



## The Use of Idiomatic Expressions in Comments of Facebook Reels

**Asst.Lect.Adnan Mushref Fayyadh**

Ministry of Education, General Directorate of Education in Anbar, Hit Education Department

[Adnanmfayyadh21@gmail.com](mailto:Adnanmfayyadh21@gmail.com)

### Abstract

The language of Facebook comment reels is a captivating phenomenon in the study of language that captures the dynamic and creative nature of digital communication. Idioms are phrases, expressions, or sounds that have a figurative meaning, which can vary significantly from their literal one, and are used by users to add humour, emotion, and culture to their comments. Idioms are very useful in Facebook for sending complex ideas in a concise manner as comments are short and are trying to send a message in a timely fashion. They also help to build engagement by tapping into the common culture and getting the user to connect with the content on a deeper level through the use of familiar phrases. This study is both quantitative and qualitative, the former dealing with the frequency of the types of idioms while the latter providing the content-latent analysis of the idioms selected to be analysed in the current study. The data is from 10 Facebook reels and the analysis follows the model of the English idioms proposed by O'Dell and McCarthy (2010). The outcome shows that the most frequent was clichés with 6 represented 46.15% of the results, followed by proverbs with 3 which represent 23.07% of the outcomes. The fewest occurrences were of fixed statements, 1 (7.69%). No binomials and trinomials were included in the data.

### Key words:

Figurative language, idioms, social media, comments, Facebook reels



## استخدام التعابير الاصطلاحية في تعليقات مقاطع الفيديو القصيرة على فيسبوك

م.م عدنان مشرف فياض

وزارة التربية، المديرية العامة لتربية الانبار، قسم تربية هيت

[Adnanmfayyadh21@gmail.com](mailto:Adnanmfayyadh21@gmail.com)

### المستخلص

تُعدّ لغة التعليقات في مقاطع الفيديو القصيرة على فيسبوك ظاهرةً آسرةً في دراسة اللغة، إذ تُجسّد الطبيعة الديناميكية والإبداعية للتواصل الرقمي. المصطلحات هي عبارات أو تعابير أو أصوات تحمل معنىً مجازياً، قد يختلف اختلافاً كبيراً عن معناها الحرفي، ويستخدمها المستخدمون لإضفاء روح الدعابة والعاطفة والثقافة على تعليقاتهم. تُعدّ المصطلحات مفيدةً جداً على فيسبوك لإيصال الأفكار المعقدة بإيجاز، نظراً لقصر التعليقات وسعيها لإيصال الرسالة في الوقت المناسب. كما تُسهم في تعزيز التفاعل من خلال الاستفادة من الثقافة المشتركة، وحث المستخدم على التفاعل مع المحتوى على مستوى أعمق عبر استخدام عبارات مألوفة. هذه الدراسة كمية ونوعية في آن واحد، فالأولى تتناول تكرار أنواع التعابير الاصطلاحية بينما الثانية تقدم تحليل المحتوى الكامن للتعابير الاصطلاحية المختارة للتحليل في الدراسة الحالية. وتستند بياناتها إلى ١٠ مقاطع فيديو قصيرة على فيسبوك، ويتبع تحليلها نموذج المصطلحات الإنجليزية الذي اقترحه O'Dell و McCarthy (2010) اظهرت ان اكثر المصطلحات شيوعاً هي الكليشيهات، حيث بلغ عددها ٦ مصطلحات بنسبة ٤٦.١٥٪ من النتائج، تليها الأمثال الشعبية بثلاثة مصطلحات بنسبة ٢٣.٠٧٪ من النتائج. كانت أقل العبارات تكراراً هي العبارات الثابتة، حيث بلغت ١ (٧.٦٩٪). ولم تتضمن البيانات أي عبارات ذات حدين أو ثلاثية لحدود.

### الكلمات المفتاحية

اللغة المجازية، التعابير الاصطلاحية، وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، التعليقات، فيديوهات فيسبوك القصيرة



## 1.1 Problem Statement

This study aims to investigate the use of idiomatic expressions in the comments of Facebook Reels and its effect on communication. Although idioms can express humor, emotion and culture, they can also cause misunderstandings, particularly for users with other cultures and languages. Further, idioms create a difficulty for automated tools of sentiment analysis, which usually depend on all part of speech literal definition and are not capable of accurately discerning the figurative meaning of the sentences. Hence, it is crucial for gaining new insights into the use of the idioms in social media discourse to further improve the effectiveness of the sentiment analysis system to achieve better cross-cultural communication.

## 1.2 Research Questions

1. What types of idioms are found in Facebook Reels?
2. What is the frequency of each type of idioms in the comments of Facebook reels?

## 1.3 Objectives of the Research

1. To identify the types of idioms in comments of Facebook reels.
2. To show the frequency of each type of idioms in the comments of Facebook reels.

## 1.4 Data Collection

The data of this research is from 10 Facebook reels that selected randomly. The researcher took only 10 videos in order to analyze idioms. The data source in this research are expressions in social media namely Facebook. The data are checked into an online idiom dictionary so that we know that the word we choose is an idiom.

## 1.5 Data Analysis and the Model Adopted

This study is both quantitative and qualitative, the former dealing with the frequency of the types of idioms while the latter providing the content-latent analysis of the idioms selected to be analysed in the current study. The analysis follows the model of the English idioms proposed by O'Dell and McCarthy (2010).



## 1.6 Value of the Study

This study is of paramount importance as it explores the use of idioms in a new context: comments on short Facebook videos. It helps learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) understand the native language present in the online social media environment and enhances their cultural awareness. Furthermore, its findings can benefit developers of sentiment analysis systems by enabling them to better handle idioms. Finally, the study underscores the importance of teaching idioms to prevent misunderstandings in intercultural communication.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Definitions of Idioms

An idiom is a phrase that has a meaning that is not the same as the meaning of its separate words. These are the building blocks of language and communication, they enable people to express complex ideas and feelings in a concise, expressive and culturally specific way. Gain in fluency is only possible when the learners become proficient in using idioms because they convey the cultural and historical context of the language in which they are used (Fernando, 1996).

Idioms are frequently used in conversational and written speech. They are adding nuances, depth and colour to communication. For example, the phrase "spill the beans" does not mean "to spill beans," but "to reveal a surprise inadvertently. Similarly, the idiomatic expression means 'to break the ice' and does not refer to actually breaking the ice. The expressions are very much a part of the culture and only by knowing the social and historical context in which they are used can they be understood (Moon, 1998). The study of idioms is significant not just for language learners, but for those interested in language/culture relationships. Idioms reveal values, humor and worldviews of a speech community. For instance, the expression 'kick the bucket' (to die) and 'barking up the wrong tree' (the wrong approach) are historical and cultural expressions (Simpson & Mendis, 2003)

In addition, idioms are difficult to translate and understand across cultures as they don't always make sense out of context. This is why they are a major source of study in linguistics and cultural studies. The phrase "avoir le cafard" means literally "to have the cockroach," but in French it means to be "down" or "depressed," which is only understood when knowing the culture. Idioms are a serious and intricate part of language and are expressions of culture. Idioms are



still crucial to conversation and writing, whether for humorous effect, to make a point, or to convey an idea efficiently (Cacciari & Tabossi, 1993).

Idioms, or colloquial expressions, are typically used in both official and informal communication. Idioms are defined in language knowledge as well-known expressions with arbitrary meanings because the meaning depend on the environment and culture of the society that are regularly employed metaphorically. Idioms are collections of words that are placed in a specific order and have a meaning that is distinct from the meaning of the individual words and cannot be accurately translated (Virdaus, 2020).

## 2.2 Types of idiomatic expressions

O'dell and McCarthy (2010)'s Classification of Idiomatic Expressions:

### 1. Similes

Similes are expressions which compare two things: they always Use the words as or like. Similes are a way to add colour to your spoken and written English and to make your comparisons more powerful .

### 2. Binomials

They are expressions that connect two words with a conjunction (an exclamation point), usually "and". The two words have to be in a particular order. For instance: Black and white is always used (McCarthy & O'Dell, 2010). These idioms are made up of two words, typically "and" or "or," and are frequently fixed expressions (Mieder, 2004).

### 3. Trinomials

Trinomials are similar type of idiom, in which three words are joined .

### 4. Proverbs

Proverbs are short sentences of wisdom which refer to something most people have experienced and which give advice or warnings .

### 5. Euphemisms

A type of idiom, euphemisms are used so as not to say words that could be insensitive or unpleasant. Euphemisms are used to :



- a. talk about subjects which might upset or offend, such death. For instance: He was clearly not a man for this world (he didn't want to go to the world (to die). But he never lost his sense of humour soon .
- b. to not use the words of body functions. For instance: I just will Use the toilet (in the UK used to charge a penny) to spend a penny
- c. to add a touch of humor to a story. For instance: My boss lost his job and was swearing the p-word, the word effing and blinding. Confidential report .

## 6. Cliché

A cliché is a type of phrase that is frequently used in everyday language. Most people have familiar phrases, but they are not original. Categorical phrases are used in everyday speech and are also found in advertisements and newspaper headlines.

## 7. Fixed Statements

These fixed statements can be heard and used in everyday conversation often.

### 2.3 Social Media: Facebook

Facebook is one of the social media platforms that is used the most. It is regarded as the primary means of communication throughout the entire globe. In addition, users can simply build their counts by sharing personal details and corresponding with other users to exchange information, ideas, emotions, and hobbies. Facebook is considered a vital tool for self-representation in this regard. This indicates that it is a platform where individuals can utilize their posts to express their identities, as well as their personal activities and emotions (Hargittai, 2011). It gradually spread to additional American and Canadian colleges, and by September 2006, it was available to anybody 13 years of age or older with a working email address (Ogedegbe et al., 2012). Some people may use Facebook as a communication tool to share their opinions and experiences .

They are free to share everything they want about their experiences and psychological state through their postings and comments. Consequently, it could prove advantageous by providing a platform for Facebook users to interact and share thoughts and societal issues that are pertinent to their everyday lives. In addition, Facebook enables eleven users to sustain friendships, create social networks, lower obstacles to friend-making, photo-sharing, fundraising, and family communication .



For the most part, Facebook updates are the ideal means of keeping in touch with loved ones. According to Campbell (2015), language is the greatest way to bring people together in society as, in general, people require a channel through which to communicate, discuss, comment, or express their feelings on Facebook. As a result, as more people join Facebook, more people are following pages and interacting with people outside of their social circles. Wang et al. (2014) state that in order to maintain positive relationships with their addressees or receivers, speakers need to follow a variety of communicative guidelines.

## 2.4 Past Studies

Udianti et al. (2020), in their study of idiomatic expressions in the screenplay of the film "Beauty and the Beast," analyzed the colloquial terms used in the plot. The study was inspired by the film and employed a qualitative approach. Phrasal verbal idioms were analyzed according to the theory of Seidl and McMordie (1988), Palmer's method of meaning interpretation (1981), and Spears' American Idiomatic Dictionary (2005). Less common forms, such as the transitive verb + preposition variant and the intransitive verb + adverb combination, were also considered. It is noteworthy that the meanings found are transparent, indicating a similarity between the meanings of literal and phrasal verbs .

Ghooriyan and Salehi (2022), investigated the effectiveness of teaching idioms using the Instagram platform, utilizing smartphones as a support tool for upper-intermediate Iranian learners of English as a foreign language. The Oxford Level Test (OPT) was used to determine the students' proficiency level. Sixty students were randomly assigned to two groups: an experimental group and a control group. The results showed that students in the experimental group performed better than those in the control group, and the improvement in both groups was statistically significant, indicating that Instagram is a good application for learning idioms. It could be useful for both students and teachers of English as a foreign language to improve learning and teaching .

Wijaya and Untari (2022), aimed to show the reader the types of idioms in a Katy Perry 42 songs, the strategies used by translators to translate idioms, and the strategies used by translators to translate the lyrics of the idioms on a song lyrics translation website. The method used in this research was qualitative because there was no data calculation involved; the research consisted only of data collection, classification, and analysis to enrich the research. The analysis yielded 243 data points on types of idioms, 239 data points on idiom translation strategies



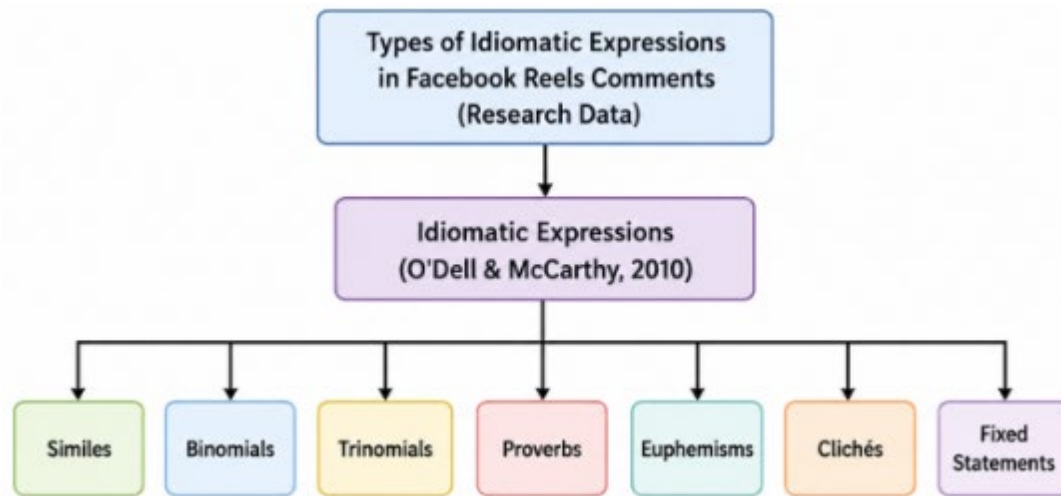
in the song lyrics, and 4 untranslated data points. The findings indicated the use of pure idioms, semi-idioms, and literal idioms. These idiom translation strategies included similar meaning and form, similar meaning and dissimilar form, and paraphrasing, and omission .

Sugiarto et al. (2023) conducted a study to investigate English idioms in the film “Moana” by Ron Clements and John Musker, using an extensive corpus. Analyzing usage data can provide general information about English idioms. This study appeared to offer a description of the idioms considered by Fernando and Heasley's theory. According to the research, a total of 16 idioms were identified in the film Moana. Fernando's theory divides them into seven pure idioms, six semi-pure idioms, and three literal idioms .

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The researcher took only 10 videos in order to analyze idioms. The data source in this research are expressions in social media namely Facebook. The data are checked into an online idiom dictionary so that we know that the word we choose is an idiom. Nunan (1997) defines research as an activity that entails problem definition, objective statement, and hypothesis formulation. In order to determine the degree to which the primary goal has been accomplished, it entails information gathering, categorization, analysis, and interpretation. Three categories exist for research design: mixed method design, qualitative design, and quantitative design (Dodgson, 2017). This study adopted a descriptive qualitative-quantitative approach to analyze idiomatic expressions in Facebook reel comments. Idioms Used in Comments on Facebook Reels, was designed with a qualitative study utilizing library qualitative research to explore idioms. Hence, the researcher's source of data was the Idiomatic Expressions Used in Comments on Facebook Reels. These components were the main source of information used in this study's analysis. This research employed O'dell and McCarthy (2010) model of idiomatic expression .



**Figure 3.1** Conceptual framework of the research  
(Adapted from O'Dell & McCarthy, 2010)

### 3.2 Data Analysis Procedures

The data were collected manually on 22 May 2026. Ten public Facebook reels were purposively selected based on the following criteria: (1) the reel was in English; (2) the reel had at least 50 comments; and (3) the comments contained potential idiomatic expressions. The reels were accessed directly through the Facebook mobile application, and no API or automated scraping tools were used. For each reel, the first 20-30 comments were read and screened. A total of 13 idiomatic tokens were selected for analysis.

The analysis followed two stages: quantitative analysis was conducted. The frequency of each idiom type was counted according to the classification proposed by O'Dell and McCarthy (2010). The types included similes, binomials, proverbs, and euphemisms. Raw frequencies were reported instead of percentages due to the small size of the corpus. Then the second, qualitative analysis was carried out. Each identified idiom was analyzed in its original comment context. The surrounding thread was quoted to establish the situational context.



#### 4. Results and Discussion: Quantitative Analysis

The table below presents the most common idiomatic expressions, which encompass seven types of idioms identified in this research. However, the total of all types are 13, and the highest frequency of the idioms are Clichés which appear 6 times with a percentage 46.15 %, followed by the second frequency of proverbs, which appear 3 times with a percentage of 23.07 %, as far as the lowest frequency of the idioms are fixed statements which appear once with a percentage of 7.69. There is zero appearance to binomials and trinomials.

**Table 4.1 Types of Idioms used in Facebook Reels**

| No.          | Types of idioms  | Frequency | Percentage  |
|--------------|------------------|-----------|-------------|
| 1.           | Similes          | 2         | 15.38       |
| 2.           | Binomials        | 0         | 0           |
| 3.           | Trinomials       | 0         | 0           |
| 4.           | Proverbs         | 3         | 23.07       |
| 5.           | Euphemisms       | 1         | 7.69        |
| 6.           | Clichés          | 6         | 46.15       |
| 7.           | Fixed statements | 1         | 7.69        |
| <b>Total</b> |                  | <b>13</b> | <b>100%</b> |

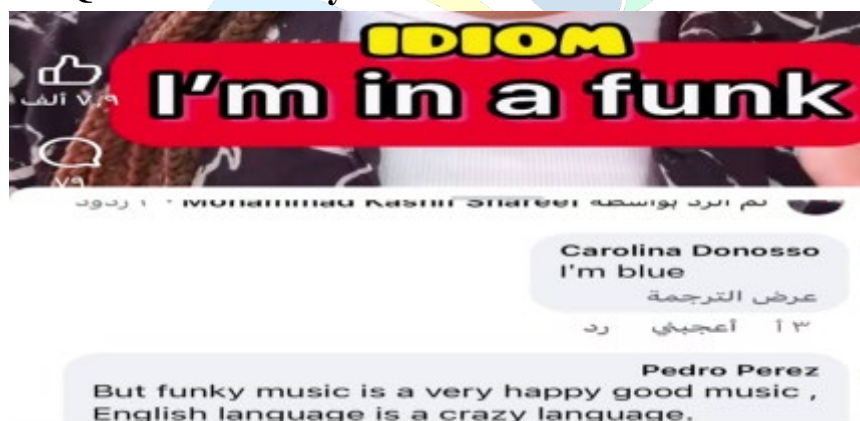
**Table 4.2 Idiomatic expressions and meaning in comments Facebook Reels**

| No. | Idiomatic expressions  | Type            | Meaning                                                     |
|-----|------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | I'm in a funk          | Fixed statement | To mean "blues" or "depression"                             |
| 2   | You Snooze, You lose!  | Proverb         | Do not pay attention                                        |
| 3   | I'm a big mouth        | Fixed statement | To be likely to reveal personal or confidential information |
| 4   | I'm a social butterfly | Fixed statement | Refers to someone who is very sociable                      |



|    |                          |                 |                                                                 |
|----|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5  | I'm a people person      | Fixed statement | Someone is friendly and enjoys meeting and talking to people    |
| 6  | I'm a homebody           | Fixed statement | Person who likes spending time at home rather than going out    |
| 7  | Two peas in a pod        | Fixed statement | To say that two people or things are very similar to each other |
| 8  | Put yourself in my shoes | Fixed statement | To be in the situation, usually a bad or difficult situation    |
| 9  | Hit by a truck           | Cliché          | To mean tired, sore or unwell                                   |
| 10 | Had a brush with danger  | Fixed statement | Mean very close to dying                                        |
| 11 | Busy as a beaver         | Simile          | To mean very busy and active                                    |
| 12 | Pull a fast one          | Fixed statement | To successfully deceive someone                                 |

#### 4.1 Qualitative Analysis of the Data



#### Reel 1:

I'm in a funk

My mom's in a funk

One of the comments said that I'm blue this means sad, "Im in a funk," which is



an idiom meaning that you're feeling down, stuck, or in a low mood. This expression is often used to describe a period of feeling unmotivated or unhappy, but it usually implies that the feeling is temporary and can be overcome. You might be in a serious funk after your best friend moves across the country. One way to use funk is to mean "blues" or "depression".



## Reel 2

You Snooze, You lose!

The phrase "You snooze, you lose!" is an idiom used to convey the idea that if someone hesitates, delays, or fails to act quickly, they might miss out on an opportunity. The idiom suggests that being slow or inattentive can lead to a disadvantage, as opportunities often pass by quickly and may not come around again.

-Snooze: To nap or doze off, implying a lack of attention or inaction.

-You lose: Missing out on something desirable or beneficial because of that inaction.



### Reel 3

I'm a big mouth

The idiom "big mouth" refers to someone who talks too much, especially when they reveal secrets or private information that should have been kept confidential. When someone is called a "big mouth," it often implies that they have a tendency to say things they should not, sometimes leading to unintended consequences or trouble.



I'm a social butterfly

According to the comment above, social butterfly is someone who is very outgoing and sociable, and enjoys interacting with a wide variety of people.



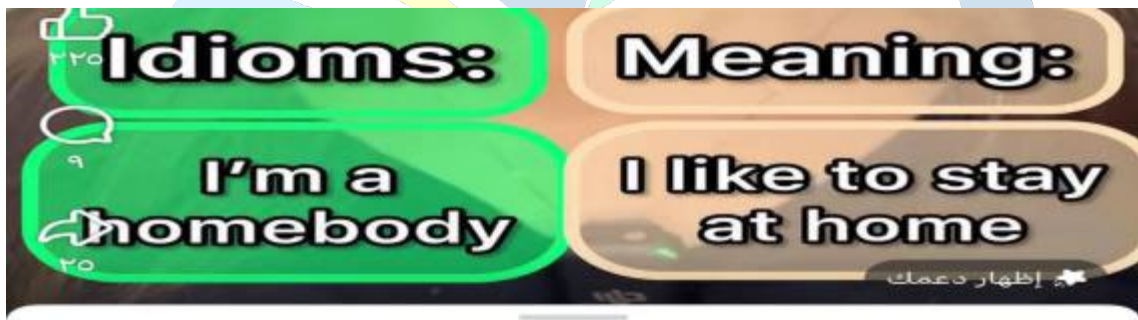
Because they love spending time with others, they always have a fully booked social calendar. They are charming and charismatic, so they win people over easily and have a lot of friends. A social butterfly is often seen at social events, mingling, and engaging with different groups. This person is typically comfortable in social situations and enjoys being the center of attention or simply being around others.



أبرز المعجدين  
Oscar Escobedo  
Does it mean the same ?  
I am a people person and  
I am a social butterfly

I'm a people person

It is an idiom that means someone is naturally good with people, enjoys interacting with others, and finds it easy to relate to them. A "people person" is typically sociable, friendly, and outgoing, often thriving in environments where they can engage with others and build relationships.



الأكثر ملاءمة

Tabark Ali  
warmth and simple pleasures of being at home.

I'm a homebody

The idiom I'm a homebody refers to someone who prefers staying at home rather than going out or engaging in social activities. A "homebody" is a person who enjoys the comfort and familiarity of their home and often chooses to spend their time there rather than being out and about. This idiom is often used to



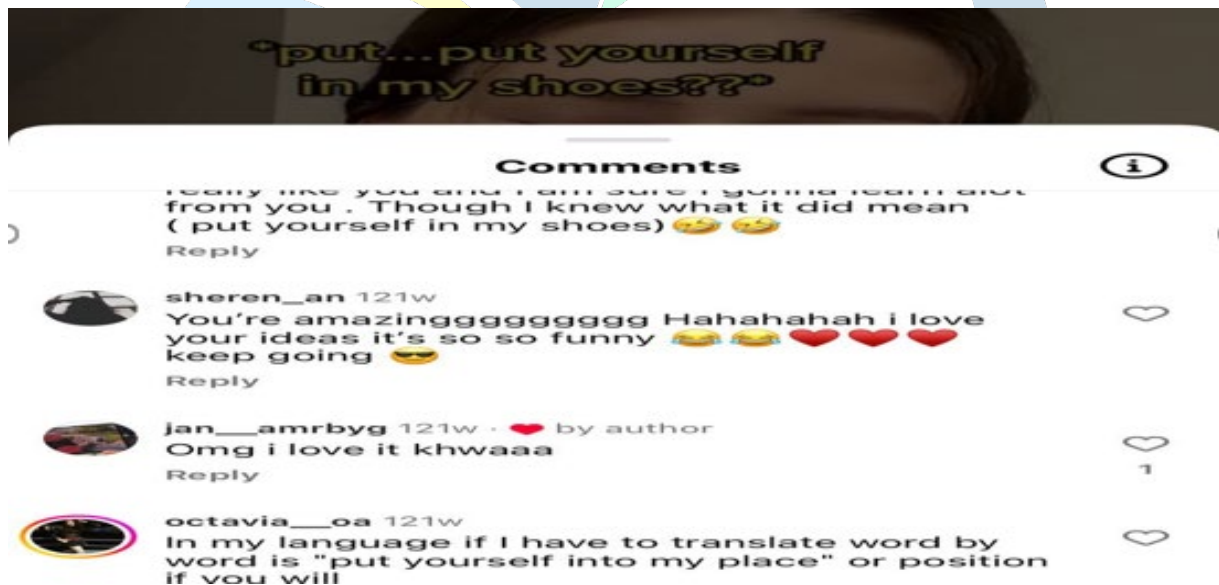
describe someone's preference for a quieter, more relaxed lifestyle. It is considered the opposite of the idiom social butterfly .



#### Reel 4

##### Two peas in a pod

The meaning of the phrase 'two peas in a pod' is used to describe two people who are very similar to each other, often in terms of personality, appearance, or behavior. It is a way of saying that two people are almost identical in some way, like two peas from the same for example: The twins are like two peas in a pod.





## Reel 5

### Put yourself in my shoes

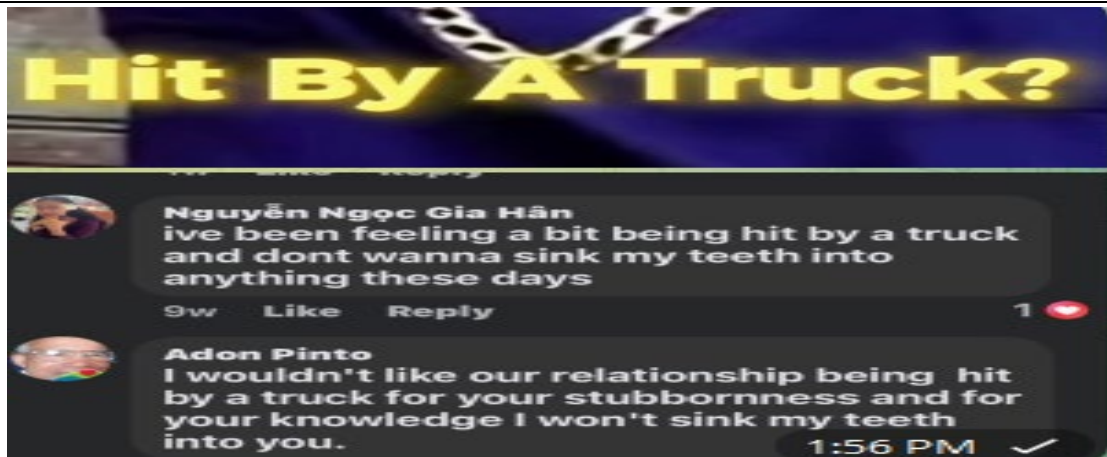
The idiom put yourself in my shoes means to imagine yourself in someone else's situation in order to understand their feelings, perspective, or experiences better. For example: If I were to put myself in your shoes, I would try to see things from your point of view, considering your circumstances, challenges, and emotions. This phrase is often used to ask someone for empathy or understanding.



## Reel 6

### If You can't handle heat get out of the kitchen

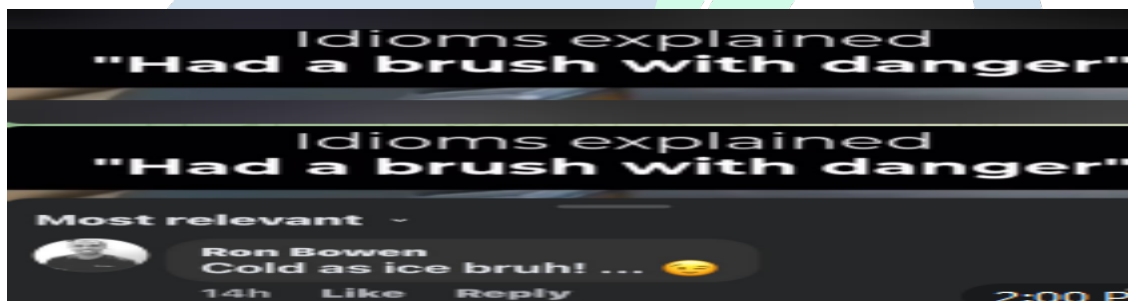
The idiom "If you can't handle the heat, get out of the kitchen" means that if someone cannot cope with the pressure, stress, or challenges of a particular situation, they should remove themselves from it. It is often used to suggest that people should only take on tasks or roles that they are capable of managing, especially when those tasks are demanding or difficult. The phrase implies that if you cannot deal with the difficulties that come with a situation, it is better to leave rather than complain or struggle ineffectively.



## Reel 7

### Hit by a truck

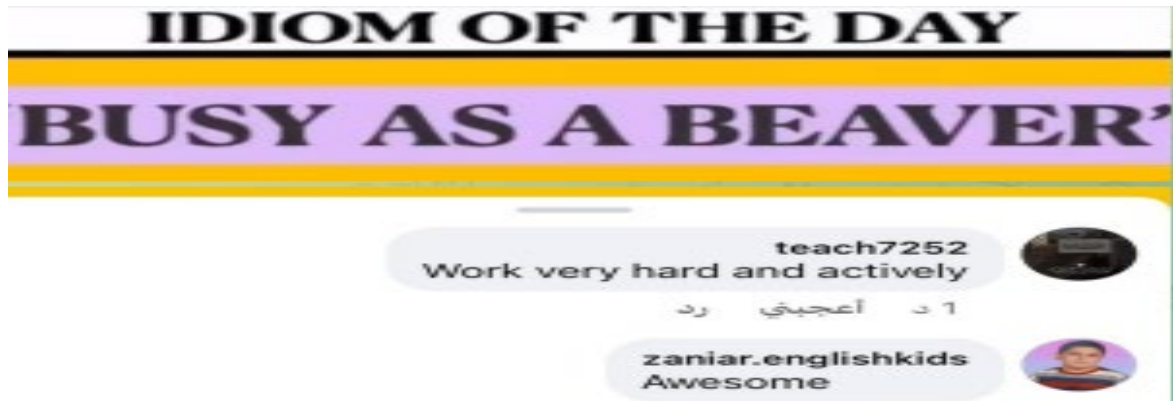
The phrase "hit by a truck" is often used idiomatically to describe feeling extremely exhausted, sore, or overwhelmed, as if one had literally been struck by a vehicle. It is commonly used to express how someone feels after a very strenuous activity, a tough workout, a long day, or even after waking up with severe body aches, as if they were physically run over by a truck. For example: "I caught the flu, and now I feel like I've been hit by a truck".



## Reel 8

### Had a brush with danger

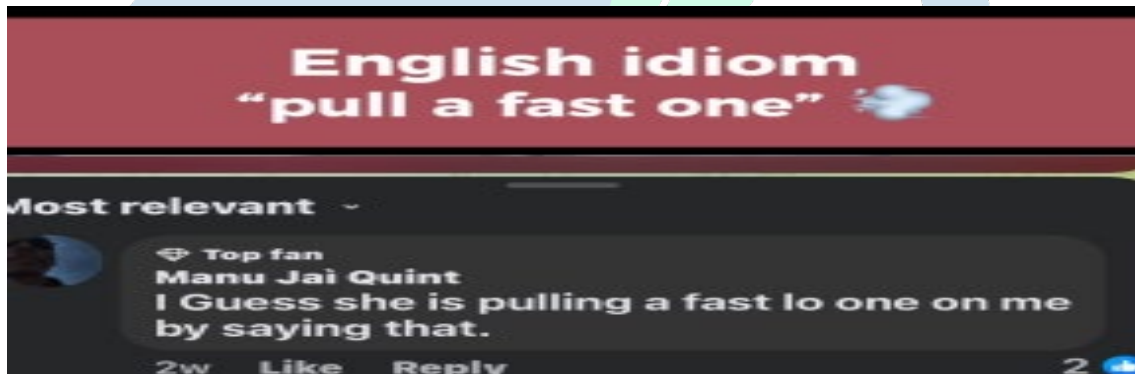
The idiom 'had a brush with danger' means to have a close encounter or narrowly avoid a dangerous or risky situation. It suggests that the person was very close to experiencing something harmful or perilous but managed to escape or avoid it.



### Reel 9

#### Busy as a beaver

The idiom “busy as a beaver” refers to someone who is very industrious, hardworking, and constantly busy. Beavers are known for their diligent work in building dams and lodges, so the phrase is used to describe a person who is similarly dedicated and active in their tasks.



### Reel 10

#### Pull a fast one

The idiom “pull a fast one” means to deceive or trick someone, often in a clever or unexpected way. It is often used when someone successfully pulls off a sneaky or underhanded action that others did not see coming. For example, He tried to pull a fast one by switching the documents at the last minute.



## Conclusions

The results of the present study suggest that the use of idioms in comments on Facebook Reels can be used effectively to convey humor, to highlight opinions and provide a link to the cultural sphere of shared reference for social connection. In digital communication, idioms can be used to pack a lot of meaning into a few words and make it easier to remember, more engaging. However, caution should be used in the use of idioms. Their significance might not always be obvious, especially to listeners from other cultures or languages. Idioms can cause problems in contexts such as this, because people might not understand them or might misunderstand them, thus giving a wrong idea of what's happening. Thus, idiomatic expressions should be used judiciously to ensure clarity and to prevent ambiguity.

The analysis also showed that the clichés were the most common idioms used, with the count of occurrences being 6, and 46.15% of the total data. Proverbs had the second highest number of occurrences at 23.07%, with 3. Proverbs had three occurrences (23.07%). The frequency of the fixed statements was the lowest, with only one occurrence, and 7.69% of the data was made up of such statements. No examples of binomials or trinomials were found in the corpus .

To sum up, on social media, idioms are important to the construction of such discourse. The use is common, both as an example of the creativity of digital communication, and the influence of cultural knowledge. However, it is crucial to be aware of audience diversity in order to ensure that the use of idioms facilitates the development of interaction and not causes confusion.



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