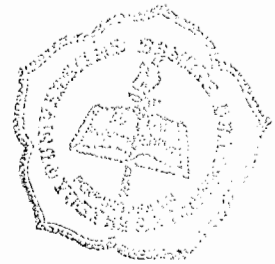


EXPLANATION BY POINTING AT SEMANTIC FEATURES



A Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirements for the
Sarjana Pendidikan Degree
(S1 Programe)



By :

ELLY LISMURYATI LISETYAWAN

S1 / 812082 / I

YOGYAKARTA, December 1985

EXPLANATION BY POINTING AT SEMANTIC FEATURES

A Thesis
Presented to
The Department of English Language
and Literature
Faculty of Arts and Letters
Sanata Dharma
Teacher Training Institute

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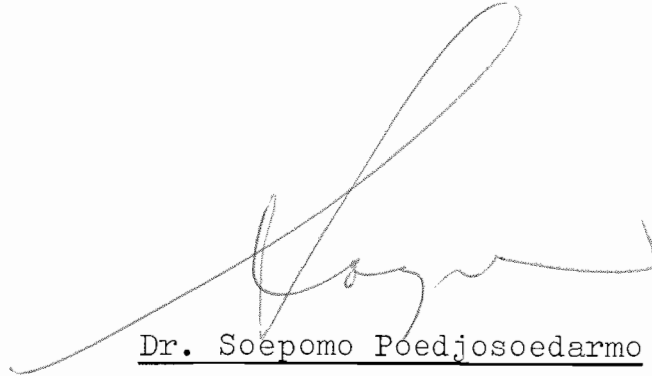
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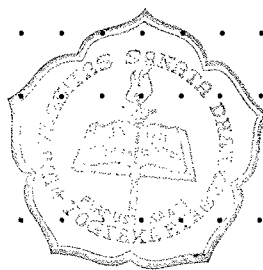
I also want to thank Pak Sri who has typed this thesis.

Finally, I dedicate this thesis to my beloved father, mother, sisters, someone dearest and all my relatives who have given me encouragements and facilities for my study.

Elly Lismuryati Lisetyawan

I. 2082

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Background

Only a few people have studied how to give an effective explanation to understand a concept, in this case, the concept of words' meaning. Lado¹ suggests ten ways of how to explain the meaning of words. They are by: providing self-defining context; supplying the definition of the word; giving the opposites; giving synonyms; showing pictures; giving dramatization; showing realia; giving series, scales, systems; analysing parts of words; and giving illustrative sentences.

Although Lado does not recommend it, he says that in the past people taught words through translation. It is in fact the easiest way for the teacher to teach words. For example, the teacher explains the word assassin by using the translation 'pembunuh'. Though it is the easiest way from the point of view of the teacher, it may cause inaccuracy. With that translation, the learners may use the word assassin in the wrong way.

¹Lado, 1964, p. 120-126.

They may make a sentence like this:

The assassin of the shopkeeper yesterday was actually a robber.

It is not accurately used, because the word assassin actually means 'a killer of a very important individual'.

The misunderstanding of the concept is caused by the explanation which is not effective. The explanation is not clear and accurate enough. It does not point at the whole semantic features or components in order to get the exact meaning of the words being explained. However, if the learners really know the meaning of assassin they know the semantic features of the word. Assassin refers to a 'human being', a 'murderer' and a 'killer of a very important individual'. These are the semantic features of the word that the speakers of the language will agree.

Therefore, if the teacher wants his learners to get the accurate understanding of the word, he must point at the semantic features of the word when he explains it. By knowing the situation of the significant features, the learners will become clear on the meaning of the word. Then, the question is "How?"

In connection with the above point, the writer tries to discuss how to use semantic features in the explanation. She suggests six points: the things to be

mentioned in the explanation, the kinds of semantic features to be covered, variation in the explanation, the progression of the explanation, the statement of the explanation, and the illustration of the features. All of those aim to give a clear explanation.

However, this thesis is still a preliminary study, so it is still far from being perfect. The writer realizes that there are still many weaknesses in this study. She hopes that those who happen to read and to be interested in this field will improve it.

The Aim of the Study

This thesis aims to describe the ways of explaining a word, especially a noun and a verb. It is hoped that it will become a leader of how to explain the types of words and even other more extensive concepts, such as various types of discourses.

The Scope of the Study

As mentioned above, the discussion will include six points:

- 1) Point at the features.
- 2) Is it necessary to point at all features?
- 3) Make a variation for different students.

- 4) Start from the most generic to the most specific.
- 5) Is it necessary to give the explanation in one sentence?
- 6) Illustrate whenever necessary.

The discussion may not be very detailed yet. It is understood that everything mentioned here is still in preliminary in nature.

The Plan of the Study

In the second chapter, after the introduction, the writer discusses the importance of explanation in the teaching activities. Explanation is needed to clarify something which is unclear. This chapter can be used as the basis of the next chapters, since before the writer goes further she must realize that explanation is important in learning-teaching activities.

After the writer realizes the importance of explanation, she then asks herself 'explanation of what?'. The answer is explanation of the meaning of words by using semantic features. So, in the third chapter she tries to give a little description of the semantic features and its analysis. The writer only gives some examples of the features of the words meaning 'female', 'a container for carrying things from place to place'

and 'to cut', since it aims only to give examples, not to analyse the features. The ideas of the examples of some words are taken from some theses of her friends which emphasize on the study of the semantic features. Based on those ideas, the writer rewrites the examples in her own words.

The fourth chapter is the main point of this thesis. The writer discusses how to explain the meaning of words by using the semantic features. She discusses six principles of the strategy of how to use semantic features in the explanation.

In the fifth chapter, the writer tries to see the possibilities of the help of pictures in understanding the explanation of the semantic features, especially for children.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

This thesis leans heavily on the semantic analysis of words. The analysis referred here is mostly drawn from the lecture of Dr. Soepomo in his linguistic class and several theses written in IKIP Sanata Dharma reflecting the theory. The theses include:

1. Eko Kusuma Dewi's²

²Kusuma Dewi, 1981, p. 25-38.

2. Elizabeth Lilies Herawati's³

3. Lianawati's⁴

Methodology of the Study

First, the writer reads the three theses which discuss the analysis of the semantic features.

Second, the writer takes the idea of some words as the examples of the analysis for this thesis. Then she presents the examples in her own words.

Third, the writer tries to relate the result of the analysis of the semantic features with the possibility to explain the meaning of words by using those semantic features.

During the preparation of this thesis the writer has had a lot of discussion with Dr. Soepomo. The points discussed especially concern the points to be clarified during the discussion of words. Dr. Soepomo's ideas have been very important in shaping my understanding of the problems discussed in this thesis.

³Lilies Herawati, 1981, p. 48-51.

⁴Lianawati, 1981, p. 39-49.

Chapter II

THE IMPORTANCE OF EXPLANATION

According to Dr. Soepomo in Acuan Umum Metode Pengajaran¹ there are three domains in language learning which should be acquired by learners, namely cognitive domain, psychomotoric domain, and affective domain.

In order to develop these domains in the learners' language acquisition, the learners need help from their surrounding, especially at school from their teacher. As we know a teacher is a person who is responsible to teach and to educate students. He is the person who is responsible to do several things. For example:

1. To give exposure of the language the learners learn. The teacher lets the learners hear other people talk in the target language.

2. To Prompt

The teacher must speak to or talk to the learners by using the target language. Prompting can be done in greeting, questioning requests, instruction, comments or even explanation.

¹Poedjosoedarmo, 1984, p. 1.

3. To give the learners chances to practice the language or to apply the knowledge of the language.
4. To give responses to his utterances.
5. To correct the mistakes to improve the knowledge.
6. To explain
It can help them to establish correct knowledge, application, comprehension and evaluation of the language. It is needed to overcome confusion and unclarity.

Among the six things that the teacher has to do in class, explanation is the teacher's task which is never forgotten. Some people say that the teacher's task is only explaining.

This idea is confirmed by Thomas F. Green in Teaching Activities² that explanation is one of the teacher's activities which must be done when the teacher is teaching.

Since teaching is a practical activity, something that we can identify and watch, we might begin to find out what teaching is by observing what teachers do. Green suggests an expanded version of the list and groups the items under three general headings:

²Green, 1971, p. 2-9.

I. The Logical Acts

1. Explaining
2. Concluding
3. Inferring
4. Giving reasons
5. Amassing evidence
6. Demonstrating
7. Defining
8. Comparing

II. The Strategic Acts

1. Motivating
2. Counseling
3. Evaluating
4. Planning
5. Encouraging
6. Disciplining
7. Questioning

III. The Institutional Acts

1. Collecting money
2. Chaperoning
3. Patrolling the hall
4. Attending meetings
5. Taking attendance
6. Consulting parents
7. Keeping reports

In the first list there are activities which are relating primarily to the element of thinking or reasoning in the conduct of teaching. In the second list, are those items that have to do primarily with the teacher's plan or strategy in teaching, the way material is organized or the way students are directed in the course of teaching. In the final list are those activities that arise primarily because of the way the teacher's work is organized by the institution of the school.

Green emphasizes the distinction between the teacher's role or office on the one hand, and the activity of teaching on the other hand.

The teacher's role or office are the institutional acts of the teaching. The activity of teaching can go on without the institutional activities of teaching, and one of the defining features of such activities is that they are in no way required by the nature of teaching itself.

The latter is the activity of teaching itself that is the logical and the strategical acts. Activities associated with the logic and the strategic acts of teaching are indispensable to the conduct of teaching wherever it is found. In the absence of the logical activities we no longer have an example of such a thing

that we normally call teaching. Let us suppose that later when we examine a record of a teaching sequence in the classroom we find that at no point did the teacher draw a conclusion, define, explain, compare, or contrast. He never did give reasons, provide evidence, demonstrate anything, answer questions, or question answers. We might suspect that we chose the wrong class hour to observe and to record. They are perhaps only a club meeting, a social gathering or some kind of activities.

The same thing happens with the absence of the strategic acts of teaching, for example a teacher did not act apparently according to any plan providing a connection between successive sessions of the class. Under these conditions we would say that the teacher was not engaged in teaching.

From the above discussion we may conclude that explanation, as one of the logical acts, should be included in teaching. Though explanation is necessarily given in the language acquisition process, since there are much unclarity and confusion for the learners, it should be given at the right time and with the right references. (Soepomo, 1983).

Explanation at the right time means that it is given when the learners really need it, since

explanation is useless when they do not need it. It has to be done when they find unclarity which causes them to make mistakes. This is the right time for the teacher to help them. Therefore, this time, such a help is usually effective.

Explanation with the right reference is referring to the important features or components of the discourse which the learners think about. For example, those components involve several things like grammar, semantic features or meaning that must be symbolized by the discourse.

So, it is clear that explanation should exist in the learning-teaching activity in any lesson, including in grasping the meaning of words. Learners need to know the meaning of the words exactly and clearly. Thus, it is the teacher's task to explain, to make plain, clear or intelligible or to clarify the meaning of words.

How to Explain the Meaning of Vocabularies

According to Lado there are three steps involved in teaching vocabulary:

1. Hearing the word
2. Pronouncing the word
3. Grasping the meaning

There are a lot of techniques to enable the learners to grasp the meaning of words, namely by using:

1. Self defining context:

The context makes the situation clear, and this, in turn, illuminates the meaning of the new word. Therefore, by using context clues, the reader can often figure out the meaning of an unfamiliar word without looking it up in a dictionary. The ability to infer the meaning of a word from its context depends on the clues given.

2. Definition:

Definitions in the target language may be used effectively if they are expressed in terms that are better known or more easily guessed than the word defined.

3. Opposites:

When one member of a pair of opposites is known, the meaning of the other can be made clear through it.

4. Synonyms:

A synonym may be used to approximate the meaning if the synonym is better known than the word being taught.

5. Pictures:

Pictures of many kinds have been successfully used to show the meaning of words and utterances. They are particularly effective to cue the meaning-stimulus in practice exercises. The pictures need not be elaborate or artistic. Drawings can also be used.

6. Dramatization:

Many actions can be acted out or demonstrated.

7. Realia:

Real objects or models of real objects are effective in showing meanings.

8. Series, scales, systems:

The meaning of such words as the months of the year, the days of the week, the parts of the day, seasons of the year, ordinal numbers, cardinal numbers, etc., that form part of well-known series can be made clear by presenting them in their usual order in the series.

9. Parts of words:

The parts of complex and compound words may be more common than the words themselves.

Separating such words into their component parts often clarifies the meaning.

10. Illustrative sentences:

It is better to give several examples that illustrate the range and variation of usage.

Chapter III

SEMANTIC FEATURES

What are Semantic Features?

Dwight Bollinger in Aspects of Language¹ says that in the beginning of language development a child needs concrete materials when he learns to make verbal responses to things. For example, a dog, to become recognizable and repeatable segment of reality, the child needs to make contacts with it - feel the hair, see the tail wag, watch the fawning behaviour, hear the bark - and hear whenever older children or adults are talking about utterances replete with a certain pattern of sounds, /dog/. So, the texture of hair, a certain size, shape, colour of eyes and the name 'dog' are the characteristics of a dog.

The child's first experience, with the assistance of the parents and playmates, make it possible for the first abstracting to be done from objects that can be seen, touched, heard, tasted, and smelled. If this had to be done completely out of touch with solid objects, the child could not build on the foundation he already has; fortunately most early talk is about

¹Bollinger, 1975, p. 187-194.

visible and tangible things. As time goes on, the raw material is now the unending string of sentences that the child hears and there are some words with contexts which tend to focus on particular characteristics or the concepts behind the words.

The word boy makes a good example of how a meaning is abstracted. The first step is from concrete reference - the child hears the word applied to an individual, perhaps to himself. From the experience the child will conclude that boy is 'male', 'human being' and 'young'. Those are the features or the traits of the word's meaning which are called the semantic features.

Some semantic features are common to many words, e.g. 'male' is part of the meaning of the words such as man, boy, father, uncle, brother, etc. The common feature is usually shared in the synonymous words.

However, some features are not shared in the synonymous words. They even distinguish the meaning of one word from another. They are called the distinctive semantic features. Take the examples for the words widow and relict. There is a slight difference in meaning of both words, that is the feature 'style' in relict. Relict is very rarely used for it is an old use, a slang and vulgar expression.

In reality, learners often misuse the words since they are not aware that there are some distinctive features between two words that are similar in meaning. In such a condition, the knowledge of semantic features will help the learners to understand the correct meaning of words. The knowledge of semantic features that the teacher has may help him to analyse the features, classify the features and show the distinction of one word from another. The result of the analysis of semantic features can be used in teaching the exact meaning of words.

The Analysis of the Semantic Features

In order to find the semantic features of words, the teacher has to do some steps:

1. Look up the synonyms of the words in Thesaurus dictionary.
2. Observe the definition(s) of each word analysed.
3. Add information the writer gets.
4. Contrast the definition(s) of words to each other to see the differences. These differences are the significant semantic features of the contrasted words.
5. List the semantic features or properties.

In this chapter the writer wants to give the examples of the analysis of semantic features of the words meaning

1. 'female'

whose ideas are taken from Eko Kusuma Dewi's Thesis: A Preliminary Study on the Semantic Features of the English Words Meaning 'female', January 1981.

2. 'a container for carrying things from place to place'

whose ideas are taken from Elizabeth Lilies Herawaty's thesis: A Preliminary Semantic Study on Lexical Items meaning 'a container for carrying things from place to place', January 1981.

3. 'to cut'

whose ideas are taken from Lianawati's thesis: A Preliminary Semantic Study on Lexical Items Meaning 'to cut', January 1981.

In this case the writer only takes some examples of words, not all of them, because she only wants to give the words as the examples for the teaching of meanings, not to analyse them.

I. The words meaning 'female'

1. woman and lady

woman: adult female human being

lady : woman belonging to the upper class. A woman has good manners and some claim to social position.

The differences between the two words are on social status and quality. A woman is a common expression for an ordinary adult female human being, while a lady is for a woman who has a high social status and usually has good manners. Both are usually over 22.

The semantic features are:

woman:

+ female]
+ human being	
+ age	

lady:

+ female]
+ human being	
+ age	
+ social status	
+ quality	

The usage:

- a. The woman and children hid in the caves for safety.
- b. Please bring this lady a glass of wine.
- c. Ladies and Gentlemen. (addressing a speech to a group of people).

2. mistress and wife

mistress: woman who lives with a man as if she were his wife, or is kept by him and visited for the purpose of sexual relation

wife : married woman

The differences between the two are on the law status and social status. Both are adult female human beings. A wife is legally married, while a mistress lives with a man as if they were husband and wife without legal marriage. A mistress is considered having a low social status in society.

The semantic features are:

mistress:

+ female
+ human being
+ age
+ law status
+ social status
+ state

wife:

+ female
+ human being
+ age
+ law status
+ marital status

The usage:

a. After his wife left him he began seeing another woman, who soon became his mistress.

b. Violet is married to Patrick. She is Patrick's wife.

3. spinster and woman

spinster: unmarried woman

woman : adult female human being

A woman can be used either for a married or unmarried adult female human being. A spinster is used only to refer to an unmarried woman who is rather old, usually over 40. Sometimes a spinster is considered unfavourable.

The semantic features are:

spinster:

+ female
+ human being
+ age
+ marital status
+ quality

woman:

+ female
+ human being
+ age

4. lassie and girl

lassie: girl, sweet heart

girl : female child, unmarried

There is only one difference between the two words lassie is a dialect, it is used for Scottish girls. girl is a common expression for a young, unmarried, female human being.

The semantic features are:

lassie

+ female
+ human being
+ age
+ marital status
+ style

girl:

+ female
+ human being
+ age
+ marital status

5. maiden and girl

maiden: girl, young unmarried woman

girl : female child, unmarried

There is also only one difference, that is on the style. Usually maiden is used in literature and it is rather old fashioned.

The semantic features are:

maiden:

+ female
+ human being
+ marital status
+ style

girl:

+ female
+ human being
+ marital status

6. queen and princess

queen : a. wife of a king

b. woman ruler in her own right

princess: a. wife of a prince

b. daughter or granddaughter of a sovereign

(a)

The difference is only in terms of social status, queen has a higher position or rank than princess.

The semantic features are:

princess:

+ female
+ human being
+ marital status
+ age
+ social status

queen:

+ female
+ human being
+ marital status
+ age
+ social status

Both are titles; queen for she is a ruler in her own right, while princess for she is a daughter or granddaughter of a sovereign. A queen is usually an adult female human being and a princess can be either a young or an adult one.

The semantic features are:

princess:

+ female
+ human being
+ (age)
+ title
+ social status

queen:

+ female
+ human being
+ age
+ title
+ social status

7. woman and aunt

woman: adult female human being

aunt : sister of one's father or mother

wife of one's uncle

An aunt is a woman who is married to one's uncle or sister of one's mother or father. So, an aunt is different from a woman in general because of a kin relationship or because of her marital status.

The semantic features are:

woman:

+ female
+ human being
+ age

aunt:

+ female
+ human being
+ age
+ kinship/marital status

The following is the list of all the semantic features found in the analysis of the English words above:

1. female
2. human being
3. title
4. address form
5. marital status:
 - married
 - unmarried
6. law status:
 - legally married
 - illegally married
7. rank:
 - age: young, adult, old, over ..., about ...
 - social status: high - respected in society
low - not respected in society
 - kinship
8. quality: beautiful, good mannered, unfavourable
9. style:
 - literary
 - old fashioned/archaic
 - dialect
10. state:
 - has not experienced sexual union
 - lives with a man as if they were husband and wife
 - ruler of her own right

2. The words meaning 'a container for carrying things from place to place'

- 1) purse: is a small bag, it can be made of leather, cloth, or plastic. Usually it is closed by a clasp (originally it is closed by drawing strings together). It is carried in the hand. It is used to carry money, especially coins. Usually women carry it.

The semantic features are:

+ material
+ shape
+ manner of carrying
+ sex
+ function



- 2) satchel: is a small bag with a strap, it can be made of leather or other flexible material. It is carried by slinging over the shoulder or strapping to the back. It is used to carry light articles, especially school books. It is used by schoolboys or schoolgirls.

The semantic features are:

+ material
+ manners of carrying
+ location
+ user
+ function

- 3) picnic basket: is quite a big basket (now it can be made of plastic) with a lid and a handle. It is carried by hand or by hanging on the arm. It is used to carry food when people are going for a picnic.

The semantic features are:

+ size
+ material
+ manner of carrying
+ location
+ user
+ function

- 4) wallet: a small folding-pocket case usually made of leather. It is used to carry money, papers, bank-notes. It can be carried in the pocket or in the hand. Men usually use it.

The semantic features are:

+ material
+ manner of carrying
+ function
+ location
+ sex

The following is the list of all the semantic features found in the analysis of the English words above:

1. material
2. shape
3. manner of carrying
4. function
5. sex
6. location
7. user
8. size

3. The words meaning 'to cut'

- 1) to slice: to cut bread or meat into slices by using a knife. To slice is commonly used by people. This action uses fewer energy.

The semantic features are:

+ object + instrument + energy used

- 2) to butcher: to cut up animals for food. This action uses a lot of energy. This kind of word is the style of speech of people in a butcher's shop where the action is done. The persons who do the action are men called butchers.

The object of to butcher is in a lying position when the action takes place. To butcher is higher in frequency than to slaughter.

The semantic features are:

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + object + profession + energy used + location + frequency + style of speech + purpose |
|--|

- 3) to shave: to cut off hair especially the beard close to the skin with a razor. If we compare to shave with to clip we will find some differences. To clip is done by using a scissors or a shears. The object of to shave is a human being, while to clip is a sheep.

The semantic features are:

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + object + instrument + location + purpose + result + manner |
|---|

4) to saw: to cut wood with a saw to make boards, planks etc.

If we compare to scissor with to saw we find that to saw uses more energy than to scissor. To saw can be done by one person or more who are called sawyers, but to scissor can only be done by one person. The object of to saw is different from the object of to scissor. The purpose and the results are also different.

The semantic features are:

+ profession + object + instrument + purpose + result + energy used + number of the doer(s)

The following is the list of all the semantic features found in the analysis of the English words above:

1. object
2. instrument
3. energy used
4. profession
5. location

6. frequency
7. style of speech
8. purpose
9. result
10. manner
11. number of the doer(s)

Chapter IV

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE STRATEGY OF HOW TO USE SEMANTIC FEATURES IN THE EXPLANATION

This chapter deals with the principle of the strategy of how to use semantic features in the explanation. The description covers:

1. the things to be mentioned in the clarification
2. the kinds of semantic features to be covered
3. variation in the explanation
4. the progression of the explanation
5. the statement of the explanation
6. the illustration of the features

1. Point at the Features

When a teacher explains something to his students, he actually shows the features of the thing. For example, when he explains the characteristics of narrative writing, in fact he points at the features of that kind of writing like the aim, the object, the method, and the language.

It is also the same when he wants to explain the meaning of a word. Indeed he must point at the semantic features of the word. By pointing one by one at the semantic features, the learners will be able to know the meaning of the word clearly and exactly.

However, the teacher should consider the level of the students whether they are children or adults. Words which are being explained to children should be those which interest them, of course according to their experience about their immediate environment so that they can understand it. For example, the words meaning 'female' like mother, girl, aunt, nurse, etc.

While when the teacher teaches adults, he may explain some more difficult words like wife, mistress, widow, spinster, etc., since adults have much more experience about their environment.

Example:

Suppose the teacher wants to explain the meaning of the word mother to the children, he can say as follows:

A Mother: is a woman who is married to a man who is called father. So, she is a female parent. From the marriage she gets children. The children call her 'mother'.

A Mother lives in a home with father and her children. Mother, father and children are called a family.

A Mother is very loving, kind and nice to her family. She takes care of her children. She prepares food for

her family every day. Sometimes she makes clothes for her children. She accompanies her children to go to school.

Children usually tell their mother when they find difficulties like when they are sad or when they are sick. Then mother will comfort and help them, because she loves them.

Suppose the teacher explains the meaning of the word wife to adults.

A wife: is a married woman. She is legally married to a man.

By the above explanation the teacher has pointed at the features of the words mother and wife:

mother:	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr><td>+ female</td></tr> <tr><td>+ human being</td></tr> <tr><td>+ marital status</td></tr> <tr><td>+ quality</td></tr> <tr><td>+ task</td></tr> <tr><td>+ kinship</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	+ female	+ human being	+ marital status	+ quality	+ task	+ kinship
+ female							
+ human being							
+ marital status							
+ quality							
+ task							
+ kinship							
wife :	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr><td>+ female</td></tr> <tr><td>+ human being</td></tr> <tr><td>+ marital status</td></tr> <tr><td>+ law status</td></tr> <tr><td>+ age (adult)</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	+ female	+ human being	+ marital status	+ law status	+ age (adult)	
+ female							
+ human being							
+ marital status							
+ law status							
+ age (adult)							

Actually the features of the words meaning
'female' are:

1. female
2. human being
3. title
4. address form
5. occupation
6. marital status:
 - married
 - unmarried
7. law status:
 - legally married
 - illegally married
8. rank:
 - age: young, adult, old, over ..., about ...
 - social status: high - respected in the
society
low - not respected in the
society
 - religion: high, e.g. the head of the
religious community
ordinary, e.g. member of religious
community
 - kinship
9. quality: beautiful, good manner, unfavourable
10. religion

11. task: what the subject does or the job of
the subject
12. location:
 - place where the subject works: in a
restaurant, in a hotel, in a family
13. user: the person who usually uses the word:
pupil, waiter, shopkeeper
14. style:
 - slang
 - literary
 - old fashioned/archaic
 - dialect
15. state: the condition that specifies the word
e.g.:
 - who has not married again
 - who takes religious vows
 - who has not experienced sexual union
 - who is a ruler of her own right

Actually the features of the words meaning 'a container for carrying things from place to place' are:

1. material composition
2. making
3. size
4. quality
5. value
6. function
7. manner of carrying

8. location
9. shape
10. agent (human, animal)
11. user
12. sex
13. style of speech
14. accompaniment
15. dialect
16. quantity

And finally, the features of the words meaning 'to cut' are:

1. profession:
 - doctor
 - sawyer
 - sunnite
 - butcher
 - hewer
 - reaper
 - carver
2. object:
 - person
 - things
 - animals
3. part of the object:
 - outer part
 - middle part

- edged part
 - top part
 - tip part
4. kinds of object
- concrete
 - abstract
5. position of the object (before action is done):
- lying position
 - standing position
 - near or far from the doer
6. instrument:
- knife
 - scissors
 - sword
 - scythe
 - sickle
7. manner of carrying:
- roughly
 - forcibly or violently
8. purpose:
- to be healthy
 - to stop the disease speed
 - for a religious rite
 - to get food
9. result:
- healthy
 - neat

- cleaned
10. location:
- in a field
 - in a butcher shop
 - in a barber shop
 - on a chopping block
11. time:
- harvesting time
 - during the day
12. duration:
- short
 - long
13. number of the doer(s):
- one person
 - more than one person
14. emotional accompaniment:
- angry
 - rough
 - polite
15. quality of the action:
- good
 - bad
16. energy used:
- little
 - much
17. frequency:
- high

- low
- 18. position of the doer's body:
 - squatting
 - standing
- 19. style of speech:
 - people in the hospital
 - people in a butcher's shop
 - people in 'dunia persilatan'
- 20. word function:
 - figuratively
 - not figuratively

2. Is it Necessary to Point at All Features?

The answer to this question depends on the learners' level:

a. Children

When the teacher teaches children, he needs to point at much more features than adults, since children have not enough experience about their environment in the brain. Therefore, much more features are useful to help children to understand the concept of the word. Of course, more features are presented in simple words so that they can understand.

Suppose the teacher wants to explain the meaning of the word mother to children, he can say as follows:

A mother: is a woman who is married to a man who is called father. Usually she is an adult, over 22. So, she is a female parent. From the marriage she gets children. The children call her 'mother'.

A mother lives in a home with father and her children. Mother, father and children are called a family.

A mother is very loving, kind and nice to her family. She takes care of her children. She prepares foods for the family every day. Sometimes she makes clothes for her children. She accompanies her children to go to school.

Children usually tell their mother when they find difficulties like when they are sad, or when they are sick. Then mother will help them, because she loves them.

The feature 'age' (adult) is necessarily mentioned though the teacher has mentioned the feature 'marital status' (married) which actually has explained or indicated the previous feature. Adults will have already understood that a woman is usually adult. And a married woman is also an adult person. This elaborateness will help children to grasp the meaning of the word.

b. Adults

Since adults have more experiences about the concept of things either in their environment or not, it is not necessary to point at all features of the word. It is even superfluous for them if the teacher points at all the features, including the features they already know. Thus, they only need the new features or the features that they do not know yet.

Moreover, adults have been mature enough in their intellectual capacity. They can conclude from what the previous statement cues the understanding of the meaning.

Example:

Suppose the teacher explains the meaning of the words wife and mistress, he can say as follows:

A wife: is a female human being who is legally married. She is usually adult.

Actually the teacher need not explain the features 'female' and 'human being', because learners will understand that a female human being is a woman. Neither is the feature 'adult' needed, because usually a woman who is married is adult.

So, the explanation should be:

a wife is a woman who is married legally.

A mistress: is a woman who is illegally married. She is usually adult, over 22. She lives with a man as if they were

husband and wife, so she is considered immoral.

It is the same with the first case. Here the feature 'age: adult, over 22' is not necessarily mentioned, because a woman is usually adult. Neither need the feature 'social status: immoral' be mentioned, because learners can conclude that a woman who is illegally married is usually considered bad in morality.

So, the explanation should be:

a mistress is a woman who is illegally married.
She lives with a man as if they were husband and wife.

3. Make a Variation for Different Students

As teachers we cannot use any technique to the learners in the different level, since children's ability is different from adults. They have a different experience in language learning. Adults have a longer time experience in learning a language.

As children's motivation is not so strong in learning a foreign language, the teacher should present the material as interestingly as possible. Interest provides strong motivation to learn. Therefore, they are eager to learn as long as they are interested.

With respect to this case, the teacher should make a variation in the explanation. It means that explanation is not only given in one long sentence definition. Instead of this, the teacher may use a story to explain the meaning of the word. We know that children usually like stories. Not only do stories give pleasure, but they also help children to clarify their thoughts. They aid the development of imagination about the meaning of the word.

Example:

Suppose the teacher wants to explain the meaning of the words nurse and to slice, he can say as follows:

A nurse: is a woman who is trained a specific skill in a school. After she has finished her training at school, she works in a hospital. A hospital is a place where sick people are treated until they recover from their illness. The nurse works there to help doctors to take care of sick people.

Everyday she visits the sick people. She gives them medicine. She brings them meals. She helps the doctor to check them whether they are healthy or not. She even helps them to clean their body when they cannot take a bath by themselves. Those sick people are called patients.

Usually a nurse is very kind and nice to the patients. She treats them well and patiently. She is full of smiles.

Generally a nurse wears a white dress with a white cap and white or black shoes. Her dress is usually tidy and clean.

to slice: is to cut foods. Usually the foods are cake, bread, cheese, meat, apples etc. People cut that foods with a knife. They slice those foods into thin, flat and broad pieces which are called slices. People usually cut or slice bread, cake, etc., into slices. So, when they eat it, we can say that they eat a slice of bread, a slice of cake, a slice of meat or a slice of apple.

When people slice, they only need a little energy. It is because those foods are light and easy to cut.

All the above examples of the explanation are applied to children. While for adults the teacher need not use such a technique. Instead of that, he can give the meaning of a word in one long definition sentence.

Example:

Suppose the teacher wants to explain the meaning of the words widow, spinster, to shave, and to butcher, he can say as follows:

A widow : is a woman who has not married again after her husband's death, or after they are divorced.

A spinster: is an unmarried woman who is rather old or usually over 40 and she is considered unfavourable.

to shave : is to cut off hair especially the beard close to the skin with a razor.

to butcher: is to kill animals and prepare for sale as food.

4. Start from the Most Generic to the Most Distinctive Features

Children and adults have a different capacity to understand an explanation, the teacher has to distinguish the sequence of the features pointed at.

a. Children

Children commonly understand something from the general point of view, not from the specific one, because it is easier. Their intellectual capacity and their language development make them get better understanding if the explanation is started from the generic features first and move to the most distinctive

features. As Elizabeth B. Hurlock suggests in her book Child Development:

The child responds to the total situation rather than any one part of it. Gradually, vague and undefined concepts develop into specific and differentiated concepts.¹

So, if the explanation is started from the most specific features, it will cause difficulties for them to understand the concept of the word.

Example:

Suppose the teacher explains the meaning of the words satchel, purse, he can say as follows:

A satchel: is a kind of bag. A bag is a means to carry something. A satchel is a bag which is made of leather, cloth or plastic. If it is made of leather, the leather can be goat or cow leather. Before people make the leather into a satchel they process the leather in a leather factory. After processing, the outside part of the leather is smooth. Then they polish it colourfully. It can be black, brown, red, green, yellow or white.

A satchel is oblong and small. It is more or less the same size as a book.

¹Hurlock, 1978, p. 358.

It has a strap to sling over the shoulder or to strap to the back.

It is usually used to carry light things like books, a pencil case, and an eraser. Boys and girls use a satchel to carry school books when they go to school.

A purse: is a kind of bag. A bag is usually a means to carry something. A purse is a bag which is made of leather, cloth, or plastic. If it is made of leather, the leather can be goat or cow leather. Before people make the leather into a purse, they process it in a leather factory. After processing, the outside part of the leather is smooth. Then they polish it colourfully. It can be black, brown, green, red, yellow or white.

Usually a purse is small. It is more or less the same size as paper money.

There is a clasp to close it. A clasp is made of metal. Before people use a clasp to close a purse, they use drawing strings.

A purse is usually used to carry money, especially to carry coins. Women like to use it when they go shopping. They keep their money there. They carry it in the hand.

b. Adults

The way to explain to children is basically the same with the way to explain to adults. We should start by pointing the generic features first. However, the generic features are not needed so much. The most important is the distinctive feature.

In giving the examples, the writer uses the same words in order to see the differences from the previous ones.

Example:

Suppose the teacher explains the meaning of the words satchel and purse, he can say as follows:

A satchel: is a small bag for carrying light articles, especially school books.

A purse : is a small bag usually of leather, for money (originally closed by drawing strings together now closed with a clasp).

5. Is It Necessary to Give the Explanation in One Sentence?

The answer to this question depends on the different level of students, too.

a. Children

According to the children's capacity to understand utterances, they tend to understand short simple

sentences which conceptualize a concept rather than a long complex sentence which also conceptualize the same concept.

Example:

Suppose the teacher explains the meaning of the word to shave, he can say as follows:

to shave: to cut off hair, especially the beard.

Beard is the hair on the face below the mouth. The beard is close to the skin of the face. Usually men have beards. They cut it with a tool. The tool is called a razor or a shaver. They cut it in order to be neat or clean.

b. Adults

Adults can understand the same concept in a long sentence.

Example:

Suppose the teacher explains the meaning of the word to shave, he can say as follows:

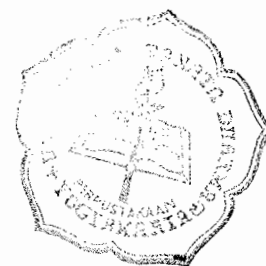
to shave: to cut off hair, especially the beard close to the skin, with a razor or a shaver in order to be neat and clean.

6. Illustrate Whenever Necessary

Illustration is sometimes needed when the teacher gives explanation to children, because it will give a clearer imagination about the meaning of the word. We know that illustration can help children build up the picture of the word being explained. So, illustration helps the meaning of the word exist in their mind.

What are illustrated are the features of a word. For example, the features of the word purse:

- | |
|----------------------|
| + material |
| + shape |
| + size |
| + manner of carrying |
| + sex |
| + function |



purse: is a kind of bag. A bag is usually a means to carry something. A purse is a bag which is made of leather, cloth, or plastic. If it is made of leather, the leather can be goat or cow leather. Before people make the leather into a purse, they process it in a leather factory. After processing, the outside part of the leather is smooth. Then they polish it colourfully. It can be black, brown, red, green, yellow, or white.

Usually a purse is small. It is more or less the same size as paper money.

There is a clasp to close it. The clasp is made of metal.

Before people use a clasp to close a purse, they used drawing strings.

A purse is used to carry money, especially to carry coins. Women like to use it when they go shopping. They keep their money in it. They carry it in the hand.

The illustrations which can be observed from the above example are:

- the material:

If it is made of leather, the leather can be goat or cow leather. Before people make the leather into a purse, they process the leather in a leather factory. After processing, the outside part of the leather is smooth. Then they polish it colourfully. It can be black, brown, red, green, blue, yellow, or white.

- the size:

It is more or less the same size as paper money.

- the sex:

Women like to use it when they go shopping. They keep their money in it.

In the explanation, sometimes the teacher needs to cover the features which seem not to be so important. Those features are low in degree, but they are useful to help children to clarify the concept of a word.

Take an example:

- the colour of the leather:

Then they polish it colourfully. It can be black, brown, red, green, yellow or white.

Chapter V

THE HELP OF PICTURES IN UNDERSTANDING THE EXPLANATION OF SEMANTIC FEATURES

1. The Reasons for Using Picture

Since children's ability to conceptualize is still developing, they may find difficulties in understanding the explanation of the semantic features of the words. In order to help them to conceptualize the meanings of the words more easily, the teacher can use visual aids, that are pictures. The teacher can show the picture of each word to students.

The writer has chosen pictures as the visual aids to help children to understand the meaning of the words because of some reasons:

- 1) Pictures can make abstract concepts of words more tangible or real.
- 2) Pictures help the students to visualize things or ideas, thus making concepts more concrete.
- 3) Pictures can clarify size, shape, and any other detail items which are impossible to observe first hand.
- 4) Pictures supply an immediacy of understanding not achievable by words alone.

- 5) Pictures provide a high interest.
- 6) Pictures may help to focus students' attention.
- 7) Pictures are available everywhere. They are easy to get and not expensive.

2. The Selection of Pictures

In order to cover the semantic features of a word, the teacher must use the pictures which represent the semantic features of the word being explained. For example, the picture of a nurse should cover the features 'female', 'human being', 'occupation', 'location', 'quality'.

Besides, a picture should be a convincing representation of the object. Inaccuracies or ambiguities may lead to misunderstanding of the real concept. So, it should illustrate only the meaning of the word. For example, if a picture shows a woman wearing a cowgirl's suit, don't say she is a stewardess. Though the teacher actually wants to explain the word stewardess by using a newspaper's cut out of a western airlines advertisement, it will make the learners confuse the meaning between the concept of a cowgirl and that of a stewardess.

Teachers may use photos, magazine cut outs, sketch, or drawings. The pictures need not be very artistic. The main thing is that those pictures represent the semantic features. Usually photos or magazine cut outs can be

used to help the explanation of words which have elaborate features.

Mary Finochiaro in Teaching English as a Second Language¹ suggests that pictures should contain three types of illustration:

- 1) pictures of persons and single objects
- 2) pictures of people engaged in activities presenting the relationship between individuals and objects
- 3) a series of six to ten pictures mounted on one chart of count nouns (as foods) or sports or work activities.

The teacher may use the first and the third categories to teach concrete nouns and the second one to teach verbs and adjectives.

3. The Sequence of Explanation and Showing Pictures

The writer suggests that explanation should come after showing the picture. There are several reasons:

- 1) It aims to attract children's attention and interest.
- 2) It gives the children chances to guess first in their mind what the picture is. It is more challenging for children.

¹Finochiaro, 1958, p. 169.

3) It stimulates them to think and to speak.

In this case, the teacher can use the technique of describing the picture. It is like a game. There are some steps:

- 1) The teacher shows the picture first.
- 2) Then, he asks the learners to describe it together.

He may start to stimulate them by asking questions, such as: 'What is it?', 'What is it made of?', etc. until he covers the semantic features of the word.

- 3) The teacher may also ask one of the learners to come in front of the class. Then the teacher asks him or her to describe the picture to the class.

In this case, the teacher must help them by stimulating and directing the answers or the descriptions given by the learners. He must correct them when the answer is wrong, so that finally they will get the right concept of the word.

It is in fact different from when we teach adults. Adults need explanation much more than demonstration of pictures or games, etc. They have already had some advantages which can help them to become faster learners of vocabulary or structure as it is mentioned by Mirjana

Vilke in Teaching Foreign Language to the Very Young²,
namely:

- 1) They have more insight into the system of language
- 2) They have experiences of studying different aspects of their mother tongue
- 3) They have intellectual maturity

4. The Difficulties of Using Pictures

Pictures can only be used to visualize concrete nouns which have specific visible characteristics which can be commonly identified, for example:

- a nun is identified by her dress, and a cross
- a nurse is identified by her uniform and her cap
- a queen is identified by her crown

Nevertheless, some words cannot be identified clearly because they have no specific visible characteristics which can be identified through pictures, for example:

- aunt
- spinster
- widow
- mistress, etc.

²Vilke, 1982, p. 17.

5. Some Examples of Pictures

Suppose the teacher explains the words nurse, queen, satchel, purse, to slice, and to butcher, he can say as follows:

A nurse: is a woman who is trained a specific skill in a school. After she has finished her training at school she works in a hospital. A hospital is a place where sick people are treated until they recover from their illness. The nurse works there to help doctors to take care of sick people.

Every day she visits the sick people. She gives them medicine. She brings them meals. She helps the doctor to check them whether they are healthy or not. Even she helps them to clean their body when they cannot take a bath by themselves. Those sick people are called patients.

Usually a nurse is very kind and nice to the patients. She treats them well and patiently. She is full of smiles.

Generally a nurse wears a white dress with a white cap and white or black shoes. Her dress is usually tidy and clean.

The picture of a nurse:



A queen: is a woman, usually adult. She is the wife of a king. She lives with the king in a palace. A palace is usually a very big and beautiful house. The queen accompanies the king in ruling the country. She is respected by the people.

She usually wears a crown on her head.

The picture of a queen:



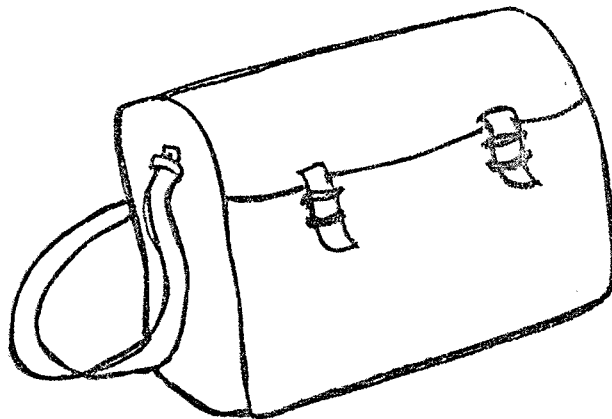
A satchel: is a kind of bag. A bag is a means to carry something. A satchel is a bag which is made of leather, cloth, or plastic. If it is made of leather, the leather can be goat or cow leather. Before people make the leather into a satchel, they process it in a leather factory. After processing, the outside part of the leather is smooth. Then they polish it colourfully. It can be black, brown, red, green, yellow, or white.

A satchel is oblong and small. It is more or less the same size as a book.

It has a strap to sling over the shoulder or to strap to the back.

It is usually used to carry light things like books, a pencil case, and an eraser. Boys and girls use a satchel to carry school books when they go to school.

The picture of a satchel:



A purse: is a kind of bag. A bag is a means to carry something. A purse is a bag which is made of leather, cloth, or plastic. If it is made of leather, the leather can be goat or cow leather. Before people make the leather into a purse,

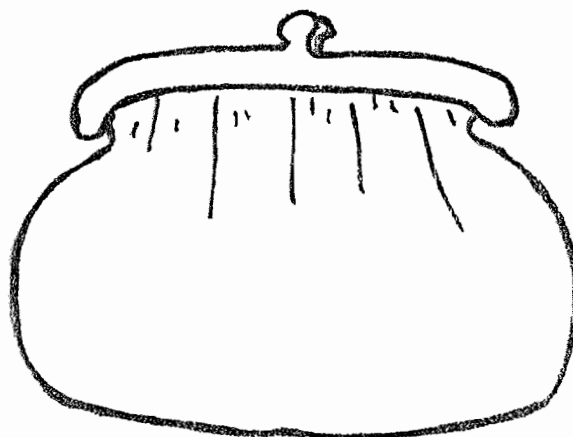
they process it in a leather factory. After processing, the outside part of the leather is smooth. Then they polish it colourfully. It can be black, brown, red, green, yellow, or white.

Usually a purse is small. It is more or less the same size as paper money.

There is a clasp to close it. The clasp is made of metal. Before people use a clasp to close a purse, they used drawing strings.

A purse is used to carry money, especially to carry coins. Women like to use it when they go shopping. They keep their money in it. They carry it in the hand.

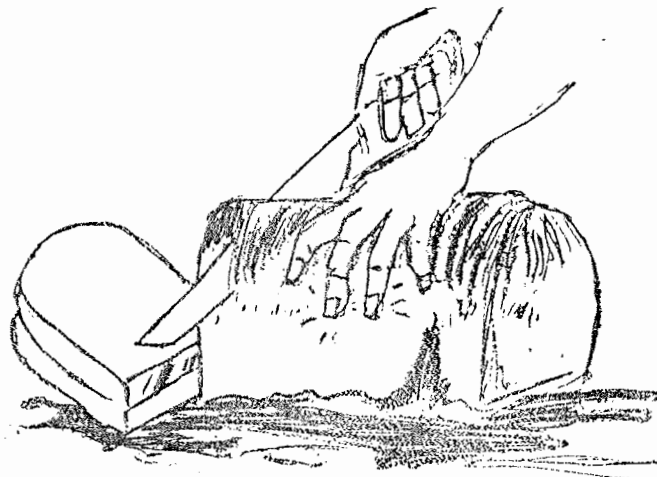
The picture of a purse:



to slice: is to cut foods. Usually, the foods are cake, bread, cheese, meat, apples, etc. People cut those foods with a knife. They slice those foods into thin, flat and broad pieces which are called slices. People usually cut or slice bread, cake, etc., into slices. So, when they eat it, we can say that they eat a slice of bread, a slice of cake, a slice of meat, or a slice of apple.

When people slice, they only need a few energy. It is because those foods are light and easy to cut.

The picture of to slice:



to butcher: is to kill animals by cutting them with a big knife. The animals are usually cattle, such as cows, buffaloes, goats, or pigs. The men who cut the animals are called butchers. They cut the animals in a shop. Then they sell the meat in the same shop. The shop is called a butcher's shop.

People buy meat for food. They cook the meat into several kinds of foods.

When the butchers cut the animal they usually need much energy, because the animal is usually big enough.

The picture of to butcher:



Chapter VI

CONCLUSION

Semantic features are really very useful to teach meaning because if we explain the meaning of words by pointing at the semantic features, we actually represent the accurate and clear concept of the word. Furthermore, by using semantic features in the explanation, we actually convey the cultural units of the language which the word contains.

We know that learning a language is actually learning the culture of the language as well. It is very clear in the example of the word breakfast. It means 'the first meal of the day'. Usually the meals are bread, eggs, orange juice, or coffee. The way they eat is by using a knife, a fork and a napkin in a certain way. So, breakfast refers to a certain food the people eat and a certain way they eat.

If we compare the concept of breakfast with sarapan, we can see that breakfast is loaded with its cultural background where the speakers of the language live. While sarapan is loaded with its own culture too. Sarapan means the first meal of the day. But the meals are usually rice with side dishes and tea. Usually

people have sarapan only by using a spoon and a fork. Thus it refers to the different material, manner and equipment.

The cultural differences between the two languages can be identified only from the explanation which is exploiting the semantic features. So, translation in one word is not enough. It cannot clarify the meaning of the word accurately. But it does not mean that we eliminate the use of the mother tongue in the explanation. Explanation in the mother tongue can be done as long as it is the last effort to help the learners to understand the meaning of the word exactly. Of course, the explanation should cover the semantic features of the word.

However, the way we present the explanation should be in accordance with the learners' level, either children or adults. The writer has mentioned six principles of the strategy of how to use semantic features in the explanation. Those principles should be adjusted to children or adults.

Children need a step by step process. This can be seen in the six principles. They need much more features, a variation in story, starting point from the generic features, explanation in more than one sentence, and illustration. So, it seems that explaining to

children needs much more efforts and patience from the teacher. They need techniques which really can help them to understand the explanation.

Being aware of the fact, the teacher must help them through some ways like explaining in a simple language, explaining in the mother tongue and showing pictures. Once again, explanation in the mother tongue, Indonesian, can be used in order to avoid confusion and misunderstanding. However, as teachers we have to try to use English as the first effort, so that the learners will be accustomed to using the target language. If it is necessary use the two languages in the explanation.

Because adults understand the explanation more easily in the target language, the teacher may use the English-English explanation. This way even helps them to increase the acquisition of mastering the target language:

1. It gives a challenge to them since it tests their own English.
2. It is a kind of conversation, so they become accustomed to the communicative function of the language.
3. It also trains them to think in English, since learning a foreign language also means being able to think in the target language.

Then to test whether they understand the meaning of the words or not, the teacher may give them some exercises, like the following:

Choose the right answer in the list of words given.

- I. 1. A ... helps the doctor to bring that mother
sick man to the hospital yesterday. nurse
2. She loves the two children, because queen
she is the ... of them.
3. She is a ..., so she lives with the
king in a palace.
- II. 1. Father has a ... in his pocket. satchel
2. Mother usually carries a ... to keep purse
coins when she goes to the market. wallet
3. Usually schoolboys and schoolgirls.
use a ... to carry their books when
they go to school.
- III. 1. The men ... the cows, then sell the slices
meat in the market. butcher
2. The girl ... an apple, and then gives slice
a ... to her friend.

Finally the writer suggests that the teacher must be able to build up the semantic features immediately when he finds a new word. As we know exploiting semantic features in the explanation of the meaning of words is very useful to get the right concept of the words.

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