CHAPTER I

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1.1 Background of the Study

According to Krakowian (1985:1) the adequate
mastery of foreign language vocabulary is very important
in developing the ability to successfully interact in the
target language. This implies that by mastering
vocabulary of the target language, the learners will have
the ability to produce or use the words properly in the
written and oral form. In other words, they will have no
difficulties in communicating with foreigners, in reading
a book or in progressing with their studies. Moreover, he
also states that no one can deny the assertion that one
major aspect of fluency in a language is control over the
lexicon. Furthermore, the number of syntactic and
phonological rules in any language is finite, the number
of words in a language is nearly infinite in terms of
the human potential of the average native speaker.
This means that native speakers of a language have
acquired all the rules of syntax and phonology at a
very early age; yet those same speakers will still
continue to increase the number of words in their
vocabularies throughout their lifetime and will never

master   all   the   lexical   items   in   their   native
language.

On   the   other   hand,   according   to   Palmer
(1983:100),   "Not only do different words have   different
meanings. This   is   called polysemy; such a   word   is   a
polysemic".   It means that the learners cannot   determine
the word exactly if they do not know the meaning of words
in   context. This is due to the fact that the meaning   of
words   depend on how words are used together in   contexts
(in   sentences).   For example : the learners   should   not
usually   relate "pupil" (= student) with the   "pupil"   of
the eye, or the "sole" of a shoe with the fish "sole"   (=
flat   sea-fish   with a delicate   flavor).   Through these
examples   the   writer   often finds that   there   are   many
polysemic words in context, but most SMA students   cannot
comprehend the meaning of what they are reading. If   they
do   not   know   the   words   in   context,   they   will   not
understand what they read. It is nonsense to comprehend a
reading passage without knowing the vocabulary. In   other
words, students have to guess the meaning of the words in
context,   so they will be able to have a clear notion   of
what the content is about. Palmberg (1986:19) states that
it is equally   important that learners' ability to   make
"intelligent guesses" as to the meaning of a word   before
looking it up in dictionary should be developed.

Therefore, the first step to be taken is by making

the students realize that vocabulary mastery is important. However, before we come to the students, we should first, take the teacher into account. English teachers should always remind the students not to look up the words in a dictionary until they read the whole context in which it occurs, since a word in a dictionary (in isolation) can have more than one meaning.

In the 1994 English Curriculum for SMU, it is said,"Belajar bahasa asing adalah belajar komunikasi melalui bahasa tersebut sebagai bahasa sasaran baik secara lisan maupun tertulis." This implies that the objective of teaching and learning the English language for SMA students in Indonesia is to make them able to give and accept the message in the target language well both in the written and spoken forms. Since the teaching and learning activity at the SMA is specially concentrated on the ability to read, the mastery of vocabulary is really important for the students as a means to improve their reading ability. In order that the students can understand the sentences used in the passage, they have to comprehend the meaning of the sentences and the words as they are used in the passage. And the problem usually arises from here. They lack in vocabulary. Therefore, the mastery of vocabulary in context cannot be ignored.

Bearing that fact in mind, the writer wants to find out

how far the second year students of SMUK "Stella Maris" Surabaya have mastered polysemy of vocabulary in context.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the reasons above, in this study the writer would like to answer these following questions :

Major Problem :

To what extend have the second year students of SMUK Stella Maris Surabaya mastered polysemy in context ?

Minor Problem :

Among the four parts of speech (Verb, Adjective, Adverb, and Noun), which part has been mastered the most by the students and which type of the test is mastered the least ?

1.3. Objective of the Study

This study is intended to :

1. find out to what extend the second year students of SMUK Stella Maris Surabaya have mastered polysemy in context.

2. identify, among the four parts of speech (Verb, Adjective, Adverb, and Noun), which of them has been mastered the most by the students and which has been mastered the least ?

1.4. Significance of the Study

It is intended that the result of this study is able to give valuable information to English teachers concerning the polysemic words that the students have known.

From this report, the writer hopes that the ideas discussed in it might be of some help for the teacher to step forward further, especially those who are teaching vocabulary in SMUK Stella Maris Surabaya. Besides, this study would also give contribution to the students as a feedback on how much, so far, they have mastered polysemy in context.

1.5. Scope and Limitation

There are two limitations made for this study :

1. Realizing that the study of vocabulary is also quite broad, the writer limits the scope into vocabulary in context, especially the meaning of words from 1994 curricula. They are 486 words all together, but only 103 words are polysemic. Since the writer only has 45 minutes to administer this test, she only takes 14 words which consist of 50 items. They are 4 verbs, 4 adjectives, 3 adverbs, and 3 nouns.

2. Since there are eight classes for second year students of SMUK Stella Maris Surabaya, the writer found that it was difficult to give a test to all of them. Thus, she would only take one class for the pilot group and four classes for the real subjects.

1.6. Assumption

In this study, the following assumptions have been made :

a. The testees who are the second year students of SMUK Stella Maris Surabaya were already familiar with the words being tested since they had already studied English for three years at the SMP and one year at the SMA.

b. In order to have a good test, the pilot test should be administered;therefore, the writer needed SMUK Stella Maris Surabaya. In this case, the writer had taken five classes in her study. One class was to carry out the pilot test and while the rest of the classes would be her subjects. Students taken to be the subjects of the pilot test and the students taken to be the subjects of the real test were assumed to have the same characteristics and were, more or less, at the same level.

1.7. Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the theories of vocabulary teaching, polysemy, and error analysis. These theories will be discussed deeper in chapter II.

1.7.1. The role of vocabulary teaching

Here, in this section, the writer discusses about the role of vocabulary teaching. This discussion says that vocabulary is important in language teaching and learning. Without knowing vocabulary, the students frequently face a crucial problem, namely being unable to understand what they are reading.

1.7.2. Polysemy

In this section, the writer discusses that the same word may have a set of different meanings. Since there are many polysemic words in context, the students should know the meaning of a word not in isolation. Therefore, they have to guess the meaning of a word in context.

1.7.3. Error Analysis

In this section, the writer also discusses about the error analysis. Most students often make an error in the form of Phonology (pronounciation), Syntax and Morphology (grammar), Semantic and Lexicon (meaning and vocabulary) and discourse (style).

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1.8. Definition of the key Terms

This study uses several key terms which are necessary to be discussed further :

a. Vocabulary :

According to Hornby (1984;523). " Vocabulary is the total number of words which (with rules for combining them) make up a language.

b. Reading :

According to Eleaner J. Gibson and Harry Levin, " Reading is extracting information from text or reading is an active process, self directed by the reader in many ways and for many purposes".

c. Polysemy :

According to Palmer (1983:100). " Polysemy is the same word which may have a set of different meanings."

d. Study :

According to the writer, study here means the research which is done on the second year students of SMUK Stella Maris Surabaya about Students' Mastery of Polysemy of vocabulary in context (A case study of second year students of Stella Maris Surabaya)

e. Mastery :

According to Fries (1974:1). "Mastery is the

ability to understand the words of a language."

1.9. Organization of the Study

This study consists of five chapters. The first chapter in the introduction. The second chapter is about the Review of Related Literature. They are theories about the role of vocabulary teaching, polysemy, and error analysis. Chapter three, research methodology, explains about whom, where and how the data were gathered. Chapter four discusses about data analysis and findings. Finally, in chapter five, the writer gives summary and suggestions for this study.