

Chapter Two

Literature Review

In this chapter, the researcher discusses some important literatures and previous studies which are appropriate with the topic to support the researcher's opinion. The researcher reveals some important aspects such as the definition of idiom, types of the idiomatic expression, characteristic of idiom, the differences of idiom and other figurative meaning, the difficulties in learning English idiomatic expression, overcome the difficulties, previous study, and the conceptual framework.

Definition of Idiom

There are numerous ways to express English in daily conversation or for an academic purpose and one of the ways to express English is using idiomatic expression. It is estimated that there are more than 10.000 idioms in English and some of them relatively recent and some of that idioms have been using for more than 2.000 years (Brenner, 2011). Idiom is included into non-literal or figurative meaning that consisted of metaphor, simile, proverb, and fixed expression. There are so many researchers who did a research about idiomatic expression and many of the researcher give their idea and assumption about the definition of idiomatic expression.

Defining the definition of idiom itself is never be easy. Researchers such as Moon (2006), Meryem (2010), Wang (2012), McCarthy & O'Dell (2002) have made various attempts to define constitute an idiom. The researchers adopted some different theoretical classification in the definition, but they are not able to agree with

a term or describe the whole process clearly (Saleh & Zakaria, 2013). The origin of an idiom is from Greek's word which means 'peculiar'. Peculiar in this view means that a fixed group of words that has a strange meaning. According to Barnet and Stubbs's study, this stands as a pointer to the first set of the researchers who started to make their perception of the meaning of the idiom (as cited in Uwakwe, 2009). Furthermore, this view which started with the original of the word 'peculiar' has been continuing until nowadays.

The definition of idiom does not come from the source of the word itself and there are some researchers who described the definition of idiom based on their research. According to Moon (2006) idiom is a fixed arrangement of the word which has a meaning beyond that of the component part. This idea has been supported by Meryem (2010) who stated that the meaning of an idiomatic expression is not the sum of the word taken individually. The meaning of an idiom cannot be reached if it just consists of one word, because idiom is fixed in a form which has no meaning if it is taken by one word or the idiom is interpreted into word by word. The meaning of an idiom can be interpreted if it takes the meaning from the whole words as one part and not interpreted by individual word. One straight with it, Wang (2012) argued that idiom is a language in the formation of the unique fixed in using process. The idiom is a unique one in the language because idiom has specific style and it cannot be understood by transferring the idiom word by word. As long as the idiom use term unique, the meaning of an idiom can be so far away from the source word and that is

the reason why idiom cannot be explained using the lexical meaning. Although it is composed of some words but it cannot be explained in word by word.

Another definition was proposed by McCarthy and O'Dell (2002) who said that an idiom is a fixed expression that the meaning is not directly obvious from looking at the individual word in the idiom. McCarthy and O'Dell clearly mentioned that idiom is not a simple figurative meaning that the meaning of its word can be caught in the sight. Moreover, in order to catch the appropriate meaning of an idiom it is necessary to consider all of the words that consist in an idiom because the meaning cannot be interpreted if just look at the individual word. Cain, Oakhill and Lemmon (2005) have supported the McCarthy and O'Dell's opinion by stating that an idiom is a figurative meaning that requires a non-literal meaning in order to define the specific context. Both of opinion can be explained by using an example with idiom "He is the bad of roses". This idiom has nothing to connect with a rose at all, but it means simply "a worse person". Further, to sum up all the definition that has to be clarified, Ifill (2002) has identified that idiom is not the literal expression that the meaning can be found in the dictionary. The meaning of idiom is not simply to transfer the meaning of word taken by individually because idiom is fixed in the form and it is required the specific context to understand the idiom well.

Types of Idiom

Idiom is one of the literal meaning which have many interpretations but only have one meaning. Makkai (1974) has categorized the idiom in order to make idiom easier to learn. There are two types of idiom which have identify according to

Makkai's study, there are idiom of encoding and idiom of decoding (as cited from Meryem, 2010).

The idiom of encoding. The idiom of encoding means that the idiom is identifiable. The idiom of encoding is those idiosyncratic lexical combinations that have a transparent meaning. This idiom is easy to identify with the hearer or easy to figure out the point event the listener did not know that idiom. The example of idiom encoding is *answer the door* which means "talk to yourself" and *wide awake* which means "wary, or on guard".

The idiom of decoding. This idiom is contrasted with idiom of encoding. In idiom of decoding, the meaning is non-identifiable or difficult to identify. The idiom of decoding refers to those misleading lexical expressions whose interpretation cannot be figured out by using only independently learn linguistic conventions. This idiom cannot be known by the hearer if they did not know or never hear the idiom before. The example of idiom decoding is *kick the bucket* which means "to die", *I'm broke* which mean "does not have any money", and *etc.*

Characteristics of Idiom

The objective of this part is to make clear what have been defined as the essential and attractive characteristic of an idiom. The previous section has talked about relatively simple definition based on some experts and this section will continue the discussion by explored the characteristic of idiom in any perfective. This section will give some ideas of how researcher have typically characterized idiom in an attempt to draw their fundamental nature.

Idiom is the part of figurative meaning which has unpredictable meaning and the meaning cannot be interpreted into word by word or taken individually. In that case, idiom has their specific characteristic in order to differentiate idiom into another figurative meaning. In the previous part which discussed definition of idiom, McCarthy and O'Dell (2002) has defined the idiom as a fixed expression whose meaning is not directly obvious from looking at the individual words. According to McCarthy and O'Dell's observation, the first characteristic which can concludes is idiom has a fixed word order which implies that they socially accept the expression. Secondly, it is impossible to guess the meaning from the individual word that makes up an idiom (Saberia & Fotovania, 2011).

Idiom is fixed in a form and it is impossible to find the meaning of idiom according to the dictionary or in the other word using the literal meaning. According to Bataineh and Rula (2002), there are several characteristics of the idiom as well as "idiom is metaphorical rather than literal, i.e. several words combined often lose their literal meaning and express something only remotely suggested by one word" (p.38). In particular, their assumption tried to make clear that idiom is a variable or fixed in form. Bataineh and Rula continued that this characteristic must be followed by several rules in order to make it easier to understand. Firstly, one often cannot substitute word that is close in meaning, for example, *The man gave up the ghost* cannot be substituted event with the closest word like *The man gave up the apparition*, or *the man released the ghost*. Secondly, one cannot replace a noun by a pronoun without losing the idiomatic meaning, for example, *He split the beans over*

my plans to find a new job into *He split them over my plans to find a new job*.

Pronoun does occur in the idiomatic expression, especially with pronoun 'it'. Phrases with pronoun are idiom in their own right. Thirdly, the information of the passive is impossible in the most cases, for example *at three o'clock the ghost was given up by the man*. Fourthly, one cannot delete a word from the idiom, for example, the idiom, *to spill the beans* cannot be written *to spill beans*. Lastly, the only changeable part of all idiom containing a verb is tense but should pay attention to the fact that although an idiom is considered one semantic unit, the tense morpheme should be attached to the verb (Baker, 1992) for example, *kicked the bucket* but not *kick the bucketed*.

Another characteristic from Bataineh and Rula, idiom is consisting of phrases two or more words. Idiom rarely just consists of one word, because when the idiom contains one word it will has no meaning. Further, most of idiom belongs to informal rather than formal. In summary, there were occurred five characteristics according to expert's observation above. First, idiom has a fixed word order, which implies that they have socially accepted the expression. Second, it is impossible to guess the meaning from the individual word that makes up an idiom. Third, idiom is in a variable or fixed in form. They are unchangeable or varied in the way literal expression is varied, whether in speech or writing. Fourth, idiom is consisted of two phrases or more. Fifth, mostly these expressions belong to informal sentence rather than to formal sentence.

The differences between idiom and other figurative meanings

Language is a system communication which has literal and figurative meaning. The literal meaning is a direct source for the word of a sentence to object and the figurative is used for giving a creative description or a special outcome. Figurative is divided into metaphor, simile, proverb, fixed expression, idiom (Araya, 2008). Since all of them belong to the figurative meaning it is a little bit difficult to differ one to another. Moreover, there are some similarities among idiom and another figurative meaning which make they are difficult to identify. Thus, there are also some differences and they can recognize by Leah (2012) explanation about some differences between idiom and another figurative meaning.

Idiom and Metaphor. Idiom and metaphor is the part of figurative language and have their own role in figurative meaning. According to King (2000), the metaphor is analogy two or more things into something quite different. King's thought completely assumed that metaphor is a comparison between two seemingly different objects, for example, *the words are clear as crystal*. This expression tells the similarity between word and the crystal in the degree of clarity. Another example such as *New ideas blossomed in her mind / His temper boiled over / Inner peace is a stairway to heaven / His advice is a valuable guiding light / The wind in the tree is the voice of the spirits*. On the other hand the meaning of idiom is more complicated like, *kick the bucket, I chew more than I can bite, I am broke, so long*, and many more.

King also stated that metaphor is attractive due to their ability to explain a complex vague expression making it more comprehensible and clear. Maalej (2005), argued the meaning of idiom and metaphor will make confused if both meaning is taking by literally. In this case, metaphor is easier to understand than idiom. Idiom is more complicated than metaphor that compares two seemingly different objects.

Idiom and Simile. Simile is one of the figurative meanings that is closely related to metaphor since they are used for understanding something in term of something else. Simile can be defined as a comparison between things which are not particularly similar in their essence. The characteristic of simile is frequently using “like”, “as”, and “than” in their sentence (Brown, 2006) and these markers are make the simile easy to identify. Igrisa (2015) stated that simile is very useful in order to describe people, thing, even place and also can help the user to paint a picture inside their brain. There are some example from simile such as ‘*love is like a rose*’ or ‘*your mind is clear as your paper sheet*’.

Principally, idiom and simile are similar in the purpose of meaning, because both of them are unique and useful. They are different when the people use the idiom to describe or compare a thing, because the meaning of an idiom is unpredictable. In the process to describe a thing, it is better to use simile because simile is easy to distinguish from idiom by the specific structure and also, they always contain the comparative particle (Ruhanen, 2015).

Idiom and Proverb. Proverb is special, fixed and unique. The only thing that makes proverb different from idiom is they displayed and shared cultural wisdom.

This is in line with Hassan and Tabassum's (2014) opinion that "proverb is short non-sentence of the folk which is full of wisdom, reasoning, truth, traditional and metaphorical aspects which are easy to memorize and transmitted from one generation to next generation" (p.18). Moreover, proverb is easy to understand and sometimes the first part of the proverb might be enough to express the whole meaning. The expression '*there is no smoke without fire*' has instead mean there is no problem if there is no the trigger. That is the one of the examples from the proverb.

Idiom and proverb are not always translucent and both meanings are sometimes ambiguous. Both of them are also a part of the figurative meaning that produced cultural information. Equally important, the function of proverbs are frequently used for giving some word of wisdom, besides the idiom that used in so many figures of speech.

Idiom and Fixed expression. Fixed expression has very specific meaning. Hillert and Swinney (1999) argued that fixed figurative expression is a string of words for which the interpretation is not derived from the individual meanings of the words comprising the string. Further, this non-literal interpretation has become 'fixed' in the language by use. Another key point, fixed expression is a phrase that has a very specific meaning that cannot be expressed in any other way and also cannot be deducted just by considering the sum of its parts.

Unlike idiom and proverb, fixed expression naturally offers neither folk wisdom nor an image (Shojaei, 2012). As a phrase "All of sudden" is the best example. "All" means a totality a location or moment in the time in which everything

is included. “Of” is really just a grammatical phrase with no internal meaning of its own. “Sudden” refers to something completely unexpected. All of this explanation is only the final word in this expression that contributes to the fixed expression which is simply another way of saying “Suddenly”.

Difficulties in learning idiom

In the way of pedagogical, there is always occur the difficulty, as well in the way of learning idiom. Idiom is not a simple material to be learned because idiom is the part of figurative meaning which has unpredictable meaning. Moreover, there are several experts such as Balfaqeeh (2009), Teilanyo (2007), Baker (2011) and Utami & Munir (2014) which clarified that idiom is difficult to learn and need more time and thought to understand the idiom well. First, According to Balfaqeeh (2009), one of the difficulties in understanding the meaning of idiomatic expression is difficult to find the matching equivalent for a single word that conveys one specific meaning. Similarly, Teilanyo (2007) stated that the difficulty in understanding the good meaning of an idiom is occur from the problem to find adequate target language equivalent for a term conveying culture sensitive notion in the source language as a result of the fact that the two languages have a different meaning subsystem and culture. Both of them agreed that the first problem in understanding the idiom is to find the match and equivalent meaning into the target language.

Additionally, the second problem identified is supported by Baker (2011) which clarified that the main problem faced by the people in understanding idiom is being able to recognize that they are dealing with an idiom. In so many cases, not

much people who meet idiom knows that some phrases they read or listen are idiom. This is the common problem from Baker's study and observation. Furthermore, Baker also continued that another difficulty appears when an idiom drives to far meaning that has supposed to be reached or in the other manner of speech some idioms are misleading. That idiom has seemed transparent because they offer a rational literal meaning and their idiomatic meaning are not necessarily signaled in the surrounding text. There are several idioms like "*I am broke, a bad rose*" that would be misleading into another meaning. Based on the explanation, the third difficulty is the misleading of the meaning of idiom.

In the previous section, researcher has already discussed the types of idiom which consist of idiom of encoding and idiom of decoding. Utami and Munir (2014) claimed that the difficulty in understanding idiom is some idiom difficult to identify (non-identifiable). In Utami and Munir's observation, some idioms are non-identifiable and make them stuck to guest the appropriate meaning. Based on the Utami and Munir's observation, it is shown that idiom is imaginative and has different types in which the meaning is not obvious from the meaning of the constituent word. To sum up, to use idiom in English is very much a problem of style. There are a lot of aspects regarding the meaning of an idiom. Using idiom is not that simple. In the other word, "idiom more than any other feature of language demands that translator is not only accurate but highly sensitive to the rhetorical nuances of the language (Baker, 2011, p.75).

Overcoming the difficulties in idiom

There are always the difficulties in every pedagogical process, but also always the way to resolve the difficulty. The idiom 'nothing is impossible' can be correlated into this section. In addition, there are a lot of ways to overcome the difficulties in English idiom. Baker (2011) clarified that there are four strategies to understand the idiom and firstly is using similar meaning and form. This tactic involves using idiom in the target language which conveys roughly the same meaning as that of the source language idiom and in addition consisted of an equivalent lexical item. The Indonesian idiom '*setengah hati*' and its English idiom '*halfheartedly*' can be the example. Furthermore, they are equal both of meaning and form.

Secondly, Baker's study (2011) revealed that an idiom can be used for referring of similar meanings but having dissimilar forms. It is possible to find an idiom in the target language which has a meaning similar to that of the source idiom or expression, but which consists of the different lexical item. On the other word, expressing more or less similar ideas can be done through different lexical item. For example, Indonesian idiom '*bersilat lidah*' and the English idiom '*clever tongue*' have been used in different lexical item to express their same point. The third strategy is using the translation by paraphrasing. This is the most common way of translating idiom when a suitable word cannot be found in the target language. A paraphrase is a way to express or to deliver the meaning of a sentence through another form without changing the meaning. Moreover, this idea is restatement the idiom without changing the meaning, such as '*naik pitam*' into '*lost his temper*'. Fourth is the translation by

omission. As a single word, idiom may be omitted altogether in the target language because it has no close match in the target language and its meaning cannot be easily paraphrased. For example, in Indonesian idiom '*mata angin*' does not have any matched and equivalent word in English and it is difficult to paraphrase. In the other word, if that idiom is using paraphrase technique then the meaning will be confusing. With this intention, the omitted translation is available into this Indonesian idiom.

Previous study

An idiomatic expression is one of the important aspects of English learning. Idiom is frequently used in a manner of speech. In so many decades there are a lot of researchers who try to observe the difficulties faced through the English idiom. In this part, the researcher will clarify several previous researchers who have done their research in order to find the difficulties in English idiom. Further, this part will be the guideline and as the comparison for the researcher in conducting this research. The first researcher is Utami and Munir (2014) who focused on the study entitled "Problem in understanding idiomatic expression by senior high school". The research took place in SMA Negeri 1 Cerme, and the subject of the research is the third graders which include XII-Ipa 1, 3 and 5.

The background of their research came from their observation which shows that most of the students in senior high school got difficulty in understanding the meaning of idiomatic expression. Related to the background of their research Utami (2014) and Munir was interested in conducting a research. The data collection technique for their research was tested score and questionnaire responses which were

analyzed using SPSS. In this research, they have used three different contexts which are Translation Test (TT) with no context, Text Multiple Choice (TMC) and Test Blank Filling (TBF). Based on the test result, they found that the students got difficulty in understanding idioms in phrasal verbs and incorporating verbs type and the result showed that TMC has higher t-value which means TMC has a good assistance to help students in exploring the meaning.

Furthermore, Utami and Munir (2014) have explained two more conclusions that can be drawn. First is that the senior high school students really find considerable difficulties in predicting the appropriate meaning of an idiomatic expression. This result showed that idiom is really colorful and have different types in which the meaning is not obvious from the meaning of the constituent words. Second, the context has an important role in smoothing the figurative interpretation on an idiom and hence providing a correct answer. Idiom has a strong conventional associated meaning and it is probable that context played many roles in helping the students guess the meaning. To summarize, the big point of Utami and Munir's research is the context in idiom has a crucial role in assisting the students to understand the idiomatic expression.

The second research which has been conducted by Gathia and Njoroge (2016) is "The teaching of English idiom in Kenyan secondary school: Difficulties and effective strategies". The research by Gathia and Njoroge focused on difficulties and effective strategies in English idiom. Ten teachers of English from both rural and urban secondary schools in Kenya were interviewed to find out the actual practices in

their classrooms, the difficulties they face, and the effective strategies they employ for successful teaching of English idioms. The data collected were qualitatively analyzed. First, the study notes that it is possible to infer semantic relations between the literal sense of individual parts of an idiom and its meaning when interpreting compositional idioms. Second, there is incongruity between form and meaning when dealing with non-compositional idioms since their semantic interpretation cannot be retrieved by means of their constituent parts.

Gathia and Njoroge (2016) have stated four difficulties faced by Kenyan secondary school. First is the paucity of the suitable in idiom. Some teachers which have intervention with the research of theirs noted that there was a glaring paucity of suitable material for understanding English idiom in Kenyan secondary school. Based on that problem, teacher faced difficulties in identifying the idiom to teach and suitable pedagogies. One teacher also mentions that he usually collected idioms to learn from newspaper, novel, and other literary material. Second is attitudinal problem. Attitude also plays the role in understanding idiomatic expression. They found students were apathetic to learn idiom and it becomes the problem for the teacher to teach and proved that idiom would enhance their English skills. Third is grammatical error. Gathia and Njoroge mentioned most of the idiom is relatively frozen and have a severe grammatical restriction.

Therefore, they do not permit any lexical and syntactic modification. This reason makes the students go wrong when using an idiom. Some teacher stated a case occurred when students formed a plural form for the idiom “kick the bucket” to

“kicks the buckets”. Fourth is the opacity of idiom. Learner of English as the second language felt a big difficulty learning the meaning of opaque idiom than they are acquiring transparent one because the meaning of opaque idiom cannot be retrieved by means of the meaning of their constituent parts. A teacher also noted of a case when a student instead of using the idiom “Pandora’s box, kiss the blarney stone and pick up/ take up the gauntlet” pose a great challenge to their comprehension.

One intention with the Gathia and Njoroge’s research, Shojaei (2012) has conducted a research with title “Translation of idiom and fixed expression: Strategies and difficulties”. Shojaei’s observation tries to investigate and identify some existing obstacles in the process of interpreting and translating inter-lingual pairs and then to suggest that some weighty theoretical strategies overcome the difficulties. Further, this research has followed Baker’s (1992) classification of difficulties and strategies which aimed to investigate the difficulties arise in the process of interpreting and translating idiom and fixed expression from one language into another language.

Moreover, several steps are applied in conducting Shojaei’s study. First steps taken in the process of writing this paper included gathering some authentic data regarding the subject of the work. In order to explore the information, Shojaei has used Baker’s (1992) book “In Other Words” in order to study in detail and the parts of the book containing any relevant data in this issue were highlighted mainly focusing on the quotation or categorizations for idiom and fixed expression. The second step was to find some works of previous researcher and scholars on the issue. Analyzing and exploring the found sources, some helpful theories and ideas were

added to the paper so as to cover a comprehensive body of knowledge and data. The last step was to collect the finding and mention the strategies that are adequate and efficient for the translation of idiom and fixed expression from one language into another language.

The result of this research found that there is no specific term to cut and predefine way to cope with the idiomatic expression, but it is the role of the strategies to be taken. Another key concept to be considered was that student must have a depth knowledge of both source language and target language so as to understand the connotative meaning of idiom of the source language and then to recreate their counterpart in the target language. Those are three previous researchers that conducted some problem in idiomatic expression. Those previous studies will be the parameter in conduction this research.

Furthermore, this research is in line with Gathia and Njoroge's (2016) research that focused on the difficulties in understanding the idiomatic expression and the strategies or efforts to cope with the difficulties and also one intention with Utami and Munir's (2014) observation that focused on students' difficulties in understanding idiomatic expression, but on the other hand the differences in to this research is the subject of the research. Gathia & Njoroge (2016) and Utami & Munir's (2014) subject are the senior high school students. In this research, the subject of the research is the student of university, especially the English department students which expected that the result will be more relevant and contextual to the students' feel in learning.

Conceptual Framework

This research is done in order to know the difficulties in understanding English idiomatic expression faced by students of English Education Department UMY. Idiom is a part of the figurative language which has unpredictable meaning and cannot interpreting word by word. Most of the students find inconvenience when face an idiom. Finally, they cannot express their English freely and looks inflexible because through idiom English can be gorgeous (Ifill, 2002).

The meaning of idiom cannot be reached if just consisting of one word because the meaning of the idiomatic expression is not the sum of the word taken individually (Meryem, 2010). The basic problem in understanding the meaning of an idiom is when the user does not realize that they are dealing with an idiom (Baker, 2011). According to Balfaqeeh (2009), Tailanyo (2007) and Baker (2011), another difficulty in understanding the idiom is difficult to find the match and equivalent word that has the same meaning. Then, the difficulties which were mentioned by Utami and Munir (2014) difficult to identify the idiom. The last, some idioms are misleading (Baker 2011).

In order to get the information about student's difficulties in understanding English idiomatic expression and what are the efforts which to cope the difficulties, the researcher using the concepts of difficulties in understanding idiomatic expression which has been presented by Baker (2011), Balfaqeeh (2009), Tailanyo (2007) and Utami & Munir (2014). The concepts above will be the basis to answer the research questions related to the difficulties in English idiom in English Education Department

UMY batch 2012. The conceptual framework of this research will be drawn in the following figure.

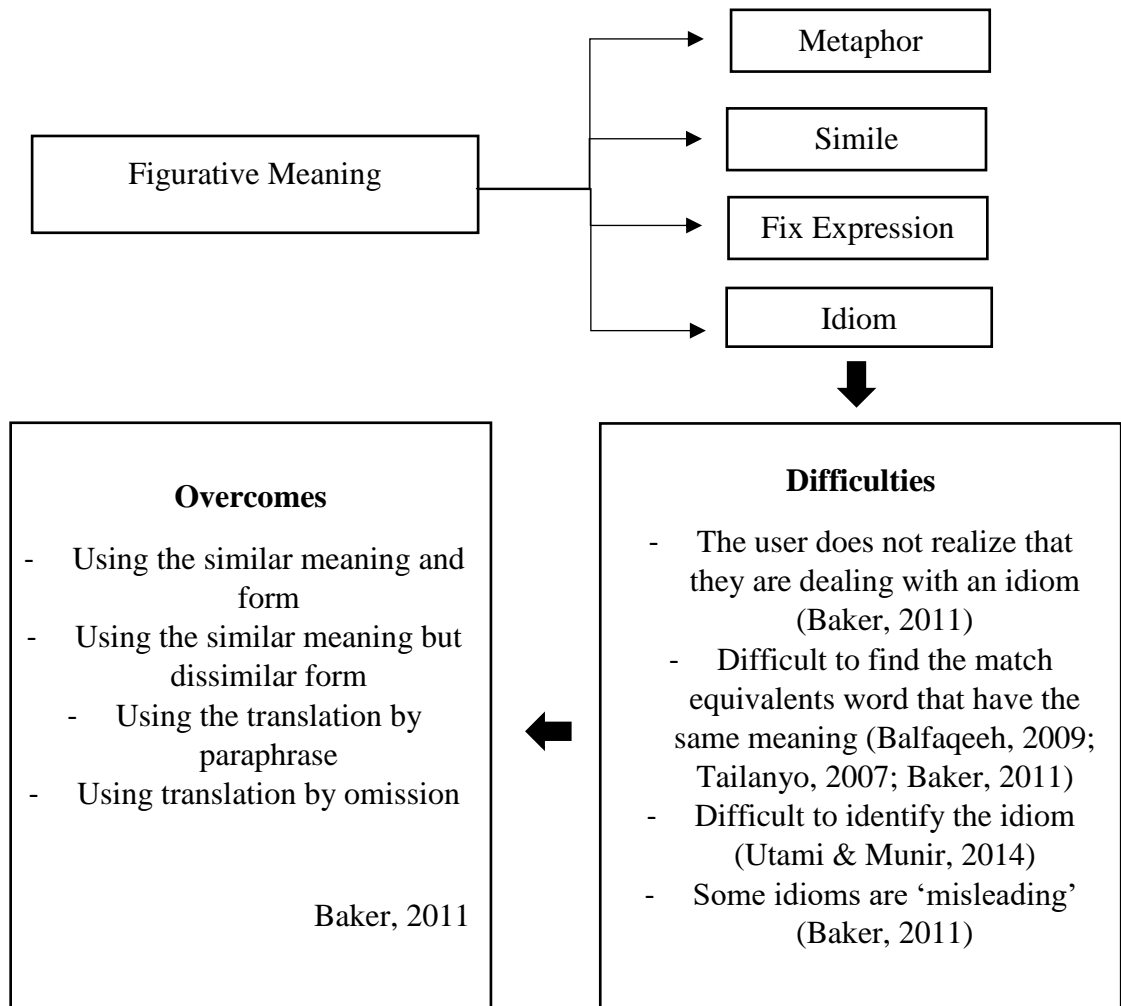


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework