# The Impact of Teaching English Polysemy through Similarity-Based Approach

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## Abstract

This paper aims to investigate the effectiveness of teaching polysemous nouns through an innovative method that the researcher calls Similarity-Based Approach (SBA) and to compare it to the translation-based vocabulary instruction method (TBM). The objective of the study is to show how guiding students' comprehension of a polysemous word through semantic relations improves their understanding.  At the same time, it is the aim of the study to demonstrate the effectiveness of Similarity-Based instruction by teaching vocabulary through showing semantic relation of word meaning to young learners compared to the old, traditional way of memorizing pairs of words. The experiment is conducted with two groups of elementary students with a pre-test, a lesson and a post-test. The results in the post-test revealed that through SBA students remember the vocabulary better than they do through the traditional method of memorization. SBA might represent a new method in teaching polysemous vocabulary to young learners, while TBM implies a traditional, well rooted way of teaching polysemous words in ESL classrooms.

**Key words:** teaching vocabulary, vocabulary retention, vocabulary recall, polysemy, similarity-based approach, younger learners, receptive skills, productive skills

## Introduction

Teaching vocabulary to younger learners in a way that supports their long-term retention is one of the most challenging goals to achieve. Teachers often complain about the high number of instances of students failing to recall vocabulary previously acquired. Even though the younger learners are believed to have a better memory for language acquisition, they often fail to do so when it comes to a polysemous word. When teaching a second language in a typical Georgian public school, teachers tend to place a high value on grammar and reading rather than vocabulary development.  Based upon personal observation, many teachers list English vocabulary words on the board and ask students for the Georgian equivalent. In most cases, many English as a Second/Foreign Language teachers follow the traditional "read and translate" as the preferred way of classroom instruction (as demonstrated in this study).

Methods of teaching vocabulary vary from teacher to teacher. The preferred method of teaching new vocabulary to younger learners is limited to repeating words after the teacher, spelling them and finally memorizing the list. This method of memorization has a low rate of retention because there is no context or definition to help students in the future. It is observed that when a student simply memorizes the word without proper perception of the sense there is high likelihood to fail to recall it later on. If two children of the same age are compared, they will likely show a range of differences in abilities for memorization.

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The issue is particularly acute with polysemous words as various meanings of one-word often result in student's confusion. Teachers acknowledge the importance of delving deep into the teaching of polysemous words, though they confess the lack of emphasis they place on doing so. Some of the reasons mentioned include the lack of competence in demonstrating the understanding of polysemous word sense relations.

Mastering a language means that the learner should be able to fully engage in a language. He/she should be using English inside and outside the classroom. In order to support students to develop the productive skills along with receptive ones, they should be given opportunities to perceive, practice, process and produce the language in the classroom. Together with repetition for pronunciation and spelling, students should have an opportunity to use the word themselves through speaking and writing activities. Developing only listening and reading skills does not result in language use in an everyday context. "Use describes the ways in which language is used to meet personal and social needs" (Pence Turnbull & Justice, 2011, p. 253).

Teachers are often asked by students for recommendations on what the best ways for polysemous words' memorization are. Suggestions might vary from using the flash cards, brushing up words more often, reciting them frequently or rewriting them many times. The outcome of these practices is not as productive as one might think. After a long period of trial and error, a student might end up being unable to recall a word when needed. Hence, teachers need to think over the methods and strategies they would like their students to apply in order to be able to retain the vocabulary in their long-term memory and recall it when needed. One of the best ways that this study aims to offer is to guide students through polysemous relations. Assisting students in understanding that word meanings are not scattered but related to the core meaning of a word will help reduce the burden of learning the words as separate lexical units with different meanings. If all the words in all languages had unrelated meanings it would be absolutely impossible for an individual to acquire any language. Polysemy defined as the capacity for a word or phrase to have multiple meanings has simplified the vocabulary retainment level of the students in this study.

The objectives of the study are, on the one hand, to identify some of the best methods of teaching polysemous vocabulary to young learners, to explore the ways young learners perceive and acquire words, and, on the other hand, to give insights to teachers on how to reduce the burden of vocabulary memorizing through using the methods of looking into the semantic relations of words. The study aims to demonstrate the effectiveness of teaching vocabulary through looking into polysemy compared to the traditional way of memorizing words. The study also offers a sample lesson plan for ESL teachers.

## Theoretical Background

### Polysemy

Vocabulary is a fundamental part of a language and vitally important for language learners. David Wilkins (Wilkins, 1972, pp. 111-112) points out: "without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed". Therefore, identifying best practices in teaching vocabulary in order to opt for the best one for your students is of high importance. Looking back in the far past teaching, vocabulary has gone through a number of phases ranging from old methods of memorization to various classroom activities, but until recently polysemy has been viewed as one of the most important topics for experimenting.

Vocabularies of developed languages are huge. Fortunately, we know that it is possible to get along in English with fewer than 10,000 words (Nation, 2006). High frequency words that are found in any English language dictionary with a set of tons of meanings assist us to convey the message and there is no necessity to acquire very many words in order to process and produce the language. First three thousand words they say are enough to be able to produce the language, however, we should decide on which words to choose when making an effort to teach vocabulary.

Learning vocabulary becomes a headache for learners when it comes to polysemy. Some researchers suggest various ways of presenting polysemy in class. Among the methods we read about the advantages of image-schema-based vocabulary instruction method (ISBM) over the translation-based vocabulary instruction method (TBM). "While ISBM is inspired by cognitive linguistics, and represents a new trend in teaching polysemous vocabulary, TBM embodies a traditional and well established way of teaching polysemous vocabulary in EFL contexts" (Makni, 2014, p. III). The traditional (rote) way of memorization is never helpful when it comes to polysemy. Students confess the difficulty they face in understanding the variety of meanings for one single word. In a classroom setting any teacher will agree to have experienced a case when a confused student expressed discontent for being unable to perceive why certain words are written in the same way, but differ in meaning. It is teachers' responsibility to guide their learners through the obscurity of a language. Unfortunately, many teachers admit ignoring delving deep into teaching polysemy, as 'it takes time' or 'is difficult to teach', as they often say.

In language teaching methodology polysemy represents a largely neglected phenomenon, hence, tackling the polysemy in the classroom is a problematic issue for students and is properly considered 'as a complete headache for students' (Thornbury, 2002, p. 53) because learners perceive them as being 'unrelated and unsystematic' (Csábi, 2004, p. 233) At the end of elementary grades, 95% of children can *read* more words than they understand (Biemiller, 2005). It is obvious that reading without processing the content accurately is useless.

> Tackling the problem of polysemy in the classroom is a matter of disentangling an otherwise difficult issue for students that has been considered by Thornbury (2002: 53) 'as a complete headache for students' because they are perceived by students as being 'unrelated and unsystematic' (Csábi, 2004: 233)

The fact that each word might have multiple meanings confuse learners and discourage them, they do not feel confident while communicating in a language. The perception that these meanings are absolutely unrelated and chaotic drives students to negatively view the idea of polysemy and frighten English language learners in general. However, a cognitive semantic view of polysemy claims that polysemous meaning extensions are motivated and form a systematic network (Lakoff, 1987). Word meanings (except the cases when historically two differently spelt words came to be spelt the same way) are not unrelated as students perceive them, but rather closely related to the core meaning of the word. If a learner will know how word meanings are related, the burden of vocabulary learning will no longer be a complete headache for learners.

Even though there are loads of articles and researches on how to help learners perceive polysemy, unfortunately, even some recent studies continue to suggest that schools on elementary level do little to promote vocabulary (Casas et al, 2016). Years ago Becker (1977) suggested that putting more emphasis on developing reading skills without focusing on higher-level vocabulary instruction frequently results in complications in upper elementary level children's reading comprehension.

Going back to the image-schema-based instruction pedagogically, teaching polysemy through ISBI instruction is productive, as English language learners have an opportunity to acquire the vocabulary through pictures, without having to memorize them. For instance, when a student is presented a picture of a core meaning of a word and sees the relation of meanings that are physically visible, it is much easier to recall the sense later on. Besides that, there is high probability that a learner will recall the meaning of the word when she/he encounters it in the future because of the image schema.  As argued, "presenting figurative meanings of polysemous words with their image schemas can be rewarding in a classroom setting. First, for teachers, as they will find it easy to teach metaphorical meanings through concrete images; and second, for learners, as they will better understand and retain these words" (Makni, 2014, p. 7).

Elementary school EFL textbooks teach few polysemous words, however, some polysemous nouns and verbs are often repeated. The fact that teachers do not often come across a big variety of polysemous words pushes them to opt to limit

themselves to just providing students with just a translation of the word relevant to the given context. They do not go further in explaining the word meanings not only at elementary level, but also at higher level to promote a deeper and more efficient understanding of polysemy.

**Novelty**

This study focuses on a new angle of learning and teaching polysemous words effectively. The method suggested in it is based on long-term studies in cognitive linguistics. For the first step of the research a few nouns denoting parts of the body were selected for the experiment. Through various methods of analysis (definition analysis, contextual analysis, corpus analysis) that some frequently used meanings derived from the core meaning of these nouns were identified. They can be classified into three main domains: Similarity in Shape, Similarity in Function and Similarity in Location. Some of the meanings might go under one, two or all three domains. For instance, the polysemous noun *head* has 30 meanings. Some of the meanings of *head* are recorded in elementary school textbooks, such as: *the 'head' of a bed, the 'head' of a family, the 'head' of a lettuce,* etc. Through the methods used the researcher identified that it will be much easier for students to acquire these meanings of polysemous nouns at an early age, if Similarity-Based Approach is used. To be clearer, the *head* of a bed is called '*head*' because the word is similar to *head of a human body* in *location*. It is *on the upper part of something*. The *head* of a family is called '*head*' as the function of human *head* is to manage the body whereas the function of a *head of a family* is to manage the family. And finally the *head of lettuce* is called '*head*' as it resembles the *head of human body* in shape.

Thus, by investigating the effectiveness of the innovative Similarity-Based Approach and by verifying the hypothesis of this study, the paper will attempt to support teachers of English in Georgia and their learners to develop effective strategies of polysemous vocabulary comprehension. The study will provide teachers with pedagogical methods that can be effective to perceive and instruct polysemous lexical items and provide them with hands-on activities, on the other hand, will enable them to perceive that polysemy that once was considered too difficult to understand in reality is much simpler through this innovative approach. Based on the visualization of the polysemic relations, students easily perceive and retain the vocabulary in the long-term memory. The lesson plan provided in the study will guide the teachers through the path of polysemic semantic relations.

**Research hypothesis**

The experimental group students who will be taught polysemous words using the Similarity-Based vocabulary instruction method are expected to outperform the control group, who will be taught the same words using the translation-based vocabulary instruction method (TBM).

**The study**

Before the actual study, a group of 20 ESL teachers were surveyed through questionnaires on various aspects of teaching vocabulary. Through the questionnaire it was revealed how teachers evaluate their learners with regard to acquiring vocabulary and what the methods used to teach polysemy are, in addition to this the survey assisted to collect information on the challenges that teachers face when instructing polysemy and their views on the concept.

Surveyed teachers attended a short meeting aimed at introducing them to the new method to be investigated. The goal of the meeting was to receive feedback from the ESL teachers on the effectiveness of the method to be used. The feedback revealed that the Similarity-Based Approach is a novelty that teachers are willing to apply, claiming that the method will certainly support vocabulary instruction assisting students' long-term retention of the vocabulary. Out of the group two teachers were

selected on voluntary bases to support in the study process. Both teachers have been teaching English for more than 5 years - this was one of the prerequisites of the study to ensure the same qualification of the teachers and the same level of students in the control and experimental groups to be almost the same.

## Participants and setting

A total of 52 Georgian learners of English participated in this study. All participants were 6th-grade students of a public school. They spoke Georgian as their L1 and had received formal English classes for 5 years by the time of the study. One group of 26 students was selected to be an experimental group and another - a control group (also 26 students). The gender distribution in the groups was as follows: 14 females and 12 male students in the experimental group, and 15 female and 11 male students in the control group.

## Test, Treatment Words and the Procedure

The study was conducted to experiment the new method of Similarity-Based Approach and to compare its efficiency to the Translation-Based Approach.

On the first stage of the study, students in both groups were tested on the perception of polysemous words through an illustrated test (Appendix 1) with three multiple choice answers. Students had to select what the illustrated word/item/thing might be called in English. The test consisted of 12 multiple-choice style questions. The test lasted for 10 minutes for both groups. Both the experimental and the control group did the test on the same day.

The words used for the test were: *hand, eye, head, foot, shoulders* and *neck*. These words were chosen for the following reasons: first, the participants knew the literal meanings of these words, which is a prerequisite for understanding the metaphorical extensions, second, all of them belong to the first 3000 most frequent words in both spoken and written English, and third, these words are frequently identified in ESL elementary textbooks. Words standing for human body parts are frequently used in a language to describe the outside world. As a result, the "foot" of a mountain refers to the bottom of a mountain, or the shoulders of a mountain refer to the opposing sides of a mountain.

The SBA was used with the experimental group. The aim of the method is to make learners aware both of the word's core meaning and of how other meanings are derived from this central meaning.

The advantages of SBA include the following: it provides learners with various meanings of polysemous words based on resemblance, thus helping learners to identify a unified picture of language. Second, it helps learners understand how other word meanings are extended from the core meanings. The third advantage is that the use of SBA enables learners to understand the meanings of phrases that do not have equivalents in their L1.

## Experimental (SBA) group

After a week from the pre-test a lesson was conducted with the application of the SBA method to the experimental group. The detailed lesson plan (Appendix 2) provides information on each step of the lesson. The students were introduced to the similarities that polysemous word meanings reveal to have with their core meanings. At the end of the lesson students did a quick test to check their perception after the detailed instruction. In the third week the students were given the same format and difficulty test they did as a pre-test.

**Control (TBM) Group**

The control group participants were taught the same list of polysemous words as their experimental peers with the help of TBM. The word list was distributed among the participants of the control group. The words were explained (translated) and given to be memorized at home. The list consisted of 20 words all derived from the core meaning of nouns.

The assumption here is that it is hard to remember polysemous word meanings without perceiving the relations of different meanings of the same word. The knowledge of the vocabulary was checked on the following day, and rechecked again the following week. After two weeks a post-test was conducted (the same in format and difficulty as the pre-test).

**Table 1.** The procedures of the experiment

| Experimental Group | Control Group |
|---|---|
| Pre-test (10 min) | Pre-test (10m) |
| One lesson of SBA application (45 min). Practice and a quick test | One lesson of TBM application (45 min). Memorization practice at home (duration not defined). Checking the knowledge next day. |
| Post-test (10min) | Post-test (10min) |

It is easy to see that even more time was spent on the same vocabulary teaching in the control class than in the experimental class.

# Method

Method of qualitative and quantitative data analysis was used. The reason for employing this method was for compatibility of the direct analyzing process and small-scale data. In order to provide the study of different attitudes to one and the same matter, qualitative approach is the best framework as "researchers adopting a qualitative perspective are more concerned to understand individuals' perceptions of the world. They seek insights rather than statistical perceptions of the world" ( (Bell, 2014, p. 7). The research employs quantitative approach because, as Bell (2014) states, it will allow to generalize research findings and claim that what will be found in the research sample can be generalized to a larger population.

The steps in this method are as follows: identifying correct and incorrect choices in multiple choice tests and comparing them to the post-test results. The test tasks looked as follows:



a)   An arrow of a clock

b)   A hand of a clock

c)   A stick of a clock
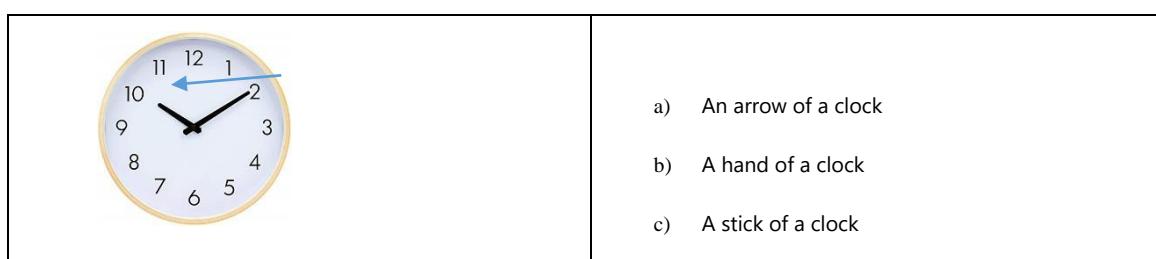
The test included 12 multiple choice items.

## Results

The control group provided correct answers to on average more than 4 questions out of 12 (M = 4.56, SD = 1.31) of the pre-test. After a class held in traditional way of instruction on average more than 8 questions and more correctly in the post-test (M = 8.85, SD = 1.73).

The experimental group correctly answered more than 4 questions in pre-test (M = 4.52, SD = 1.19), similarly to the control group. After the application of Similarity-Based instruction on average almost 11 questions were done correctly in the post-test (M = 10.93, SD = 2.07). The results are presented visually in figure 1.
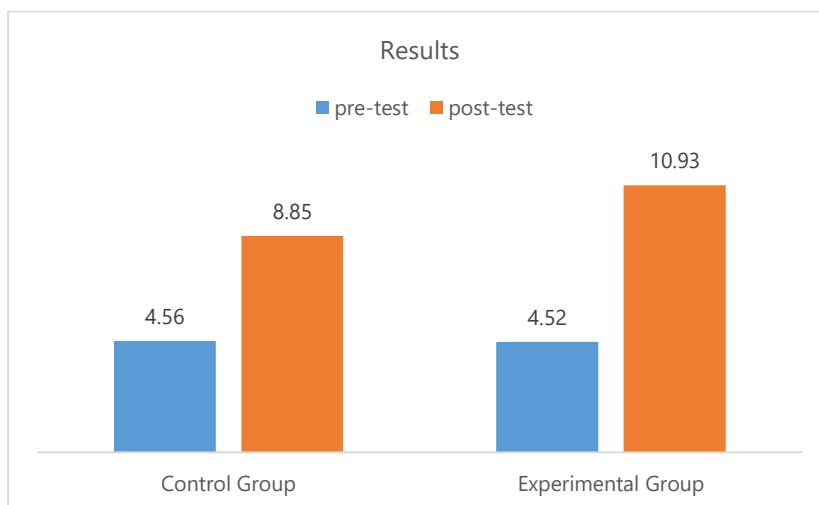


Figure 1. Comparison of pre/post-test results in the control and experimental group.

In total as mentioned above, 52 students participated in the study, aged 11-12, 23 boys and 29 girls. Based on the pre-test the results of the control (M = 4.56, SD = 1.31) and experimental (M = 4.52, SD = 1.19) group were almost the same.

Based on the data revealed through the study the improvement of vocabulary skill in the experimental group is greater (M = 4.52→ 10.93), than that of the control group (M = 4.56→8.85). The standard deviation in both groups is relatively high, which reveals the heterogeneous level of vocabulary skills in both groups. The standard deviation even increased to a certain degree in both groups in the post-test, which indicates that both methods of dealing with polysemy are not equally efficient for all students in the group. In the control group rote memorization is over-exploited, which is not efficient for some students, while in the experimental group the intellectual requirement may be too high for some students, so, however effective SBA is on the whole, it may be too difficult (at least, in the short run of this experiment) for some students. To see whether the obtained results have a statistical value, paired samples T-test was held based on the obtained results with the help of SPSS statistical package. Table 2 presents the samples T-test results. Variable 1 is SBA, while variable 2 is TBM.

**Table 2.** Paired samples T-test

***Paired samples statistics***

|  | Mean | N | St. dev. | St. error mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable 1 | 7.2150 | 4 | 3.20346 | 1.60173 |
| Variable 2 | 1.5000 | 4 | 0.57735 | 0.28863 |

*Paired samples correlations*

|  | N | correlation | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Var. 1 – Var. 2 | 4 | *-0.184* | 0.816 |

| | Paired differences | | | | | t | df | Sig (2-tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | St. dev. | Std. error mean | 95% confidence interval of the difference | | | | |
| | | | | Lower | Upper | | | |
| Pair: Var.1-Var.2 | 5.71500 | 3.35790 | 1.87895 | 0.37183 | 11.05817 | 3.404 | 3 | 0.042 |

It is possible to see that at 95% of confidence interval typically used for education research the significance p=0.042 (or p<0.05), which means that the obtained results are statistically significant. All this confirms the hypothesis of the research.

To summarize the results received, the control group answered on average 38% of the pre-test questions correctly, and 74% in post-test (an increase of 36%). The experimental group on average answered 37.7% of questions in pre-test correctly and 91% in post-test (an increase of 53%). Therefore, the results of the study revealed that the SBA was more efficient, however, the TBM also yielded a positive result. Besides, the control group students often failed to recall the definitions of the words, as they had just memorized them without understanding the relations of the central meaning to the extended ones.

## Discussion

To recall the study hypothesis, the results received through the two types of instruction demonstrate that the experimental group participants outperformed their control group peers in the post-test used to assess the effectiveness of the Similarity-Based Approach – the SBA and the Translation Based Method - TBM. The significant difference between the results of the experimental and control groups prove that the study hypothesis is true. Several factors contributed to the better results achieved by the experimental group, the most significant of which are:

1. Background knowledge of the treatment words;
3. The understanding of word relations to the central meaning of a word;
4. The nature of polysemous words to demonstrate similarities in various aspects; and
5. The effectiveness of the SBA.

The obtained result is in agreement with those of some recent researches related to cognitive linguistics (Makni, 2014; Veliz, 2017; Yamagata, 2016).

**Limitations**

The research held was short-term at one school. To get more generalizable results, it is needed to pursue the research on a larger scale.

**Conclusion**

This research investigated the effectiveness of two types of instruction the Similarity-Based Approach (SBA) and the Translation Based Method for learning English nouns as polysemous words, and examined how meanings of polysemous nouns were perceived by young learners. The study implemented an experiment with young learners of English as a Second Language. Two groups of six grade students participated in the experiment as an experimental and a control group, that gave us the opportunity to observe the effectiveness of SBA in vocabulary acquisition and the advantages of it over the TBM. The results of the experiment revealed that an innovative method that I call Similarity-Based Approach is much more effective in learning and retention of the vocabulary than the old traditional way of memorizing them.

Through this study I aim to offer a new method of classroom instruction on teaching polysemous nouns to ESL learners. We, the ESL teachers should search for innovative ways of teaching to facilitate students' learning and meeting their long-term goals that include language comprehension and hence, fluent application of it in authentic, real life situations. As proven by this study providing students with proper Georgian counterparts of the words and eliciting them after memorization does not promote grounds for long term retention. Learners tend to forget the vocabulary acquired if not practiced frequently or seeing the ways to remember them. The benefits of polysemy that include the nature of words to visualize senses contribute to the picturing of the non-human world. Thus, the study is aimed to suggest a new way of teaching polysemic words to assist teachers and learners in English language teaching and learning process.

The lesson plan provided in this article will guide teachers through the complicated path of teaching vocabulary in a way to facilitate understanding of word sense relations. This simple lesson plan will support ESL teachers to design some of the productive classroom instruction processes to result in long-term retention of polysemous words that are of frequent use in the English language. Assisting a student visualize the similarity of an *arm of a human* to that of an *arm of a chair* will surely result in visualizing the rest of the objects in a way to relate them to the polysemous extensions of senses.

To conclude, the promising results of the study allow me to offer this new method of instruction that might represents a new trend to shed light to the vocabulary teaching in future. Polysemy is undoubtedly an invaluable treasure of a language that demonstrates the comprehension level of a language use. We should not turn blind eye to polysemous meanings of a word if we have eyes for better outcomes of our learners.

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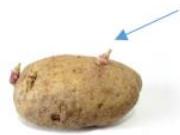
**Appendix 1**

Pre-Test for Elementary Level Students

Grade _____
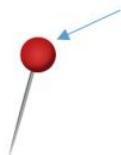
School_____

Years learning English _____

    I.       Please, look at the pictures, circle the correct answer next to the pictures.

a) A spot on a potato
b) An eye of a potato
c) A potato

a) A pin
b) A head of a pin
c) The top of a pin

a) The shoulders of a bottle
b) The sides of a bottle
c) The top of a bottle

d) An arrow of a clock
e) A hand of a clock
f) A stick of a clock

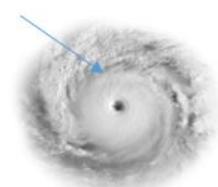a) A spot on a feather
b) A circle on a feather
c) An eye of a feather

a) A stick of a chair
b) A leg of a chair
c) A foot of a chair

a) A motor wagon

b) The first wagon

c) The head of a train

a) A hole in the needle

b) An eye of a needle

c) A circle of a needle

a) A hole in the hurricane

b) A spot in the hurricane

c) An eye of a hurricane

a) The head of beer

b) The top of beer

c) The cover of beer

a) The holes of a cheese

b) The spots of a cheese

c) The eyes of a cheese

a) The long part of a guitar

b) The handle of a guitar

c) The neck of a guitar

## Appendix 2

A Lesson Plan

Topic: Teaching Polysemous Nouns to Elementary School Students

Grade _____

The goal of the lesson: The students will be able to

- analyze connections/links between the basic and transferred meanings of polysemous nouns;

- identify the basic and metaphorical meanings of polysemous words.

**Procedure**

| Step 1 Lead-in | Teacher starts a lesson by eliciting some polysemous word in their native language (Teacher says the following: Please tell me any words in Georgian that you know, that have two different meanings? The teacher gives a hint e.g.: head of a person and a head of a cabbage; students come up with some ideas). | 2 minutes |
|---|---|---|
| Step 2 Brainstorming | Teacher writes up a word "body" in the center of the board and asks students to brainstorm any parts of the body they know in English. Teacher writes them up on the board. | 3 minutes |
| Step 3 | Teacher points at the noun "head" and asks students to brainstorm what the function of the human head is. (students brainstorm some ideas: to make decisions, to manage the body actions, to think etc.) after eliciting some thoughts the teacher asks the students to identify where the "head" is with regard to location on the body (it is on the top of the body), for the las stage the teacher asks students to name any objects that are similar to head with regard to the shape. (cabbage, pin etc.). If they can't think of any the teacher gives a hint with the same example mentioned before "head of a person" and a "head of a cabbage". Teacher writes up any ideas under the heading "head". | 5 minutes |
| Step 4 Presentation | Teacher draws a body on the board and gives out Handout (pictures of a pin, a cup of beer and a principal of a school. For later on of an eye, cheese and needle) or just shows the pictures to the whole group. Teacher asks students to think of what is the similarity between a pin and a human head. (it is similar in shape). Students might say that it is similar in shape. Teacher writes: "1. Similar in Shape" next to the drawing. And explains that a head of pin is called "head" because it is similar in shape of the human head. Teacher asks students to think of any other object that is like the head in shape (cabbage, axe etc.). Than teacher shows a picture of a glass of beer and asks what do they think it is (students might say it's a class of beer), teacher points at the foam of beer and asks if they know what it is called in English (student might not be able to say foam), teacher asks students to observe where the foam is (it's on the top of beer) and | 7 minutes |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | where the human head is? (it's on the top of body), so teacher together with students makes conclusion that head of beer and head of human have something in common, and it is location. Teacher writes: "2. Similar in location" under "Similar in Shape". Teacher asks if they can think of anything that is similar in head with location (bed,) for the final stage teacher shows the last picture and asks students to say what it is (it's a director). Teacher asks what is the function of the school director? To manage school. And what was the function of the head? To manage. So what is someone who runs a school called? (head). Teacher writes: 3. "Similar in Function" under "Similar in Location". And asks students to name someone who runs something (office head, head of a family, head of supra etc.). Teacher explains that this is called polysemy. When words have same form but different related meanings. | |
| Step 4 Practice | Look at this picture. What do you think this is called? Teacher shows a picture of an eye. Students say it's an eye. Now the teacher shows them a picture of a cheese with an eye and asks how is it connected to the eye? Students will guess that in shape. Than a picture of a needle. Teacher points at the clock on the classroom wall (if any) and says: please look at the hand of a clock and tell me what does it show? (it points at a number). Can you guess what a hand of a clock is? Why do you think it is called a hand? How is it similar to the hand of a human body? Students try to guess the way the words are connected to one another through selecting one out of similarities: Similar in shape Similar in function Similar in location In some cases, there might be all the three similarities. | 7 minutes |
| Step 4 Practice | Students work in pairs to do the quiz. After 10 minutes' teacher elicits the answers to the quiz. Students discuss the relationship between the meanings of the words. | 7 minutes |
| Step 5 Production | Students work in pairs to fill in the gaps with 1 word in a handout. | 6 minutes |

Results suggest that the SBA is more effective in teaching and learning polysemous vocabulary in this setting than the TBM. Based on these findings, I give a number of recommendations to teachers of ESL. As for the contributing to the field of teaching vocabulary in ESL classrooms this study attempts to lighten the teaching of polysemous words in Georgian context, to support students in perceiving polysemous word relation in order to retain vocabulary systematically, and to provide teachers with guidelines on a new approach in vocabulary teaching.