Kindergarten Pupils' Ability to Comprehend the Lexical Meanings of Indonesian Nouns

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ABSTRACT

This research concerns pupils' understanding of the lexical meaning of nouns in Indonesian. The aim of this research is to discuss their comprehension on the lexical meaning of nouns using a semantic approach, and, also, to see the suitability of the lexical meaning of nouns given by the teachers in classes with references from the Big Indonesian Dictionary. The methods used are observation, questionnaires, interviews, and libraries. The findings from 18 samples were only 10 students who understood the lexical meaning of nouns and after being explained in class the pupils' abilities increased with the results showing that 14 pupils got good and very good grades and 6 who were less good. From this research, teachers are expected to be more active in providing understanding of word meaning, especially lexical meaning.

Keywords: understanding, meaning, lexical, nouns, reading, writing, pronouncing

INTRODUCTION

As a branch of linguistics, semantics is closely related to human life because human language has meanings that must be interpreted. Saussure said that the meanings of a language come from two sources, namely, from language and from the world to which it is connected.[1] As a science whose object of study is the lexicon, lexical semantics can be known from the meanings of lexemes in a language. Basically, lexical meanings refer to the meaning(s) of words as found in the dictionary; however, some linguists disagree with this perspective, arguing that not all dictionaries are complete. Words that can be categorized into verbal, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs have lexical meanings while articles, affixes, conjunctions, prepositions, pronominals and others do not have ones without context. Lexical meaning is in accordance with its referent, meaning that is in relevance to the results of observations of the senses, or meaning that is truly real in our lives.[2] Lexical meaning(s) of the word "rat", for example, is 'a rodent that can cause typhus', like the sentence "the rat was killed by a cat". The sentence "the rat in our warehouse turned out to have a black head" has no lexical meanings because the word "rat" does not refer to animals but to humans.

The general aim of this research is to create a noun learning model carried out by researchers for pupils with the concept of lexical meaning. Specific objectives are to determine pupils' ability to understand the lexical meaning of nouns and to determine the suitability of the lexical meaning of

nouns given by the teachers in class with the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI).[3]

Learning a language cannot be separated from the smallest elements to the largest ones in language such as phonemes, words, phrases and sentences. Without a cognitive role, language development is limited to what can be experienced; in this case, all components of language develop creatively or go beyond the limits of instinctive experience, namely stimulation and response. Creative language development is the result of the participation of mental or cognitive operations.

Pupils' cognitive (understanding) of words is influenced by what is found, and what is seen and they understand and the role of cognitive greatly influences pupils' ability to speak. The problem is that a pupil's language acquisition greatly influences his or her ability to understand words and the environment that really supports his/her ability to speak. To improve pupils' ability to understand nouns, the role of teachers and parents is very supportive. With this research, it is hoped that it would be useful to schools so that teachers and school officials can overcome the problems faced by pupils and teachers in the teaching and learning process.

This research tries to discuss lexical meanings in terms of semantic theory and concepts. Specifically, this problem can be formulated as follows: How is the ability of Kindergarten pupils to understand the meanings of nouns and are the lexical meanings of nouns from teachers in accordance with the meanings in the KBBI?[3]

LITERATURE REVIEW

Lexical meaning is categorized as an adjective form derived from the noun form of the lexicon (vocabulary) and the unit of the lexicon is the lexeme. If lexicon is equated with vocabulary, then lexemes can be equated with words. Thus, lexical meaning can be interpreted as meaning that is lexicon, lexeme, or word. Thus, lexical meaning is the one that is in accordance with its referent or meaning that is truly real in life.[1] Meaning depends on the purpose of the conversation, the influence of language units in understanding, the relationship in terms of equivalence or incommensurability, between language and nature outside the language or utterance and the same thing designated, and how to use lexical symbols.[4]

Lexical, semantic, or external meaning is the meaning of a word when the word stands alone, whether in the form of a lexeme or an affixed form whose meaning is more or less fixed as in a dictionary.[5] Lexical meaning has elements of independent language and their use or context.[6] The lexical meaning of a word can stand alone because the meaning of a word can change once the word is in a sentence. Thus, the lexical meaning of words can be understood if the words are connected with other words. Lexical meaning is the meaning of language elements as symbols of objects, events and so on.[4] We can define the speaker's meaning carefully if the meaning is related to an object, and we have knowledge about that object. For example, we can define the name of a mining product in terms of chemistry and mineralogy, for example, the usual meaning of English "salt" is sodium chloride ($NaCl$).[7]

Referent is a lexical cohesive device and is characterized by personal pronouns such as I, we, you, and us. Referent is also used with the words there, here, or there. In its function as a referent, pronominals have three possible directions of reference (or retrieved), namely anaphoric, cataphoric, and exophoric. Anaphoric refers to the participant backwards and cataphoric displays the noun before the participant, in other words it refers to the front or to the participant mentioned in front, for example, "even though he doesn't work yet, Ali has a lot of money."[8] Lexical meaning is the one that is in accordance with its referent, meaning that it is in accordance with the results of observations from the sense

organs, or meaning that is truly real in our lives.[2]

Every word has a denotative meaning, but not every word has a connotative meaning; words that have a connotative meaning have a taste value whether positive or negative and those that have a denotative meaning are meanings that are in accordance with the results of observations based on sight, smell, hearing, feeling or other experience. In other words, denotative meaning is the actual meaning.[2]

Morphological derivation rules involve changes in the morphological specification, for example, the addition of affixes to the basic morphological specification. The word *menangkap* 'catch' (V) can change to the word *tangkapan* 'catch' (N), the word *meminum* 'drink' (V) becomes *minuman* 'beverage' (N), and the word *mengharap* 'hope' (V) changes to *harapan* 'hope' (N). Changes in morphology are always followed by changes in semantic specifications and semantic specification rules are lexical rules which result in changes in semantic specifications.[9] Metaphor expansion rules such as the word dough-nut in English indicates a lump of soil which has the characteristics of a soft and tender dough-nut cake, so the name of the cake can contain a metaphorical meaning (semantic meaning) which means a 'lump of soft and tender clay'.[7]

The word can mean whole, all, and every and the word whole means the inclusion of an object, and this word can be used with semantic nouns which contain the meaning of components of the whole word, the whole nation; the word whole can be used with semantic nouns which contain components of the whole.[10]

MATERIALS & METHODS
This research uses qualitative methods and was conducted in September 2023. To obtain accurate data, researchers directly supervised and distributed questionnaires to pupils and photographed them answering each question given. This research used linguistic approach. The research location was KG Raudhatul Athfal Al–Muchlisin, located in Percut Sei Tuan District, Deli Serdang Regency, Indonesia. There were 18 respondents.

The data sources for this research consist of primary and secondary data; primary sources are obtained in the field and the respondents are pupils, teachers and school principal and secondary sources come from libraries having relation to lexical meanings of Indonesian nouns. The methods involved observation, questionnaires, interviews, and libraries. Observation included the process of recording activities in the field so that researchers can collect data on respondents and obtained the required information. Questionnaires were conducted to obtain information and found out respondents' responses to questions. Interviews were carried out by asking respondents directly to obtain information. A literature study was carried out to collect data from literature reviews related to the research problems.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Level of Pupils' Comprehension on Indonesian Nouns
Every language has structure and meaning; the structure may change because each language has a different structure, but the meaning must be maintained by looking for a nearly identical equivalent so that the meaning of the source language is not lost. Lexical meaning is the one that is in accordance with the referent, that is related to the results of observation based on the senses, or that is truly real in our lives.[1] The lexical meaning of a word is contained in the word itself (see Table 1); therefore, the meaning of a word can change once the word is in a sentence.

Table 1. Nouns in Indonesian language

No	Nouns	Pupils' Serial Numbers	Pupils' Quantity
1	Dapur 'kicthen'	1 s/d 18	18
2	Sayur 'vegetable'	1 s/d 13,15,18	15
3	Pintu 'door'	1 s/d 13,15,18	15
4	Komik 'comic'	1 s/d 4,6 s/d 13,18	12
5	Koran 'newspaper'	1 s/d 4,6 s/d 13,18	14
6	Gulai 'curry'	1 s/d 4,6,9 s/d 15,16,17,18	16
7	Rumah 'house'	1 s/d 7 s/d 13,16,17,18	13
8	Jendela 'window'	1 s/d 4,7 s/d 18	15
9	Cerita 'story'	1 s/d 4,6,7 s/d 13,15,16	15
10	Air 'water'	1 s/d 7,9 s/d 14	14
11	Surat 'letter'	1 s/d 7, s/d 17	17
12	Gambar 'picture'	1,2,4,5,8 s/d 10,14,15,17,19	11
13	Basket 'basket'	1,7,12,5,14,11,10,9,6	9
14	Gigi 'tooth'	10,11,14,8,5,7,12,1,0,13	9
15	Pensil 'pencil'	1 s/d 12,17,18	14
16	Tas 'bag'	1,3, s/d 7,8,9,11,12,16,17,18	13
17	Laut 'sea'	1,3,4,8 s/d 10,12,16	12
18	Ikan 'fish'	1,3,6,8 s/d 10,12	12
19	Halaman 'house yard'	1,3,4,6 s/d 10,11,13,17	11
20	Sepatu 'shoes'	1,3,4,6,8 s/d 18	15
21	Sungai 'river'	2 s/d 10,12,17,18	11
22	Sekolah 'school'	1,3,4,6,8,10,11,12	8
23	Pekarangan 'yard'	1,3,4,8,15,17,8,9,10,18	10
24	Taman 'garden'	3,6,10 s/d 13,16	7
25	Bunga 'flower'	3,6,10 s/d 18	11
26	Kayu 'wood'	1,2,3,4,5,8,10,15,17,18	9
27	Batu 'stone'	7,8,11,13,16,18	6
28	Kebun 'garden'	7,1,3,8,9,10,11,13	7
29	Kasur 'blanket'	3,6,9,10,16,17,18	7
30	Kambing 'goat'	2,3,4,1,10,13,23,17	8
31	Rumput 'grass'	2 s/d 4,10,11,13,17	7
32	Pesawat Terbang 'plane'	5,6,9 s/d 11,18	6
33	Papaya 'papaya'	5,6,9,10,11,14,17	7
34	Mobil-mobilan 'car toy'	5 s/d 13,17,18	10
35	Ular 'snake'	1,2,3,5,6,10 s/d 12	8
36	Beras 'rice'	1,3,4,6,7,9,10,12,13	9
37	Kantor 'ofice'	3,5,6,8,9,10,11,14,17	9
38	Baju 'clothes'	2,3, s/d 9,12,18	13
39	Durian 'thorned fruit'	1 s/d 4,15,17	6
40	Kaca 'glass'	2,8,9,11, s/d 14,17	8
41	Es krim 'ice cream'	1 s/d 4,13,15,16,17,18	9
42	Tanah 'land'	5,6,8,9,10,11,14,18	8
43	Kursi 'chair'	3,4,10,13,14,11,17	7
44	Bola 'ball'	2,3,6,7,8,10,12 s/d 14	9
45	Sepatu roda 'skate'	6,8,11 s/d 14	6
46	Gunting 'scissors'	3 s/d 10,12,13 s/d 17	13
47	Sisir 'comb'	1,2,3,5,7,8 s/d 10,12,16,17	11
48	Air 'water'	1,2 s/d 9 s/d 14	14
49	Boneka 'doll'	3 s/d 15,16,17	14
50	Buku 'book'	2 s/d 14,16,18	14
51	Dodol 'sticky glutinous cake'	4,5,12,16,8,9	6
52	Kue 'cake'	12,8,4,5,8,12	6

Based on Table 1, respondents' ability to understand nouns is good. A total of 18 respondents (100%) understood *dapur* 'kitchen'; 16 comprehended the noun *kari* 'curry'; 15 understood the words *sayur* 'vegetables', *pintu* 'door', *jendela* 'window', *cerita* 'story', and *sepatu* 'shoes'; 14 comprehended the nouns *boneka* 'doll', *air* 'water', *pinsil* 'pencil', and *koran* 'newspaper'. Furthermore, 13 could understand the nouns *tas* 'bag' and *rumah* 'house'; 12 understood the nouns *laut* 'sea', *ikan* 'fish', and *komik* 'comic'; 11 understood the nouns *bunga* 'flower', *halaman buku* 'page', *sisir* 'comb', *gambar* 'picture', and *sungai* 'river'. A total of 10 respondents understood the nouns *mobil-mobilan* 'toy car', and *halaman rumah* 'yard'; 9 undersood the nouns *bola basket* 'basketball', *gigi* 'tooth', *kayu* 'wood', *kantor* 'office', and *bola* 'ball'; 8 could understand the nouns *pakaian* 'clothes',

sekolah 'school', *kambing* 'goat', *ular* 'snake', *gelas* 'glass' and *bumi* 'earth'. Furthermore, 7 respondents could understand the nouns *kursi* 'chair', *rumput* 'grass', *tilam* 'mattress', *taman* 'garden', and *tumbuhan* 'plant'; 6 undersood the nouns *sepatu roda* 'roller skates', *durian* 'thorned fruit', pesawat 'plane', and *batu* 'stone'.

Table 2. Selected Nouns in Indonesian language

No	Nouns	Pupils' Quantity for Comprehension	Percentage %
1	Dapur 'kitchen'	18	100
2	Surat 'letter'	17	94,44
3	Gulai 'curry'	16	88,89
4	Sayur, pintu, jendela, cerita, sepatu (vegetables, doors, windows, stories, shoes)	15	83,3
5	Boneka, air, pensil, dan koran (doll, water, pencil and newspaper)	14	77,8
6	Tas dan rumah (bag and house)	13	72,2
7	Laut, ikan dan komik (sea, fish and comics)	12	66,7
8	Bunga, halaman, sisir, gambar, and Sungai (flowers, pages, combs, pictures, and rivers)	11	61,11
9	Mobil-mobilan dan pekarangan (car toys and yards)	10	55,55
10	Basket, gigi, kayu dan kantor (basketball, dental, wood and office)	9	50
11	Baju, sekolah, kambing, ular, kaca dan tanah (clothes, school, goat, snake, glass, and earth)	8	44,44
12	Kursi, rumput, Kasur, kebun dan taman (chairs, grass, mattresses, gardens and parks)	7	38,88
13	Sepatu roda, durian, pesawat, pesawat terbang, batu, dodol dan kue (roller skates, durian, planes, airplanes, stones, sticky rice cake and cakes)	6	33,33

Table 2 shows that more than 50% of students can understand nouns by looking for the meaning relations of the nouns; there were only four respondents who got less than 50%. Rank I means respondents can understand the nouns *dapur* 'kitchen', *kari* 'curry', and *surat* 'letter' between 83.3% to 100% and get an A. Rank II can understand the words *sayur* 'vegetable', *pintu* 'door', *jendela* 'window', *cerita* 'story', *sepatu* 'shoe', *surat* 'letter', and *kari* 'curry' and reach 72.2% and 77.8% and got a grade of B with the number of respondents 2; rank III was able to understand the words *laut* 'sea', *ikan* 'fish', *komik* 'comic', *bunga* 'flower', *halaman buku* 'page', *samping* 'side', *gambar* 'picture', *sungai* 'river', *mobil* 'car', and *halaman* 'yard', which got a C score and reached 55.55% to 67.7 with a total of 3 respondents; the score D reached 50% with 2 respondents, and E with 3 respondents (failed).

Based on the interviews, the principal stated that kindergarten pupils were divided into A and B classes and the ability level of class A pupils is 50% below the average because they have just entered class zero and class B are students who have been in class for two years so their ability to interpret nouns reaches above 70%, that is, on average, only a few students got grades B and C, and E was a pupil with a low level of understanding because they had just entered their first year; while students who entered class B had an increased level of ability to understand nouns.

Conformity of the Lexical Meaning of Nouns
An example of meaning suitability analysis can be seen in Figures 1-7.
- Correspondence of meaning relations of nouns door, window, and kitchen

Pintu 'door'   *Jendela* 'window'   *Dapur* 'kitchen'
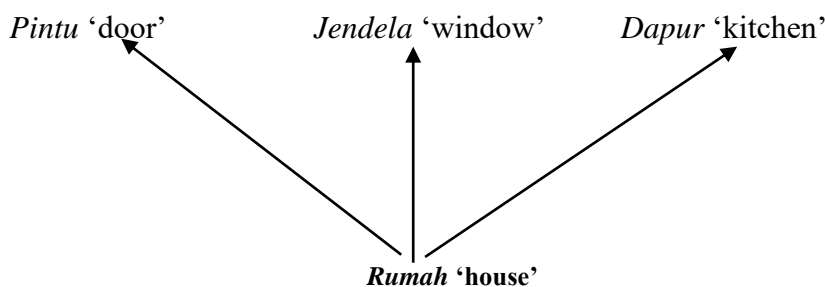
Rumah '**house**'
Figure 1. Meaning relation of nouns door, window, and kitchen

The nouns *pintu* 'door', *jendela* 'window', and *dapur* 'kitchen' are synonymous with the word *rumah* 'house' and these nouns are in accordance with data 1 to 18 in Table 1 respectively.

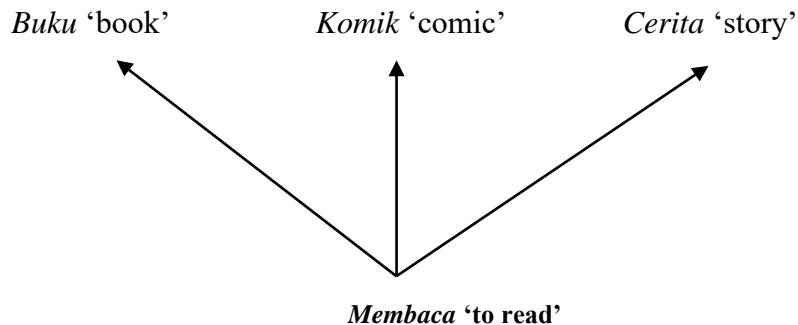- Correspondence of meaning relations of nouns books, comics, and story

Buku 'book'   *Komik* 'comic'   *Cerita* 'story'

Membaca **'to read'**
Figure 2. Meaning relationship of nouns books, comics, and stories

The nouns *komik* 'comics', *buku* 'book', and *cerita* 'story' correspond respectively to data 1 to 4, data 6 to 13, and 18, and data 1 to 4, data 6 to 13, and 18, data 1 to 4, and data 6 to 13.

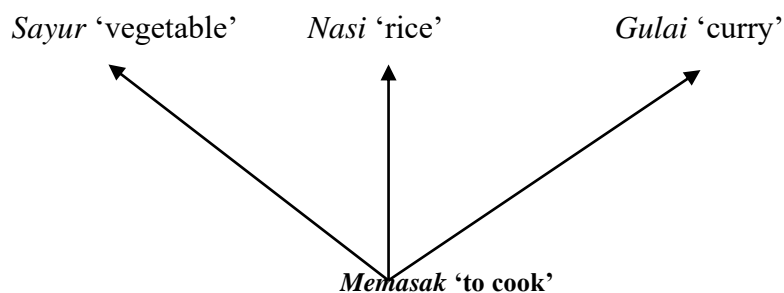- Correspondence of meaning relations of nouns vegetable, rice, and curry.

Sayur 'vegetable'   *Nasi* 'rice'   *Gulai* 'curry'

Memasak **'to cook'**
Figure 3. Meaning relationship of nouns vegetable, rice, and curry

The nouns *sayur* 'vegetable', *gulai* 'curry', and *nasi* 'rice' are in accordance respectively with data 1 to 13, 15, and 18, data 1 to 4, 6, 9, and 15 to 18, and data 1 to d 4, 6, 9, and 15 to 18.

- **Correspondence of meaning relations of nouns letter, story, and book**

Surat 'letter'   *Cerita* 'story'   *Buku* 'book'
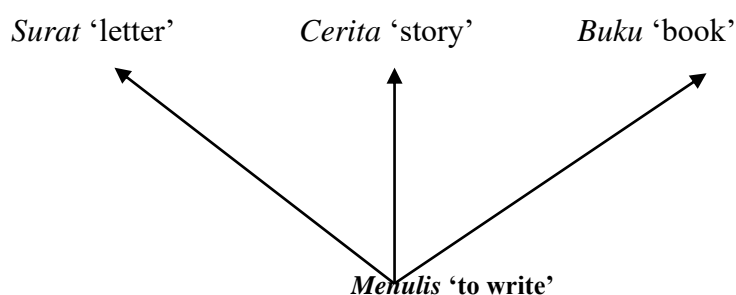
Menulis **'to write'**
Figure 4. Meaning relation of nouns letter, story, book

The nouns *surat* letter, *cerita* 'story', and *buku* 'book' are in accordance with data 1 to 7 and 17, data 1 to 4, 6, 7, and 13 to 16, and data 2 to 4, 6, 9,14, 16, and 18 respectively.

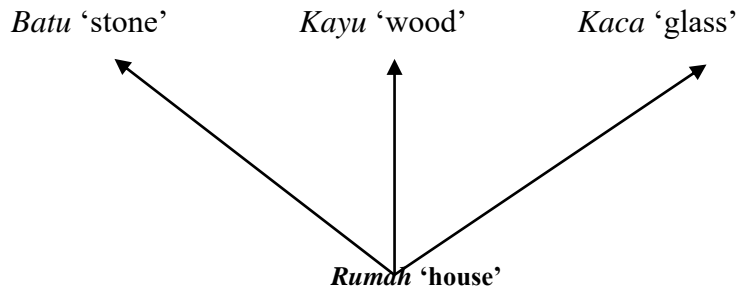- Correspondence of meaning relations of noun house

Batu 'stone'   *Kayu* 'wood'   *Kaca* 'glass'

Rumah **'house'**
Figure 5. Meaning relation of nouns stones, wood, glass

The nouns *batu* 'stone', *kayu* 'wood', and *kaca* 'glass' correspond respectively to data 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 15, 17, and 18, to data 7, 8, 11, 13, 16, and 18, and to data 2, 8, 9, 11 to 14, and 17.

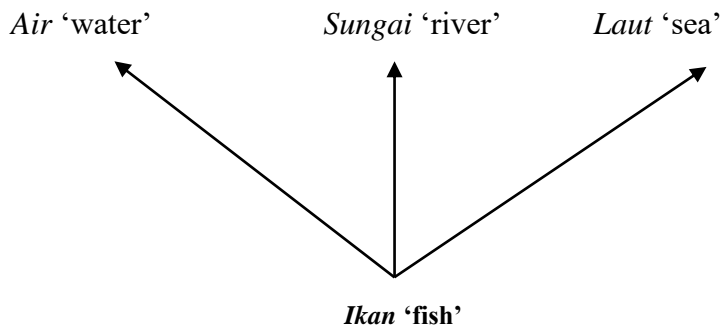- **Correspondence of meaning relations of noun fish**

Air 'water'   *Sungai* 'river'   *Laut* 'sea'

Ikan **'fish'**
Figure 6. Meaning relation of nouns water, river, and sea

The words *air* 'water', *sungai* 'river', and *laut* 'sea' correspond to data 1, 2 to 9 to 14, to data 2 to 10, 12, 17, and 18, and to data 1, 3, 4, 8 to 10, 12, and 16 each.

- **Correspondence of meaning relations of noun *durian* 'thorned fruit'**

Dodol 'sticky glutinous cake'   *Es krim* 'ice cream'   *Kue* 'cake'
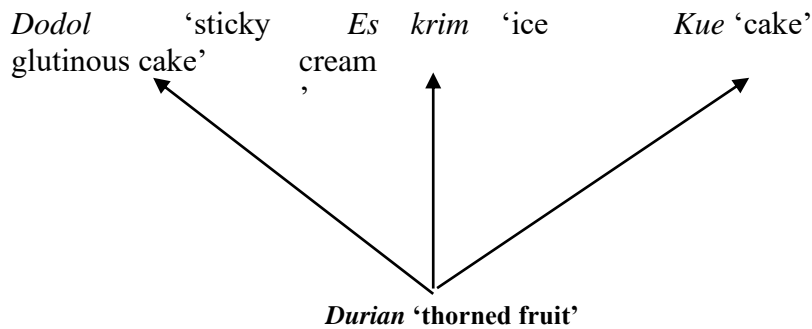
Durian **'thorned fruit'**
Figure 7. Meaning relation of nouns *dodol* 'sticky glutinous cake', *es krim* 'ice cream', and *kue*'cake'

The nouns *dodol* 'sticky glutinous cake', *es krim* 'ice cream', and *kue* 'cake' correspond to data 1 to 4, 15, and 17, to data 4, 5, 12, 16, 8, and 9, and to data 12, 8, 4, 5, 8, and 1 respectively.

Pupils' incomprehension in meaning relations of nouns
1. The word *rumah* 'house' >< *pohon* 'tree'

The words above does not match the meaning relationship and are found in data 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 10, and 16. The words *rumah* 'house' >< *matahari* 'sun' do not match the meaning relations and found in data 2, 5, 8, 9, and 11 to 15. The words *rumah* >< *matahari*, and *rumah* 'house' >< *tanah* 'land' (data 7, 10, and 11) do not match the meaning relations and are found in data 4, 7, 10, and 11.

2. The word *sepatu* 'shoes'
   Respondents with serial numbers 4, 12, 2, and 6 to 17 do not understand the relationship between the meaning of the word *membaca* 'to read' and *cerita* 'story' and should correspond to *membaca buku cerita* 'to read story book' and number 5 does not understand the relationship between the meaning of the word *membaca* 'read' and the words *komik* 'comics' and *koran* 'newspapers'.

3. The word *bunga* 'flower'
   Respondents with serial numbers 2, 5, 6, and 7 do not understand the relationship between the meaning of *bunga* 'flower' and the words *kebun* 'garden', *pekarangan* 'yard', and *halaman rumah* 'house yard'.

4. The words *ikan* 'fish' >< *kebun* 'garden', *taman* 'park' and *kantor* 'office'
   Respondents with serial numbers 5, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16 do not understand the relationship between the meaning of *bunga* 'flower' and the words *kebun* 'garden', *taman* 'park', and *kantor* 'office'.

5. The phrase *alat olahraga* 'sports equipment'
   Respondents with serial number 7, 5, and 9 do not understand the relationship between the meaning of the words *peralatan olah raga* 'sports equipment' with the words *bola basket* 'basketball' and *sepatu roda* 'roller skating'; number 10 does not understand the meaning relationship between the words *alat olahraga* and *sepatu roda* and number 8 does not understand the meaning relationship of bola basket.

6. The phrase *tukang pangkas* 'barber' >< *sisir* 'comb'
   Respondent with serial number 7 do not comprehend the meaning relation of the *tukang pangkas* 'barber' with the words *kaca* 'glass' and *baju* 'clothes', and number 12 do nor mastery in the word *tukang pangkas* 'barber' with the word *kursi* 'chair'.

7. The word *kolam renang* 'swimming pool'
   Respondents with serial numbers 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 12 do not understand the meaning of *kolam renang* 'swimming pool'.

8. The phrase *binatang buas* 'wild animal'
   Respondents with serial numbers 5, 6, 8, 13, 16, and 17do not understand the meaning relationship between *binatang buas* 'wild animal' with *harimau* 'tiger' and *singa* 'lion'.

9. The words *harimau* 'tiger' >< *buah-buahan* 'fruits' and *gandum* 'wheat'
   Respondents with serial numbers 5, 6, 9, and 16 do not understand the relationship between the meaning of fruits and wheat.

10. The words *durian* 'thorned fruit' >< *buku* 'book' and *sayur* 'vegetable'
    Respondents with serial numbers 12, 5, 9, 14, 15, 7, 17, and 10 do not understand the meaning of *durian* 'thorned fruit'.

11. The word *kacamata* 'glass/spectacles'
    Respondents with serial numbers 15, 6, 4, 13, 8, 11, 16, 10 and 17 do not understand the relationship between the meaning of *kacamata* 'glass'.

CONCLUSION

From the analysis above, the conclusion can be made that ten respondents do not have an understanding of the meaning relationship of the words *rumah* 'house', nine for the word *durian* 'horned fruit', eight for the word *kolam renang* 'swimming pool', seven for *rumah* 'house', six for the words *ikan* 'fish', *kebun* 'garden', and *binatang buas* 'wild animal', four for the words *tepung* 'flour', *bunga* 'flower', and *tanah* 'land', and three for the word *olah raga* 'sport'. After their teachers describe the meaning of such nouns, the percentage of respondents increased between 60% to 100% so that 14 respondents understand nouns and only four ones get 50%. Thus, teachers must be more active in teaching vocabularies, especially nouns, using learning media that can motivate respondents.

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