

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Definition of Semantics

Semantics is the study of meaning in language and has a vital role in understanding how language conveys information and ideas. Betti & Igaab (2021) say that semantics is the study of meaning in language. Semantics can analyze meaning not only in single words but also in entire texts, addressing how words and sentences interact to create coherent meaning. This field helps reveal how linguistic units such as words, phrases, and clauses carry and structure meaning in communication. It provides tools for analyzing the use of metaphors, idioms, and figurative language, which often do not follow literal interpretation but are crucial in understanding deeper intentions and implied meanings. In applied contexts, such as literature or media studies, semantics is essential to interpret and decode the intentions of speakers or writers. For instance, how tone, word choice, and sentence structure contribute to the overall message or theme becomes clear through semantic analysis.

It is a subfield of linguistics that explores meaning at various levels, from individual words to larger units of discourse. This branch of study focuses on understanding the essence of communication by deciphering the meanings encoded within language structures. Beyond analyzing individual components, semantics also investigates the rules and principles that govern how meanings combine to form logical and comprehensible messages. This includes compositional semantics, where the meaning of a sentence is built from the meanings of its parts and their syntactic arrangements. Moreover, semantics interacts closely with pragmatics, a branch that studies how context influences meaning. While semantics deals with literal meaning, pragmatics considers factors like speaker intention, cultural background, and situational context making both areas essential in understanding real-life communication.

According to Abdurrahman (2019), semantics is the study of the meaning of words, phrases and sentences. And then, Yunira et.al (2020) has a statement that meaning is the field of the study discussed in the semantic field. Semantics is a branch of linguistics that studies the meaning of words in languages. Through the study of semantics, linguists can trace how meaning shifts over time, how synonyms and antonyms develop, and how words carry both denotative (literal) and connotative (implied or emotional) meanings. This understanding is key in translation, language teaching, and discourse analysis. Furthermore, this field encourages awareness of how ambiguity and multiple meanings can arise from a single expression, which often occurs in poetry, advertising, and everyday speech. Being able to identify and interpret such semantic phenomena can enhance communication effectiveness in both spoken and written forms.

Kase (2019), as cited in Kurniawan (2023), defines semantics as the branch of linguistics that examines how language symbols relate to their meanings. Semantics is crucial in understanding how humans use language to convey messages, share knowledge, and express emotions, emphasizing the deep connection between words and the concepts they represent. This deep connection allows semantics to contribute to fields like artificial intelligence and natural language processing, where machines are trained to understand and produce human language based on meaning structures. By simulating semantic analysis, these systems can improve machine translation, sentiment analysis, and chatbot responses. Moreover, semantics supports critical thinking and analytical skills, helping individuals to evaluate arguments, detect fallacies, and recognize persuasive techniques in language. The awareness of semantic structures can thus empower individuals to be more discerning and effective communicators.

In conclusion, semantics plays a foundational role in understanding language, as it delves into how meaning is constructed, conveyed, and interpreted. As a vital branch of linguistics, it bridges words and human thought, enabling clearer communication, deeper interpretation, and effective interaction across different contexts. Whether in daily

conversations, literature, language learning, or digital communication, the study of semantics equips individuals with the tools to understand and navigate the complexities of meaning.

2.1.2 Types of Meaning

2.1.2.1 According to Geoffrey Leech's

In his work "Semantics. The Study of Meaning" published in the year 1981, Geoffrey Leech establishes at that time one of the most thorough classifications of the term "Meaning" from a semantic point of view. There are seven types of meaning according to Leech in Zdravkovic 2018:

1) Conceptual Meaning

According to Leech in Semantics: The Study of Meaning (1981), conceptual meaning (also called denotative or cognitive) is a major aspect of language communication. He argues that conceptual meaning has a complex structure, similar to the organization of syntax and phonology in language. According to Chaer in Sudaryati 2023, denotative meaning is the real meaning. For example, the words 'father' and 'daddy' have the same denotative meaning, namely 'male parent'. However, although these examples have the same meaning, their use in society has different values. The word 'father' has a higher value than the word 'daddy'. This shows that, although the denotation is fixed, the pragmatic or social value of the words may vary. Udofot in Matindas et al 2020, submits that "denotative meaning is the ordinary dictionary everyday meaning of a word or expression". He further stated that "in denotative usage, words refer to thing and point to factual variable situation."

Based on the various views that have been expressed, it can be concluded that conceptual or denotative meaning is the core or basic meaning of a word or phrase, which is usually found in a dictionary. It is objective, unaffected by social, cultural, or emotional context, and refers to the real meaning according to direct experience or observable facts. For example: "*Eu sebua tarewe nangi*" this proverb has a

denotative meaning because literally, it describes a large tree where the wind plays or passes, just as a clothesline is where other things are hung.

2) Connotative Meaning

Connotative meaning is the communication value that an expression has based on what it refers to, apart from its conceptual meaning. Connotative meaning often overlaps with conceptual meaning. This happens when features in conceptual meaning become properties of objects in the real world. However, additional connotative meanings can be influenced by factors such as age, culture, or individual perception. In other words, conceptual meaning is related to the language itself, while connotative meaning is related to the real world. Therefore, connotative meaning is more open-ended and unstable than conceptual meaning. Connotative meaning is the communicative value of expression based on what it refers to, exceeds and above its pure conceptual content. Related to real-world experiences associated with the linguistic expressions that people use or hear (Leech in Yunira et.al 2020). For example, the word 'home' conceptually means a place to live, but connotatively it can carry meanings of comfort, security, or even nostalgia depending on one's personal experience. These meanings are highly subjective and can differ between individuals, as they are influenced by their culture, social background and life experiences.

Hassan 2023, Connotative meaning is the communicative value that an expression has by virtue of what it refers to. Connotative meaning is the communicative value that an expression has by virtue of what it refers to, it is the 'real world' experience that one associates with an expression when one uses or hears it. For example, the connotative meaning of the word "dog" might include loyalty, friendship, and playfulness. According to Suwandi in Sudaryati 2023, connotation meaning is a lexeme that contains a person's idea related to the meaning that arises from its taste value. The meaning of a word

that arises is related to the value of taste when someone is respected, liked or liked, hated, and so on. Connotative meaning cannot be separated from denotative meaning. In addition, Pratiwi et al 2020 say that connotative meaning is the meaning that does not go directly to the intent or something, in other words this meaning exceeds the conceptual meaning itself, connotative meaning is often referred to as meaning that is not actually.

In conclusion, connotative meaning refers to the additional communicative value or emotional associations that a word carries beyond its literal and conceptual meanings. These meanings are shaped by real-world experiences, cultural background, and personal perspectives, so they are subjective and vary among individuals. For example: "*Emali dome si so ba lala, ba ono luo na so yomo*" This proverb has a connotative meaning because it implies deeper social values and relationships than just its denotative meaning. "Strangers" (*emali*) meeting on the road connotes unfamiliarity, while "brothers" (*ono luo*) arriving home connotes closeness and acceptance.

3) Social Meaning

Social meaning in language includes all the social aspects that influence the use of an expression. It relates to the various social groups involved in communication. There are the classification of social variation in language is based on several factors:

- Dialect (The language of a geographical region or social class)
- Time (e.g. The language of the 18th century)
- Province (Language of law, science, advertising, etc.)
- Status (Polite, colloquial, slang, etc.)
- Modality (Language of memoranda, lectures, jokes, etc.)
- Singularity (The style of Dickens, Hemingway, etc.)

Because of these factors, words with the same conceptual and social meaning are very rare. To prove this, Leech gives examples of words that are conceptually similar but have stylistic differences. Moreover, in certain contexts, social meaning can also reflect

illocutionary force, i.e. the intention behind an utterance, such as a request, apology, or threat.

4) Affective Meaning

Another type of meaning related to social meaning is affective meaning. This meaning indicates the speaker's personal feelings, including attitudes towards the listener or the topic being discussed. Affective meaning can be conveyed directly or indirectly, depending on the context. For example:

- You are a horrible person and I hate you. (Direct message)
- Boyfriend: "What's wrong?" Girlfriend (in a clearly nervous tone): "Nothing."

From these examples, it can be seen that tone of voice, facial expressions, and gestures play a big role in understanding the true meaning of an utterance (decoding).

5) Reflected Meaning

Reflected meaning occurs when a word has multiple conceptual meanings, and one of the meanings influences how we understand the other meanings. According to Leech, an example of this phenomenon can be found in the terms 'The Comforter' and 'The Holy Ghost'. Although both refer to the third element in the Holy Trinity, the meanings they evoke are different. 'The Comforter' gives the impression of being warm and soothing, whereas 'The Holy Ghost' feels more majestic and electrifying. Leech also adds that in cases like this, words can have suggestive power due to certain associations of meaning.

6) Collocative Meaning

Collocative meanings are meaning associations that arise because a word is often used together with certain words in a context. To explain this, Leech gives the example of the adjectives "pretty and handsome". While both mean "attractive" or "beautiful/handsome," their usage is different. "Pretty" is more often used with words like 'girl', 'flower', or 'village', while 'handsome' more often appears with 'man', 'car', or

'horse'. This means that the collocative meaning of a word depends on the words that commonly accompany it in everyday communication.

7) Thematic Meaning

Thematic meaning is related to the way the message is arranged and organized in a sentence. Leech explains that this meaning arises from the choice of grammatical structure used. For example, the difference between active and passive voice indicates thematic meaning:

- Active: Mr. X donated the first prize.
- Passive: The first prize was donated by Mr. X.

In addition, the choice of sentence structure also affects the emphasis of the message, as in:

- A man is here to see you.
- There is a man here to see you.

Other factors that affect thematic meaning are intonation and word emphasis in a sentence.

2.1.2.2 According to Frank Palmer

Types of meaning according to Frank Palmer in his book "Semantics: A New Outline" (1976) and its comparison with Geoffrey Leech

1. Sense (conceptual/intra-linguistic meaning)

Relates to the relationship between elements in the language itself, not referring to the real world.

2. Reference (referential/extra-linguistic meaning)

Refers to the relationship between language and the real-world referents. The opposite of sense, but both are interrelated.

3. Social or Inter-personal Meaning

Meaning that arises from the social context or relationships between speakers. These include: Affective Meaning is meaning that contains elements of the speaker's feelings or attitudes. Examples: through intonation, emotion, or tone of voice.

4. Presuppositional Meaning

Meaning that is implied or presupposed in a sentence. Example: “When did you stop beating your wife?” assumes that the questioner has been violent before. This is not discussed by Leech, only by Palmer.

5. Utterance-meaning (utterance-specific meaning depending on the context of the utterance)

Meaning that arises based on the specific context of communication, not just from the sentence itself. Example: “There is a house over there” → requires context and follow-up questions to understand the actual meaning. Palmer calls this outside the scope of semantics, rather than pragmatics. It can be partly equated with Thematic Meaning according to Leech.

6. Reflected Meaning (mentioned in relation to Leech)

Additional meaning that arises because a particular word is associated with other meanings in the culture. Palmer does not discuss this specifically, but some of her examples (such as liberty and freedom) show this element.

2.1.2.3 According to John Lyons

The types of meaning according to John Lyons in his two works (2002 and 1996), the following is a sorting and classification of the types of meaning proposed in the explanation:

A. Form-Based Classification

1. Lexical Meaning

This meaning comes from the word itself individually. For example, the word "cat" means a four-legged animal that is often kept by humans.

2. Sentence Meaning

Meaning that arises from the whole sentence, not just from individual words. Sentence meaning is divided into:

- Grammatical Meaning: Meaning determined by structure or grammar.

- Utterance Meaning: Meaning that depends on the context in which the sentence is used in a real situation.

B. Semiotic/Communicative Function-Based Classification

3. Descriptive Meaning (or Descriptive Function)

Meaning that conveys factual information or statements that can be judged as true or false. For example: "Water boils at 100 degrees Celsius" is verifiable information.

4. Non-descriptive Meaning

Meaning that does not convey factual information and cannot be judged as true or false. This type is divided into two:

- Expressive Meaning (also called Emotive or Affective Meaning): Meaning that shows the speaker's feelings, emotions, or attitudes. Examples: "Oh my gosh!" or "That's great!"
- Social Meaning: Meaning that indicates social relationship, social status, level of formality, or social role in the communication. For example, the use of "you" (more formal) vs "your" (more casual) reflects social relationships.

C. Based on Linguistic Meaning Analysis (Reference-Sense Framework)

5. Reference

It is the relationship between words or language expressions and real objects or concepts in the outside world. For example, the word "sun" refers to a celestial body that illuminates the earth.

6. Sense

It is the relationship between words in the language system itself. For example, the relationship between the words "student" and "teacher", or between "big" and "small". Sense is similar to conceptual meaning according to Leech, and is also related to connotative meaning.

All three experts discuss the types of meaning in language, but with slightly different approaches and focuses. Leech (1981) categorizes meaning into seven types which are quite complete and detailed, ranging from basic meaning (conceptual meaning) which is objective and can be found in the dictionary, to thematic meaning which relates to how messages

are arranged in sentences. Leech also includes social and affective aspects, which show the meaning not only of the word, but also of the social context and feelings of the speaker, as well as reflected meaning that arises from the double meaning relationship of a word.

Meanwhile, Palmer (1976) offers a simpler but still profound classification by dividing meaning into sense (conceptual/intra-linguistic) and reference (extra-linguistic), which is similar to Leech's conceptual and denotative meaning. Palmer also adds social and affective meaning to interpersonal meaning, similar to Leech, as well as presuppositional meaning which indicates the implied meaning or assumption in a sentence, something that Leech does not discuss. Palmer also distinguishes a more pragmatic meaning of utterances, which is the meaning that arises in the specific context of communication.

Lyons (1996, 2002) divides meaning based on form (form-based), communication function (function-based), and linguistic analysis (reference-sense framework). He distinguishes lexical meaning (word meaning) and sentence meaning (sentence meaning) which includes grammatical and utterance meaning. Lyons also divides meaning into factual descriptive and non-descriptive which includes expressive/affective and social meaning, in line with Leech and Palmer's divisions. Lyons' main difference is the focus on separating meaning by form (word vs. sentence) and communicative function, which can help analyze meaning from the micro (word) to macro (sentence and context) level.

In terms of similarities, all three agree that meaning is not only about the dictionary definition (denotative/conceptual), but also includes social, affective, and contextual meanings that arise in everyday language interactions. All agree that social and affective meanings are very important in understanding the message conveyed, especially in traditional culture and communication such as proverbs in traditional ceremonies.

The difference lies in focus and scope:

- Leech is very detailed with seven types of meaning that facilitate analysis from many sides, including thematic and collocative.

- Palmer adds presuppositional meaning which is important for understanding implied meaning and pragmatic meaning of utterances.
- Lyons emphasizes the separation of meaning based on linguistic form and communication function, and more explicitly distinguishes descriptive and non-descriptive meaning.

To analyze meaning in traditional Nias proverbs in the context of marriage, Leech's model can be very useful because of its comprehensive and flexible scope to capture literal meaning as well as the social and emotional meaning inherent in the proverbs.

2.1.3 Definition of Proverbs

Proverbs are simple and concrete sayings popularly known and repeated, which express a truth, based on common sense or the practical experience of humanity. They are traditional sayings which offer advice or present a moral in a short and pithy manner. Proverbs are often metaphorical. Proverbs that describe a basic rule of conduct may also be known as maxims. Sadikovna 2021 says that, a proverb is always a sentence. It has a didactic purpose (to teach, warn, etc.). Proverbs are often compound sentences. In context, the proverb acts as a stand-alone sentence or as part of a compound sentence. Proverbs are semantically realized by being attached to variable sentences. And then, according to Whiting in Almutalabi 2019, a proverb is "An expression which owing its birth to the people, testifies its origin in form and phrase".

Lauhakangas 2019 also have statement that proverbs are also a genre of folklore. Thus, they belong to the tradition of each culture although their ideas are international. Mieder's in Igwebuike & Nweze 2020, definition that 'proverb is a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed, memorable form which is handed down from generation to generation.

From these opinions, it can be concluded that proverbs are concise and metaphorical expressions that convey wisdom, truth, morals, and

practical advice rooted in common sense and cultural traditions. Proverbs serve a didactic purpose, teaching or warning through short, memorable and often compound sentences. As a genre of folklore, proverbs reflect the unique traditions of each culture while embodying universal ideas passed down from generation to generation.

Talking about people's understanding of proverbs, we can see that proverbs are not just expressions that are passed down from generation to generation, but also reflect the way of thinking and social values in a community. People use proverbs as a communication tool to convey advice, warn, or affirm a truth in a concise yet meaningful way. In many cultures, including Indonesia, proverbs are often used in daily life, both in informal conversations and in conveying cultural values through education, folklore and traditional arts. In the context of Nias society, proverbs are part of customs and moral teachings that are passed down orally from generation to generation.

People's understanding of proverbs is also influenced by the social and educational environment. In societies that still strongly uphold oral traditions, proverbs are more often used and deeply understood. However, in the modern era, where written and digital culture is increasingly dominant, the understanding of proverbs may have changed or even diminished among the younger generation. Therefore, the preservation and utilization of proverbs in the context of formal and informal education is important to maintain the cultural wealth and wisdom contained therein.

2.1.4 The Functions of Proverbs

There are some functions of proverb that we should know, such as:

- 1) Proverbs are used as a useful tool to express our need for communication and sharing knowledge, feelings, attitudes, responses, beliefs, reactions, etc. Proverbs are indispensable language and communication techniques (Hernadi & Steen in Hoshan 2021) stating that proverbs are necessary to provide us with guidelines that are brief, memorable, intuitively convincing, and socially approved.

- 2) Proverbs serve as a general code for setting standards of ethical and moral behavior. This shows that proverbs have become part of our social norms.
- 3) Taylor in Hoshan 2021 also states that proverbs can be used as "a means for criticizing or praising people" as in the following proverb "It is an ill bird that fouls its own nest". This proverb is used to condemn the person who vilifies his own family, friends, relatives, country, etc. On the contrary, proverbs can also be used as a "device for providing guidance for people's lives".

From these, it can be seen that the function of proverbs is closely related to the role of proverbs in social and cultural life. In daily life, people use proverbs not only as a means of communication, but also as a means of reinforcing shared moral and ethical values. As a communication tool, proverbs allow individuals to convey messages in a concise yet meaningful way. In oral cultures, such as those still found in many traditional societies, proverbs are often used in everyday conversation to teach wisdom without having to give lengthy explanations. For example, in Nias society, proverbs can be used in traditional meetings to emphasize the principles of justice, hard work or togetherness. In addition, proverbs also serve as reinforces of social norms. People use proverbs to set standards of behavior that are considered good or bad. Thus, proverbs become part of the informal education system that instills ethical values from an early age.

The function of criticism and praise in proverbs also reflects the way society assesses and corrects the behavior of individuals in the community. In certain situations, proverbs are used to satirize or remind someone without directly offending, thus maintaining social harmony. Conversely, proverbs can also be used to praise people who behave well and set an example for others. Thus, proverbs are not just a part of language, but also reflect the collective thinking of a society. They serve as tools to teach moral values, maintain social norms, criticize and praise, and guide individuals in living life. Therefore, people's understanding of

proverbs plays an important role in maintaining the continuity of cultural traditions and local wisdom from generation to generation.

2.1.5 Previous Research

Researchers found previous research by Zalukhu et.al 2024, which also analyzed the meaning contained in *amaedola* (proverbs) at traditional Nias weddings. This research is descriptive and qualitative research. Data sources in this research are traditional leaders. The data analysis techniques used are data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Based on the results of the research that has been arranged in the order of the problem formulation with the research objectives, it can be concluded that Amaedola contains meanings that contain advice so that from Amaedola that is conveyed can be interpreted in family life. Based on that, there are several meanings contained in Amaedola ono niha (Nias proverbs):

- 1) Denotative meaning which means it can be found in all aspects that are concrete and literal.
- 2) In the context of Nias marriage customs, Amaedola also has connotative meanings that are rich in cultural values and emotions associated with the procession.
- 3) Communicative Meaning i.e. in the context of traditional Nias marriage, events such as Amaedola has a rich and important communicative meaning. This communicative meaning involves messages that are conveyed indirectly through the actions, symbols and rituals that occur during the event.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this research focuses on examining proverbs used in traditional Nias weddings, from a semantic perspective, specifically denotative and connotative meaning. The framework outlines key concepts and relationships that guide the analysis, emphasizing how proverbs convey cultural values, wisdom and social norms in the context of traditional wedding ceremonies. By exploring the meaning and function

of these proverbs, the framework aims to highlight the importance of proverbs in preserving the cultural identity and traditions of the Nias people.

The conceptual framework about “Semantics Perspectives' On the Proverbs of Traditional Nias Wedding at Dahadanö Gawu-Gawu Village, Gunungsitoli City” is described in the schematic as follows:

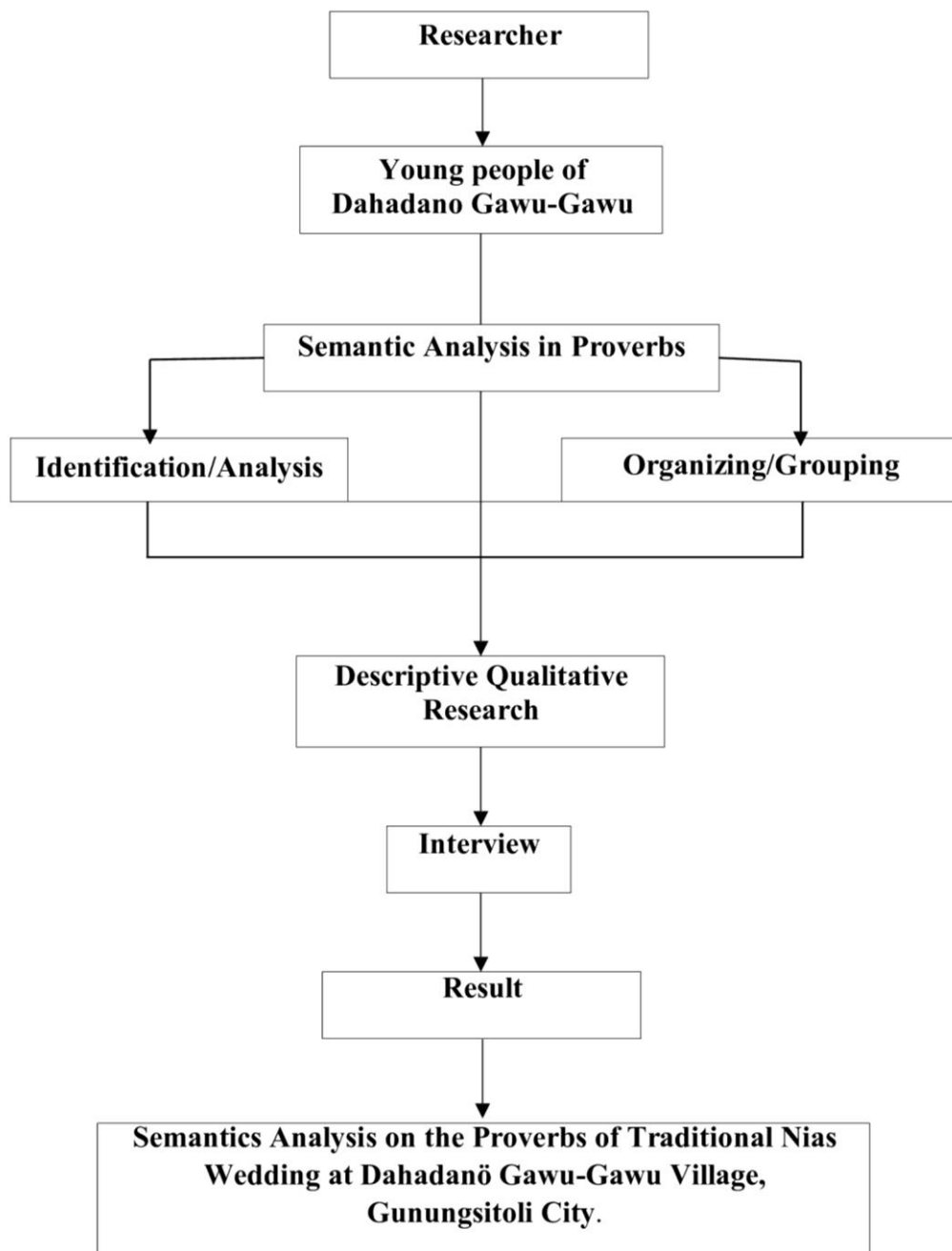


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework