

An Analysis on Students' Ability in Distinguishing Polysemy and Homonymy

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Abstract—Vocabulary is a central part of a language and a success of learning vocabulary when students understand what teachers are teaching and they can give feedback on teaching materials. The implementation of polysemy and homonymy into teaching and learning practice is one way to improve vocabulary. This study aimed to reveal students' ability in distinguishing polysemy and homonymy. The method applied in this study was combination of quantitative and qualitative to discover the percentage of students who understood using polysemy and homonymy. Quantitative research with pre-test and post-test and qualitative research with questionnaire by using Likert scale. The sources of data were taken from the second semester students of STIE Wira Bhakti the Academic year 2017/2018 in Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. There were 25 students who had been selected as sample. To collect the data, pre-test and post-test were given. The test was in the form of vocabulary test that includes homonymy and polysemy words. The data were analyzed by using a repeated measure T-test in SPSS 22. The findings showed that the result of post-test increased after the treatment of eight meetings. The mean score of post-tests (88.4) was higher than the pre-test (36.68). It was concluded that there was improvement of the students' understanding on polysemy and homonymy from 36.68 to 88.48.

Keywords—analysis; homonymy; polysemy; students' ability; vocabulary

I. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is a central part of a language. The more words students know well and can use, the more meaning they can communicate in a wide variety of circumstance [1]. Vocabulary is the number of words in a language. Ur in Hidayati states that vocabulary is the words taught in a foreign language [2]. The first thing students must have been reproducing vocabulary in English that can help them to know the meaning of what they learn in English. Learning vocabulary in the classroom is a success when the students understand what teachers are teaching and they can give feedback on teaching materials.

In learning vocabulary there are some words that have same sound and writing but different meanings and also words that have more than one meaning, for example, homonymy and polysemy. Thornbury stated that homonyms are words that share the same form but have unrelated meanings [3]. Homonymy words have meaning depending on the context of

the sentence that follows it. Therefore, people still cannot decide what the meaning of a word is conceived without seeing it in the form of a whole sentence. And polysemy is a word that has more than one meaning. Polysemy and homonym are difficult in conversation. So, people will certainly have difficulty in doing communication.

Examples of homonymy words, when we hear the word bat, some people must mean it is a bat and some people interpret it with a bat. And the example of the word polysemy is blood, the word has more than one meaning, the blood that flows when we are wounded and the descendants of the example is blue-blooded. The way to distinguish the two words is by looking at the context of the sentence. Therefore, homonymy and polysemy are important for us to understand.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A. Vocabulary Mastery

Vocabulary is central to language and of critical importance to typical language learner [4]. Mc Charty states that the vocabulary is the experience of most language teachers [5]. It does not matter how well students learn grammar, it does not matter how well students listen to, talk, and read without vocabulary it will all be worth it. The students will not be able to understand what the meaning of what they are talking about, from what they hear and from what they read. Without the vocabulary of communication using a second language will not happen.

The key to learning a foreign language is vocabulary. Mc Carten said that learning vocabulary is mostly about remembering and students generally need to see, say, and write newly learned words many times before they can be said to have learned it [6]. In addition, teachers play an important role in helping students to master vocabulary using techniques and strategies that make students feel comfortable to learn. According to Scrivener, vocabulary is a powerful carrier of meaning. A learner, recognizing the communicative power of vocabulary, might reasonably acquire a working knowledge of a large number of words [7].

B. Kinds of Vocabulary

Scrivener stated that an important consideration for teachers planning vocabulary work is the distinction between receptive and productive vocabulary [7].

1) *Productive vocabulary*: It is the set of words that are used in spoken communication. Good pronunciation might get encouraged to get the sounds and the stress right. While, according to Nation, the use of productive vocabulary involves the desire to express a meaning through speaking or writing, understanding and producing the right word form. Earning that we produce in the form of language is by talking and writing to convey a message to others [8].

2) *Receptive vocabulary*: It is the use of words that we can understand. According to Nation, receptive vocabulary uses involves perceiving the form of a word while listening or reading and retrieving its meaning. Receptive brings the idea that we accept language input from others through hearing or reading and then we try to understand it [8].

C. Aspects of Learning Vocabulary

There are a lot of ways that will help students to develop their vocabulary and abilities.

1) *Word classes*: A word is a microcosm of human consciousness [3]. Word is classified based on their functional categorized, it is called part of speech. Kinds of part of speech are: 1. Noun are words that concretely indicate the identity of an object, 2. Pronouns is a word that replaces the noun, 3. verb is a word class that expresses an action, existence, or experience, 4. adjective is a word that serves to describe a noun or a pronoun, 5. adverb is a word class that provides information to other words, 6. Preposition Preposition is a word placed before a thing or something, 7. Conjunction is a group of words that connect sentences, phrases or clauses.

2) *Word families*: Thornbury stated a word generated from the addition of affix to root, and which has a different meaning from its root, it is called a derivative. For example: players, replays, and playful games are still derived from the game. The derivatives and their infections are both formed by the affixation process. Affixes consist of suffixes, such as -ful, -er are end of word. Prefixes, such as re-, un-, pre-, de- in the beginning of word [3].

3) *Word formation*: Thornbury stated that there are several kinds of word formation [3], such as:

a) *Compound words*: It is a merger of two or more independent words. For example: Noun + verb + -er = record player, bus driver, hair dryer, typewriter. Nouns + nouns = class room,

b) *Blending*: Blending is a combination of two words into one. For example: breakfast + lunch = brunch. information + entertainment = infotainment.

4) Meaning of words:

a) *Synonyms*: It is a word that shares a similar meaning. Thornbury [3]. For example: see = look, fast = quick, reply = answer

b) *Antonym*: It is a word with opposite meaning. Thornbury [3]. For example: old > < young, accept > < reject.

c) *Homonyms*: It is a word that has the same pronunciation and spelling but has a different meaning. For example: She looked fine yesterday. You should pay the fine or go to the court.

d) *Polysemy*: It is a word that has more than one meaning. For example: foot. The house is at the foot of the mountains. One of his shoes felt too tight for his foot.

D. Vocabulary Testing

The purpose of a vocabulary test is to measure understanding and production of words used in speaking or writing. According to Madsen, there are four general kinds of vocabulary tests. First, the limited response is for beginners who are simple physical actions like pointing out something or very simple verbal answers like "yes" or "no". The second, some options of completion, is a test in which sentences with missing words are presented; students choose one of the four vocabularies given to complete the sentence. The third type, multiple paraphrase choices, is a test in which a sentence with a single underlined word is given [9]. Students choose which of the four closest words means underlined items. Last type, simple settlement (word), students write in the missing word section that appears in the sentence. That is, from the type of vocabulary tests above, the authors can conclude that in each type of test has its own advantages, a teacher must know how to choose the right test for his/her students.

However, Scrivener states that there are a lot of exercises on vocabulary [7], they are:

- Matching pictures to words;
- Matching parts of words to other parts;
- Matching words to other words, example: synonyms, opposites, etc.;
- Using given words to complete a specific task;
- Filling in crossword, grids or diagrams;
- Filling in gaps in sentences;
- Memory game.

In fact, the fourth goal of this test is to measure students' understanding of a material. In this case, a teacher should be able to find out the appropriate test model to be given to the students.

E. Homonymy

The word homonymy comes from the Greek (homonymous), maning "having the same name", which is the conjunction homos, "common, same" and anoma meaning "name". In linguistics, a homonymy is, in the strict sense, one of a group of words that share the same spelling and the same pronunciation but have different meanings. If the same pronunciation is called a homophone, but if the same is the spelling then it is called homograph. Thornbury stated that homonyms are words that share the same form but have

unrelated meanings [3]. The word ‘fine’ of course there are two meanings that pass through our brain so that we cannot decide the exact meaning of the word. However, if the word ‘fine’ has been put into a whole sentence like below, then we can identify the meaning of the word ‘fine’.

She looked fine yesterday

You should pay the fine or go to the court.

The word fine in the context of the first sentence has the meaning of feeling fine. While the fine context in the second sentence means something that must be paid or paid. Due to it, homonymy is often confusing. But by recognizing these words false writing can be avoided.

TABLE I. HOMONYMY WORDS AND HOMONYMY SENTENCES

Homonymy words	Homonymy sentences
Bat (kalelawar), bat (pemukul)	Bats may have rabies like dogs. The boy hit a thief with an aluminium baseball bat last night.
Can (dapat), can (kaleng)	I can't leave her alone. That can may made of plastic.
Fine (baik), fine (denda)	He looks fine today. You should pay the fine or go to the court.
Left (meninggalkan), left (kiri)	He left the room 30 minutes ago. Turn left at the post office.
Light (lampu), light (terang)	The hurricane damaged many traffic lights. I prefer a light color for my furniture.
Match (korek api), match (pertandingan)	He can light a fire with one match. I'll watch the live match online.
Stalk (tangkai, batang), stalk (mengikuti)	This vegetable has grayish-green stalks. I'm not interested to stalk him on instagram.
Tie (mengikat), tie (dasi)	My friend tied the box with a blue ribbon. She wanted to know to put a tie on properly.

The above examples are some examples of words that have a homonymy meaning, there are many other words. Sometimes these horny words are the same pronunciation, but their meaning and writing are different, this is called homophone. For example, ‘buy’ and ‘bye’. Buy is a word that we must pay off and bye is a farewell greeting. Another example is the word die which means dying and dye which means coloring.

And homonymy word also has the same way of writing but the meaning and pronunciation is different, this is called homograph. For example, fly. I believe I can fly, and there is a flay on your plate. The first sentences on the word flay means something that can fly and the meaning of the word fly in the second sentence is an animal. Another example is pupil. She has small pupils, and there are 45 pupils in my class. The meaning of the word pupil in the first sentence is part of eye while the meaning of the word pupil in the second sentence is a student or student.

F. Polysemy

As the author explained earlier polysemy is a word that has more than one meaning. Polysemy from Greek, poly (many "and sema" sign ") is the capacity for a sign or sign to have multiple related meanings. A polysemy he a word phrase with different, but related senses. Simpson stated that a word which has two (or more) related meaning [10]. Although polysemy

has different meaning but it has relationship, for example the word ‘foot’. The house is at the foot of the mountains, and one of his shoes feels too tight for his foot. The word ‘foot’ in the first and second sentences still have a meaning relationship that equally means the foot. The word foot in the first sentence is the location of a house (foot of the mountain), while the foot in the second sentence is the foot used for walking.

Polysemy and homonymy are often overlapped because they are the same. But, in fact they are very different. The equation is that between homonymy and polysemy are derived from one word that has the same writing and pronunciation. While the difference is, the homonymy meaning of a word is very different, and in polysemy the difference in meaning of a word still has a relationship.

Here are some examples of polysemy:

- Accept- take willingly, receive as appropriate, agree, admit (responsibility), to believe that something is true and soon.
- Bed- something sleepers lie upon, what a scream lies on
- Book-a bound collection of pages, a text reproduced and distributed (thus, someone who has read the same book as the actual paper volume)
- Bolt-means "to lock", "not to move", while at the same time it may be interpreted as "moving very quickly".
- Box-a type of tree, a container, a seating area, and to fight with fists.
- Center- of or left to the right politely or intellectually, an area that is approximately central in some of the region (it is in the center of town)
- Count- to say the numbers in the right order, to calculate, include, consider, total, say numbers, measurement and so on.
- Court- seek favor, assembly of the favor seeking, the president of the court (judge).
- Crane a bird, a type of construction equipment, to strain out one's neck.
- Face- the front of the human head from the forehead to the chin and ear to ear (he washed his face), the deal with (something unpleasant) head on (he faced the terrible consequences of his mistakes).

III. RESEARCH METHOD

A. Research Design

This research was designed by using quantitative and qualitative method. It was based on the research to discover the use of given words to complete a specific task in increasing students ‘understanding and the problem faced by the students’ in distinguishing polysemy and homonymy.

B. Population and Sample

The population of this study was the second semester students of STIE Wira Bhakti the academic year 2017/2018. And the writers took C1 as a class sample. The writers used purposive sampling technique. The sample consisted of 25 students. C1 class was an experimental group and it was treated by giving words to complete a specific task of homonymy and polysemy before doing the test. The research instruments of this research were pre-test and post-test.

TABLE II. TREATMENT [11]

Pre-test	Treatment	Pos-test
01	X	02

C. Research Instrument

1) *Test*: The writers used writing test with 30 questions. In the test, the writers used pre-test and post-test to know the students' ability in distinguishing polysemy and homonymy.

2) *Questionnaire*: Questionnaire is a data collection technique that is done by giving a set of questions or written statement to the respondent to answer. In the questionnaire, the writers used Likert Scale (close question) and open question. The questionnaire was used to get difficulties faced by STIE Wira Bhakti students in distinguishing polysemy and homonymy.

D. Technique of Collecting Data

1) *Pre-test*: Pre-test is done to know the difference of previous students' ability. The students were given a writing test and the test consisted of 30 questions for each student of the experimental group. This test was done to determine the achievement of polysemy and homonymy for 25 students before they got treatment. The pre-test was given to the experimental group by giving the test.

2) *Treatment*: In this research, the researchers gave treatment, that was teaching vocabulary by giving words to complete the task and it was given after pre-test. The writers did the treatment in eight meetings.

a) *First meeting*: Giving writing test for students.

b) *Second meeting*: Describing the definition of homonymy and 5 example of homonymy words.

c) *Third meeting*: Giving 10 words of homonymy.

d) *Fourth meeting*: Explaining words meaning of homonymy.

e) *Fifth meeting*: Giving definition of polysemy and 5 example words.

f) *Sixth meeting*: Giving 10 words of polysemy.

g) *Seventh meeting*: Describing the words meaning of polysemy.

h) *Eight meeting*: Giving writing test and questionnaire.

3) Post-test

Post-test is a measure taken after experimental treatment has been applied. The researchers gave post test to 25 students of experimental group. Post-test used to know their knowledge

after they got treatment. It was done to know the final score and to know their differences competence before and after they got treatment.

E. Technique of Data Analysis

To analyze the data, the writers found T-test and used SPSS 22 to calculate the data.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

After analyzing using SPSS 22 the researcher found that ($0.00 < 0.05$) were, the p-value (0.00) at the level of significance (0.05). It indicated that the alternative hypothesis (H1) was accepted and, of course, the null hypothesis (H0) was rejected. It showed that students' understanding in distinguishing polysemy and homonymy significantly increased. The finding of this research deals with students' ability in distinguishing polysemy and homonymy. The findings consisted of 15 perception items of polysemy and homonymy.

The questionnaire was distributed to 25 students of C1 in STIE Wira Bhakti Academic Year 2017-2018. It consisted of 15 positive statements in closed questions. Indicating whether one strongly agree (SS), Agree (S), Somewhat Agree (N), Disagree (TS), or Strongly Disagree (STS) with each statement. Each response associated with point value an individual. Score was determined by summing the point value of each statement. The point value was assigned to response to positive statements.

V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Students' ability in distinguishing polysemy and homonymy of the second semester students of STIE Wira Bhakti in the academic year 2017 / 2018 got improvement. The result of post-test increased after giving treatment for eight meetings. The improvement was significantly increased from 36.68 to 88.48.

The second semester students of STIE Wira Bhakti were interested in learning polysemy and homonym through given words. It was indicated that most students have high satisfaction, spirit, motivation, curiosity and high understanding in it.

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