communicative competence.

5. Some suggested learning methods:

Through studying the similarities and differences in English and Vietnamese idioms containing the word "fire", we realize that learners will encounter some difficulties when learning them such as: the meaning of an idiom, the correct and appropriate use of idioms, limited teaching materials, ... From there, we would like to give some suggestions on how to learn idioms well as follows:

5.1. Learn idioms in context, never in isolation:

Not only is it essential to perceive the meaning of idioms, but also for achieving proficiency in their application. This can be accomplished by supplying examples of idioms in context, such as through fundamental dialogues in which the idiom's intended meaning is clear.

Provided that you stumble on an idiom in context i.e., in a magazine, newspaper or a book, please try to fully understand the context and this will help your learning the idiom. For example: His wife flew off the handle when seeing him texting with another chicks. However, he decided to stay calm and explained that they were just friends because he knew that in that scenario, fighting fire with fire was not a wise choice.

5.2. Have a chit-chat using idioms:

To become proficient in the use of idioms in practical situations, it is essential to not only comprehend their meaning but also develop the ability to use them effectively. A useful approach to achieve this is by finding a regular conversation partner and composing dialogues that incorporate the idiom. Regular conversations should then be conducted where idioms are naturally used. To maintain natural use of idioms, it is suggested to first write out the dialogue, and then to integrate the idioms into daily conversations. Furthermore, practicing the use of learned idioms in everyday conversations is recommended for long-term retention.

5.3. Keep an “idiom” diary:

Whenever you encounter an idiom, whether in conversation or in writing, it is prudent to record it. Nonetheless, it is also important to ensure that you can look up the meaning and context of the idiom in a dictionary designed for English language learners, and then write it down in a sentence for better retention; otherwise, you may forget its meaning.

5.4. More is not better:

Attempting to learn a vast number of idioms in a single attempt may not be the most effective method for memorization. Idioms are intricate and challenging to not only comprehend but also to explicate. Therefore, it is recommended to introduce only a limited quantity, perhaps three to five, at once. This technique will provide sufficient time to thoroughly comprehend each idiom and allow for ample practice without becoming inundated.

5.5. Numerous idioms can be found in songs

Learning through leisure activities is considered rather beneficial to learners. This is because when listening to your favorite songs, acquiring some idioms through the lyrics could enable learners to retain them longer with the context and melody provided to make the learning process less dull and more effective.

5.6. Make your learning theme-related

One way to incorporate idioms into your learning is to learn them thematically. When idioms are connected to the topic you are studying, they are easier to remember, and you become more familiar with the relevant vocabulary. For example, when studying about pets, you can learn idioms like "work like a dog" and "dog tired," which are relevant to the subject and can provide a basis for discussion. The uniqueness of idioms lies in the fact that they are a distinct combination of words that hold a meaning entirely different from the individual words themselves, making them intriguing.

5.7. Try to picture an idiom in your mind

Are you able to visualize the image? A considerable number of idioms are composed of imagery. Therefore, attempt to visualize them, as this technique can assist in memorizing them by visualizing the illustrations mentally. Keep in mind that practice leads to perfection! Strive to learn idioms to the best of your ability, and you will achieve your goal.

6. Conclusion

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. Through this investigation, the diverse meanings and grammatical structures utilized in idioms containing the word "fire" will be analyzed and compared. The ultimate objective of this research is to enhance the understanding of how idioms are used effectively and appropriately in English and Vietnamese.

7. References

1. Ambrose J. Why idioms are important for English language learners. TESOL Q. 2008;33(2).
2. Cummins C. An introduction to English semantics and pragmatics. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press; 2023.
3. Miller J. Introduction of English syntax. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press; 2016.
4. Nguyen TT. A comparative study of idioms in Vietnamese and English: Implications for second language acquisition. J Second Lang Stud. 2020;5(2):78-98.
5. Pham Vu Lua Ha. Mastering English idioms - Học anh văn bằng thành ngữ. Ho Chi Minh: Tre Publisher; 1996.
6. Pham TT. A comparative study of idioms in Vietnamese and English. J Lang Linguist. 2018;17(1):1-12.
7. Seidl, Mordie. Oxford pocket English idioms. New York: Oxford University Press; c1992.
8. The free dictionary O. Online dictionary; c1998.
9. Vũ D, Vũ TA, Vũ QH. Từ điển thành ngữ và tục ngữ Việt Nam.