

## ABSTRACT

PAULUS SUBIYANTO. *The Acquisition of Polysemy among the Second Semester Students of the English Department of IKIP Sanata Dharma Yogyakarta.* Department of English Language Education, Faculty of Language and Arts Education, Sanata Dharma Institute of Teacher Training and Education, Yogyakarta, 1991.

Many English words are polysemous -- one word has several meanings in the context. Strictly speaking, every word at a certain extent has potential to be polysemous. This aspect reveals the novelty of language. However, for the second language learners such a characteristic does give rise to some problems on how to determine the appropriate meaning. The learners are accustomed to translating the target word into Indonesian. Unfortunately, such a way is not always effective, especially dealing with polysemy.

Not all meanings of a polysemous word have the same significance in the learner's meaning representation. It seems that there is a core meaning that determines the other meanings (surface-senses) in a polysemous word. This core meaning is easily translated into other languages literally. The learner tends to memorize the core meaning rather than the surface-senses. In other words, the learner is able to construct the surface-sense appropriately on the base of the core meaning and the context. Therefore, when the surface-sense is close to the core meaning, the role of context is minimal and thus the learner does not find any difficulties to determine the appropriate meaning. On the contrary, when the surface-sense deviates from the core meaning, the role of context is maximal, and thus the learner will find some difficulties to determine the appropriate meaning.

This research is intended to find some ways by which the learners cope with polysemy. It discovers that in this experimental task the learners tend to choose the use of the core meaning rather than the surface-senses. When the core meaning is omitted, the learners tend to choose the surface-sense which is close to the core meaning. Finally, when the presented meanings deviate from the core meaning -- such as idiomatic ones -- it is very difficult for the learners to determine the appropriate meaning, though they know the literal meaning. Based on these findings, the writer tries to present the organization of meanings of a polysemous word in an atomic model in which the core meaning acts as the nucleus with other meanings around it. Thus, the extent of difficulty on determining the appropriate meaning depends on the distance between the core meaning (nucleus) and the surface-sense (electron). The closer they are, the easier a learner determines the appropriate meaning, and vice versa.

At the procedural level, these theoretical insights can be applied to vocabulary building. For the beginners the core meanings should be mastered as a base for the next levels. Gradually the learners are introduced to the other meanings by giving context. This procedure can be carried out communicatively with other language skills. By this way, it is the learners themselves who construct the appropriate meaning in a given context. However, in regard with the core meaning it is better to use some traditional procedures such as word-memorization, drills, etc. Therefore, the teachers should integrate the traditional procedures and the communicative approach in order to obtain the best way to teach English as a Second Language.