

دراسة تقابلية دلالية للتعبيرات الاصطلاحية المعاصرة في حلقات تلفزيونية
باللغتين الإنجليزية والعربية – "Breaking Bad" (إنجليزي) و
"Fauda" (عربي)



الأستاذ قاسم عباس ضايف (دكتوراه)
جامعة بابل – كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية
قسم اللغة الانكليزية
qasimabbas@uobabylon.edu.iq

زهراء سالم عبيد
جامعة بابل – كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية
قسم اللغة الانكليزية
zahaasalem999@gmail.com

الكلمات المفتاحية: كلمات مفتاحية: التحليل التقابلي، علم اللغة التقابلي، علم الدلالة، تعبيرات اصطلاحية، معنى.

كيفية اقتباس البحث

عبيد ، زهراء سالم ، قاسم عباس ضايف ، دراسة تقابلية دلالية للتعبيرات الاصطلاحية المعاصرة في حلقات تلفزيونية باللغتين الإنجليزية والعربية "Breaking Bad" – (إنجليزي) و "Fauda" (عربي)، مجلة مركز بابل للدراسات الانسانية، شباط 2026، المجلد: 16، العدد: 2 .

هذا البحث من نوع الوصول المفتوح مرخص بموجب رخصة المشاع الإبداعي لحقوق التأليف والنشر (Creative Commons Attribution) تتيح فقط للآخرين تحميل البحث ومشاركته مع الآخرين بشرط نسب العمل الأصلي للمؤلف، ودون القيام بأي تعديل أو استخدامه لأغراض تجارية.

مسجلة في
ROAD

مفهرسة في
IASJ



A Contrastive-Semantic Study of Contemporary Idiomatic Expressions in English and Arabic TV Episodes – "Breaking Bad" (English) and "Fauda" (Arabic)

Zahraa Salim Obaid

University of Babylon – College of
Education for Humanities –
Department of English Language

Prof. Qasim Abbas Dhayef (Ph.D.)

University of Babylon – College of
Education for Humanities –
Department of English Language

Keywords : Contrastive Analysis, Contrastive Linguistics, Semantics, Idiomatic Expressions, Meaning.

How To Cite This Article

Obaid, Zahraa Salim , Qasim Abbas Dhayef , A Contrastive-Semantic Study of Contemporary Idiomatic Expressions in English and Arabic TV Episodes – "Breaking Bad" (English) and "Fauda" (Arabic), Journal Of Babylon Center For Humanities Studies, February 2026, Volume:16, Issue 2.



This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license
(<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>)

[This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.](#)

مستخلص البحث

تناولت هذه الدراسة إمكانية تطبيق التحليل التقابلي الدلالي على التعبيرات الاصطلاحية المعاصرة في المسلسلات التلفزيونية الإنجليزية والعربية. تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى استكشاف المعاني الدلالية، والدلالات الثقافية، والبنى اللغوية للتعبيرات الاصطلاحية في حلقات مختارة من المسلسل

التلفزيوني الإنجليزي الشهير "Breaking Bad" والمسلسل التلفزيوني العربي المشهور

"Fauda". تعتمد منهجية الدراسة على التحليلين الكيفي والكمي للتعبيرات الاصطلاحية داخل هذين المسلسلين، من خلال منظور سياقاتهما الاجتماعية والثقافية. تكتسب الدراسة أهمية نظرية لأنها تحدد الوظائف الدلالية والتداولية للتعبيرات الاصطلاحية في المسلسلات التلفزيونية، بينما تكتسب أيضاً أهمية عملية للباحثين المهتمين بالدراسات اللغوية عبر الثقافات. إنها تقدم بيانات قيمة يمكن استخدامها في الأبحاث المستقبلية التي تستكشف التقاطع بين اللغة والثقافة والإعلام. أخيراً، كما خلصت الدراسة الحالية، فمن الواضح أن التعبيرات الاصطلاحية في كل من "Breaking

"Bad" و "Fauda" تعكس سياقاتهما الاجتماعية والثقافية، مع ظهور أوجه تشابه واختلاف ملحوظة من استخدامهما الدلالي والتداولي.

Abstract

This study has tackled the applicability of contrastive-semantic analysis to contemporary idiomatic expressions in English and Arabic television narratives. The present study aims to investigate the semantic meanings, cultural implications, and linguistic structures of idiomatic expressions in selected episodes of the critically acclaimed English TV show "Breaking Bad" and the popular Arabic TV series "Fauda". The methodology of the study involves both qualitative and quantitative analyses of idiomatic expressions within these shows, conducted through the lens of their socio-cultural contexts. The study is theoretically significant as it identifies the semantic and pragmatic functions of idiomatic expressions in television narratives, while also being practically significant for researchers interested in cross-cultural linguistic studies. It provides valuable data that can be utilised in future research exploring the intersection of language, culture, and media. Finally, as concluded by the present study, it is evident that idiomatic expressions in both "Breaking Bad" and "Fauda" reflect their respective socio-cultural contexts, with notable similarities and differences emerging from their semantic and pragmatic usage.

1. Introduction

The reversed semantic context of contemporary English and Arabic TV show idiomatic expressions hasn't been investigated yet, particularly as regards the hit TV show "Breaking Bad" (English) and "Fauda" (Arabic), which the researcher is aware of. The present research





investigates the idiomatic expressions employed in both series and analyzes their semantic connotations within each cultural context.

The present study aims to identify the semantic differences and similarities in idiomatic expressions that appear in English and Arabic television episodes, challenging the validity of a contrastive-semantic approach in such audiovisual content in order to ascertain the differences and similarities between the English and the Arabic idioms.

The hypothesis is that even though English and Arabic idioms will have similar communicative functions, their meanings will reflect opposing cultural perceptions as well as structural features.

The methodology of the present contrastive-semantic analysis is to select idiomatic expressions from "Breaking Bad" and "Fauda," analyze them according to existing semantic theories, and compare their application and connotations in the TV shows' context. This methodology will be applied in order to identify semantic trends and contrasts that dominate between the two languages.

This study focuses on some chosen idiomatic expressions used in some episodes of "Breaking Bad" and "Fauda," which are English and Arabic for modern TV dialogues, respectively.

The present study has theoretical significance in the way that it contributes to contrastive semantics and idiomatic usage across languages, and practical significance in the way that it can assist language learners, translators, and cross-cultural communicators to navigate the subtleties of idiomatic expressions in English and Arabic media.

1.2. Literature Review

1.2.1. Contemporary Idiomatic expressions

Contemporary Idiomatic expressions are expressions or phrases that cannot be understood based on the literal meaning of the words in them. They are connected to culture, are metaphorical, and usually depict social and pragmatic values in society (Fernando, 1996; Glucksberg, 2001).

Jafarov (1970) cited in Sarjan Sadigova (2024), defines idioms as "stable word combinations that convey a figurative meaning of words with real meaning" (Jafarov, 1970, p. 97). Extensive research has been carried out on Contemporary idiomatic expressions in fields such as linguistics, psycholinguistics, and translation studies. Fernando (1996) describes idioms in terms of: fixed expressions with non-compositional meaning, where the whole cannot be predicted from the sum of its parts. Glucksberg (2001) investigates the cognitive mechanisms that one relies

upon for decoding figurative utterances, such as idioms, and finds that idioms are processed as metaphors are, as they require the application of an underlying conceptual mapping.

Idiomatic expressions are a widespread means of communication, appearing in various languages and cultures. Since the dawn of human speech, idioms have been an integral part of language, arising from human interaction and communication. Idioms differ from other forms of figurative language because of their dimensions of subjective frequency, ambiguity (possibility of having a literal interpretation), and decomposability (possibility of the idiom's words to assist in its figurative interpretation). In modern times, English has become a prominent medium of communication among people worldwide. Understanding the development and function of idioms in English can help address the challenges that arise during intercultural communication and may lead to effective strategies for overcoming these difficulties. Scholars regard the diverse nature and richness of idioms in speech as key indicators of their importance, making them a subject of study across various interrelated disciplines (Tagiev, 1966, p. 5). Idiomatic expressions are fundamental components of language. These stable yet versatile combinations of words do not simply convey their literal meanings but often encapsulate deeper cultural significance. To fully grasp their meaning, one must consider both the linguistic context and the cultural connotations associated with them (Sarjan Sadigova, 2024).

The relationship between language and culture has been explored by numerous scholars. Halliday (1978) views language as a social semiotic, arguing that language is shaped by and reflects the social and cultural context in which it is used. Wierzbicka (1997) emphasizes the importance of understanding cultural key words in order to gain insights into the values and beliefs of different cultures.

Television shows, being cultural texts, influence language and culture to a large extent (Mittell, 2015). They reflect contemporary language usage and can even shape linguistic trends (Mittell, 2015). O'Sullivan et al. (1994) suggest that media texts, including television shows, are responsible for the negotiation and construction of cultural identities.

1.2.2. Linguistic Functions of Idiomatic Expressions

Fernando (1996, citing Halliday, 1985) classifies idioms into three categories based on their functions: 1. ideational, 2. interpersonal, and 3. relational.





Ideational idioms, also referred to as ‘the state and way of the world’ idioms, convey the message's content and describe the nature of the message itself. This type of idiom is commonly used in informal speech and journalism but is rarely found in formal contexts. Fernando (1996, citing Halliday, 1985) further divides ideational idioms into those that describe: actions (e.g., to spill the beans), events (e.g., a turning point), situations (e.g., to be in a pickle), people and things (e.g., a red herring), attributes (e.g., cut-and-dried), evaluations (e.g., a watched pot never boils), and emotions (e.g., green with envy).

Interpersonal idioms serve an interactive function by expressing greetings and farewells (e.g., good morning), directives (e.g., let’s face it), eliciting opinions (e.g., what do you think?), agreements (e.g., say no more), and rejections (e.g., come off it!). Additionally, they can characterise the message. Interpersonal idioms may be used covertly (e.g., believe (you) me) or overtly (e.g., it’s raining cats and dogs).

Lastly, relational idiomatic expressions primarily perform a connective function, providing both cohesion and coherence to the text.

1.2.3. Contrastive Analysis and Contrastive Linguistics

Contrastive analysis (CA) is the systematic comparison of two or more languages, with the aim of describing their similarities and differences. CA has often been done for practical/pedagogical purposes. The aim has been to provide better descriptions and better teaching materials for language learners.

Fisiak defines contrastive linguistics as “a subdiscipline of linguistics concerned with the comparison of two or more languages or subsystems of languages in order to determine both the differences and similarities between them” (Fisiak et al. 1978 cited in Fisiak 1981, p.1).

As Krzeszowski explains (1990, p.11), there is, unfortunately, not much consistency in the terminology related to contrastive linguistics. However, the terms ‘contrastive linguistics’ and ‘contrastive studies’ are most often used. The term ‘contrastive linguistics’ is usually used to refer to the whole field of cross language comparison, slightly focusing on the instances related to the theory or methodology of comparisons.

Another term, ‘contrastive analysis’, can be used interchangeably with the above mentioned terms, but linguists tend to use it to refer to the comparison proper. And finally, ‘contrastive grammar’ refers to “the product of contrastive studies, as a bilingual grammar highlighting the differences across languages” (Krzeszowski 1990, p.11).

1.2.4. Semantics

Semantics is the study of the meaning of words, phrases and sentences, but the focus is on what the words conventionally mean, rather than on what the speaker wants them to mean in certain situations leech (1983). As Kroger (2022, p.4) describes it is the study of the relationship between linguistic form and meaning.

Semantics is the investigation of meaning. The word semantics comes from Greek word, *sēmantikós* 'significant'; *sēmaínein* 'to show, signify' or 'indicated by a sign'; from *sēma* 'sign'. But the word 'meaning' has a wide range of conceptions and there is no general agreement among experts about the way it should be defined.

Two broad reasons are why semantics emerges as a valid study. One, meaning is closely related to communication. Verbal and non-verbal communication undoubtedly conveys some meaning; at the same time communication is highly essential in life. Two, the mechanism of human attempts to comprehend the nature of meaning involves the use of mental faculty by the use of perception and reason. As Leech (1974, p. ix) puts it: "Semantics is central to the study of communication; and as communication more and more becomes a vital element in social organization, the need to know about it more and more grows. Semantics is also at the centre of the study of the human mind – thought process, cognition and conceptualization.

As a result of those main points, semantics has been the intersection of various fields of study. Semantics has a close relationship with such other fields as philosophy, psychology, sociology, and anthropology.

1.2.5. What is Meaning?

If semantics is the study of meaning, then what does "meaning" mean? Different definitions of meaning have been established in the past. Technical definitions of philologists, philosophers, psychologists, critics of literature, and other specialists; a large portion of the disagreement between different definitions can be explained by the necessity or desire of each specialist to modify the study of meaning to the needs of their particular discipline. Therefore, a philosopher might define meaning in terms of what is true and what is not for his purposes; a behaviorist psychologist might define meaning in terms of stimulus and response; a critic of literature could define meaning in terms of the reader's reaction; and so on (Leech, 1981, p.3).





1.2.6. Types of Meaning

Leech (1981) had divided "meaning" into seven types to show us the widest sense, and he gave importance to conceptual meaning.

1.2.6.1. Conceptual meaning: (it is also called 'logical' or 'cognitive' or 'denotative' meaning). It refers to literal or dictionary meaning. Conceptual meaning is the direct meaning. It means what it means. It doesn't give you any other shade of meaning. Conceptual meaning has been given a priority more than other types of meaning because it is complex and sophisticated in organization (phonological and syntactic organization) on the principles of contrastiveness and synthetic structures.

1.2.6.2. Connotative meaning: is a kind of associated, implied, or referential meaning. It means that certain characteristics or features are associated with a particular word. 'Connotative meaning' is, in fact, 'implied meaning'. It gives you a secondary meaning, such as: Rose (associated with) love, Moon (associated with) beauty.

1.2.6.3. Social meaning: (also called stylistic meaning) is defined as the study of different writers and types of literature and elements of language. In other words, it is the study of what makes Shakespeare different from other writers. Stylistic meaning refers to the way we express an idea. So the same idea can be expressed differently from one person to another or from one social context to another, for instance: He died, He passed away, He left for heaven abroad.

1.2.6.4. Affective meaning: A word's affective meaning is closely linked to the speaker's and the listener's feelings and mood. What we mean by that is the subjective sensations produced in audiences or readers by a text in any medium, or the personal feelings expressed by a speaker or writer.

1.2.6.5. Reflective meaning: A phenomenon known as "reflected meaning" in semantics occurs when a single word or phrase has many senses or meanings. Other names for it include coloring and contagion. As an example: Comedians typically employ language that reflects the meaning of their jokes.

1.2.6.6. Collocative meaning: A group of words that are expected to be together because of their habitual use. In other words, Collocative meaning is that ... there are certain words which go with a certain set of words, For example: Handsome Boy Beautiful Girl Long Road.

1.2.6.7. Thematic meaning: refers to the way a speaker or writer organizes a message to emphasize certain ideas or emotions. This can be done through focus, theme (topic), or emotive emphasis. For example, using the active voice instead of the passive voice can change the emphasis of a sentence, even though the conceptual meaning remains the same.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data Collection

For this study, the researcher selected two series with episodes that carry the idiomatic expressions, Breaking Bad and Fauda. These episodes were chosen because they feature significant character development and intense dialogues rich in idiomatic expressions.

3.2 Data Description

Contemporary idiomatic expressions form the basis for sentences, a component of language which is inseparable and tells us much about culture, history, and community. As a style of storytelling, TV shows use idioms to reflect reality, describe feelings, or build the character's depth. This paper compares the idiomatic expressions of Breaking Bad (2008–2013), an American crime drama series set in Albuquerque, New Mexico, centered on a high school chemistry teacher turned methamphetamine manufacturer by Vince Gilligan, and Fauda (2015–present), an Israeli Palestinian political thriller set in the West Bank, developed by Lior Raz and Avi Issacharoff. Both series are known for their suspenseful storylines and realistic portrayals of human conflict. The study is carried out with the aim of specifying and analyzing idiomatic expressions in selected episodes of **Breaking Bad** and **Fauda**, pinpointing the semantic meaning of these expressions within their cultural contexts, and finally highlighting a comparative analysis of the usage patterns of idioms in both shows.

3.3 Data analysis

After collecting the data, a qualitative and quantitative data analysis will be conducted, based on Leech's model of seven types of meaning.

1. Qualitative Analysis

Idiomatic Expressions in Breaking Bad

Extract 1

Season 4, Episode 6 "Cornered", at 8:10-9:42

The conversation between Skyler and her husband, Walter White.

Skyler: Well, I've said it before: if you are in danger, we go to the police.





Walter White: No. I don't want to hear about the police.
Skyler: You don't say that lightly. I know what it could do to this family, but if it's the only real choice we have, if it's either that or... are you getting shot when you open your... Find one where you're above. You're not some hardened criminal, Walt. You are in over your head. That's what we tell them, and that's the truth. It's not the truth, of course. It is a school teacher, cancer, desperate for money. We're done...
Walter White: No. You clearly don't know who you're talking to, so let me clue you in: **I am not in danger, Skyler. I am the danger.**
Walter White: **A guy opens his door and gets shot... No. I am the one who knocks.**

The analysis

After identifying the actual idiomatic expressions in the text, this dialogue from Breaking Bad can be analyzed using Leech's model of seven types of meaning. Leech (1981) categorized meaning into seven types: conceptual, connotative, social, affective, reflective, collocative, and thematic.

The theme of the scene is Skyler worries about Walt's safety due to his illegal actions, and Walt responds with accusations of control and power. The analysis splits the dialogue into several layers of meaning. On the level of Conceptual Meaning "I am the danger", Walter literally tells us he is the danger. At the Social Meaning level Walter's menacing tone ("You obviously don't know who you're dealing with") is claiming dominance, threatening Skyler's power as well as the Affective Meaning Walter's forceful declarations ("I am NOT in danger") convey defiance and ego. And that lead to shape Reflective Meaning "I am the one who knocks". It subverts the previous impression about Walter being a victim or something vulnerable (like a schoolteacher with cancer). He is, instead, creating danger now, reversing his old image). All the above types of meaning come together to end with the Thematic Meaning which revolve around Walter's monologue ("I am the danger") Walt's "I am the danger" monologue is an exemplary case of his hubris (overweening pride) and illustrates the show's broad theme of power corrupting individuals.

The Idiomatic Focus, "I am the one who knocks". Literally refers to the act of knocking on doors, but the idiomatic or figurative meaning. It is not just knocking on a door, but being the person who makes trouble.

Extract 2

Season 3, Episode 12 "Half Measures", at 23:30-27:11

This extract is a conversation between Mike Ehrmantraut and Walter White. Mike Ehrmantraut said:

"I used to be a big cop, long time ago. And I'd get called out on domestic

disputes all the time—hundreds, probably, over the years. But there was this one guy... there's one piece of it I'll never forget. Gordy. He looked like Bo

Svenson, you remember him? Walking Tall? You don't remember? No, anyway, big boy, 270, 280. But his wife, or whatever she was, Letty, was real small. Like a bird versus, like, little branches.

Anyway, my partner and I'd get called out there every weekend. And one of us would pull her aside, and we'd say, 'Come on, tonight's the night! We press charges!' And this wasn't one of those 'deep down he really loves me' setups. We got a lot of those, but not this. This girl was scared. She wasn't gonna cross him, no way, no how. Nothing we could do but patch her up, pass her off to the EMTs, put him in a car, drive him downtown, throw him in a drunk tank. He sleeps it off, next morning out he goes, back home.

Then one night, my partner is out sick, and it's just me. The call comes in, and it's the usual crap: broke her nose in the shower, kind of thing. So I cuff him, put him in the car, and away we go. Only that night, we're driving into town and, sideways, he's in my backseat, humming. Daddy-boy just rubbed me wrong. So instead of left, I go right, out into nowhere.

I kneel him down, and I put my revolver in his mouth. And I told him, 'This is it. This is how it ends.' And he's crying, going to the bathroom all over himself, swearing to God he's gonna leave her alone, screaming—much as you can with a gun in your mouth. And I told him to be quiet, that I needed to think about what I was going to do here.

And of course, he got quiet. Goes still, and real quiet, like a dog waiting for dinner scraps. And we just stood there for a while, me acting like I'm thinking things over, and Prince Charming kneeling in the dirt with piss in his pants. And after a few minutes, I took the gun out of his mouth. And I say, 'So help me, if you ever touch her again, I will [such and such and such and such and blah blah blah blah] just a warning.' Um, of course, just trying to do the right thing.

But two weeks later, he killed her. Of course. Caved her head in with the base of a Waring blender. We got there, there was so much blood you could taste the





metal. The moral of the story is: I chose a **half measure**, when I should have gone all the way. **I'll never make that mistake again. No more half measures, Walter."**

The analysis

The motif of this theme is Mike recounts a story to Walter White about his failure to take decisive action, leading up to the lesson: "No more half measures."

Mike's testimony is a story about his experience in dealing with domestic violence as a police officer. Important phrases like "half measure" (meaning an action that is not complete) state the main problem. On the level of Conceptual

Meaning the term "half measure" means trying to do something only partly. It also shows a failure to do the right thing. The social meaning helps show Mike's background as a former police officer and mentor. Words like "domestic disputes" and "EMTs" strengthen his authority. The story also makes him seem like a warning to Walter when he says, "No more half measures, Walter." In terms of feelings, the emotional tone is layered by use the clinical language masks vulnerability, while the final warning ("no more half measures") carries cold, unyielding resolve. The Reflective Meaning is the strongest in the monologue because it can be understood in two ways. "Half measure" shows both Mike's failure to kill Gordy and Walter's hesitation to get rid of threats. Thematic Meaning states the overall message is one of making moral decisions. Mike's tale disparages indecision ("half measures") and endorses pragmatism in an unforgiving world. The words "no more half measures" serve as a recurring refrain, encapsulating the show's consequentialist approach to morality.

Extract 3

Season 5, Episode 7 "Say My Name", at 3:17-6:00

This extract is a conversation in which Walt asserts his authority to a rival dealer who questions his identity.

Walt: My partner tells me that your crew switched to a P2P cook because of our success. You dye your meth with food coloring to make it look like mine. You've already aped my product at every turn, but now you have the opportunity to sell it yourself.

Dealer: I need you to listen to me. We're not going to give up this deal to be your errand boys, do you understand me? For what? Watch a bunch of junkies get a better high?

Walt: A better high means customers pay more. A higher purity means a greater yield. That's \$130 million of profit that isn't being pissed away by some substandard cook. Now, you listen to me. You've got the greatest meth cook—and a mentor, no—the two greatest meth cooks in America right here. And with our skills, you'll earn more from that 35 than you ever would on your own.

Dealer: Yeah? So you say. Just wondering why we're so lucky.

Walt: Cut us in. Mike is retiring from our crew, so his share of the partnership is available—if you can handle his end: distribution.

Dealer: Who the hell are you?

Walt: You know... you all know exactly who I am. Say my name.

Dealer: Do what? I don't—I don't have a damn clue what the hell you are talking about.

Walt: Yeah, you do. I'm the cook. I'm the man who killed Gus Fring. The cartel... Gathrie... You sure that's right? Now... Say my name.

Dealer: Heisenberg.

Walt: You're goddamn right.

The Analysis

Walt confronts a rival dealer, demanding recognition as "Heisenberg" to assert dominance.

On the Conceptual Meaning level, the literal meaning is Walt's insistence on "Say my name," a direct demand to be recognized. "Heisenberg" is Walt's alias, his criminal name. On the Connotative Meaning level, the additional meanings enhance the tension within the scene. "Heisenberg" connotes fear, terrible reputation, and intense power, indicating how Walt has transformed from a timid teacher to a drug boss. "Say my name" meanwhile transcends its literal meaning to reveal his intense craving for approval and control.

Reflective Meaning the conversation encourages double meanings. "Heisenberg" echoes Walt's broken identity. "Say my name" parallels the understated authority of Gus Fring, demonstrating Walt's transformation into a figure of fear.

Collocative Meaning The repetitive utterance of the line "say my name" is closely connected with Walt's ego, showing his obsession with his legacy.

Thematic Meaning also comes into play in the name "Heisenberg," as he completely owns his criminal identity, prioritizing his reputation over doing what is right. It also highlights the way that pride can taint, as Walt's need for recognition outweighs his desire to protect himself.





Extract 4

Season 5, Episode 14 "Ozymandias", at 8: 30 - 10:32

This extract is a conversation in which Walt asserts his authority to a rival dealer who questions his identity.

Walt: No, Jack! Jack, don't kill him. He's family.

Jack: Say again?

Walt: He's my family. He's my brother-in-law.

Jack: Didn't it cross your mind to maybe tell us you had a DEA agent for a brother-in-law?

Jack: Did you know about this?

Walt: I called you off! Remember? I told you not to come.

Jack: It seems to me we did you a solid. You weren't supposed to be here. It's too late now.

Jack: How about you telling me what was going down out here? Yeah, you and your brother-in-law don't seem to be getting along too well.

Walt: It doesn't matter. It doesn't concern you.

Jack: We just wasted his partner here, and he's wearing a bullet, so yeah, I'd say it does concern me.

Walt: This is between him and me.

Jack: No cavalry coming, I don't...

Walt: No, no, no, Jack! No goddamn Jack! No, the DEA doesn't know about this... not yet.

Walt: Hank, nothing can change what just happened, but you can walk out of here alive if you just promise us that you'll... you'll let this go.

Jack: Yeah, I thought as much.

Jack: Sorry, man, there's just no scenario where this guy lives.

Walt: No, no, no, listen! I've money! I have money! It's buried out here. It's 80 million dollars! 80 million!

Jack: So that's what got this party started.

Jack: Huh.

Jack: But this money... years won't do me much good in prison. You can go.

Walt: You can go anywhere! You can do anything! Think about it!

Walt: You can have any future that you want!

Walt: Jack! 80 million, and all you've got to do is let him go!

Jack: That's a hell of an offer. What do you think, Fed? Would you take that deal?

Walt: It's Hank! His name is Hank!

Jack: How about it, Hank? Should I let you go?

Hank: My name is ASAC Schrader.

Walt: Hank, listen to me! You gotta tell him! You gotta tell him now that we can work this out! Please! Please!

Hank: What, you want me to beg?

Hank: You're the smartest guy I ever met, and you're too stupid to see he made up his mind ten minutes ago.

Hank: Do what you're gonna do, you... [Hank died here]

The Analysis

The theme of this extract is that Hank understands that Walt is very intelligent ("smartest guy I ever met") but blames him for failing to see Jack's deadly intention ("he made up his mind ten minutes ago").

The Connotative Meaning of "Smartest guy I ever met" connotes respect, admiration, and even jealousy. However, with Hank's impending death and Walt's culpability in it, this line is tinged with irony and regret. "Too stupid" owes its force to the vivid contrast with the preceding compliment. "Stupid" tends to connote lack of intelligence, but here it refers to Walt's willful blindness, his voluntary refusal to open his eyes to the obvious moral and practical consequences of what he is doing. It is a devastating critique of Walt's deception of himself.

Affective Meaning, Hank speaks with a tired sarcasm and deep disappointment. He feels bitterness about Walt's choices, but there is also sadness and maybe some old feelings for the man he used to respect. The sarcasm helps him cope with the hard truth of his situation. He also feels betrayed because he risked his life for Walt's case.

Reflective Meaning, "Smartest guy" and "stupid" echo a main theme of Breaking Bad, the way power corrupts people and the moral choices they make to get what they want. Hank's words bring to mind an archetypal tragic flaw, where the greatest strength of a character is the cause of their failure. The line, "He made up his mind ten minutes ago," is how the show thinks about consequences. It's a bigger story, in which a chain of small decisions results in an enormous disaster that can't be changed. So "ten minutes ago" not only refers to Jack's choice, but to all the times Walt could have decided differently. This scene, which carry the thematic meaning also illustrates the universal theme of the tragic hero who is destroyed by his own hubris.

Collocative Meaning, The term "smart" is usually paired with adjectives such as "successful," "clever," and "resourceful." However, here it is paired with "stupid," which makes one shudder and feel uncomfortable. This indicates the perversion of Walt's intelligence and the tragic irony of his fate.





Idiomatic Expressions in Fauda

In the series "Fauda," on the other side of comparative study, the researcher will focus on contemporary Idiomatic Expressions without dialogue, as these terms clearly and explicitly express their meaning and do not require context to define them. In their meanings, they are closer to proverbs.

The analysis of the Arabic dialogues from Fauda is based on Leech's model of seven types of meaning.

Extract 1

Season 1, Episode 5: The Uncle

"اللي إيده في المية مش زي اللي إيده في النار. لو فضلت تلف وتدور، حترمقنا كلنا".

The Analysis

A brief context of this expression is that a Palestinian informant warns Doron about the dangers of working for both sides.

First, there's a the proverb "النار في إيده اللي زي مش المية في إيده اللي". It highlights how someone who isn't in danger shouldn't feel as those who are actually at risk. Then, the informant tells Doron, "كلنا حترمقنا وتدور، تلف"، Here, the informant is warning that Doron's actions could cause trouble for everyone involved.

This idiomatic expression covers several types of meanings. First is the conceptual meaning. The first part talks about being safe (like in water) versus being in danger (like in fire). It shows the difference between having less risk and being in real danger. The second part uses "playing games" and "drown us" as figures of speech to describe Doron's risky actions.

The connotative meaning would involve the proverb suggesting that someone is pretending to face danger while others truly are. The second part indicates that Doron's careless behavior could lead to serious problems for everybody.

Social meaning relates to power. By using a well-known saying, the informant draws on cultural wisdom and local traditions to emphasize their point.

Affective meaning involves the warning serious tone. The informant is desperate for Doron to see the risk his actions pose to everyone's safety.

Collocative meaning involves contrasting terms, which is common in Arabic. The phrase "وتدور ف'تل" relates to being evasive or not facing problems directly.

Thematic meaning shows moral dilemmas of this dialogue emphasizes the dangers of divided loyalties and the potential fallout from duplicitous actions.



Extract 2

Season 1, Episode 12: The Prisoner

"العين بالعين والسن بالسن. الدم ما رح يضيع."

The Analysis

Connotative Meaning of the expression "Eye for an eye" isn't just about seeking revenge; it's about preserving honor and order within society. In the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the idea that means every drop of blood must be recognized, adding a sense of inevitability and gloom to the situation.

Social Meaning This proverb reflects the speaker's cultural heritage. It's a way to bring traditional values to modern-day conflicts. Mentioning blood vengeance is connected to tribal or communal systems of justice, which hold significant importance in many Middle Eastern cultures.

Affective Meaning, The overall tone is likely strong and unwavering. The speaker is defending the idea of revenge, so there's a feeling of anger and perhaps a sense of duty. The repeated phrases like "بالسن والسن بالعين العين" give it a rhythmic, almost poetic feel, which amplifies the emotional intensity.

Collocative Meaning, the pairing of "عين" and "سن" is traditional and frequently found in sayings about justice connects with themes of honor and vengeance.

Thematic Meaning, this connects deeply with the themes of revenge and its consequences explored in the show.

Extract 3

Season 2, Episode 8 : The Bomb

"يا وليد، اللي يزرع الريح يحصد العاصفة. إنتَ بَدَّكْ تضرب إسرائيل؟ رح ينقلب عليك."

The Analysis

Like the previous extract, there is also a traditional Arabic proverb. Conceptual meaning of the proverb uses farming imagery, like planting and harvesting, to explain cause and effect. It warns Walid that attacking will bring trouble.

Connotative Meaning suggests that reckless actions lead to trouble. "رياح" might mean something weak or unseen but dangerous, and "عاصفة" signifies chaos or destruction. The message to Walid suggests that aggression toward Israel is not only dangerous but also pointless.

On the level of Social Meaning the proverb's use highlights the speaker's wisdom and cultural background. Mentioning Israel signals the ongoing political tension between Palestinians and Israelis.





The Affective Meaning of the proverb carries a serious, cautionary tone. the speaker rise a question to suggest inevitable negative consequences, perhaps expressing frustration or a sense of inevitability.

On the level of reflective meaning, the proverb reflects on Walid’s past behavior.

Collocative Meaning shows that the term "يزرع" and "يحصد" are paired in farming contexts. "عليك ينقلب" commonly describes situations where plans don’t turn out as intended.

Extract 4

Season 2, Episode 10: The Father

"أيوب: اللي بده يذبح خروف، ما بده يشوف دمه. إحنا جاي نخلص العملية، مش ندور عالضمير"

The Analysis

The Conceptual Meaning established by Ayub uses an old saying about slaughtering a sheep but not wanting to see the blood. This is a way of saying people want to avoid dealing with the messy results of their actions.

Connotative Meaning is realized by using the metaphor of the sheep, which might symbolize innocence or victims, while the blood stands for violent consequences. And the emotional tone, or affective meaning, of Ayub's

statement is direct and practical. The use of a proverb might add a sense of accepting one's fate or a feeling of giving up.

2.Quantitative Analysis

The following table shows the distribution of semantic types (from Leech’s, 1981 model) found in some idiomatic expressions from Breaking Bad and Fauda. The frequencies for each kind of meaning are computed in relation to the idioms analysed in every series.

Table (1) The Quantitative Analysis

Type of Meaning	Breaking Bad	Fauda
Conceptual	75% (3/4)	50% (2/4)
Connotative	50% (2/4)	100% (4/4)



Social	50% (2/4)	75% (3/4)
Affective	75% (3/4)	75% (3/4)
Reflective	100% (4/4)	25% (1/4)
Collocative	50% (2/4)	100% (4/4)
Thematic	75% (3/4)	50% (2/4)

4.Results Discussion

The generalizability of the findings may be compromised by the small number of all sample episodes of each series (only four episodes). This means that the results should be considered suggestive rather than definitive.

The comparison between the idiomatic expressions in **Breaking Bad** and **Fauda** highlights significant differences in how language reflects cultural and storytelling priorities. The study described idiomatic expressions as both semantically dense and culturally entrenched. In English and Arabic contexts, their meanings diverge because of differences in socio-cultural values, emotion, and underlying intentions in communication.

Breaking Bad primarily uses idiomatic expressions to explore individual moral decline, focusing on reflective meaning and themes of excessive pride. Phrases like "I am the danger" and "No more half measures" emphasize clear, straightforward meanings to examine personal change and psychological conflict. The show uses emotional and social meanings to highlight power struggles among characters, such as Walt's demand for recognition with "Say my name" and Mike's practical warnings. These aspects align with Western narratives centered on individual ambition and the risks of too much pride.

In contrast, **Fauda** emphasizes connotative and collocative meanings, using culturally rooted proverbs to critique collective trauma and systemic oppression. The frequent use of social meaning in **Fauda** engages with the



uneven power dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This is evident in sayings like “العاصفة يحصد الريح يزرع اللي”. Unlike "Breaking Bad," "Fauda" focuses more on cultural identity and collective resilience rather than individual introspection.

The differences in themes reinforce this contrast. Breaking Bad dissects personal choice and responsibility, highlighted by Hank’s remark, “You’re the

smartest guy I ever met, and you’re too stupid to see...,” critiquing Walt’s moral blindness. Meanwhile, Fauda uses idioms to address hypocrisy in systemic violence, like “اللي بده يذبح خروف، ما بده يشوف دمه””, prioritizing

community survival over individual redemption. While **Breaking Bad** presents its themes of power corruption in a broad sense, **Fauda** grounds its narrative in specific cultural struggles, using proverbs to maintain language traditions and explore historical issues.

5. Conclusion

The study shows that idioms in Breaking Bad and Fauda act like cultural mirrors, reflecting different societal values. In Breaking Bad, the idioms are straightforward and focus on individuals, helping to discuss moral decline in highly individualistic settings. Fauda, meanwhile, uses symbolic, proverb-like language to talk about shared trauma and occupation. This shows how language choices reflect what a culture values: Breaking Bad's idioms delve into the mind of a self-made antihero, while

Fauda's idioms uphold community identity in the face of ongoing oppression.

Future research could explore how translation deals with these cultural subtleties, ensuring idioms are understood by various audiences without losing their original meaning. Such studies would enhance our understanding of how language shapes global stories about power, morality, and resistance.

References

1. Baker, M. (1992). In other words: A coursebook on translation. Routledge.
2. Fernando, C. (1996). Idioms and idiomaticity. Oxford University Press.
3. Fillmore, C. J. (1982). Frame semantics. In The Linguistic Society of Korea (Ed.), Linguistics in the morning calm (pp. 111-137). Seoul: Hanshin Publishing Co.

4. Fisiak, J. (1981). *Contrastive linguistics and the language teacher*. Pergamon Press.
5. Fisiak, J., Lipińska-Grzegorek, M., & Zabrocki, T. (1978). *An introductory English-Polish contrastive grammar*. Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.
6. Glucksberg, S. (2001). *Understanding figurative language: From metaphors to idioms*. Oxford University Press.
7. Halliday, M. A. K. (1978). *Language as social semiotic: The social interpretation of language and meaning*. Edward Arnold.
8. Halliday, M. A. K. (1985). *An introduction to functional grammar* (1st ed.). Edward Arnold.
9. James, C. (1980). *Contrastive analysis*. Longman.
10. Kroger, R. O. (2022). *Doing social psychology: Analysing everyday experience*. Routledge.
11. Krzeszowski, T. P. (1990). *Contrasting languages: The scope of contrastive linguistics*. Mouton de Gruyter.
12. Lada, A., Paquier, P., Dosi, I. et al. Four hundred Greek idiomatic expressions: Ratings for subjective frequency, ambiguity, and decomposability. *Behav Res* 56, 8181–8195 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13428-024-02450-z>
13. Lado, R. (1957). *Linguistics across cultures: Applied linguistics for language teachers*. University of Michigan Press.
14. Leech, G. N. (1981). *Semantics: The study of meaning* (2nd ed.). Penguin Books.
15. Leech, G. N. (1983). *Principles of pragmatics*. Longman.
16. Mittell, J. (2015). *Complex TV: The poetics of contemporary television storytelling*. NYU Press.
17. O'Sullivan, T., Hartley, J., Saunders, D., Montgomery, M., & Fiske, J. (1994). *Key concepts in communication and cultural studies* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
18. Sarjan Sadigova. (2024). A Comparative Analysis of Idiomatic Expressions in English and Azerbaijani: Cultural and Linguistic Insights. *Acta Globalis Humanitatis et Linguarum* , 1(1), 158–167. <https://doi.org/10.69760/aghel.024061>
19. Wierzbicka, A. (1997). *Understanding cultures through their key words: English, Russian, Polish, German, and Japanese*. Oxford University Press.





Episodes of Breaking Bad and Fauda.

Breaking Bad

1. Gilligan, V. (Executive Producer). (2011, September 4). Cornered (Season 4, Episode 6) [TV series episode]. In Breaking Bad. Sony Pictures Television.

Writer: Gennifer Hutchison | Director: Michael Slovis

2. Gilligan, V. (Executive Producer). (2010, June 6). Half Measures (Season 3, Episode 12) [TV series episode]. In Breaking Bad. Sony Pictures Television.

Writer: Sam Catlin & Moira Walley-Beckett | Director: Adam Bernstein

3. Gilligan, V. (Executive Producer). (2012, August 19). Say My Name (Season 5, Episode 7) [TV series episode]. In Breaking Bad. Sony Pictures Television.

Writer: Thomas Schnauz | Director: Thomas Schnauz

4. Gilligan, V. (Executive Producer). (2013, September 15). Ozymandias (Season 5, Episode 14) [TV series episode]. In Breaking Bad. Sony Pictures Television.

Writer: Moira Walley-Beckett | Director: Rian Johnson

Fauda.

1. Raz, L., & Issacharoff, A. (Executive Producers). (2015, February 15). The Uncle (Season 1, Episode 5) [TV series episode]. In Fauda. Yes Studios.

Writer: Moshe Zonder | Director: Rotem Shamir

2. Raz, L., & Issacharoff, A. (Executive Producers). (2015, March 8). The Prisoner (Season 1, Episode 12) [TV series episode]. In Fauda. Yes Studios.

Writer: Moshe Zonder | Director: Rotem Shamir

3. Raz, L., & Issacharoff, A. (Executive Producers). (2017, December 31). The Bomb (Season 2, Episode 8) [TV series episode]. In Fauda. Yes Studios.

Writer: Moshe Zonder | Director: Rotem Shamir

4. Raz, L., & Issacharoff, A. (Executive Producers). (2018, January 14). The Father (Season 2, Episode 10) [TV series episode]. In Fauda. Yes Studios.

Writer: Moshe Zonder | Director: Rotem Shamir