

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The phenomenon of language use in modern society shows increasingly complex dynamics along with the rise of social mobility, cross-cultural interactions, and the development of communication technology. Language does not only function as a means of communication, but is also closely related to human cognitive processes in understanding the world. The relationship between language and cognition indicates that meaning is not static, but is constructed through the interaction between experience, knowledge, and language use in a particular context (Perlovsky, 2009). Therefore, the study of meaning becomes increasingly important in understanding how language is used in real communication.

One important phenomenon in the study of meaning is semantic ambiguity, which refers to a condition in which a linguistic form has more than one possible meaning. This ambiguity can occur at both the word level and the sentence structure level, and often creates difficulties in language comprehension. Ambiguity can even disrupt the effectiveness of communication because it allows different interpretations between speakers and hearers (Aritonang & Damanik, 2025). Furthermore, without sufficient contextual support, ambiguity becomes increasingly difficult to avoid in everyday communication (Aritonang & Damanik, 2025).

In classical semantic studies, the phenomenon of homonymy has been discussed as part of meaning relations in language. Homonymy refers to the sameness of form with different and unrelated meanings. This approach is generally structural, emphasizing the relationship between form and meaning within the language system. However, developments in linguistic studies show that meaning is not only determined by linguistic structure, but also by the context of use. This indicates the limitation of structural approaches are insufficient to fully account for meaning interpretation in real communicative contexts.

From a pragmatic perspective, meaning is not only understood as part of the language system, but also as the result of language use in social contexts. Pragmatics emphasizes that language was used in communicative actions involving speakers, hearers, and specific situations. Therefore, meaning cannot be separated from social context and communicative intentions (Mey,

2016, pp. 15–16). This approach highlights that meaning analysis must consider factors beyond the linguistic structure itself.

In addition, contemporary linguistic studies view language as a dynamic and adaptive system. Language develops through interaction between individuals and speech communities, making language variation an integral part of communication. This variation is influenced by cognitive and social factors that shape how meaning is produced and interpreted in communication (Petré & Anthonissen, 2020, pp. 185–186). This further supports the view that meaning is contextual and cannot be fully explained through a purely structural approach.

In the context of Indonesia as a multilingual country, the phenomenon of homonymy becomes more complex due to the interaction between the national language, regional languages, and foreign languages. This linguistic diversity creates opportunities for identical forms with different meanings, which may lead to ambiguity in communication. Regional languages, as part of cultural identity, also need to be studied and preserved, as they possess lexical richness that reflects the dynamics of meaning in their speech communities (Harahap & Gapur, 2020, pp. 47–48).

One regional language that reflects such dynamics is Butonese (Wolio), which is used in daily communication among communities in Southeast Sulawesi. In practice, Butonese (Wolio) does not exist in isolation but interacts with Indonesian and English. This interaction allows the emergence of interlingual homonymy, where a single form may have different meanings across languages. This condition indicates that meaning is not only determined by the language system but also by cross-linguistic interaction and context of use.

This phenomenon reveals a gap between theory and practice in the study of homonymy. Theoretically, homonymy is understood as a relation between form and meaning within a language system. However, in actual communication, the meaning of homonymy is often determined by context, situation, and social factors. This leads to ambiguity that cannot be fully explained through a structural semantic approach alone (Aritonang & Damanik, 2025, p. 6035).

Previous studies have generally focused on classifying homonymy based on form and meaning, without examining how these meanings are interpreted in real communication contexts. Moreover, research on homonymy in regional languages, particularly Butonese (Wolio), remains limited. Cross-linguistic studies that integrate semantic and pragmatic approaches are also still scarce. Furthermore, only a few studies have examined homonymy by considering the dynamics of meaning in actual communication contexts (Petré & Anthonissen, 2020, p. 186).

Based on these conditions, this study is conducted due to its strong academic and empirical relevance. This research aims to examine the phenomenon of homonymy in English and Butonese (Wolio) using both semantic and pragmatic approaches. This approach is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how meaning is constructed, used, and interpreted in real communication.

This study is expected to contribute to the development of linguistic studies, particularly in understanding the relationship between linguistic structure and context of use. Theoretically, this research highlights the limitations of structural approaches in explaining homonymy and proposes a more comprehensive perspective through the integration of semantics and pragmatics (Mey, 2016, p. 16). Practically, this study is expected to help language users understand the potential for ambiguity in meaning and improve communication effectiveness in multilingual contexts.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background presented above, the research questions of this study are formulated as follows:

1. How can the forms and types of homonymy in English and Butonese (Wolio) be classified based on John Lyons' concept of homonymy?
2. How are homonymous meanings in English and Butonese (Wolio) interpreted in communication based on semantic and pragmatic perspectives?
3. To what extent is John Lyons' concept of homonymy adequate in explaining homonymy phenomena in English and Butonese (Wolio) communication?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Based on the research questions above, the objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To identify and classify the forms and types of homonymy in English and Butonese (Wolio) based on John Lyons' concept of homonymy.
2. To analyze the interpretation of homonymous meanings in English and Butonese (Wolio) in communication from semantic and pragmatic perspectives.
3. To evaluate the adequacy of John Lyons' concept of homonymy in explaining homonymy phenomena in English and Butonese (Wolio) communication.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to linguistic studies, particularly those related to the phenomenon of homonymy from semantic and pragmatic perspectives.

Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich linguistic studies, especially in understanding the relationship between form, meaning, and context in homonymy. It also contributes to reevaluating John Lyons' concept of homonymy by examining the extent to which the theory can explain homonymy phenomena in real communication. By integrating semantic and pragmatic approaches, this study offers a more comprehensive perspective in understanding the dynamics of meaning, particularly in multilingual contexts.

Practically, this study is expected to assist language users, especially speakers of English and Butonese (Wolio), in understanding potential ambiguity arising from homonymy. This understanding is expected to improve communication effectiveness and reduce misunderstandings in daily interactions. In addition, this study may serve as a reference for language teachers and learners in identifying and explaining homonymy more contextually. Furthermore, this research is expected to contribute to the preservation of regional languages, particularly Butonese (Wolio), through documentation and analysis of linguistic phenomena that reflect language use in society.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Previous Studies

The first research was conducted by Harahap and Gapur (2020) entitled *Homonim in Mandailing Language: A Semantic Analysis*. This qualitative study aimed to identify and analyze homonymy in the Mandailing language. The study focused on revealing the forms and meanings of homonymous words used in the language. In identifying the homonymous words, the researchers collected the data through observation and documentation of words used in the Mandailing language. The data were analyzed using semantic analysis to determine the relationship between word forms and their meanings. The study employed a descriptive qualitative design to systematically describe the phenomenon. The results of the study revealed that homonymy in the Mandailing language is characterized by similarity in form with different and unrelated meanings. The findings also showed that homonymous words can create ambiguity in communication, especially when the context is unclear. Furthermore, the analysis indicated that the meaning of homonymous words can be understood based on the context in which they are used. However, the study mainly focuses on structural and semantic classification and does not explore the interpretation of homonymy in real communicative contexts from a pragmatic perspective. In addition, the study does not evaluate the applicability of John Lyons' concept of homonymy, which is essential in understanding the limitations of structural approaches in multilingual communication.

The second research was conducted by Juanda (2021) entitled *Homonimi Bahasa Indonesia dan Bahasa Sunda: Materi Pembelajaran Bahasa*. This study aimed to describe the forms of homonymous lexemes found in Indonesian and Sundanese languages. The research focused on identifying lexemes that have the same form but different meanings in two different languages. In identifying the homonymous lexemes, the researcher collected the data from Indonesian and Sundanese dictionaries. The data were analyzed using a descriptive method by comparing the meanings of the same lexemes in both languages. The study employed a descriptive design to explain the differences in meaning between the two languages. The results of the study revealed that homonymy occurs when the same lexeme has different meanings in Indonesian and Sundanese. For example, the word *amis* in Indonesian means "fishy," while in Sundanese it means "sweet." The findings also showed that homonymous lexemes can be classified into

several grammatical categories such as noun-noun, adjective-noun, verb-noun, noun-adjective, and adjective-adjective. The analysis indicated that the differences in meaning between the two languages cannot be traced to a common semantic origin, which distinguishes homonymy from polysemy. However, the study mainly focuses on lexical comparison and classification and does not examine how homonymy is interpreted in real communicative contexts. In addition, the study does not incorporate a semantic–pragmatic approach nor evaluate the applicability of John Lyons’ concept of homonymy in multilingual communication.

The third research was conducted by Oluga (2010) entitled *Ambiguity in Human Communication: Causes, Consequences and Resolution*. This study aimed to analyze ambiguity in human communication by identifying its causes, examining its consequences, and explaining the techniques used to resolve it. In identifying ambiguity, the researcher analyzed various linguistic expressions that contain multiple meanings. The study discussed different types of ambiguity, including lexical, structural, phonological, and semantic ambiguity, and focused on how ambiguity arises through language use in communication. The results revealed that ambiguity occurs when words or expressions allow double or multiple semantic interpretations. The findings showed that ambiguity can be caused by several factors, such as the use of ambiguous lexemes, omission of punctuation, multiple referents, and complex sentence structures. The study also found that ambiguity may lead to misunderstanding, semantic confusion, and ineffective communication. Furthermore, ambiguity can be resolved through disambiguation techniques such as appropriate use of context, punctuation, lexical choice, and syntactic reorganization. The analysis emphasized that context plays a crucial role in determining the intended meaning of ambiguous expressions. However, the study discusses ambiguity in a general sense and does not specifically focus on homonymy as a distinct semantic phenomenon. Moreover, it does not examine ambiguity in multilingual contexts nor evaluate the applicability of John Lyons’ concept of homonymy in explaining meaning variation in communication.

The fourth research was conducted by Garba (2024) entitled *Lexical Ambiguity in Eggon Language*. This study aimed to examine lexical ambiguity in the Eggon language by identifying its nature, sources, and strategies for disambiguation. The data were collected through participant observation, documented sources such as the Eggon dictionary, and introspection as a native speaker. The data were analyzed using a descriptive method. The study focused on lexical ambiguity arising from polysemy and homonymy and how such ambiguity can be resolved in communication. The results revealed that ambiguity is a common phenomenon in the Eggon language. Lexical ambiguity occurs due to polysemy and homonymy, which can lead to both

semantic and syntactic ambiguity. The findings also showed that homonymous words in Eggon share the same form but have different meanings, and these meanings can be distinguished through context of use. In addition, tone plays an important role in disambiguating meaning in the language. The analysis indicated that context, co-occurring words, and discourse situation are essential in interpreting ambiguous expressions. This demonstrates that meaning is not determined solely by lexical form but also by contextual factors in communication. However, the study focuses on a single language and does not examine homonymy in a multilingual context. Furthermore, it does not evaluate the applicability of John Lyons' concept of homonymy nor systematically integrate a semantic-pragmatic framework in analyzing meaning in communication.

The fifth research was conducted by Kamilah et al. (2025) entitled *Semantics Analysis of Ratatouille Movie: The Lexical Ambiguity in English*. The study aimed to analyse lexical ambiguity in the movie *Ratatouille* by identifying the use of homophones and homographs in film dialogues. In identifying lexical ambiguity, the researchers collected the data from the movie and its script. The data were analysed using descriptive qualitative method through semantic analysis. The study focused on three main characters and examined how ambiguous words are used in their dialogues. The results of the study revealed that lexical ambiguity is widely used in the movie, particularly in the form of homophones and homographs. A total of 313 ambiguous words were found in 920 dialogues. The findings showed that lexical ambiguity can influence meaning interpretation, create misunderstanding, and contribute to humor and narrative complexity. The analysis also indicated that context, speaker intention, and discourse situation play an important role in determining the intended meaning of ambiguous expressions. Furthermore, the study emphasized that meaning is not fixed but dynamically constructed through interaction between linguistic forms and contextual factors. This shows that understanding lexical ambiguity requires not only semantic analysis but also consideration of pragmatic aspects in communication. However, the study focuses on lexical ambiguity in a single language context and does not specifically examine homonymy as a distinct semantic phenomenon. In addition, the study does not explore multilingual communication nor evaluate the applicability of John Lyons' concept of homonymy in analysing meaning variation across languages.

The seventh research was conducted by Hapsari, Hamied, and Emilia (2025) entitled *Comprehensibility of Indonesian Teachers' Translanguaging: Insights from Higher Education English Classrooms*. The study aimed to examine teachers' translanguaging practices and analyse the comprehensibility of these practices in English classrooms. In identifying

translanguaging practices, the researchers collected data through classroom observations, video-stimulated recall interviews, and students' comprehensibility rating scales. The study employed a mixed-method design combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. The participants consisted of two English teachers and ten university students in Indonesia. The data were analysed by identifying translanguaging strategies and measuring their comprehensibility based on students' responses. The results of the study revealed that teachers performed translanguaging by drawing linguistic features from multiple languages such as English, Indonesian, and Javanese. Three main translanguaging strategies were identified, namely alternating drawing in sustained speech, alternating drawing in minimal speech, and fluid drawing in sustained speech. The findings showed that the alternating strategy in sustained speech was the most comprehensible for students, while the fluid strategy in sustained speech was the least comprehensible. Furthermore, the study indicated that context, language choice, and teaching strategies significantly influence students' comprehension. Translanguaging can facilitate understanding when used strategically, particularly when teachers restate or clarify meanings using another language. However, unplanned or excessive mixing of languages may reduce comprehension and lead to confusion among students. However, the study focuses on translanguaging practices in classroom interaction rather than specifically analysing homonymy as a semantic phenomenon. In addition, the study does not examine lexical ambiguity in detail nor evaluate the applicability of John Lyons' concept of homonymy in multilingual communication.

The eighth research was conducted by Mansyur and Said (2020) entitled *A Cognitive Semantics Analysis of Butonese (Wolio) Proverbs Related to the Human Body*. The study aimed to explain the cognitive mechanisms underlying the formation of Butonese (Wolio) proverbs related to the human body from a cognitive semantic perspective. In identifying the data, the researchers collected Butonese (Wolio) proverbs from written sources and analysed them using a qualitative method. The analysis focused on mapping the source domain and target domain based on conceptual metaphor and metonymy theories. The study also applied the concept of the Great Chain of Being Metaphor to understand how meaning is constructed in proverbs. The results of the study revealed that Butonese (Wolio) proverbs related to the human body contain positive, negative, and neutral meanings. The findings showed that parts of the human body are used metaphorically and metonymically to represent human behavior, feelings, and social values. For example, body parts such as "skin," "mouth," "lips," and "heart" are mapped into abstract meanings such as emotions, speech, and responsibility. The analysis indicated that meaning in Butonese (Wolio) proverbs is formed through cognitive mechanisms that transform concrete elements into abstract concepts. Furthermore, the study showed that the meaning of proverbs is

closely related to cultural experience and social values of the Butonese (Wolio) people. The findings also revealed that although some conceptualizations are culture-specific, others are universal across languages. This indicates that meaning construction is influenced by both cognitive processes and cultural context. However, the study focuses on cognitive semantic analysis of proverbs and does not specifically examine homonymy or lexical ambiguity as distinct semantic phenomena. In addition, the study does not analyse meaning interpretation in real communicative interaction nor evaluate the applicability of John Lyons' concept of homonymy in multilingual communication.

The ninth research was conducted by Taembo, Rahma, and Akbar (2023) entitled *Kajian Diakronis pada Fonologis Bahasa Wolio*. The study aimed to describe phoneme innovation and retention in the Wolio language by tracing its development from its proto language, Proto Malayic Polynesia. In identifying the data, the researchers collected 200 basic vocabularies based on the Swadesh list through interviews, observation, and recording techniques. The study employed a qualitative descriptive method and used comparative and interlingual equivalent analysis to examine phonological changes between Proto Malayic Polynesia and Wolio. The results of the study revealed that Wolio language belongs to the Austronesian or Malay-Polynesian language family and is categorized as a vocalic language, meaning it does not allow consonant sounds in the final position of words. The findings showed that more phonemes undergo innovation than retention, indicating significant phonological changes in the development of the language. These changes occur not only at the phonological level but also at the lexical level. Furthermore, the analysis demonstrated that phonological changes follow systematic patterns, including deletion of final consonants, phoneme substitution, and merger of sounds. The study also indicated that language change is influenced by historical development and linguistic evolution, confirming that Wolio has undergone continuous transformation from its proto language. However, the study focuses on phonological changes in Wolio and does not analyse semantic meaning or homonymy as a lexical phenomenon. In addition, the study does not examine how meaning is interpreted in communication nor evaluate the applicability of John Lyons' concept of homonymy in a semantic-pragmatic framework

2.2 Theoretical Background of the Research

2.2.1 Language, Meaning, and Semantics

Language is fundamentally understood as a system of communication that enables humans to express ideas, thoughts, and meanings within a social context. It is not merely a collection of

words, but a structured system of signs that functions to convey meaning between speakers and listeners. From a linguistic perspective, language operates through the relationship between form and meaning, where linguistic expressions serve as carriers of conceptual content (Chaer, 2002; Kridalaksana, 2008).

In structural linguistics, language is viewed as a system of signs, as proposed by Ferdinand de Saussure, who distinguishes between the signifier (the form of a word) and the signified (the concept it represents). This distinction highlights that meaning is not inherently attached to objects in the real world, but is constructed through social conventions within a linguistic community. Thus, the relationship between form and meaning is arbitrary, meaning that there is no natural connection between a linguistic sign and what it represents (Saussure, as cited in Amilia & Anggraeni, 2017).

Building on this perspective, meaning becomes the central concern in linguistic analysis. Meaning is not a simple or fixed entity; rather, it is a complex and multi-layered phenomenon that can be approached from different theoretical perspectives. One of the primary branches of linguistics that deals with meaning is semantics. Semantics is concerned with the study of meaning as encoded in language, focusing on how words, phrases, and sentences represent concepts and relationships in the world (Lyons, 1977; Tarigan, 1995).

According to Lyons (1977), semantics examines the systematic relationship between linguistic forms and their meanings. In this framework, meaning is treated as a stable and structured component of language that can be analyzed independently of context. Words are assumed to have meanings that are stored in the mental lexicon, and these meanings can be identified and classified based on their formal properties. This approach allows linguists to describe how meaning is organized within a language system.

However, the study of meaning in semantics also reveals that the relationship between form and meaning is not always one-to-one. A single linguistic form may correspond to multiple meanings, giving rise to what is known as lexical ambiguity. This phenomenon challenges the assumption that meaning is fixed and highlights the complexity of linguistic interpretation. Lexical ambiguity occurs when a word or expression has more than one possible interpretation, which may lead to misunderstanding if the intended meaning is not clear (Pateda, 2010; Rofiah, 2024).

One important distinction in semantic studies is between polysemy and homonymy. Polysemy refers to a situation in which a single word has multiple related meanings that share a common semantic core. In contrast, homonymy refers to the existence of multiple meanings that are

unrelated, despite sharing the same form. This distinction is crucial because it shows that not all cases of multiple meaning can be treated in the same way. While polysemy reflects semantic extension, homonymy reflects the coexistence of distinct meanings within a single form (Lyons, 1977; Chaer, 2009).

Furthermore, semantic analysis often assumes that meaning can be understood without reference to context. However, in actual language use, meaning is rarely interpreted in isolation. The presence of lexical ambiguity indicates that semantic information alone is sometimes insufficient to determine meaning. In such cases, additional factors are needed to resolve ambiguity and identify the intended interpretation (Ginting & Ginting, 2019).

This limitation suggests that while semantics provides an essential foundation for understanding meaning, it does not fully explain how meaning is interpreted in real communication. The gap between semantic representation and actual interpretation highlights the need for a broader perspective that takes into account the role of context and language use.

Therefore, the study of language and meaning must go beyond structural analysis and consider the dynamic nature of meaning in communication. This perspective opens the way for integrating semantic analysis with pragmatic approaches, which focus on how meaning is interpreted in context. Such integration is particularly important in analyzing phenomena like homonymy, where multiple meanings coexist and require contextual interpretation (Levinson, 1983).

2.2.2 Pragmatics and Context

While semantics provides a structured framework for analyzing meaning based on the relationship between linguistic form and meaning, it does not fully explain how meaning is interpreted in actual communication. In real-life interaction, speakers and listeners do not rely solely on lexical meaning, but also consider various contextual factors in order to understand the intended meaning of an utterance. This limitation has led to the development of pragmatics as a complementary approach to semantics.

Pragmatics is generally defined as the study of meaning in relation to context. It focuses on how meaning is constructed, conveyed, and interpreted in communicative situations, rather than how it is encoded in linguistic forms. According to Levinson (1983), pragmatics examines the relationship between language and context that is essential for understanding meaning. This

definition highlights that meaning is not inherent in words themselves, but emerges through their use in specific contexts.

From a pragmatic perspective, meaning is dynamic and context-dependent. A single linguistic expression may convey different meanings depending on the situation in which it is used, the participants involved, and the communicative purpose. This view contrasts with semantic approaches that tend to treat meaning as stable and context-independent. As stated by Yule (1996), pragmatics is concerned with what speakers mean rather than what words mean, emphasizing the interpretative nature of communication.

Context, therefore, becomes a central concept in pragmatic analysis. Context can be understood as all the factors surrounding an utterance that influence its interpretation. Levinson (1983) distinguishes several types of context that are relevant in meaning interpretation. First, linguistic context (co-text) refers to the surrounding words or expressions within a sentence that help determine meaning. Co-text plays a crucial role in narrowing down possible interpretations, especially in cases of ambiguity.

Second, situational context refers to the physical and situational conditions in which communication takes place, including time, place, and activity. The meaning of an utterance may vary depending on whether it occurs in a formal setting, casual conversation, or a specific activity. This type of context enables speakers and listeners to interpret meaning based on the situation in which language is used.

Third, social and cultural context involves the relationship between participants, social roles, cultural norms, and shared knowledge. Language is not used in isolation, but within a social environment that shapes how meaning is conveyed and interpreted. As noted by Wardhaugh (2006), language reflects social structures and cultural values, and meaning is often influenced by factors such as politeness, status, and social distance.

In addition to context, meaning interpretation in pragmatics also involves inferential processes. Communication is not merely a process of decoding linguistic forms, but also a process of inference, where listeners actively interpret the speaker's intended meaning based on available clues. This idea is central to the theory of implicature proposed by Grice (1975).

Grice argues that communication operates under the cooperative principle, where speakers and listeners assume that each participant is contributing meaningfully to the conversation. This principle is supported by conversational maxims, such as relevance, quantity, quality, and

manner, which guide the interpretation of meaning. In situations where an utterance is ambiguous, listeners rely on these principles to select the most relevant interpretation.

This inferential mechanism is particularly important in understanding lexical ambiguity, including homonymy. When a word has multiple meanings, listeners do not interpret all meanings equally. Instead, they use contextual cues and pragmatic reasoning to eliminate irrelevant meanings and select the most appropriate one. This process shows that meaning interpretation is not purely linguistic, but involves cognitive and contextual considerations.

Therefore, pragmatics provides a crucial framework for understanding how meaning is interpreted in real communication. While semantics identified the possible meanings of a linguistic form, pragmatics explains how one meaning is selected based on context and inference. This complementary relationship between semantics and pragmatics is essential in analyzing phenomena such as homonymy, where multiple meanings coexist within a single form.

2.2.3 Homonymy Theory by John Lyons (1977)

Homonymy is one of the central phenomena in lexical semantics, as it directly reflects the complexity of the relationship between linguistic form and meaning. In general, homonymy refers to a situation in which a single linguistic form is associated with two or more meanings that are not semantically related. This phenomenon challenges the assumption that each linguistic form corresponds to a single, stable meaning, and instead highlights the potential for ambiguity within language.

In semantic theory, homonymy has been extensively discussed by John Lyons (1977), who defines it as a situation in which two or more lexical items share the same phonological or orthographic form but differ meaning without any semantic connection. This indicates that identical forms may represent entirely unrelated meanings. For example, the word bank can refer to a financial institution or the side of a river, which shows no conceptual relationship between the two meanings. This absence of semantic relatedness is what distinguishes homonymy from polysemy, where meanings remain conceptually linked. In this study, this criterion is important to determine whether English and Wolio data belong to homonymy or polysemy.

The distinction between homonymy and polysemy is one of the most important issues in semantic analysis. Polysemy occurs when a single word develops multiple related meanings through processes such as metaphorical extension or semantic shift. For example, a word may

extend its meaning from a concrete sense to a more abstract one while maintaining a conceptual link. In contrast, homonymy involves meanings that originate from entirely different sources and share no semantic relationship. As a result, homonymous meanings are treated as separate lexical entries in the mental lexicon (Lyons, 1977; Chaer, 2009).

Lyons further classifies homonymy into several types based on formal characteristics. One of the main categories is homophones, which are words that share the same pronunciation but differ in meaning and spelling. Another category is homographs, which are words that share the same spelling but differ in meaning and sometimes pronunciation. In addition, Lyons identified total homonymy, where two or more lexical items share both the same form and pronunciation while having completely unrelated meanings. These classifications demonstrate that homonymy is not a uniform phenomenon, but consists of different subtypes that can be systematically analyzed within a semantic framework.

From the perspective of semantic theory, homonymy is treated as a structural phenomenon. The primary goal of analysis is to identify and classify the different meanings associated with a linguistic form based on their formal properties. In this approach, meaning is assumed to be stable and can be described independently of context. This allows for a clear and systematic categorization of lexical items within a language.

However, this structural approach also reveals certain limitations. While semantic classification can identify the existence of multiple meanings, it does not explain how one meaning is selected in actual communication. In real language use, speakers and listeners are not confronted with isolated lexical items, but with utterances that occur within specific contexts. As a result, the interpretation of homonymous expressions cannot rely solely on semantic information.

Furthermore, the boundary between homonymy and polysemy is not always clear-cut. In some cases, it is difficult to determine whether meanings are truly unrelated or whether they share subtle conceptual connections. This ambiguity suggests that semantic classification may depend on interpretation and is not always objective. Such cases indicate that meaning is not entirely fixed, but may be influenced by contextual and cognitive factors (Pateda, 2010).

In addition to its structural complexity, homonymy also plays a significant role in creating lexical ambiguity in communication. When a homonymous word is used in an utterance, it may initially activate multiple possible meanings. Without sufficient contextual information, this ambiguity can lead to misunderstanding. However, in most communicative situations, ambiguity

is successfully resolved, suggesting that additional mechanisms are involved in meaning interpretation (Rofiah, 2024).

These observations indicate that while Lyons' theory provides a strong foundation for understanding homonymy as a semantic phenomenon, it is not sufficient to explain how meaning is interpreted in real communication. The theory focuses primarily on the relationship between form and meaning, but does not fully account for the role of context, inference, and social interaction in meaning interpretation.

Therefore, it can be argued that homonymy should not be viewed solely as a semantic phenomenon, but as a phenomenon that also involves pragmatic processes. While semantic theory identified the existence of multiple meanings, pragmatic analysis explains how one meaning is selected in context. This perspective suggests that a comprehensive understanding of homonymy requires the integration of semantic and pragmatic approaches.

In the context of this study, Lyons' theory serves as the primary framework for classifying homonymy in English and Butonese (Wolio). However, to explain how homonymous meanings are interpreted in communication, this study also incorporates a pragmatic perspective, particularly the concept of context as proposed by Levinson (1983). Through this integrative approach, homonymy is analyzed not only as a structural phenomenon, but also as a dynamic process of meaning interpretation.

2.2.4 Context and Meaning Interpretation (Levinson, 1983)

Semantic theory particularly that proposed by Lyons (1997), provides a systematic framework for identifying and classifying homonymy based on the relationship between form and meaning. However, this approach primarily focuses on lexical structure and does not sufficiently account for how meaning is interpreted in actual communication. In real language use, speakers and listeners rely not only on lexical meaning but also on contextual factors such as situation, intention, and shared knowledge. Therefore, understanding homonymy in communication requires a pragmatic perspectives. In this regard, Levinson (1983) emphasizes the role of context in shaping meaning interpretation, making it a relevant framework for this study.

Pragmatics is generally defined as the study of meaning in relation to context. According to Stephen C. Levinson (1983), pragmatics examines the relationship between language and context that is necessary for understanding meaning. This perspective emphasizes that meaning is not an inherent property of linguistic forms, but is constructed through their use in

specific communicative situations. In other words, meaning emerges from the interaction between linguistic expressions and contextual factors.

One of the central concepts in Levinson's framework is context, which refers to all the background knowledge and situational factors that influence how an utterance is interpreted. Levinson distinguishes several types of context that play a role in meaning interpretation. First, linguistic context (co-text) refers to the surrounding words and structures within an utterance. Co-text helps narrow down possible meanings by providing immediate linguistic cues. For instance, in cases of homonymy, co-text can function as a filter that eliminates irrelevant meanings and supports the intended interpretation.

Second, situational context refers to the physical and situational conditions in which communication takes place, including time, place, and ongoing activity. The meaning of an utterance may differ depending on whether it is used in a formal setting, informal conversation, or specific activity such as cooking, working, or playing sports. This type of context allows speakers and listeners to interpret meaning based on shared situational knowledge.

Third, social and cultural context involves the relationship between participants, social roles, cultural norms, and shared background knowledge. Language is inherently a social phenomenon, and meaning is often shaped by factors such as politeness, social distance, and cultural expectations. As noted by Wardhaugh (2006), language reflects social structures, and meaning interpretation is influenced by the norms and values of the speech community. This aspect of context is particularly important in languages where meaning is closely tied to social relations, such as in the use of honorific forms.

In addition to contextual factors, meaning interpretation also involves inferential processes. Communication is not merely a process of decoding linguistic forms, but also a process of inference, where listeners actively interpret the speaker's intended meaning based on available clues. This idea is closely related to the theory of implicature proposed by H. P. Grice (1975), which explains how meaning is often conveyed implicitly rather than explicitly.

According to Grice (1975), communication operates under the cooperative principle, where speakers and listeners assume that each participant contributes meaningfully to the interaction. This principle is supported by conversational maxims, such as relevance, which plays a crucial role in interpreting ambiguous expressions. When a word has multiple meanings, listeners tend to select the meaning that is most relevant to the context of the conversation.

This inferential mechanism is particularly important in the interpretation of homonymy. When a homonymous expression appears in an utterance, it may initially activate multiple possible meanings. However, through contextual cues and inferential reasoning, speakers and listeners are able to eliminate meanings that are not relevant and select the intended interpretation. This process can be understood as a mechanism of meaning selection through contextual filtering.

From this perspective, meaning is not static but dynamic and context-dependent. The interpretation of meaning involves the interaction between linguistic structure, contextual information, and cognitive processes. This view contrasts with purely semantic approaches that treat meaning as fixed and independent of context.

Therefore, Levinson's pragmatic framework provides an essential complement to semantic theory in explaining how meaning is interpreted in real communication. While semantics identified the possible meanings associated with a linguistic form, pragmatics explains how one meaning is selected based on context and inference. This complementary relationship is particularly important in analyzing homonymy, where multiple meanings coexist and require contextual interpretation.

In the context of this study, Levinson's concept of context is used to explain how homonymous meanings in English and Butonese (Wolio) are interpreted in communication. While Lyons' theory provides the basis for classifying homonymy, Levinson's framework explains how meaning is dynamically constructed and interpreted through contextual factors.

2.2.5 Theoretical Synthesis

Based on the discussion of semantics and pragmatics in the previous sections, meaning in language can be understood as a dynamic phenomenon that emerges from the interaction between linguistic form and contextual interpretation. This is particularly evident in homonymy, where a single linguistic form is associated with multiple unrelated meanings, potentially leading to ambiguity in communication.

From a semantic perspective, as proposed by Lyons (1977), homonymy can be systematically identified and classified based on the relationship between form and meaning. Through categories such as homophones, homographs, and total homonymy, semantic theory provides a clear framework for analyzing how multiple meanings coexist within a single linguistic form. In this sense, semantics plays a crucial role in describing the structural organization of meaning in language.

However, although semantic analysis provides a systematic framework for identifying homonymy, it primarily focuses on lexical relations and classification. As a result, it does not fully account for how speakers and listeners determine the intended meaning of homonymous expressions in actual communicative contexts. In the context of this study, this limitation is evident in both Wolio and English data, where identical forms often require contextual cues to resolve ambiguity. The same lexical item may convey different meanings depending on situational context, speaker intention, and shared knowledge. This indicates a gap between semantic representation and meaning interpretation in real communication.

Therefore, a pragmatic perspective is required to address this limitation. Levinson (1983) emphasizes that meaning is not inherent in linguistic forms but is constructed through context, including speaker intention, situational factors, and shared knowledge. This perspective provides an essential framework for understanding how meaning is interpreted in communicative situations, particularly in cases involving ambiguity such as homonymy.

By integrating semantic and pragmatic perspectives, this study positions homonymy at the semantic–pragmatic interface. In this framework, meaning interpretation can be understood as a two-stage process. First, at the semantic level, multiple meanings associated with a homonymous form are identified and become available for interpretation. Second, at the pragmatic level, one of these meanings is selected based on contextual relevance and inferential reasoning. This integrated approach enables a more comprehensive analysis of how homonymy operates in both Wolio and English, particularly in real communicative contexts.

2.3 Homonymy in English Language

Homonymy is a common phenomenon in English and plays an important role in shaping lexical ambiguity within the language. As one of the languages with a rich and dynamic vocabulary, English contains a large number of words that share the same form but differ in meaning. This condition reflects the complexity of the relationship between linguistic form and meaning, as discussed in semantic theory.

In English, homonymy can be observed in both spoken and written forms. Some words share the same pronunciation but differ in spelling and meaning, while others share both spelling and pronunciation but carry unrelated meanings. This aligns with the classification proposed by John Lyons (1977), which distinguishes between homophones, homographs, and total homonymy. These categories can be clearly identified in English, making it a suitable language for analyzing homonymy from a semantic perspective.

For example, the word bat can refer to an animal or a piece of sports equipment, while bank can mean a financial institution or the side of a river. These meanings are not semantically related, which makes them clear examples of homonymy rather than polysemy. Such cases illustrate how a single form can correspond to multiple distinct meanings within the same language.

From a semantic point of view, homonymy in English can be systematically classified based on the relationship between form and meaning. Words are treated as separate lexical entries when their meanings are unrelated, even if they share the same form. This reflects the structural approach emphasized by Lyons (1977), where the focus is on identifying and categorizing meanings within the language system.

However, in actual language use, the interpretation of homonymous words is rarely problematic. Speakers and listeners are generally able to determine the intended meaning without confusion. This is because meaning is not interpreted in isolation, but within a specific context. Linguistic elements such as surrounding words, grammatical structure, and sentence patterns play a crucial role in guiding interpretation.

For instance, in the sentence “He hit the ball with a bat,” the context of sports clearly indicates that bat refers to a tool rather than an animal. Similarly, in “She went to the bank to deposit money,” the presence of the word deposit signals that bank refers to a financial institution. These examples show that in English, meaning interpretation is strongly influenced by internal linguistic context, particularly co-text and syntactic structure.

This tendency suggests that homonymy in English is often resolved through what can be described as intra-sentential disambiguation, where meaning is clarified within the sentence itself. The presence of lexical collocation and grammatical cues allows speakers to select the appropriate meaning without relying heavily on external context.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that context is irrelevant. In some cases, especially in isolated expressions or minimal context, ambiguity may still arise. However, in most communicative situations, the linguistic structure provides sufficient information to guide interpretation. This indicates that English relies more on internal linguistic cues compared to languages that are more dependent on social or cultural context.

Therefore, homonymy in English demonstrates a relatively systematic and structurally guided pattern of meaning interpretation. While semantic theory is effective in identifying and classifying homonymy, the actual interpretation of meaning still involves contextual factors, particularly those

within the sentence. This characteristic distinguishes English from other languages where external context plays a more dominant role in meaning interpretation.

2.4 Homonymy in Butonese (Wolio) Language

Homonymy in Butonese (Wolio) demonstrates distinctive characteristics, particularly in how meaning is interpreted in communication. As a local language that is closely tied to social and cultural practices, Wolio functions not only as a means of communication but also as a reflection of social values, norms, and shared knowledge within the community.

In Wolio, homonymy can be observed in cases where a single linguistic form carries multiple meanings that are not semantically related. This phenomenon is consistent with the definition of homonymy proposed by John Lyons (1977). However, in actual language use, the interpretation of meaning in Wolio cannot be separated from context, especially social and cultural context.

Several examples illustrate this phenomenon. The word *balu* can mean 'new' or 'widow', while *bebe* can refer to 'to hit' or 'duck'. From a semantic perspective, these meanings are unrelated, and therefore fall under the category of homonymy. Nevertheless, in everyday communication, speakers do not experience difficulty in identifying the intended meaning.

This suggests that meaning interpretation in Wolio relies heavily on context. In many cases, the meaning is determined by the type of referent involved, whether it refers to a person, an object, or an action. In addition, the situational context also plays an important role, such as whether the utterance occurs in casual conversation, specific activities, or formal interaction.

More importantly, social and cultural factors significantly influence meaning interpretation. The relationship between speakers and listeners, levels of politeness, and cultural norms all contribute to how meaning is understood. For example, certain expressions may reflect respect or social hierarchy, indicating that meaning is not determined solely by linguistic structure, but also by social relations. This supports the view that language is a social phenomenon shaped by cultural practices (Wardhaugh, 2006).

Furthermore, in some cases, a single word in Wolio may have more than two meanings depending on context. This reflects what can be described as contextual homonymy, where meaning is not fixed but varies according to the situation and domain of use. Such flexibility indicates that meaning in Wolio is dynamic and context-sensitive.

The interpretation of meaning in Wolio also involves inferential processes. Speakers and listeners rely on shared knowledge and social experience to determine the intended meaning. In

this sense, context does not merely support interpretation, but becomes a central factor in meaning selection. This highlights the relevance of a pragmatic approach, particularly the concept of context proposed by Levinson (1983), in explaining homonymy in Wolio.

Compared to English, which tends to rely more on internal linguistic cues such as co-text and syntactic structure, Wolio shows a stronger dependence on external contextual factors, especially social and cultural context. This difference indicates that homonymy is not only a linguistic phenomenon, but also one that is shaped by the socio-cultural environment of its speakers.

Therefore, homonymy in Wolio cannot be fully understood through semantic classification alone. While Lyons' (1977) framework remains useful for identifying homonymous forms, the interpretation of meaning requires a broader perspective that incorporates context, inference, and social factors. This makes Wolio an important case in demonstrating that homonymy is a dynamic and context-dependent phenomenon in communication.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

This study is based on the assumption that homonymy is not only a semantic phenomenon, but also involves pragmatic processes in meaning interpretation. For this reason, the research adopts an integrative approach that combines semantic and pragmatic perspectives in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how homonymous meanings are identified and interpreted in communication.

The main theoretical foundation of this study is derived from the semantic theory of John Lyons (1977), which emphasizes the relationship between linguistic form and meaning. This theory is used to identify and classify homonymy into categories such as homophones, homographs, and total homonymy. Through this perspective, homonymous expressions in English and Butonese (Wolio) can be systematically analyzed based on their formal characteristics and semantic distinctions.

However, semantic classification alone cannot fully explain how meaning is interpreted in actual communication. To address this limitation, the study also employs a pragmatic perspective, particularly the concept of context proposed by Stephen C. Levinson (1983). This perspective explains how meaning is selected through contextual factors such as co-text, situational conditions, and socio-cultural background.

By combining these two perspectives, this study views homonymy as a process that involves both meaning identification and meaning interpretation. At the semantic level, multiple meanings

associated with a single linguistic form are identified. At the pragmatic level, one of these meanings is selected based on contextual relevance and inferential reasoning.

This process can be understood as a form of meaning selection, where speakers and listeners rely on contextual cues and shared knowledge to determine the most appropriate interpretation. In this case, context functions as a filter that eliminates less relevant meanings and highlights the intended one.

Furthermore, this study applies this analytical perspective in a comparative context by examining homonymy in English and Butonese (Wolio). In English, meaning interpretation tends to depend more on internal linguistic elements such as co-text and syntactic structure. In contrast, in Wolio, interpretation is more strongly influenced by external factors, particularly social and cultural context.

Based on this perspective, homonymy is understood as a phenomenon that exists at the intersection of semantics and pragmatics. Semantics provides the possible meanings associated with a linguistic form, while pragmatics explains how one of these meanings is selected in communication.

The relationship between these elements can be illustrated in the diagram below:

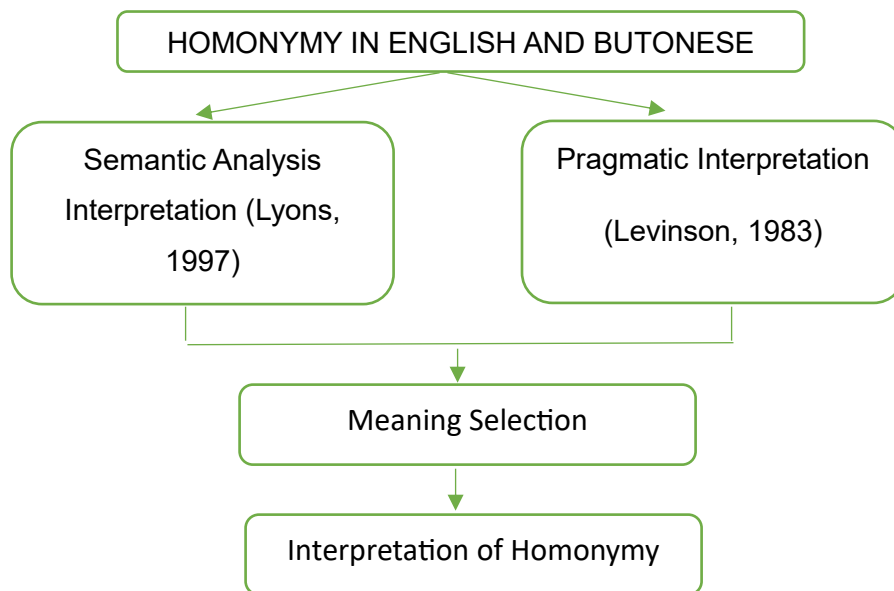


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

The diagram illustrates that homonymy is analyzed through two main perspectives, namely semantic analysis and pragmatic interpretation. These two perspectives interact to produce meaning selection through contextual and inferential processes, which ultimately lead to the interpretation of homonymy in communication.

2.6 Operational Definitions

This study employed several key terms that require operational definitions to ensure clarity and consistency in the analysis. The following operational definitions are formulated based on the research objectives and theoretical framework used in this study.

1. Homonymy

In this study, homonymy refers to words in English and Butonese (Wolio) that share the same form, either in pronunciation, spelling, or both, but have different and unrelated meanings. The classification of homonymy in this study is based on the concept proposed by Lyons (1977), which distinguishes between homophones, homographs, and total homonymy. In addition, this study also considers other forms such as lexical, contextual, and interlingual homonymy in the data analysis.

2. Semantic Analysis

Semantic analysis in this study refers to the process of identifying and classifying the meanings of homonymous words based on the relationship between form and meaning within the language system. This analysis is used to determine whether a word belongs to homonymy or polysemy and to classify the types of homonymy. The stages of semantic analysis in this study include: (1) identification of lexical meaning, (2) analysis of word usage distribution, and (3) classification of homonymy types.

3. Pragmatic Analysis

Pragmatic analysis in this study refers to the process of interpreting the meanings of homonymous words based on the context of language use in communication. This analysis is based on Levinson's (1983) pragmatic theory, which emphasizes the importance of context of utterance, discourse context, and socio-cultural context in understanding meaning. In this study, pragmatic analysis is used to determine the intended meaning of an utterance in a particular communicative situation.

4. Context of Utterance

Context of utterance in this study refers to the immediate situation in which an utterance occurs, including the speaker and hearer, time, place, and conversational conditions. This context is used to help determine the meaning of homonymy in communication.

5. Socio-Cultural Context

Socio-cultural context refers to the cultural background, social values, and shared knowledge possessed by speakers and hearers. In this study, socio-cultural context is particularly important in Butonese (Wolio), as the meaning of a word is often influenced by cultural norms and social practices.

6. Forms of Homonymy

Forms of homonymy in this study refer to the similarity of word forms that may occur in pronunciation (phonological), spelling (orthographic), or both. This analysis is used to identify whether a homonymous word belongs to the category of homophones, homographs, or total homonymy.

7. Types of Homonymy

Types of homonymy in this study refer to the classification of homonymy based on its semantic characteristics, such as total homonymy, homographs, homophones, lexical homonymy, contextual homonymy, and interlingual homonymy. This classification is used to organize the data and facilitate analysis.

8. Reevaluation of John Lyons' Concept

Reevaluation of homonymy in this study refers to the process of reassessing the adequacy of the theory proposed by Lyons in explaining homonymy phenomena in real communication. This evaluation is conducted by integrating semantic and pragmatic analyses to determine whether Lyons' structural approach can adequately explain meaning in multilingual communication contexts.

9. Interpretation of Homonymy in Communication

Interpretation of homonymy in this study refers to the process of understanding the intended meaning of a homonymous expression within a particular communicative context. This process involves both semantic and pragmatic analysis to achieve accurate meaning interpretation.

10. Cross-Linguistic Communication

Cross-linguistic communication in this study refers to interaction involving the use of two languages, namely English and Butonese (Wolio). In this context, homonymy may create ambiguity due to differences in language systems and cultural backgrounds, thus requiring accurate interpretation.