

Idioms in the Series of “Gossip Girl Season 4”: Semantics Study

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ABSTRACT

The research focused on the idioms used in “Gossip Girl Season 4” after watching the phenomena of idiom use in this television series. This research aims to identify the types of idioms and to explain the meaning of the idioms found in the series. This research used a qualitative descriptive method. This method is used to understand in detail the phenomenon of the research subject. The researcher seeks to reveal the underlying patterns, and meanings of the idioms within the series story through thorough analysis and interpretation. There are 47 idioms in the data, they are 18 transparent idioms, 27 semi-transparent idioms, and 2 semi-opaque idioms. The most frequent idiom in “Gossip Girls Season 4” belong to semi-transparent idiom. In order to fully comprehend the idiom, we must first understand the context: who is the speaker, what the speaker is talking about, when the speaker is speaking, and where the speaker is speaking.

Keywords: *Idiom; Semantics; TV Series.*

INTRODUCTION

Idioms are colourful threads that weave the fabric of language, providing depth, imagery, and cultural diversity to our statements in the great tapestry of human experience. These metaphorical terms, that are frequently based on historical background or folk wisdom, play an intriguing role in our communication. They are more than just linguistic tools; they are intricate windows into a society's collective psyche (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008). According to Genetti (2019), language is used as a medium for social interaction. This term emphasizes that language plays a vital role in human life. People use language for different purposes, including entertainment and information. Giving a directive, or something else. Idioms refer to non-literal words or phrases used in language (Rafatbakhsh & Ahmadi, 2019). Understanding idioms improves communication by adding depth and nuance to talks. On the other hand, for those unfamiliar with the realm of idiomatic idioms, the language maze might be confusing. Without the key to unlock the underlying meanings behind these metaphorical statements, words become vague and hard to understand (Oktaviani & Misnadin, 2018). Idiomatic mastery guarantees that words are no longer just symbols, but rather have a vivid and culturally resonant meaning. On the contrary, for those who have yet to solve the intricacies of idiomatic language, the linguistic maze remains a challenge, with words veiled in ambiguity and meanings tantalizingly out of reach. Kovács (2016) stated the challenges of using idiom are lack of direct parallels in the target

language, different implications; even though an idiom has a similar counterpart in the target language, it may be utilized in different contexts or situations because of its distinct meanings, and idioms may be employed in the source text in both its literal and idiomatic senses at the same time, which can be difficult to duplicate in the target text.

An idiom is described as a fixed pattern of language that permits little to no form modification and frequently has meanings that cannot be inferred from their constituent parts (Baker, 2018). Consequently, an idiom cannot be translated literally from one language into another without experiencing certain connotational alterations. On the other hand, Chaer (2014), stated that idioms are linguistic units, whether they take the shape of words, phrases, or sentences, whose meanings cannot be inferred from the language's fundamental grammatical rules or predicted from the lexical meaning of the constituent parts. According to (Kahhar, 2015), Idiomatic expressions are words or phrases that have a specific meaning and may differ from the meaning of the words or phrases they contain when used alone.

(1) *You must believe the news, I got it straight from the horse's mouth.*

From the horse's mouth means an information came from the main source.

Idioms are used in a variety of contexts, including film, when speakers must convey messages that can only be expressed with idiomatic speech. It is intriguing to investigate various sorts of idioms employed by a certain society and classifying the idioms into several categories. English features idiomatic terms, which are used by English speakers to communicate their feelings and conditions (Kovaliuk, 2022). According to Moon (1998), there are four types of idioms, namely transparent idioms, semi-transparent idioms, semi-opaque idioms, and opaque idioms.

Transparent Idioms

Transparent idioms are predictable, simple to grasp, and nearly identical in meaning to spoken language. It is simpler to anticipate understanding of transparent idioms. As opposed to opaque, ambiguous terms, idioms have a higher level of transparency, making them easier to understand. The results support the idea that some idioms can be picked up by semantic analysis.

(2) *Break a leg.*

When wishing someone luck before a performance or significant occasion, such as a theater performance or a job interview, the expression “break a leg” is frequently used. The expression “break a leg” may have a negative connotation when taken literally, but it makes sense when used in a positive context, therefore it is transparent. The message is essentially, “I hope you have a successful performance or event.”

Semi-Transparent Idioms

Semi-transparent idioms are idioms that have a metaphorical meaning that cannot be understood solely by general usage; each of the expression's component elements plays a part in understanding the expression's entire meaning. Idioms that are just marginally relevant to comprehending the expression's overall meaning. Thus, metaphorical meanings are frequently associated with semi-transparent idioms, and their

individual components have a modest contribution in comprehending the significance of the expression in its whole.

(3) *Don't cry over spilled milk.*

Although the phrases “don't,” “cry,” “over,” and “spilled” have clear definitions, the statement as a whole doesn't make sense if taken at face value, making the idiom only partially visible. The meaning of this phrase is to avoid wasting time or effort worrying about things that have already happened and cannot be changed, but it becomes evident with context or explanation. In other words, it discourages wallowing in one's past transgressions or regrets. Therefore, “Don't cry over spilled milk” does not immediately convey its intended meaning without further explanation or usage context.

Semi-Opaque Idioms

Semi-opaque idioms are a kind of idioms whose figurative meaning is unrelated to the meaning of their constituent words and whose essence of meaning is not entirely obvious. These idioms may have some metaphorical meaning that differs from the literal meanings of their constituent terms, but not to the point of being completely obscure. The substance of their meaning may not be immediately clear, necessitating some amount of interpretation or contextual awareness.

(4) *The ball is in your court.*

Due to the difficulty in determining this idiom's meaning from the literal meanings of its constituent terms, it is classified as semi-opaque. Despite the fact that “ball” and “court” have clear-cut literal definitions, this idiom does not apply to a literal sporting setting. Instead, it is used to indicate that someone in a specific scenario has the power or obligation to decide what to do. Without context or explanation, someone might take this idiom extremely literally and believe it to be talking about a sporting event. However, the full meaning becomes more apparent with some context or explanation. It is therefore rather ambiguous because it calls for figurative interpretation.

Opaque Idioms

The type of idioms known as opaque idioms are those that are challenging to understand since there are no portions of the word that are connected to the meaning. It indicates that idioms of the opaque type are difficult to grasp unless the reader or listener is familiar with the context in which they were first used.

(5) *Kick the bucket.*

The phrases “kick,” “the,” and “bucket” do not accurately communicate the meaning of this idiom, which is to die or to pass away. It is not immediately clear why these phrases are employed to describe someone's death, despite the idiom's dubious origins. You must be familiar with the term itself and its cultural setting in order to comprehend its meaning.

Idioms are under the study of semantics. These metaphorical idioms, which are frequently anchored in cultural context and shared experiences, serve as fascinating linguistic puzzles that defy conventional interpretations. With its emphasis on the meaning and interpretation of words and phrases, semantics becomes a lens through

which we can explore the complex tapestry of idiomatic idioms. As we investigate idioms in the framework of semantics, we discover the delicate interplay between language, culture, and the intricate dance of meaning that creates our communicative landscape. According to Lee (2023), semantics is a technical term for studying meaning. Similarly, Hurford (2007) defines semantics as “the study of meaning in language.” Semantics refers to the study of linguistic meaning. Semantics, or the study of meaning, is central to communication studies (Bohnemeyer, 2021). The increasing significance of communication requires a deeper understanding of language. Semantics is one of the linguistic branches that tends to read the original story in the original language (B.B. Nimanuho, 2017). People should be able to read, listen, and speak in order to receive information, and they should be able to write and speak in order to share information. Understanding morphemes, simple words, compound words, and their meanings is essential to learning a language (Elfath et al., 2022).

One important aspect of semantic analysis is the research of references, which entails evaluating how words or phrases refer to entities or concepts in the real world. The interaction between language and the external reality it reflects is an enthralling field of study in semantics, shedding light on the methods by which meaning is transferred (Nugroho, 2020).

Semantics goes beyond references and into the domain of individual words and their underlying meanings. The study of word semantics entails deciphering the layers of meaning that words contain, which are frequently altered by historical, cultural, and environmental influences (Suhendar & Arsiandi, 2020). Linguists can use this nuanced method to detect tiny changes in meaning that words may undergo throughout time. On the other hand, Rhee (2004) stated that the study of sentence semantics expands the area by digging into the complexity of meaning that arise from the arrangement and interaction of words inside a given syntactic structure. Understanding how sentences carry meaning is critical to understanding the breadth of communication. Semantic analysis also includes other forms of meanings, such as literal, metaphorical, and figurative expressions (Siahaan & Sarage, 2019). This broad perspective acknowledges the dynamic nature of language, where meanings can go beyond the obvious and into the realms of symbolism and abstraction. Changes in meaning over time are another interesting feature of semantic study. Language is a living entity, evolving with societal shifts, and semantics captures the essence of this evolution. The interesting journey of linguistic expression over time is revealed by unraveling the historical trajectory of word meanings (Eryon & Sahrul, 2022).

Chomsky (1964) stated that Semantics is one of the grammar components (the other two being syntax and phonology), and semantic components affect sentence meaning. Semantics, with its object, meaning, is present at all or at all levels of construction. (Simatupang & Adzani, 2019) define semantics as the scientific study of the meanings embodied in words and sentences. Semantics is sometimes linked to pragmatics, another discipline of linguistics that also focuses on meaning (Simatupang & Supri, 2020). The distinction between the two is based on the meaning they hold. Semantics is the study of language's implied meaning. In contrast, pragmatics focuses

on the speaker's perspective or meaning (Yule, 2010). Meaning is then found at the phonological, morphological, and syntactic levels. Meaning deals with the purpose of a word or sentence. O'Grady et al. (2001), define meaning as the message given by signs. They can be expressed verbally, in writing, or through other means (Rowe & Levine, 2018). The meaning of a speech is studied in order for both the listener and the speaker to understand it (Simatupang et al., 2020). There are two different types of meaning: literal meaning and non-literal meaning. Each has its own qualities and functions. Literal meaning, which represents the accurate and understandable interpretation of words or sentences, is like a beacon of clarity. It is a kind of expression that adheres to objectivity and factual correctness, as described by Saeed (2003). When speakers express their ideas with a literal aim, their words create a bridge of comprehension that makes it simple for listeners to understand the intended message.

Meaning resonates with the concept put forth by Griffiths (2006), when evaluating individual phrases in isolation, sentence or literal meaning is a shared knowledge among speakers of the same language. It is the basis for universal agreement among speakers of a language regarding the importance of solitary phrases. Literal meaning acts as a solid anchor in language and is, in essence, the foundation upon which linguistic communication rests. In short, meaning, whether it be literal or figurative is the cornerstone of successful communication. It makes ensuring that words, whether spoken or written, convey the intended meaning precisely and explicitly, promoting communication and understanding between speakers and listeners. The interplay between literal and figurative meanings in our language endeavors lends depth and variety to the tapestry of human speech, enabling human to communicate not only facts but also feelings, metaphors, and subtleties that improve our communication.

The researcher is interested in analyzing the idiom used in "Gossip Girl Season 4" after watching the phenomena of idiom use in this television series. The show was created for television by Josh Schwartz and Stephanie Savage. Given the popularity of idiomatic terms in many kinds of media, the researcher selected to use "Gossip Girl Season 4" as a sample case study. This decision is inspired by the assumption that researching into the idiomatic richness of content made for a teenage audience will provide a more in-depth understanding of the idioms encountered by individuals during their formative years. Recognizing the difficulty students encounter in interpreting idiomatic English gives a rationale for this study project. Furthermore, the research finds a common phenomenon in people, even when given translated subtitles, may not fully understand the idiomatic character of some terminology used in movies. This issue is worsened by the tendency to translate word for word rather than diving into the complicated literal meanings of idioms. Therefore, the study seeks to shed light on the overlooked feature of idiomatic language, with a particular emphasis on "Gossip Girl Season 4". The research aims to identify the various types of idioms found in the series, providing a comprehensive taxonomy to help us better grasp the show's linguistic diversity and to explicate the meanings encoded in these idioms, offering clarification on the figurative language used and contributing to the larger discussion of the impact of idiomatic expressions in media.

METHOD

The qualitative descriptive method, as described by Moleong (2007), was used in the study to allow a deeper knowledge of the phenomenon under examination. This study focuses on the use of idioms in discussions in "Gossip Girl Season 4". The use of a qualitative descriptive method is ideal for delving into the complexities and nuances of idiomatic language in the setting of a television series. The research technique unfolded in a structured sequence of procedures. First, the researcher identified the issue of interest, which is the analysis of idioms in "Gossip Girl Season 4." The first step established a clear focus for the upcoming investigation. Second, a preliminary inquiry was conducted, most likely involving a review of literature and background material on idioms, to lay the groundwork for the research project. The third step involved identifying a specific problem to explore. This step included defining the research questions or objectives that guided the examination of idioms in the series. Fourth, the researcher articulated the expected benefits of the research, outlining the potential contributions and insights that the study could provide to a broader knowledge of idiomatic language in media, particularly for the teenage audience.

The fifth step involved the extraction of sentences from "Gossip Girl Season 4" that contained idioms. This data collection process formed the empirical basis for the subsequent analysis. Following this, the researcher systematically compiled the various types of idioms identified within the series. This step likely included categorizing idioms based on their linguistic features or thematic relevance. The seventh and last step was the explanation and analysis of the collected data. This involved an examination of the extracted sentences, decoding the idiomatic expressions, and shedding light on their figurative meanings within the context of the series.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section provides a comprehensive analysis of idioms within the context of Gossip Girl Season 4. The researcher selected and classified 47 idioms into four different categories: transparent, semi-transparent, semi-opaque, and opaque idiom. The research reveals a distribution of 18 transparent idioms, 27 semi-transparent idioms, 2 semi-opaque idioms, and 0 opaque idiom. To provide a more advanced understanding, four typical examples are presented, representing each of the four types of idioms thoroughly explored throughout the Gossip Girl Season 4 series.

Transparent Idiom

According to Moon (1998), Transparent idioms are predictable, simple to grasp, and nearly identical in meaning to spoken language. It is simpler to anticipate understanding of transparent idioms.

(6) Dan Humphry: "If you could take Blair in stride today, Tim Gunn will be *a piece of cake*. Don't tell him I said that."

Jenny Humphry: "Okay, thank you."

(Ep 6 / (00:17:01))

In (7), there is an idiom in the conversation. Dan Humphry said "Tim Gunn will be a piece of cake". The type of idiom a *piece of cake* is transparent. The type of idiom *a piece of cake* is transparent since it expresses simply that something is very straightforward Moon (1998). It's a popular, well-known idiom that doesn't need any specific interpretation, making it clear to the reader or listener. Therefore, the idiom is transparent, which implies that its meaning is plain and easy to understand based on the terms and their regular usage.

The idiom *a piece of cake*, based on Dan Humphrey's statement "If you could take Blair in stride today, dealing with Tim Gunn will be *a piece of cake*" means easy. Dan Humphry made a parallel between dealing with Blair and dealing with Tim Gunn. Based on the conversation, Jenny Humphry can manage or cope with Blair's demands, so working with Tim Gunn will be much easier. The idiom *a piece of cake* conveys a high level of confidence in dealing with the approaching scenario with Tim Gunn, as if it will be easy.

(7) Colin Forrester: "Prison shouldn't be easy, especially when you deserve to be there."

Juliet Sharp: "He didn't do it."

Collin Forrester: "You're the only person that thinks that. Why else would his lawyer have him plead guilty? I understand he's your brother and you love him, but you are **playing with fire**."

(Ep 8 / (00:03:10))

In (6), The idiom "playing with fire" is used in the statement by Collin Forrester to warn Juliet Sharp about the dangerous consequences of her actions, despite her love for her brother. In these idioms, the metaphorical essence is readily apparent and can be easily understood through general usage (Moon, 1998)

The phrase "playing with fire" is a figurative expression that aligns closely with its literal interpretation, as it refers to engaging in something dangerous, much like playing with actual fire, which can cause damage, danger, or devastation if not controlled properly. The metaphorical essence of the idiom is readily apparent and can be easily understood through general usage.

Semi-Transparent Idiom

Semi-transparent idioms are idioms that have a metaphorical meaning that cannot be understood solely by general usage. This classification implies a nuanced complexity, suggesting that their figurative connotations require deeper exploration or contextual understanding for accurate interpretation (Moon, 1998). This linguistic intricacy adds an additional layer of depth to the series' communicative dynamics.

(8) Eric Van der Woodsen: "Oh, come on, how good would it feel to finally give them **a taste of their own medicine**? Not that we're the ones to give it to them."

Dan Humphrey: "Well, hold on a second. What's wrong with us?"

(Ep 7 / (00:07:38))

In this conversation, Eric Van der Woodsen said “Oh, come on, how good would it feel to finally give them a taste of their own medicine?” *A taste of their own medicine* is a semi-transparent idiom. Semi-transparent idiom needs a deeper examination or contextual information for appropriate interpretation, indicating a metaphorical layer that is not instantly obvious but nevertheless has features of accessibility (Moon, 1998). Since it has a figurative meaning, and while it is not entirely opaque, understanding the message may require some comprehension of the idiom's figurative meaning. It's not immediately clear without prior knowledge of the idiom's meaning.

A taste of their own medicine refers to treating someone in the same way they have treated others, frequently in a negative or retaliatory manner. It suggests that the individual being discussed has done something to others and that they should now face the same treatment or consequences. A statement by Eric Van der Woodsen, “Oh, come on, how good would it feel to finally give them a taste of their own medicine? Not that we're the ones to give it to them.” suggests a desire to see someone face the consequences of their own conduct.

Semi-Opaque Idiom

Semi-opaque idioms are a kind of idioms whose figurative meaning is unrelated to the meaning of their constituent words and whose essence of meaning is not entirely obvious (Moon, 1998).

(9) Blair Waldorf: “Where else am I going to announce to the world that

Chuck's new lady is a **lady of the evening**?”

Serena Van der Woodsen: “Do not embarrass them in public. Pull him aside, tell him in private. Let him handle it.”

(Ep 4 / (00:18:00))

Lady of the evening is semi-opaque in the statement uttered by Blair, “Where else am I going to announce to the world that Chuck's new lady is a lady of the evening?”. Semi-opaque idioms offer another layer of complication by demanding a more conscious effort to understand their intended meaning (Moon, 1998). Its figurative meaning may not be obvious to all readers, particularly those unfamiliar with the term. While the context may provide some hints, it is not entirely clear, and readers unfamiliar with this phrase may want further information or context to fully get the meaning.

Based on the conversation above, a prostitute or sex worker is referred to as a *lady of the evening* in polite company. The expression *lady of the evening* employs the descriptor *evening* to euphemistically refer to the night-time, especially when it comes to behaviors that are more covert or hidden from public view. When discussing this occupation, it is a euphemism that is frequently used to avoid using explicit language. As a result, the phrase implies that Chuck's new partner is a sex worker.

CONCLUSION

Based on the series Gossip Girl Season 4, the researcher found some classifications of idiom. There are 4 types of idioms, they are transparent, semi-transparent, and semi

opaque. Among the data analyzed, there were a total of 47 idioms identified. The first is transparent idiom. In this type, there are 18 idioms found. The second is semi-transparent idiom. In this type, the researcher found 27 idioms. The third is semi-opaque idiom. In this type, 2 idioms found. The fourth is opaque idiom. There is no idiom found. The most frequent idiom in “Gossip Girls Season 4” belong to semi-transparent idiom.

In order to fully comprehend the idiom, we must first understand the context: who is the speaker, what the speaker is talking about, when the speaker is speaking, and where the speaker is speaking. Understanding the speaker's persona is important since it reveals their perspective, experiences, and potential presumptions. The nuanced interpretation of the idiom is heavily influenced by the speaker's status as an authority person, an expert in the topic, or an ordinary individual. Furthermore, determining the speaker's motivations, objectives, and emotions can provide vital insights into the underlying message contained within the idiom.

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