

Chapter Four

Finding and Discussion

In this chapter, the researcher presents finding and discussion from the data. The final result of obtain data was reported in detail to see the finding and relate it to the literature review. This chapter consists of two main points that would be elaborated. They are the student's difficulties in understanding English idiomatic expression and the student's efforts to cope with the difficulties itself.

Findings and Discussion

To answer the researcher question, the researcher took the data through the interview with 5 participants of English Education Department UMY batch 2012 and 2013. The researcher found some findings concerning the difficulties faced by student in understanding English idiomatic expression. Based on the data from test and interview, there were some problem and difficulties in understanding English idiomatic expression and also the student's efforts to cope with the difficulties which encountered by the participant in this research.

Student's difficulties in understanding English idiomatic expression.

After collecting the data, the researcher found that there were eight major difficulties faced by students at English Education Department UMY. In this section, the researcher discussed those difficulties followed by supporting statement from the expert.

Students do not realize when dealing with idiom. The main problem faced by the students in understanding idiom is being able to recognize that they are dealing with an idiom. This argument is in accordance with Participant 4 which said that sometimes she did not recognize that she is dealing with idiomatic expression. The original statement is presented "... yes, sometimes I don't realize when I'm facing the idiom" (P4. 07). The other participant said that,

"... I feel little bit confused, and sometimes I don't know that was idiom. what is the meaning? For example, if I translated it word by word, the meaning does not match with the previous sentence, connecting to the previous word. Every word must be connected" (P3. 06)

Students who learned English would often find idiomatic expression in their daily conversation. In particular, students who found an idiom from a conversation or in a text will find difficulties to understand the idiom meaning. Students found some difficulties when they take a test about idiomatic expression. In general, the first students' impression about idiomatic expression was she did not realize if they are dealing with the idiom. As Baker (2011) stated that the main problem faced by the people in understanding idiom is being able to recognize that they are dealing with an idiom. In some cases, people did not understand that the sentence they read was an idiom specially to understand the unfamiliar idiom for them.

Students lack of vocabularies. Two of the five participants believed that vocabulary has an important role in understanding idiomatic expression. Participant 3 said that one of the difficulties in understanding idiom is lack of vocabulary.

Participant 5 said that the difficulty in understanding idiom is the lack of vocabulary. Students should have a lot of vocabulary in order to understand the idiomatic expression easier. Participant 5 also said that lack of vocabulary could be the big problem when face an idiom. The following statement was stated by two participants, " Because I am... English is not my first language so for me, it is hard for me to translate a sentence without idiom. Moreover, a sentence with idiom." (P3. 24).

"The difficulty is, we should master the vocabulary which has similar meaning with the idiom. On the other side, there are a lot of people who do not understand because lack of vocabularies." (P5. 05)

Vocabulary is very important in learning English process (Nation, 2013). In the other word, vocabulary is the most important part of English. A problem occurred when the Participants do not possess much vocabulary to understand the meaning of an idiom. By this intention, the vocabulary problem will be implied to find the match and equivalent word for an idiom.

Students are difficult to find the match and equivalent word (diction).

One of five participants argued that it is hard to find the matched and equivalent word in order to understand the meaning of an idiom. This argument has been expressed by a participant who said "... like word *temper*, this word means broken or something, right? But if we translate to keep her temper it means to keep her temper broken and I do not know. I am confused." (P3.05). Participant 3 also continued that the difference

between English and Bahasa makes the students difficult to find the match word for a single sentence. The authentic statement presented below,

“... Bahasa to English is clearly different so it is difficult to find out the match word, and then to the idiom” (P3. 26)

The technique of a language chose to express or not express the various meaning cannot be predicted and only occasionally matches the way another language chosen to express the same meaning (Baker, 2011). In general, participants thought that it was hard or difficult to find the word that has the similar meaning to correlate with the idiom *keep her temper*. Participant 3 chose word broken to explain the idiom, but the word broken did not match and equivalent to explain the meaning of *tamper* itself, as Tailanyo (2007) stated that the problem in understanding the good meaning of an idiom is occur from the problem to find adequate target language equivalent for a term.

Students have misled between purpose and meaning. Four of five participants misled with the meaning of an idiom. Initially, they thought about the meaning of an idiom for sure and they believed their answers were corrected. However, the true meaning of an idiom drove them into a far meaning from the source word. The following statement was stated by participants,

” ... because in my opinion, the words in idiom has uncertain meaning.

Emmm, for example, does a thing like a piece of cake. The meaning of piece

of cake cannot be interpreted word by word. However, the meaning of that idiom is very easy to do.” (P1. 04)

“... because, just like what I have done with your test before, eee... there are a lot of words which has a different meaning from the source word.” (P3. 04)

Furthermore, Baker (2011) also continued that another difficulty appeared when an idiom drives the listener or reader into a far meaning that has supposed to be reached or in the manner of speech some idioms are misleading. In effect, this idea is analogous to the fact which researcher found that idiom could lead the reader or listener into another meaning which has far where the meaning supposed to be.

Students find unfamiliar idiom. All of the Participants agreed that unfamiliar idiom is one factor or problem in understanding the idiom. Unfamiliar idiom will make the listener feel confused and guess the meaning of the idiom. This phenomenon was proven by students who mentioned that “... if that idiom is tramontane, surely we will wonder” (P2.04). Participant one faced some problem to interpret a strange idiom because it was her first time dealing with idiom *cupboard love*. Statement from participant one presented below,

“... I am not so sure with my answer because I don’t have any idea what cupboard implied, and this is also strange for me. (P1. 17)

Another difficulty faced by students is when they find unfamiliar idiom. In other it word was non-identifiable idiom. According to Utami and Munir (2014), the difficulty in understanding the idiom is some idioms are difficult to be identified. In

English, there are a lot of idioms and the most common idiom which might be familiar such as *once upon a time, I'll catch you up, etc.* Therefore, there were also unfamiliar idiom such as *bad of roses, I'm broke, etc*

Students are lack of technique to translate idiom. One of five Participant stated that the sixth difficulty is lack of the technique in understanding the idiomatic expression. Then, participant four argued that "... more difficult is the technique to translate the idiom, because we were not taught in the college about the technique of idiomatic translation and it troubles me in translation idiom" (P4. 05). One straight with it, participant five also stated that "a material which has not be taught it is surely difficult to understand" (P5. 22)

As the matter of fact, idiom was not taught in English Education Department UMY and it is really possible for the students to misunderstand the meaning of an idiom because of lack resources and techniques how to translate and understand an idiom. In the way of learning process, it is necessary to produce a technique in order to help the learner in learning something. According to Akbari (2013),

Since the use of idioms is a matter of style, attempting to find an idiomatic expression in the target language to translate them will help convey the style of the original in the source language. This is an important issue that could be dealt with in translator training courses. The translators need to be familiar with source language idioms and learn ways to recognize the ones they do not know. Then the different strategies for translating idioms could be

introduced to them. They could learn ways to find appropriate equivalents for idiomatic expressions. (p.40)

Idiom is fixed in a form and unchangeable. Another difficulty of understanding the idiomatic expression is idiom have some specific characteristics. As mentioned before in the second chapter, idiom has characteristics which make it more complicated. To be specific, the characteristics discussed are idiom fixed in a form and unchangeable word in an idiomatic expression. The following statement was stated by two participants below:

“... the changeable in idiom maybe the tenses and the other aspect. In idiom, it is unchangeable because from the native it is just like their characteristic” (P3. 27).

“because the characteristic of idiom is very unique, just like I explained before if the idiom in the book is very easy to identify” (P5.07)

As already discussed before in chapter two about characteristics of idiomatic expression, there are numbers of characteristics of idiom clarified by Bataneh and Rula (2002) that several words which combine in an idiom often lose their literal meaning and express something only remotely suggested by one word. In particular, their idea tried to make it clear that idiom is a variable or fixed in a form. As can be seen, the characteristic in idiom has a role in understanding the meaning of idiomatic expression

Students find cultural differences between source language and target language. According to participant three and participant four, the culture differences were one of the difficulties in understanding the meaning of idiom. As participant three stated that “Yes, the culture is already different, and also the language. Bahasa into English is also quite different, and then the idiom as well” (P3.25). Another participant said that:

“... the difficulty is the technique to translate the Indonesian idiom culture to English idiom, because the terms in Bahasa is difficult to understand if we try to translate it into English and they are different” (P4.19)

There were a lot of cultures in different place or country, so it is difficult to understand the meaning of an idiom that provided cultural information on it. For example, in Indonesia, most of people are familiar with idiom *cinta monyet*. It is the general culture of Indonesian people to tell something about teenager love. On the contrary, in English idiom usually used the idiom *puppy love* to tell the similar meaning of teenager love. The difference lies in the use of pronouns between Indonesian culture which used monkey and puppy for the English culture. Glucksberg (2001) described idioms as a secret language and a language owned by a culture that one has to be steeped in. In other words, idioms vary in frequency and familiarity depending on variables like demographic characteristics and cultural and linguistic identification.

Student's efforts to cope with the difficulties.

Naturally, human always found any difficulty when face something such as when the students of English Education Department UMY faced idiomatic expression in their daily conversation and in their academic purpose. In case, as the college student, their mindset is more comprehensive and flexible for looking the effort to cope with a problem. The strategies used by the participants were reading the sentence repeatedly, having logical understanding, paraphrasing, looking for similar form and meaning, looking similar meaning but dissimilar form, looking for the synonym, correlate the idiom into actual context.

Reading the sentence repeatedly. Based on the data gained, the entire participants announced their problem in understanding idiomatic expression. Four of five participants said that they read the idiom repeatedly to catch the meaning, as Participant one stated that "... for myself, I read the entire sentence repeatedly, does it match with the sentence or not, then make sure that sentences are suitable, and then I am looking for the references for the meaning of the word and after that I arranged one by one the word into a sentence" (P1. 05). The other Participants also stated in following statement below:

"...certainly, understand the word. After that I recalled where I found those word before and then I relate the meaning." (P2. 08)

"... if in a sentence, I read the entire sentence and find the meaning, but maybe the meaning is not necessarily true. Oh, maybe this is the right meaning, and then I connected into the previous sentence." (P3. 09)

This technique was in line with McCarthy and O'Dell (2002) that claimed an idiom meaning does not directly obvious from looking at the individual word. This idea means that the meaning of idiom cannot be reached if just read once and it is necessary for the students to read the idiom repeatedly to gain more information and get the meaning

Having logical understanding. In the way to understand the meaning of idiomatic expression, most of participants chose the straightforward understanding. Four of five participants prefer to use logical thinking to catch the meaning of an idiom, as participant one stated in the interview that "... after that I used the logic too because if it is not I can't reach the meaning." (P1. 06). The other Participants also stated in following statement below:

"... maybe I used logic to understand the meaning of idiom I chew more than I can bite." (P2.13)

"... I see the idiom from the sentence itself. I chew more than I can bite, so it means that the input more than output, and it means the pressure is too high, and I conclude to put the meaning as working too hard." (P4. 13).

The last participant said that "no, I translate it using my logical thinking" (P5. 12)

In the way of understanding the match meaning of idiom, students prefer to use their logical. This means that the meaning of idiom cannot be interpreted and found in the dictionary (Ifill, 2002). Most of the students realized that idiom is a part

of the figurative language, so they might be known to understand the meaning of the idiom out of the box. For example, the idiomatic expression “*I chew more than I can bite*”. In a glance, this idiom is peculiar to understand literally. Participant 2 used his logical thinking and he thinks about something worked out of the portion, or the other word over does something.

Using Paraphrasing. Four of five participants used the paraphrasing translation. Participants one stated that “... from the sentence we found that there is a person who make fun of him, but that people cannot take it as a joke and make him mad, so I put it as a man who cannot control his anger.” (P1. 10).

In line with participant one, participant three stated that “... I read the entire sentence and catch the meaning. After that, I used to correlate the meaning with my own word” (P3. 11). The other Participants also stated in following statement below:

” ... the other meaning of the idiom, because it says he is a love rat, right? So, I looking for the other meaning for rat. So, from the sentence, I elaborated the sentence to epiphyte or the people who take advantage of others.” (P4. 17)

“for number 4 ... if I transfer into Bahasa the meaning might be overdone something so bad, so it is not proportional into his capability” (P5. 10)

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 though another form without changing the meaning (Baker, 2011)

Looking for the similar form and meaning. Based on the data gained, all of the Participants used this technique to understand the meaning of an idiom.

Participant one used this technique to understand the meaning of idiom ‘love you with all of my heart and soul, and participant one said that “... so, we know that he loves his bride with his heart and soul. So, it means that he will sacrifice everything for the people he loved.” (P1. 15). The other participants also stated in following statement below:

“... honestly, I don’t have any idea about this idiom, but if try to answer I will say half heart” (P2. 16)

“... so, this idiom I translate directly as don’t worry” (P3.21)

“... for number six I translate suitable with the sentence, so I say take a change (P4. 22)

“... yes, I translate used the similar meaning and form” (P5. 14)

Moreover, not all the idioms are difficult to understand. In a simple understanding, students used the similar form and meaning to understand the meaning of an idiom. According to Baker (2011), this technique 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

Looking for the similar meaning but dissimilar form. Three of five participants used this technique to resolve the idiom test. There were authentic statements from the participants below:

“...for number 11 I translate the idiom with the meaning first, but in the other form. So, I say it as a marriage” (P2. 14)

“... I took the meaning first because it says that I chew more than I can bite. I don't know the rules, but I take it into another form” (P3. 13)

“ ... this is puppy love and it is impossible for me to translate it as a puppy lover. So, I translate it word by word and then I thought about teenager love. (P4. 15)

It is possible to find an idiom in the target language which has a similar meaning to the source idiom or expression, but which consisted of the different lexical item. In the other word, to express more or less the same idea can be through different lexical item as Baker (2011) wrote in her book “In Other Word”.

Correlating the idiom to the actual context. There were three participants who used this way to understand the meaning of idiom. Participants two stated that “...it is like in the real context, earn a living. And this number six said *kesempatan dalam kesempatan* and I thought like see the thing, so I just correlate into the real context. Some participants mentioned the similar point of view below:

“... the sentence before said that this person cannot go to the party tonight, so it means he has his own reason why he can't go to the party, so I think in this context maybe this person cannot go because of he is sick or something” (P3. 12)

“... so, the previous sentence said like this and I must be correlated the actual context from this used term and then I correlate both of them into one fix meaning.” (P4. 09)

In the other technique, correlating the idiom into the actual context could be an option for students to understand the meaning of idiomatic expression. This effort occurred when participant four used to understand the idiomatic expression “*love rat*”. Participant four thought it is impossible if the meaning of that idiom is a rat lover, so she tried to figure out some possibility about rat. Finally, she tried to correlate the rat into the contextual condition or the nature of the rat which closed to the parasite, like corruptor. In the end, she decided to make it as the person who always takes the advantages of other. Overall, correlating and guessing from context was the most successful strategy (Zyzik, 2009).

Beside students’ effort used to understand the meaning of idiom, all of the efforts that they use was never learned before in the class. All of the participants also felt that idiom is very useful and important to be taught in English Education Department UMY. Some participants stated that idiom is very important to be learned in order to decrease the negative words. In the other hand, idiom is one of the linguistic aspects which make the language is more beautiful and also idiomatic expression should be one of the materials in English Education Department UMY. The participants implied that the idiomatic expression could be the learning material in English Education Department UMY in the future. All those hopes are no more to make English Education Department better than before.