

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework supporting this research, which investigates the ways in which vocabulary enhancement facilitates communication more effectively than other linguistic elements for Indonesian Speakers in English-speaking nations. The framework encompasses essential concepts from semantics and lexical knowledge, emphasizing vocabulary's function as the principal means of communication. Additionally, it integrates theories of lexical semantics, the practical use of vocabulary in everyday interactions, and a comparative analysis of the effectiveness of vocabulary in relation to other linguistic components.

#### 3.1. Linguistics

Linguistics, the scientific study of language, is a multifaceted discipline encompassing various aspects of human communication. At its core, linguistics seeks to understand how language is structured, how it functions in society, and how it is acquired and processed by individuals. This includes the study of fundamental language components such as phonetics (sounds), phonology (sound systems), morphology (word structure), syntax (sentence structure), semantics (meaning), and pragmatics (language use in context) (Crystal, 2008, p. 21). Each component contributes uniquely to language comprehension and production, shaping the ways in which speakers convey and interpret meaning in different contexts.

Theories in linguistics emphasize that language is not just a system of rules but a dynamic, evolving tool for interaction and cultural expression. Chomsky's theory of generative grammar, for instance, proposed that all

humans are born with an inherent capacity for language, which is realized through exposure to linguistic input (Chomsky, 1965, p. 53). This notion sparked a range of studies examining the innate structures of language and the ways in which individuals adapt to linguistic environments. Moreover, Saussure's structuralist perspective argued that language is a system of signs, each sign consisting of a "signifier" (the form) and a "signified" (the concept), which together form the basis of meaning in communication (Saussure, 1916, p. 67).

In the context of vocabulary and communication, linguistics provides frameworks to analyze how words function as units of meaning and tools for social interaction. Through subfields like semantics and pragmatics, linguists explore the ways words convey direct and implied meanings. Lexical semantics, in particular, addresses how words are defined and related to each other, including relations like synonymy and antonymy, which help to clarify nuances in meaning (Geeraerts, 2010, p. 32). For Indonesian speakers, understanding linguistic principles like these is essential to adapting to new languages, as it supports the interpretation of cultural nuances and the development of effective communication strategies in diverse environments.

### **3.2. Semantics**

Semantics, a fundamental branch of linguistics, investigates the processes by which meaning is created, understood, and expressed through language. It explores the connections between signifiers, including words, phrases, and sentences, and their corresponding representations in the real world. Within the scope of this research, semantics plays a vital role, as comprehending the meanings of words and phrases is essential for facilitating effective communication among Indonesian Speakers in English-speaking nations.

Semantics goes beyond just recognizing individual words—it includes understanding how meaning is shaped by context, how sentences convey information, and how different meanings can be interpreted depending on the situation. This understanding of meaning becomes particularly important for Indonesian Speakers, as they often encounter situations where precise communication is vital, such as asking for directions, ordering food, or discussing travel arrangements.

The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Semantics emphasizes that lexical meaning, one of the most studied aspects of semantics, is essential for clear communication because it directly impacts how individuals express and understand concepts (2020, pp. 512-514). Nick Riemer's "The Routledge Handbook of Semantics" further explains that semantics helps in interpreting language in context, which is critical when Indonesian speakers must navigate new linguistic environments (2015, p. 241).

Thus, in the context of this research, semantics provides a theoretical foundation that supports the notion that vocabulary—through its semantic properties—is a crucial factor for enhancing communication in practical, real-world interactions. Understanding the semantic layers of language allows Indonesian Speakers to overcome communication barriers by grasping both literal and contextual meanings, which is why expanding lexical knowledge is a key focus of this study.

### **3.3. Semantics as a Linguistic Foundation**

Semantics, a key branch of linguistics, concerns itself with meaning—how words, phrases, and sentences relate to what they stand for in the world. This branch forms the basis of communication, as meaning comprehension is the primary goal of language use. For Indonesian Speakers in English-speaking nations, the capacity to comprehend and express meanings with precision is vital, rendering semantics an indispensable instrument for successful communication.

In this study, lexical semantics, which examines the meanings of specific words and their interconnections, is of utmost importance. Lexical semantics aids in differentiating among the various dimensions of meaning, including literal, figurative, and contextual interpretations. According to Dirk Geeraerts in "Theories of Lexical Semantics," the nuances in word meanings are crucial for avoiding miscommunication (Geeraerts, 2010, pp. 89-91). This is especially important for Indonesian Speakers who must navigate new linguistic environments.

### **3.4. Lexical**

Lexical knowledge, the understanding and use of words, is fundamental to communication. A broad vocabulary allows individuals to express themselves clearly and interpret information effectively, which is crucial for Indonesian Speakers for communicating with native English speakers. It helps them navigate both casual and complex social interactions, such as in travel or dining.

Mastery of collocations, idiomatic expressions, and word patterns is key to conveying meaning beyond individual words. As Nick Riemer highlights in *The Routledge Handbook of Semantics*, strong lexical competence enhances contextual understanding, vital for Indonesian speakers (2015, p. 241). Compared to syntax or phonology, vocabulary has a more immediate impact on communication, particularly in practical settings, where Indonesian Speakers benefit from understanding nuanced language.

### **3.5. Lexical Semantics**

Lexical semantics, an essential branch of semantics, explores the meanings of words and their relationships. Grasping its different categories can greatly improve communication abilities, particularly for language learners and Indonesian speakers. In lexical semantics, the study of word

meaning is fundamental, focusing on how individual words carry specific definitions and adapt in meaning based on context. This flexibility in word usage is a key feature, reflecting how meanings shift depending on situational factors, a dynamic process described in detail by Geeraerts (2010, p. 15). This aspect of semantics emphasizes the fluidity of language, as words can take on varied nuances that align with different communicative needs and cultural contexts.

### **3.6. Semantic Relations**

This area focuses on the relationships among words, which include:

- a. Synonymy: Words that share similar meanings, such as "happy" and "joyful" (Riemer, 2015, p. 32).
- b. Antonymy: Words that convey opposite meanings, like "hot" and "cold" (Riemer, 2015, p. 34).
- c. Hyponymy: This relationship exists between general terms and specific instances; for example, "fruit" as a hypernym for "apple" and "banana" (Riemer, 2015, p. 38). These relationships are fundamental for grasping how words can interact within sentences.
- d. Polysemy: This concept deals with words that possess multiple, related meanings. For instance, the term "bank" can denote both a financial institution and the side of a river, highlighting the necessity for context in interpreting meaning (Cruse, 2000, p. 75).
- e. Homonymy: Homonymy occurs when a single word form has multiple unrelated meanings. For example, the noun "bear" and the verb "bear" are homonyms because those words are pronounced the same but have two different meanings. Lyons describes homonyms as "words identical in form but differing in meaning," noting that homonymy often results from linguistic evolution where meanings diverge despite sharing the same form (Lyons, 1977, p. 550)

Homonyms is generally divided into homophones and homographs:

1. Homophones refer to words that sound the same but may differ in spelling and meaning, such as “flower” and “flour.”
  2. Homographs have the same spelling but might differ in pronunciation and meaning, such as “lead” (to guide) versus “lead” (a metal element).
- f. Meronymy: Meronymy, in contrast, describes a part-to-whole relationship where one word is a part of another concept. For example, “wheel” is a meronym of “car” because a wheel is an essential part of a car. Cruse explains that meronymic relationships help clarify complex concepts by breaking them down into their constituent parts, which is useful in fields such as linguistics and cognitive science (Cruse, 2000, p. 189).

### **3.7. Universal Grammar**

Noam Chomsky's Universal Grammar (UG) theory posits that the ability to acquire language is innate to humans and that all natural languages share a common underlying structure.

According to UG, despite the apparent differences among languages, there exists a set of grammatical principles and constraints inherent to the human mind. This innate linguistic capacity enables individuals to generate and comprehend an infinite number of sentences, including those never previously encountered.

In the context of this study, UG provides a foundational perspective for understanding how Indonesian speakers and native English speakers navigate communication. The theory suggests that, even when grammatical errors occur, the shared underlying structures of language facilitate mutual understanding. This aligns with the study's focus on the pivotal role of vocabulary in communication effectiveness, proposing that a common linguistic framework allows interlocutors to interpret meaning despite surface-level grammatical discrepancies.

### **3.8. Vocabulary**

Vocabulary plays an integral role in language proficiency, serving as the primary tool for both expressing ideas and understanding others. A robust vocabulary allows individuals to communicate effectively, providing the necessary words to convey thoughts, emotions, and complex information accurately. Within linguistic theory, vocabulary is viewed as more than just an inventory of words; it is an adaptive, context-dependent system that provides speakers with the flexibility to interpret meanings and respond appropriately in varied social contexts. Scholars emphasize that vocabulary knowledge consists of both breadth—the number of words known—and depth—the richness of understanding each word’s meanings, associations, and appropriate uses. Both dimensions are crucial for proficient communication, as they contribute to the ability to understand and produce language effectively (Nation, 2001, p. 36).

From a theoretical perspective, the importance of vocabulary has been highlighted across different fields of linguistics. Geeraerts emphasizes in *Theories of Lexical Semantics* that words are not static but contextually flexible. This adaptability in word meanings allows speakers to adjust their vocabulary to fit specific situations, whether formal or informal, literal or idiomatic. For instance, understanding context-dependent variations of word meanings is particularly useful for Indonesian speakers, who often face challenges in grasping the subtleties of a new language. Geeraerts argues that mastering these nuances reduces the likelihood of miscommunication, which is essential in environments where cultural cues may not be immediately familiar (Geeraerts, 2010, p. 15).

Riemer in *The Routledge Handbook of Semantics* also discusses the role of lexical knowledge, extending its significance to include idiomatic expressions, collocations, and culturally specific phrases. Riemer asserts that an advanced vocabulary not only facilitates understanding of individual words but also enhances speakers’ ability to interpret language in a

culturally relevant way. This skill is especially vital for Indonesian Speakers and language learners, who benefit from knowing both literal and implied meanings to navigate various communicative scenarios (Riemer, 2015, p. 241). Additionally, vocabulary development aids in the mastery of idiomatic language, which is common in English-speaking countries and requires familiarity with fixed phrases that often differ from literal translations.

Moreover, studies on language acquisition consistently support the idea that vocabulary expansion is a more immediate factor in improving communicative competence than other linguistic components, such as grammar or phonology. This highlights the fundamental role of vocabulary in conveying meaning, as even with imperfect grammar, a well-chosen vocabulary enables basic comprehension between speakers. Vocabulary thus becomes an indispensable tool for Indonesian Speakers or learners who may not have fully mastered the grammar but still need to interact effectively in English-speaking settings.

In summary, vocabulary serves as the cornerstone of linguistic capability, enabling both expression and comprehension across diverse contexts. Its importance extends beyond mere word knowledge, encompassing the ability to use language that is adaptable, context-aware, and culturally sensitive. For Indonesian speakers, vocabulary acquisition is not only an academic pursuit but also a practical necessity for achieving communicative success in a foreign environment. Expanding vocabulary enhances overall language competence, allowing for greater adaptability and confidence in diverse and often unpredictable social situations.

### **3.9. The importance of Vocabulary**

Vocabulary is crucial for effective communication, particularly for Indonesian speakers navigating a new linguistic environment. Wilkins famously noted, "While without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed" (Wilkins, 1972, p. 112),

underscoring that words are the primary vehicles of meaning. Vocabulary is fundamental because it allows speakers to access the precise terms needed to convey complex ideas, emotions, and requests.

In lexical semantics, vocabulary knowledge extends beyond mere definitions; it involves understanding word meanings in context, which is particularly relevant for Indonesian speakers who must adapt to the nuances of a foreign language. According to Geeraerts, words are dynamic, adapting to varied contexts, which makes vocabulary expansion a versatile tool for navigating different communicative situations (Geeraerts, 2010, p. 15). Riemer further supports this by emphasizing that lexical competence enables individuals to interpret language effectively, especially in culturally specific or idiomatic contexts (Riemer, 2015 p. 241). Thus, a well-developed vocabulary is essential for clear and precise communication, helping language learners and Indonesian Speakers alike to express themselves accurately and understand others in unfamiliar linguistic settings.

### **3.10. Communication Skills**

Communication skills encompass the essential abilities that facilitate effective interaction and conveyance of ideas in any language. For Indonesian Speakers, mastering these skills is vital, especially in English-speaking countries where cultural nuances and language subtleties play a large role. Effective communication relies heavily on lexical knowledge, semantic awareness, and contextual understanding, allowing speakers to select words that accurately express their intended meaning and interpret others' language with similar accuracy (Nation, 2001, p. 36).

Central to communication skills is vocabulary depth, which includes both literal and implied meanings. Indonesian Speakers benefit from knowing not only a broad range of words but also idiomatic expressions and

common phrases, which can vary greatly in different regions. As noted by Geeraerts (2010), vocabulary extends beyond individual words to include the understanding of word collocations and idiomatic meanings, which are critical for navigating social interactions effectively (Geeraerts, 2010, p. 32).

Additionally, strong communication skills involve grasping pragmatic cues—social rules and contextual subtleties that help one interpret tone, body language, and implied meanings. For example, Riemer (2015) highlights that an understanding of semantic relationships, such as synonymy and polysemy, equips speakers to adapt their language use in varied contexts, fostering smoother, more successful interactions in culturally diverse settings (Riemer, 2015, p. 241).

Overall, communication skills form a bridge between linguistic knowledge and practical use, empowering individuals to communicate confidently and effectively in new environments. For Indonesian Speakers these skills are not merely academic but essential for a fulfilling and successful experience, enabling them to respond appropriately and confidently in diverse communicative scenarios.

### **3.11. Maxim of Quantity**

Maxim of quantity is related to the amount of information provided in a conversation. There are two sub-maxims in this category:

- a. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange); and
- b. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required. (Grice. 1975, p.45).

Here, Grice (1975) wants to convey that in having a conversation, we must provide the right amount of information, not too little and not too much. Too little information will risk causing failure to understand the speaker's intention and meaning, while too much information will cause bias and confusion about what is truly meant, as well as boredom. Therefore I

can conclude that by focusing on expanding your vocabulary, you can deliver enough information for native English speaker to understand your meaning. Not too much, nor too little of information.

### **3.12. Previous Related Studies**

Based on the literature review that I have previously carried out, there are several previous studies that have been conducted. These studies have similarities and also differences with the research I have:

1. The first study is by Ahmad Rizal Abdullah (2023) from Universitas Negeri Makassar, titled "Enhancing Vocabulary Acquisition Through Contemporary Short Stories: A Study in an Indonesian Islamic Boarding School." This research investigates the effectiveness of using contemporary short stories to enhance vocabulary acquisition among students in an Islamic boarding school in Indonesia. Employing an experimental design with pre-tests and post-tests, the study compares the vocabulary development of an experimental group exposed to contemporary short stories and a control group following traditional memorization techniques. Findings indicate a significant improvement in vocabulary proficiency among the experimental group, suggesting that contemporary short stories provide an engaging and contextually relevant medium for vocabulary learning. Students also perceived literary texts positively, acknowledging them as effective and motivational tools for language acquisition. The first study is similar to mine in its focus on vocabulary acquisition, but it differs in its use of a controlled environment (an Islamic boarding school) and specific learning materials (short stories).

2. The second study is by Hussein Mohammad Ali and Marcus Fredriksson (2023) from Malmö University, titled "The Effect of Vocabulary Acquisition on L2 Students' Communicative Competence Through Task-based Learning." This research examines the use of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) concerning vocabulary acquisition in English upper secondary students. Through the analysis of multiple scientific studies, the findings suggest that TBLT is an efficient method for developing vocabulary acquisition. Regardless of the specific tasks used, communication played a significant role in increasing students' vocabulary acquisition. The study concludes that TBLT can motivate students, aiding task engagement and vocabulary development. This study highlights the importance of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in vocabulary development, where communication plays a significant role in increasing vocabulary acquisition. While my research similarly emphasizes the relationship between vocabulary and communication, it differs by focusing on real-time conversations between Indonesian speakers and native English speakers, rather than on structured learning methods such as TBLT.
3. The third study is by Kamal Heidari. Published in the Journal of Psycholinguistic Research (2024), titled "The Contribution of Willingness to Communicate to L2 Learners' Depth of Vocabulary Knowledge: An Empirical Study." This research explores the relationship between learners' willingness to communicate (WTC) and their depth of vocabulary knowledge in a second language (L2). The study finds that higher WTC significantly contributes to deeper vocabulary knowledge, emphasizing the importance of encouraging communication willingness in L2 learning environments to enhance lexical competence. This study explores how willingness to

communicate (WTC) contributes to deeper vocabulary knowledge in second language learners. My research shares this focus on vocabulary acquisition but differs in its broader context—investigating vocabulary’s role in communication effectiveness between Indonesian speakers and English speakers, regardless of WTC.

4. The third study is by Heidari (2024), published in the *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, titled “The Contribution of Willingness to Communicate to L2 Learners’ Depth of Vocabulary Knowledge: An Empirical Study.” This research explores the relationship between learners’ willingness to communicate (WTC) and their depth of vocabulary knowledge in a second language (L2). The study finds that higher WTC significantly contributes to deeper vocabulary knowledge, emphasizing the importance of encouraging communication willingness in L2 learning environments to enhance vocabulary competence. Although my research shares a focus on vocabulary acquisition, it differs in its broader context—investigating vocabulary’s role in communication effectiveness between Indonesian speakers and native English speakers, regardless of WTC.
5. The fifth study is by Nur Ainayah and Fitria Rahmawati (2024) from Universitas Airlangga, titled "The Role of Interactive Speaking Activities in Enhancing Vocabulary Mastery Among EFL Learners." This study investigates how interactive speaking activities, such as role-playing, debates, and discussions, impact vocabulary acquisition among Indonesian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Using a mixed-method approach, the researchers collected quantitative data through vocabulary tests and qualitative data

through student interviews. The findings reveal that students engaged in interactive speaking tasks showed a significant improvement in vocabulary retention and usage. The study concludes that interactive speaking activities create meaningful communication opportunities, encouraging learners to actively use new vocabulary in context, which fosters deeper lexical understanding and enhances communicative competence. This study focuses on interactive speaking activities such as role-playing and discussions, showing significant improvements in vocabulary retention and usage. This study is similar to mine in its emphasis on speaking activities and vocabulary acquisition, but it differs in its use of structured classroom activities, while my research examines naturally occurring interactions between Indonesian and native speakers in real-life communication contexts.

In my study, I focus on vocabulary acquisition and its impact on communication effectiveness in real-time interactions between Indonesian speakers and native English speakers. While the previous studies examine vocabulary acquisition through controlled methods, learning materials, or digital platforms, my research highlights the importance of vocabulary in communication effectiveness, even when grammar is not perfect, in a natural setting