

## Chapter Two

### Literature Review

In this chapter, the researcher tells about the definition from each keyword in this research and the previous study from the other researcher that have same topic. There are four main points that explain in this chapter. There are definition of idiom, translation of idiom, difficulties in understanding idiom, and strategies in understanding idiomatic expressions.

#### Idioms

Idioms were seeing as one of the hardest and most interesting parts of the English vocabulary. On the other hand, they were considering one of the most peculiar parts of the language. Therefore, idioms were difficult because of their unpredictable meaning and grammar. Idiomatic expressions were common in all languages and used widely in both written and spoken interactions, and even formal and informal contexts. Each particular language has its own unique and specific idioms, which give color to that language. Moreover, idioms may be culture bound and this may cause even greater problems for the translator. Therefore, in order to transfer a source idiom into the target language the translator must choose the most appropriate strategy.

**Definition of Idioms.** Idioms, generally, as language specific items, carry a nonliteral meaning, are usually different from the literal meaning of the expression. In all sorts of communication, idiomatic expressions are widely used almost in all

languages. It is clear that the English language is rich in the use of idioms. O'Brien (2009) stated that idiomatic expressions are a type of informal English that have a meaning different from the meaning of the words in the expression. Boers (2008) said that Idiomatic expressions in linguistics are said to randomly carry the meanings that they do.

Idioms found in almost every language. Some idioms are very culturally specific. To define an idiom is very difficult task. By understanding origins, a translator can translate it easily. A little knowledge of background story keeps it in mind for a very long time and used according to the situation and context. Hornby (1995) mentions that " an idiom is a phrase or sentence whose meaning is not clear from the meaning of its individual words and which must be learnt as a whole unit, for instance, the idiom spill the beans means to reveal secret information, especially without intending to do so" (p. 589). Idiomatic expressions frequently used in a wide variety of situations, from friendly conversations to more formal conversations and written contexts. That is, idiomatic expressions carry within them the history, heritage, culture and customs of its native users (Rizq, 2015).

It said that idioms are derived from physical human experiences are, in general, culturally equal. Therefore, idioms that based on physical human experiences, such as anger being associated with heat are easier to recognize and understand by non-natives. Due to the strong similarities across different cultures in basic physical experiences such as, being sick or well, hot or cold, idioms that are

derived from such images are often the same and fairly easy to understand (Boers, 2008). However, idioms derived from specific domains are usually different across cultures, because these domains are not equally important across cultures. Moon (1998) defined idiom as “an ambiguous term, used in conflicting ways” (p. 3). In a lay or general use, an idiom has two main meanings. Firstly, an idiom is a particular means of expressing something in a language, music, art and so on, which characterizes a person or a group. Secondly, an idiom is a particular lexical collection or phrasal lexeme, peculiar to a language.

Mary (1986) stated that idiom is multiword construction that is a semantic unit whose meaning cannot be deduced from the meanings of its constituents, and has non-productive syntactic structure. Further, to sum up all the definitions that have to clarify by the above researcher Ifill (2002), has identified that idiom is not the literal expression that the meaning found in the dictionary. The meaning of idiom is not simply to transfer the meaning of word taking by individually because idiom fix in the form and it is required the specific context to understand the idiom well.

**Classification of Idiom.** There are many types of idiom in various languages. To identify the types the students can take a look at the theories from the experts. One of them is Fernando (1996) distinguished three different groups of idioms as follows:

***Pure idioms.*** Pure idioms are opaque to users of language with respect to all or some of the words that make them up. Formally such idioms are multiword

expressions functioning as a single semantic unit whose meaning of individual words cannot be summed together to produce the meaning of the whole. For instance, *smell the rat* meaning ‘becoming suspicious’ but not ‘sense rodent with olfactory organs’ is a totally pure idiom, where a feature of complete non-literalness is evident, resulting in "a new meaning-different from what the same unit would have had if each word were void-is now associated with the idiom" (Fernando, 1996, pp. 60-63).

**Semi idioms.** The typical result of semi idioms is partial non-literalness, since one component generally keeps its direct meaning. For instance, in semi-idioms such as *rain cats and dogs* meaning ‘rain heavily’ or *blue film* meaning ‘obscene film’, one component here ‘rain’ and ‘film’ sustains their direct meanings. Fernando (1996) adds "what is evident in such idioms is that a single meaning different from the separate meanings of each word imposed on the whole unit" (p. 63).

**Literal idioms.** Literal idiom can interpret based on their parts. Components of such idioms are always used in their direct meaning; although, such combination sometimes needs figurative sense. Regarding this type, Fernando (1996) deems that “very often literal expressions are quite often considered idioms only on the grounds of compositeness and fixity” (p. 63).

**Translation of Idioms.** The meaning of idioms should never understand literally. That is to say the translator must first analyze what the writer has intended to say before she/he can even think of translating the expression. Larson (1984) points out that “the first crucial step in the translation of idioms is to be absolutely certain of

the meaning of the source language idiom” (p.143). Therefore the most important issue in translating idioms is the ability to distinguish the difference between the literal meaning and the real meaning of the expression. This is why recognizing and being able to use idioms appropriately requires excellent command over the source language.

The way an idiom translated depends on the context in which it is used. Idiomatic expressions have different and various translation strategies but the translator should see the use of which kind of these strategies can help the target language readers to better comprehend the meaning of the idioms. When translating a source idiom the translator should be conscious of the sense. Larson (1998) explains that” the core of translation process is transferring the meaning of a text, not form, from source language to target language” (p. 4). On the other hand, Bassnett-McGuire (1980) states that “idioms should be translated on the basis of the function of the phrase: the source language idiom should be replaced by a target language idiom that has the same meaning” (p. 24).

Baker (1992) points out that:

The main problems that idiomatic and fixed expressions pose in translation relate to two main areas: the ability to recognize and interpret the idiom correctly; and the difficulties involved in rendering the various aspects of meaning that an idiom or affixed expression conveys into the target language (p. 65).

Baker (1992) also adds some important rule that the translator cannot do any of the following with an idiom. First, change the order of the word. Second, delete a word from it. Third, add a word to it. Forth, replace its word with another. Fifth, change its grammatical structure. Nida and Taber (1969) exclude “the literal translation strategy and propose three translation strategies for idioms” (p. 106). There are translating idioms with non- idioms, translating idioms with idioms, and translating non- idioms with idioms.

They (1969) also maintain, "the most frequently source language idioms are shifted to target language non- idioms” (p. 106), although the ideal is to find a target language idiom that has the same meaning as the original one. Awwad (1990) identifies two major difficulties when translating idioms. The first one is misinterpreting the intention of the writer or speaker, and the second is recognizing the cultural differences among languages with regard to both traditional and innovative idioms. In addition, He (1990) establishes the following categories for idiomatic expressions. First, expressions and functions correspond in both languages. Second, functions correspond in both languages but expressions are completely different. Third, functions correspond but expressions differ slightly. The last, both expressions and functions differ and language specific.

Newmark (1981) pointed out “idiom should never be translated word for word” (p. 125). The distinction between word- for- word and global meanings of idioms and standard collocations has made to be clear. That is to say, we cannot

translate an idiom literally, since the result will usually be unintelligible in the receptor language. The best translation strategy for idioms is translating them with a natural target language idiom, which has the same meaning and effect as the original source language idiom.

**Difficulties in Understanding Idioms.** Idiom is not a simple material to be learned because idiom has unpredictable meaning. According to Balfaqqeh (2009), one of the difficulties in understanding the meaning of idiomatic expressions is difficult to find the matching equivalent for a single word that conveys one specific meaning.

Furthermore, Baker (1992) deals with the difficulties in translating idioms and establishes the following categories. First, an idiom or fixed expression may have no equivalent in the target language. Second, an idiom or fixed expression may have a similar counterpart in the target language, but its context of use may be different. Third, an idiom may use in the source text in both its literal and idiomatic senses at the same time. Forth, the very convention of using idioms in written discourse, the context in which they can use, and their frequency of use may be different in the source language and in the target language. Teilanyo's (2007) study found the following:

The difficulty in understanding the good meaning of an idiom that occurred 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 (p. 25).

Both of the experts agreed that the first problem in understanding the idiom is to find the match and equivalent meaning into the target language. The next problem that identified 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 and idiom. In so many cases, not much of people who meet idiom know 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 drive into far meaning that has supposed to be reach or in the other manner of speech, some idioms are misleading.

There are many 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). 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, they have found that some idiom is non-identifiable and make them stuck to guest the appropriate meaning.

**Strategies in Understanding Idioms.** When the translator cannot translate the English idiom into Indonesian very well, it makes the meaning of the



text will be different with the source language. A good translation can be seen by the quality of translation itself. When the quality of translation is good, it shows that the result of translation will be acceptable to the reader in the target language. The result of translation must be analyzed whether the result is somewhat good translation or not. To produce a good translation, Larson (1988) proposes “three criteria to measure the quality of translation, such as accuracy, clearness, and naturalness” (p. 54). Baker (2011) suggests four strategies in translating idioms; the first is using an idiom of similar meaning and form. This strategy involves using an idiom in the target language, which conveys roughly the same meaning as that of the source-language idiom and, in addition, consists of equivalent lexical items. This kind of match is only occasionally achieved. The second is using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form. It is often possible to find an idiom or fixed expression in the target language which has a meaning similar to that of the source idiom or expression, but which consists of different lexical items. The third is translation by paraphrase. This is by far the most common way of translating idioms when a match cannot be found in the target language or when it seems inappropriate to use idiomatic language in the target text because of differences in stylistic preferences of the source and target languages. The last is translation by omission. As single words, an idiom may sometimes be omitted altogether in the target text. This may be because it has no close match in the target language, its meaning cannot be easily paraphrased, or for stylistic reasons.

### **Previous Studies**

The first previous study is investigating idiomatic expressions inside the novel by Saputro entitle 'Idioms and Strategies of Translation in Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows'. This article described the translation of idioms expression found in the novel *Harry Potter and The Deathly Hallows* published by Bloomsbury and the strategies in translating idioms applied based on Baker (2001). Using qualitative method, the writer provided a detailed description about the translation strategies in translating idiomatic expressions found in *Harry Potter and The Deathly Hallows*. As the results, the study showed that several translation strategies applied, which include idioms of similar meaning and form, using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form, translation by paraphrase, and translation by omission. The cultural difference becomes the main concern in keeping the original meaning, especially when dealing with idiomatic expressions. When translating idioms, the translator might use some adjustment in the certain context to keep the correct meaning, so the translated text is still readable and clear. In conclusion, translating idioms could be a serious matter regarding the target language. In this case, the problem was the stylistic meaning should keep without reducing the beauty of the text.

The second previous study is investigating idiomatic expressions by Hashemian & Arezi entitled "A Study of Applied Strategies in Translating Idiomatic expressions in Two Movie Subtitles: Bring It On & Mean Girls". This study aims to investigating the applied strategies in the translation of idiomatic expressions in 2 American subtitled movies, namely *Mean Girls* (2004) and *Bring It*

*On!* (2009), through Baker's (1992) proposed procedures in translating idiomatic expressions in translation studies. Considering the concept of translation, one can recognize that the fundamental purpose of translation is to reproduce various kinds of texts in another language, and consequently, converting the text into another understandable text to a wider range of readers. Furthermore, movies, as one of the major cultural materials in each society, are of paramount importance in reflecting the cultural aspects of a society.

One of the main problems in the process of subtitling is translating idiomatic elements related to the culture and individuals' values in the society whose idiomatic expressions are included in this group. As the results there are four different strategies proposed by Baker (1992) for translating idioms. In this study, the most popular strategy was "translating the SL idioms with omitting them in the TL" in these two movies. In this study, more than 57% (i.e., 57.14%) of the idiomatic expressions were translate through the fourth strategy, that is, "omission." Then, "translating the SL idiom with an idiom similar in meaning, but different in form" received the next highest frequency, that is, 22.85%. "Translating the SL idiom with an idiom similar in both meaning and form in the TL" had the third high frequency, that is, 18.57%. Finally, "paraphrasing the SL idiom in the TL" had the least frequency among all other strategies, that is, 1.42%. Moreover, it concluded that the used strategies were not distributed equally among the movies. The Phi and Cramer's results were not significant, either. Therefore, the results showed that the mostly used translation

strategy by the translators in the *Bring It On!* (2009) and *Mean Girls* (2004) movies was “translating the SL idioms with omission,” and compensating this loss in the meaning by totally omitting the idiom or even by replacing it by another meaning. To conclude, although there are a number of studies exploring the kind of strategies used for translating the SL idioms into the TL, there still seem to be some gaps between the original SL idioms with the translated versions in the TL because not all the time proper translation is possible.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The title of this research is EED of UMY students’ difficulties and strategies in understanding idiomatic expressions in English novel. Based on the research title, the researcher is going to do a study related to the research question. The research question of this research will find EED of UMY students difficulties and the strategies in understanding idiomatic expressions. Besides, the researcher will only focus on idiomatic expressions in English novel.

Many aspects in our life use idiomatic expressions as part of communication like movies, books, music, especially books. Many of them have been translate into various languages. Idiomatic expressions that contained on the novel is various. In order to know the true meaning of the idiomatic expressions, the readers need to understand the way to translate it. The students should find some clues or similar words that match with the idiom. The basic dominant principle is an idiomatic translation reproduces the meaning of the source language in the natural form of the

target language. Idiomatic expressions can be understood based on context or meaning. Therefore, it will minimize misunderstanding from the meaning of idiomatic expressions.

In EED of UMY, some teachers used English novels as teaching media. There are two kinds of novels used by teachers; they can be non-fiction or fiction novels. The story in the novel contains idiomatic expressions. "Idioms can be defined as a number of words which when taken together will have a different meaning from the individual meaning of each word" (Seidl, 1988, p. 13).

While the teacher used novels as teaching media, some of the students felt it difficult to understand idioms. Many problems to face in translation, these remind us "many aspects are involved in it including communication situation, cultural context of source language text, lexicon and grammar" (Larson, 1984, p. 3). 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).

Students can use some strategies in understanding idiomatic expressions. There are four strategies in understanding idiomatic expressions presented by Baker (2011). The strategies are, using similar meaning and form, using the similar meaning but dissimilar form, using the translation by paraphrase, using translation by omission.

This research is going to identify the difficulties, which EED of UMY students' faced in understanding idioms in novels and the strategies that EED of UMY

students use in understanding idioms in novel. The conceptual framework of this research has been drawing in the following chart:

*Figure 1.* Conceptual framework

