

# Selection, idioms, and the structure of nominal phrases with and without classifiers

## Appendix B: Verb-object idioms in Vietnamese

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#### *B1. Description of nominals in Vietnamese*

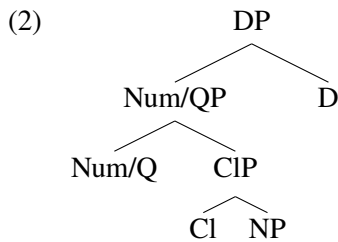
Vietnamese is an isolating SVO language that does not have case marking or verbal agreement. Like Korean, its nominal phrase includes a classifier, but it is slightly different from Korean in that it takes post-nominal modifiers. According to previous studies, a noun phrase in Vietnamese has three main parts: (i) pre-nominal modifiers (Totality, Quantifier/Numeral), (ii) the Head (Classifier/Measure Noun, Noun), and (iii) post-nominal modifiers: Adjective, Relative Clause, Demonstrative (Nguyen Can Tai 2004; Diep 2005; Nguyen Tuong Hung 2008). Some examples of complex Vietnamese noun phrases containing all of these elements are given below:<sup>1</sup>

- (1) a. tất.cả những con mèo đen tôi đã nuôi ấy  
all many CL cat black I PST raise that  
'all of those many black cats (that) I took care of'
- b. toàn.bộ mười cân thịt ngon.lành mà anh muốn mua này  
all ten CL meat delicious that you want buy this  
'all of these ten kilos of delicious meat that you want to buy'

This would lead to the following structure for Vietnamese within the DP Hypothesis, ignoring modifiers like adjectives, relative clauses, and possessors (all of which come after the head noun and could be analyzed as adjoined to NP on the right):

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<sup>1</sup>According to Tran (2011), except for the class of special nouns, all Vietnamese nouns have to have a classifier in order to occur with a numeral. This means that the examples below all have classifiers if they have numerals, since all of the idioms listed here only contain nouns in the regular class.



Alternatively, D is on the left, but its entire complement moves to Spec-DP (see, e.g., Simpson 2005). Either way, what would be selected by V is not N, but D.

## ***B2. V-N idioms, no functional elements***

This section lists idioms that do not include functional elements in their canonical forms (they are simply V-N).

### **B2.1. Idioms that are fixed**

The first 29 idioms in our database are immutable, and do not permit any functional elements or modifiers to be added:

- (3) Bạn-bè của cậu chỉ biết **ăn cháo đêm** là giỏi.  
 friend belong you only know eat porridge evening COP good  
 ‘Your friends are only good at freeloading.’ (eat evening porridge = freeload)
- (4) Khi đứng trước Ly, Nam chỉ biết **ngậm hạt thị**.  
 when stand before Ly Nam only know hold seed fig  
 ‘When standing in front of Ly, Nam stays so very quiet.’ (hold seed fig = be very quiet)
- (5) Thấy mẹ giận như thế, bọn họ **ngậm tăm**, không dám nói gì.  
 see mom angry like that they hold toothpick NEG dare say what  
 ‘Seeing their mom being angry like that, they shut down and didn’t dare to say anything.’ (hold toothpick = be very quiet)
- (6) Nam và Ly đã **chia tay** hai năm trước.  
 Nam and Ly PST divide hand two year ago  
 ‘Nam and Ly broke up two years ago.’ (divide hand = break up)
- (7) Nhiều học sinh cho biết đã **vượt rào** từ năm lớp 10.  
 Many students give know PST cross fence from year grade 10  
 ‘Many students said that they have had sex since they were in grade 10.’ (cross fence = have sex, usually for the first time)

- (8) Thiệt.tình là ghét mấy má **bung lụa** bên đó lắm!  
honest COP hate several mother throw silk side that very  
'I honestly hate those bitches who acts dramatically in the other forum very much.' (throw silk = act/do something very dramatically)
- (9) Bọn.họ hứa đủ điều rồi để một mình tôi **ôm sô**.  
they promise all thing then let one self I hug show  
'They promised everything and then let me take care of the whole thing.' (hug show = take care of something by oneself unwillingly)
- (10) Ly trông vậy nhưng nàng đang **ngậm bồ.hòn** và không vui.vẻ gì đâu!  
Ly seem that but she PROG hold soapberry and NEG happy what where  
'Ly looks like that but she is enduring and not happy at all.' (hold soapberry = bear pain silently)
- (11) Nếu chị không cẩn.thận, chồng chị có.khi sẽ ra ngoài **ăn phở** đấy!  
if you NEG careful husband you may will go outside eat noodles there  
'If you are not careful, your husband may cheat on you.' (eat noodles = cheat on someone)
- (12) Đừng bao.giờ **múa rìu qua mắt thợ**.  
NEG when dance hammer over eye worker  
'Don't ever show off in front of people who are better than you!' (dance hammer over eye worker = show off in front of someone who is obviously better)
- (13) Ly chỉ giỏi **vắt cổ chày ra nước**, một đồng cũng không muốn tiêu.  
Ly only good squeeze neck pestle out water one coin also NEG want spend  
'Ly is good at being a skinflint and doesn't want to spend even a coin.' (squeeze pestle out water = be a skinflint)
- (14) **Chém gió** với bạn.bè là một thú.vui phổ.biến trong giới trẻ.  
slash wind with friend is a hobby popular in world young  
'Bragging with friends is a popular hobby among the young people.' (slash wind = brag, boast, chitchat in a slightly exaggerated manner)
- (15) Nam thực.chất đang **múa tay trong bị** khi sếp Nga quyết.định đuổi Ly.  
Nam actually PROG dance hand inside bag when boss Nga decided fire Ly  
'Nam was actually secretly happy when boss Nga decided to fire Ly.' (dance hand inside bag = be secretly happy)
- (16) Bọn.họ không dám về làng vì đã trót **ăn cơm trước keng**.  
they NEG dare come village because PST mistake eat rice before bell  
'They didn't dare to come back to the village because they lived together without getting married.' (eat rice before bell = live together without getting married.)
- (17) Khi ông Lý mất, con ổng chắc.chắc sẽ **ăn bùn**.  
when mister Lý die child he surely will eat mud

- ‘When Mister Lý dies, his kid will be played for a fool.’ (eat mud = be played for a fool)
- (18) Cuối tháng đứa sinh.viên nào cũng **treo mồm** như tôi!  
end month CL student which also hang mouth like I  
‘At the end of every month every single student will be starving like myself.’ (hang mouth = be starving)
- (19) Cậu tin hắn thì chẳng khác nào cậu muốn **bán lúa giống**.  
you trust him the NEG different which you want sell rice seed  
‘You trusting him is no different from you being fooled completely.’ (sell rice seed = be fooled completely)
- (20) Khi Anh nghèo, Ly đã hoàn.toàn **trở mặt**.  
when Anh poor Ly PST completely turn face  
‘When Anh became poor, Ly completely changed about.’ (turn face = change about, to treat someone differently)
- (21) Khi lên sân.khấu, cô.ấy **ăn ảnh** lắm.  
when go.up stage she eat photo much  
‘She is very photogenic when she is on stage.’ (eat photo = be photogenic)
- (22) Chồng của tôi đã đi **bán muối** lâu rồi!  
husband belong I PST go sell salt long ago  
‘My husband died a long time ago.’ (sell salt = die)
- (23) Sau một ngày tập võ, tôi thực.sự đã **hết xí.quách**.  
after one day practice martial.art I really PST out bone  
‘After one day practicing martial art, I am really exhausted.’ (out bone = be exhausted)
- (24) Ly **cầm đầu** băng.đảng trong khu chợ này.  
Ly hold head gang in area market this  
‘Ly is the leader of the gang in this market area.’ (hold head = be the leader)
- (25) Nhận tiền và giờ em định **lật lọng** à?  
receive money and now you intend flip parasol Q  
‘You got the money and now you plan to double cross?’ (flip parasol = double cross)
- (26) Ly đẹp nhưng nàng **xổ** **nhò** như một người không có học.  
Ly beautiful but she conjure Chinese.character like one person NEG have education  
‘Ly is beautiful but she swears like an uneducated person.’ (conjure Chinese character = swear)
- (27) Cậu nghĩ cậu là ai mà **lên mặt** với tôi?  
you think you are who then rise face with I  
‘Who do you think you are to act superior to me?’ (rise face = act superior)

- (28) Mọi chuyện hoàn.toàn do Ly **giật dây**, Nam không biết gì.  
all story completely due Ly pull string Nam NEG know what  
'Linh controlled everything, Nam didn't know anything.' (pull string = control)
- (29) Khi chị **vượt cạn**, chị chỉ có một mình.  
when she overcome land she only have one self  
'When she gave birth, she was by herself.' (overcome land = give birth)
- (30) Mẹ tôi cứ ép tôi đi **coi mắt** dù tôi không muốn.  
mom I keep pressure I go see eye though I NEG want  
'My mom kept pressuring me to go on an arranged date although I don't want to.' (see eye = go on an arranged date, usually very formal)
- (31) Mỗi lần thấy hai cô gái **bán hoa** ấy, Nam thường chạy trốn.  
every time see two CL girl sell flower that Nam often run hide  
'Every time seeing those two girls who prostitute themselves, Nam often runs and hides.' (sell flower = prostitute)

## B2.2. Idioms that permit non-functional elements

The next 13 permit non-functional elements like modifiers to be added:

- (32) Sau nhiều năm học-hành, họ vẫn **xách dép** người-ta.  
after many year study they still carry sandals people  
'After many years of study, they are still useless.' (carry sandals = be useless, good-for-nothing)
- (33) Em định làm tôi **mất mặt** của mình trước bạn.bè sao?  
you intend do I lose face belong I in.front.of friend Q  
'Do you plan to make me look bad in front of my friends?' (lose face = look bad)
- (34) Nam muốn đi **vuốt râu hùm** ông Lý thì cứ để nó chết.  
Nam want go pet whisker tiger mister Lý then just let he die  
'If Nam wants to risk himself challenging Mister Lý then let him die.' (pet whisker tiger = risk life challenging someone)
- (35) Cô **cắt cổ** của khách.hàng như vậy mà coi được sao?  
you cut neck belong customer like this then see okay Q  
'Selling things overpriced like this to customers is okay with you?' (cut neck = sell things overpriced)
- (36) Nó chỉ giỏi **vuốt đuôi** của mấy sếp!  
he only good pet tail belong several boss  
'He is only good at fawning upon his bosses.' (pet tail = flatter someone, fawn upon someone)

- (37) Ly suốt ngày **sửa lưng** của Nam.  
Ly through day fix back belong Nam  
'Ly always criticize Nam.' (fix back = criticize)
- (38) Giỏi thì đi **nấn gân** của người khác, đừng giả bộ anh hùng!  
good then go set vein belong person different NEG pretend hero  
'If you are tough, go threaten other people, don't pretend to be a hero.' (set vein = threaten someone)
- (39) Cậu **cân não** tôi thì có ích gì?  
you weigh brain belong I then have benefit what  
'What's good for you to influence my mind?' (weigh brain = affect someone's mind)
- (40) Nam đã **cắn câu** của Ly!  
Nam PST bite hook belong Ly  
'Nam has been fooled by Ly.' (bite hook = be led on, be fooled)
- (41) Anh định **nuốt lời** anh với em sao?  
you intend swallow word you with I Q  
'Are you going to break your promise to me?' (swallow word = break a promise)
- (42) Ly chắc chắn sẽ **bợ đít** mấy sếp.  
Ly surely will carry ass several boss  
'Ly will surely adulate those bosses.' (carry ass = adulate)
- (43) Tôi có thể **cầm chân** của hắn đến mai.  
I can hold leg belong he until tomorrow  
'I can hold him off until tomorrow.' (hold leg = hold someone off)
- (44) Tôi sợ ông sẽ **bắt bài** của anh được ngay!  
I afraid he will catch card belong you able immediately  
'I am afraid that he will understand you right away!' (catch card = know someone's strategy)

### B2.3. Idioms that permit functional elements

Six idioms permit functional elements to be added, but not modifiers like adjectives:

- (45) Chồng chị không chịu nên chị liền cùng mẹ **úp** mấy cái **sọt** để ép lão.  
husband I NEG agree so I immediately with mother lay.down several CL basket to pressure he  
'My husband didn't agree with me so I and my mother worked together to force him to do so.' (lay down baskets = work together to win over someone)

- (46) Nhà có mỗi hai đứa con-gái, nhưng hai đứa cuối-cùng đi **lập** hai cái **miếu**.  
family have only two CL daughter but two CL end go build two CL shrine  
'There are only two girls in the family, but they ended up being single.' (build shrine = remain single (for girls only))
- (47) Hai cô **buôn** được mấy **thúng dưa lê** rồi?  
two you sell able how.many basket melon pear already  
'How much have you guys been chatting?' (sell melon and pear = chitchat)
- (48) Họ đã giận, nó lại còn **đổ** thêm một đồng **đầu vào lửa**.  
they PST angry he still have dump extra one pile oil into fire  
'He kept making things worse when they were already angry.' (dump oil into fire = make something worse, usually a fight)
- (49) Tôi nói thật là tôi **bó** cả hai **tay** rồi!  
I say honest that I fold all two hand already  
'To be honest, I already gave up.' (fold hand = give up)
- (50) Hai người **nấu** được mấy **nồi cháo** rồi?  
two you cook able how.many pot soup already  
'How much have you guys been talking on the phone?' (cook soup = chat on the phone)

#### B2.4. Idioms that permit both

The last 35 permit both functional and non-functional elements to be added:

- (51) Nói cho tôi biết, cậu định **ngâm** mấy **cái hũ dấm** của cậu đến bao-giờ?  
tell for I know you plan soak several CL jug vinegar belong you till when  
'Tell me, when do you plan to delay your work until?' (soak vinegar = delay working on something)
- (52) Hôm-nay Ly đã làm **bể** hai cái **dĩa** của tôi rồi!  
today Ly PST do break two CL plate belong I already  
'Ly already exposed two plans of mine today!' (break plate = expose someone's plan/scheme)
- (53) Cậu **ăn** mấy **quả dưa-bở** của Hùng thấy ngon không?  
you eat several CL melon belong Hùng see delicious Q  
'Did you enjoy being fooled by Hùng?' (eat melon = be fooled)
- (54) Minh sẽ phải đi **đổ** cả đồng **vỏ** của người-ta nếu cưới cô.  
Minh will must go throw all pile shell belong people when marry she  
'If Minh marries her, he will be with a girl who has been with many people.' (throw shells = commit to someone who has been with many people)

- (55) Nam vẫn quyết-định **vác** mấy cái **ngà voi** to-tướng ấy trong-khi ảnh bận  
 Nam still decide carry several CL tusk elephant big that when he busy  
 kinh-khủng.  
 awful  
 ‘Nam still decided work for nothing when he is already awfully busy.’ (carry elephant’s tusks = work for nothing, do charitable work)
- (56) Mày qua forum đấy để **ăn** mấy bó **hành** của chúng à?  
 you go forum that to eat several bundle onion belong they Q  
 ‘Do you go to that forum to be tortured by them?’ (eat onion = be tortured, defeated)
- (57) Cậu làm-ơn ngừng **đu** mấy sợi **dây-điện** của cậu giùm tôi!  
 you please stop swing several CL electric.wire belong you for I  
 ‘Can you please stop exaggerating for me?’ (swing electric wire = exaggerate)
- (58) Nếu không cẩn-thận khi lên mạng, cậu sẽ **ăn** một đống **gạch** của dân chơi LOL.  
 if NEG carefull when go web you will eat one pile brick belong people play LOL  
 ‘If you are not careful when you go online, you will be bashed by the LOL players.’ (eat brick = get bashed, verbally abused)
- (59) Bạn của Ly vẫn tiếp-tục **quăng** mấy trái **lựu-đạn** của họ khi ăn cơm chiều.  
 friend belong Ly still continue throw several CL grenade belong they when eat meal afternoon  
 ‘Ly’s friends still continue bragging during the meal in the afternoon.’ (throw grenade = brag, talk big)
- (60) Nếu em làm bài không tốt thì sẽ được **eat** vài ba nồi **cháo lươn** rất  
 if you do assignment NEG good then will allowed.to eat some three pot porridge eel very  
 ngon của mẹ!  
 delicious belong mother  
 ‘If you don’t do well on your assignment, you will be hit with a stick by Mother!’ (eat eel porridge = get hit with a stick)
- (61) Tiểu.Vỹ **ăn** vài hũ **dấm** chua rồi!  
 Tiểu.Vỹ eat several jar vinegar sour already  
 ‘Tiểu Vỹ got very jealous!’ (eat vinegar = be jealous)
- (62) Ly **cắm** mấy cái **sừng** to tổ.bố lên đầu chồng nàng.  
 Ly plant several CL horn big enormous onto head husband she  
 ‘Ly cheated badly on her husband.’ (plant horn = cheat on someone)
- (63) Nàng đã **đá** cái **đít** tội.nghiệp của tôi từ hai năm trước rồi!  
 she PST kick CL ass pitiful belong I since two year ago already  
 ‘She dumped me two years ago.’ (kick ass = dump someone)



- (64) Tôi phải **muối** cái **mặt** này của tôi để đi xin.lỗi Ly.  
I must salt CL face this belong I to go appologize Ly  
'I have to bear a shame to appologize to Ly.' (salt face = bear a shame)
- (65) Ông **rửa** hai cái **tai** của tôi suốt hai tiếng đồng.hồ!.  
he clean two CL ear belong I through two hour clock  
'He yelled at me for two hours.' (clean ear = yell)
- (66) Suốt mười năm qua, nàng luôn **đi** một đôi **guốc** nhọn hoắt **trong bụng** tôi.  
Through ten year ago she always walk one pair sandal sharp pointed inside stomach I  
'She always got everything of me for the last ten years.' (walk sandal inside X's stomach = understand X deeply, know all of their moves, get their nature)
- (67) Nhìn lão **thả** mấy con **đê** của lão với lũ gái trẻ thật làm tôi muốn ói!  
see he release several CL goat belong he with bunch girl young really make I want vomit  
'Looking at him perving over those young girls makes me want to vomit.' (release goat = do perverted things, be pervy)
- (68) Anh định **ôm** cái **chân** ba anh đến khi.nào?  
you intend hug CL leg father you until when  
'When you do plan to stop depending on your dad?' (hug leg = depend on someone)
- (69) Tao thách tụi công.an dám **rờ** đến cái **gáy** này của tao đó!  
I challenge bunch cop dare touch to CL nape this belong I that  
'I challenge those cops to investigate me!' (touch pape = look into, to investigate)
- (70) Dân nhập.cư mà đòi **chướp** cái chén **cơm** của tao à? Đừng có mơ!  
native immigrant then demand steal cái bowl rice belong I Q NEG have dream  
'Those immigrants want to take my job? Dream on!' (steal rice = compete for a job)
- (71) Cậu khen hoài làm Nam **nở** cả cái **mũi** của nó!  
you praise constantly make Nam rise all CL nose belong he  
'You praising constantly made Nam overly proud.' (rise nose = be overly happy/proud)
- (72) Bà Ly đã **dắt** hai cái **mũi** bự của hai thằng.chả suốt bao năm qua!  
madam Ly PST lead two CL nose big belong two he through how year last  
'Madame Ly controlled the two guys for so many years! (lead nose = control, make someone obey)
- (73) Tôi nào dám **móc** cái **họng** nào của ai ở đây!  
I which dare hook CL throat which belong who stay here  
'I don't dare to mock anyone here!' (hook throat = mock)
- (74) Mày đã **sáng** con **mắt** của mày ra chưa?  
you PST brighten CL eye belong you out yet

- ‘Have you seen the truth yet?’ (brighten eye = see the truth)
- (75) Cô làm.ơn **tắt** cái **đài** vô.duyên của cô hộ tôi!  
 you please turn.off CL radio improper belong you for I  
 ‘Please shut up for me!’ (turn off radio = shut up)
- (76) Nam đã **lòi** cái **đuôi** bẩn.thủ của hấn vào phút chót.  
 Nam PST tick.out CL tail dirty belong he in minute last  
 ‘Nam revealed his bad side at the last minute.’ (tick out tail = reveal a bad side or weakness)
- (77) Anh.ta luôn sẵn.sàng **chĩa** cái **mũi dùi** căm.ghét của anh.ta vào tôi.  
 he always ready direct CL point drill hateful belong he towards I  
 ‘He is always ready to attack me!’ (direct point drill = attack someone, usually verbally)
- (78) Nhìn anh đi, chị **đứt** cả đoạn **ruột** của mình.  
 see he go she break all CL intestine belong self  
 ‘Looking at him leaving, she was so so sad.’ (break intestine = be very upset, sad)
- (79) Cậu cứ **chặn** cái **họng** của Linh thì sao nàng nói hả?  
 you keep block CL throat belong Linh then how she talk Q  
 ‘How can Linh talk when you keep muzzling her?’ (block throat = interrupt/muzzle someone in a rude manner)
- (80) Nhiều người trong làng này muốn **đào** cái **mỏ** béo.bỏ nhà ông Lý ấy lắm!  
 many people in village this want dig CL mine rich house mister Lý that much  
 ‘Many people in this village want to make money by marrying the girl from that family of Mister Lý!’ (dig mine = make money sneakily, usually by marrying a girl from a rich family)
- (81) Mày làm.ơn ngưng **nhúng** cái **mũi** vô.duyên của mày vào chuyện của tao!  
 you please stop dip CL nose improper belong you in story belong I  
 ‘Can you please stop interfering my business?’ (dip nose = interfere in other people’s business)
- (82) Thú.thật với anh là tôi **ngứa** cái con **mắt** này lắm rồi!  
 honest with you that I itch EMPH CL eye this much yet  
 ‘To be frank with you, I am so very irritated.’ (itch eye = be irritated)
- (83) Tôi thì tôi **sốt** hết cả cái **ruột** của tôi lên, còn Ly thì chỉ ngồi đấy như không.  
 I thì I roast off all CL intestine belong I up but Ly thì only sit there like nothing  
 ‘I was anxious like hell when Ly just sat there like nothing.’ (roast intestine = be extremely anxious)
- (84) Muốn sống thì đừng để ai **bắt** được cái **thóp** nhỏ của em.  
 want live then NEG let who catch able CL fontanelle small belong you  
 ‘If you want to live, don’t let anyone know your weakness!’ (catch fontanelle = know someone’s weakness or soft spot)

- (85) Tôi đợi để **bóc** được cái **tem** bài post của bạn!  
 I wait to peel able CL stamp CL post belong you  
 ‘I waited to be able to be the first person who reads your post.’ (peel stamp = be the first to do something)

The following illustrate the addition of lexical and functional elements to an idiom:

- (86) a. Thú.thật với anh là tôi **ngứa mắt** lắm rồi!  
 honest with you that I itch eye much yet  
 ‘To be frank with you, I am very irritated.’ (itch eye = be irritated)
- b. Thú.thật với anh là tôi **ngứa con mắt** lắm rồi!  
 honest with you that I itch CL eye much yet  
 ‘To be frank with you, I am very irritated.’ (itch eye = be irritated)
- c. Thú.thật với anh là tôi **ngứa cái con mắt** lắm rồi!  
 honest with you that I itch EMPH CL eye much yet  
 ‘To be frank with you, I am so very irritated.’ (itch eye = be irritated)
- d. Thú.thật với anh là tôi **ngứa cái con mắt này của tôi** lắm rồi!  
 honest with you that I itch EMPH CL eye this belong I much yet  
 ‘To be frank with you, I am so very much irritated.’ (itch eye = be irritated)

Another example follows:

- (87) a. Bà Ly đã **dắt mũi của hai thằng**.chả suốt bao năm qua!  
 madam Ly PST lead nose belong two he through how year last  
 ‘Madame Ly controlled the two guys for so many years! (lead nose = control, make someone obey)
- b. Bà Ly đã **dắt hai cái mũi của hai thằng**.chả suốt bao năm qua!  
 madam Ly PST lead two CL nose belong two he through how year last  
 ‘Madame Ly controlled the two guys for so many years! (lead nose = control, make someone obey)
- c. Bà Ly đã **dắt hai cái mũi bự của hai thằng**.chả suốt bao năm qua!  
 madam Ly PST lead two CL nose big belong two he through how year last  
 ‘Madame Ly controlled the two guys for so many years! (lead nose = control, make someone obey)

Similar examples can be found on the internet, for example:

- <http://ver2.hoangsa.org/forum/archive/index.php/t-26554.html>
- [http://doctruyen.org/hoang-kim-dong/giai-thich-5\\_164744.html](http://doctruyen.org/hoang-kim-dong/giai-thich-5_164744.html)

### B3. V-N Idioms with functional elements

Section B2 lists idioms that include one or more of the functional elements D, Num, Cl in their canonical forms.

- (88) Hắn đang **trồng cây si** em gái của bạn hắn.  
he PROG plant CL fig sister girl belong friend he  
'He is in love with his friend's younger sister.' (plant fig = be in love with someone)
- (89) Tùng toàn **ăn quả vả** rồi **trả quả sung** một cách thản.nhiên .  
Tùng always eat CL lychee then return CL fig one way calm  
'Tùng is always ungrateful like nothing matters.' (eat lychee return fig = be ungrateful)
- (90) Ly vào bếp rồi đứng đấy **chỉ tay năm ngón**.  
Ly come kitchen then stand there point hand/finger five CL  
'Ly came into the kitchen and stood there bossing people around.' (point five fingers = boss people around)
- (91) Hãy biết cách **thả con tép** **bắt con tôm** để thành công mau lẹ.  
let know way release CL small.shrimp catch CL big.shrimp to succeed soon fast  
'Let's achieve something big by letting go of the small thing.' (release small shrimp catch big shrimp = achieve something big by letting go of something small)
- (92) Dầu em có **uốn ba tấc** **lưỡi** tôi vẫn sẽ không đổi ý!  
despite you have fold three unit(2.3cm) tongue I still will NEG change idea  
'Even when you try to talk to persuade me, I will not change my mind.' (fold three units tongue = use speaking skill to persuade someone)
- (93) Em làm ơn đừng suốt ngày **vơ đũa cả nắm** như vậy!  
you please no through day gather chopstick all hand like this  
'Please don't always stereotype like this.' (gather chopsticks all hand = stereotype things or people)
- (94) Ai có thể ngờ Nam đã **ăn ở hai lòng** với Ly?  
who could expect Nam PST eat live two stomach with Ly  
'Who would have expected that he was unfaithful with Ly?' (eat and live two stomachs = be unfaithful)
- (95) Đây là một trò-chơi, cậu không cần **chẻ một sợi tóc làm tư** như vậy!  
this COP one game you NEG need split one CL hair into four like this  
'This is a game, you don't need to be petty like this!' (split a hair into four pieces = be petty, small-minded, or meticulous)

The following example shows that the functional elements of an idiom can be changed. This idiom is unusual in that it does not have the usual NP-internal order of Vietnamese: the usual order is Num-Cl-N, but

this idiom appears as N-Num-Cl. If the order is changed to the usual one, *chỉ năm ngón tay*, V-Num-Cl-N, the idiomatic meaning is not available anymore. As (96b) shows, the idiom permits the numeral *năm*, ‘five’, and the classifier *ngón* to be omitted. The numeral can also be changed to emphasize the idiomatic reading in (96c).

- (96) a. Ly vào bếp rồi đứng đấy **chỉ tay năm ngón**.  
 Ly come kitchen then stand there point hand/finger five CL  
 ‘Ly came into the kitchen and stood there bossing people around.’ (point five fingers = boss people around)
- b. Ly vào bếp rồi đứng đấy **chỉ tay**.  
 Ly come kitchen then stand there point hand/finger  
 ‘Ly came into the kitchen and stood there bossing people around.’ (point five fingers = boss people around)
- c. Ly vào bếp rồi đứng đấy **chỉ tay mười ngón**.  
 Ly come kitchen then stand there point hand/finger ten CL  
 ‘Ly came into the kitchen and stood there really bossing people around.’ (point five fingers = boss people around)

Attested examples can be found at:

- [http://ngotruong.blogspot.com/2010\\_04\\_01\\_archive.html](http://ngotruong.blogspot.com/2010_04_01_archive.html)
- <http://xebushanoi.com/forum/archive/index.php/t-7187.html>
- <http://ttvnol.com/threads/english-for-friends-friendsa-t-club-the-6th-floor.478177/page-44>

Since there are so few V N idioms in Class 2 in Vietnamese, we also looked at V N V N idioms that include functional elements. They behave the same way, in allowing the functional elements to be dropped or replaced with another. The following idiom usually occurs with the classifier *con*, but it can be dropped or replaced with others, and other functional and lexical elements may be added in addition:

- (97) a. Hãy biết cách **thả con tép bắt con tôm** để thành công mau lẹ.  
 let know way release CL small.shrimp catch CL big.shrimp to succeed soon fast  
 ‘Let’s achieve something big by letting go of the small thing.’ (release small shrimp catch big shrimp = achieve something big by letting go of something small)
- b. Hãy biết cách **thả tép bắt tôm** để thành công mau lẹ.  
 let know way release small.shrimp catch big.shrimp to succeed soon fast  
 ‘Let’s achieve something big by letting go of the small thing.’ (release small shrimp catch big shrimp = achieve something big by letting go of something small)

- c. Hãy biết cách **thả hai ba con tép nhỏ** và **bắt một con tôm to**  
 let know way release two three CL small.shrimp small catch one CL big.shrimp big to  
 để thành công mau lẹ.  
 succeed soon fast  
 ‘Let’s achieve something big by letting go of the small thing.’ (release small shrimp catch big shrimp = achieve something big by letting go of something small)

Attested examples illustrating these points can be found at:

- <http://dechvn.net/da-den-luc-tha-con-tep-bat-con-tom-v-9425/>
- <http://2s.zing.vn/tin-tuc/chi-tiet.thong-bao.choi-gunny-nhan-qua-2s-bat-dau-dot-thu-2.3569.html>
- <https://www.facebook.com/HuyMeProductions/photos/pb.290309384403049.-2207520000.1410316798./548318765268775/?type=1>

Classifiers can also be left out, just like numerals, as shown in the example below involving the idiom ‘grow CL banyan tree,’ which typically occurs with the classifier *cây* used with stick-like objects. As (98b) shows, omission of the classifier does not affect the grammaticality or idiomaticity of the sentence. In (98c), we can see that the sentence has the idiomatic reading when it includes a numeral, a classifier, an adjective, and a demonstrative in the noun phrase.

- (98) a. Nam **trồng cây si** với Linh lâu rồi.  
 Nam grow CL banyan with Linh long already  
 ‘Nam has been pursuing Linh for a long time.’ (grow CL banyan tree = pursue a girl’s love)
- b. Nam **trồng si** với Linh lâu rồi.  
 Nam grow banyan with Linh long already  
 ‘Nam has been pursuing Linh for a long time.’ (CL omitted)
- c. Tôi quá dại.dột nên đã **trồng mỗi một cây si già đó** với Ly suốt mười năm qua.  
 I too naive so PST grow only one CL banyan old that with Ly through ten year past  
 ‘I tried to pursue a single old flame with Ly for ten years.’ (literal: ‘I grew that one old banyan tree with Ly for ten years.’)

Some attested examples involving this idiom can be found at:

- <http://ask.fm/TylerNhi/answer/115045700957>
- <http://tuongtri.com/2013/09/18/cay-si/>
- <http://text.123doc.org/document/2048372-vai-dieu-thu-vi-ve-cay-si-potx.htm>

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