



## Examining How Semantics Influences Communication in the Classroom

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**ABSTRACT:** This study explored how students' cognition is shaped by their cultural background and the function of semantics in classroom communication. To examine open-ended questions, the researcher employed a qualitative technique called thematic analysis. Fifty participants from level 4, English Language Unit, Preparatory Studies Centre, the University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Salalah, the Sultanate of Oman involved in the study. Some important conclusions emerged from the analysis. Students first stressed the need for semantics in maintaining comprehension and preventing misconceptions. Second, students' interpretations of meaning were impacted by their cultural origins, underscoring the importance of culturally sensitive instruction. Third, when it came to understanding semantic ideas, students favored interactive learning techniques like role-plays and conversations. Fourth, teaching semantics was not like teaching other language issues; to close the theory-practice gap, additional real-world examples were needed. Lastly, students thought that adding exercises to enhance semantic awareness would help them communicate more effectively. These results imply that using participatory, culturally aware teaching strategies might enhance students' communication and semantic awareness in heterogeneous classrooms.

**KEYWORDS:** Semantics, classroom communication, cultural background, interactive learning, inclusive learning environments.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Overview of Semantics in Communication

Effective message transmission and interpretation depend heavily on semantics, the foundation for comprehending meaning in communication (Geurts, 2019). It explores the relationship between the ideas or conceptions that our signs and symbols (signifiers) reflect and the signs themselves (Lemke, 1998). Every aspect of human contact, including written and spoken language as well as nonverbal clues like gestures and facial expressions, is shaped by this complex balance between form and meaning. Denotation, or the literal meaning of a word or phrase, is one of the basic concepts of semantics. It is obvious what is meant when someone says, "The cat sat on the mat," as a cat is placed on a piece of woven fabric (Cruse, 2010). Semantics, however, goes beyond appearances and includes connotation as well. Beyond its denotation, a word's connotation refers to the extra thoughts, feelings, and cultural baggage it conveys. For example, depending on an individual's experiences and cultural background, the word "cat" may convey thoughts of independence or cuteness (Textor, 2010).

It is essential to comprehend these underlying meaning levels to communicate effectively. For example, "The politician dodged the question." The connotation suggests a purposeful and maybe manipulative behavior, but the denotation says the politician just chose not to respond. By identifying these subtleties, we can improve the accuracy of our message interpretation and prevent misunderstandings. Semantics also includes the several ways in which we interpret signs together. The principles that determine how words are put together in sentences or syntax are extremely important. A minor modification in phrase structure, such as "The dog bit the man" instead of "The man bit the dog," significantly changes the intended meaning. Furthermore, pragmatics affects our understanding of the context of communication. Understanding the speaker's intention and the message's overall meaning is aided by nonverbal clues, shared knowledge, and cultural standards (Grice, 1975). Semantics also recognizes the ambiguity that is a part of language. Homonyms are words that have more than one meaning, while polysemy is the structure of sentences that permits many readings. Accurately interpreting the intended message requires taking into account multiple options and comprehending the context (Levinson, 1983).

#### 1.2 Statement of the Problem

It is indisputable that a grasp of semantics is crucial for educators, yet putting theory into practice can be difficult. Several issues make it challenging to help learners develop semantic awareness, necessitating thoughtful consideration and creative solutions from teachers.



The intrinsic complexity of language itself is a major barrier. Semantics explores the complex interrelationships between words, meanings, and use contexts (Cruse, 2010). When it comes to language subtleties, young learners may find this complexity especially difficult to understand. Moreover, another difficulty is the high degree of ambiguity in language. Words with several meanings are called homophones, while sentences with multiple interpretations are called polysemy. This ambiguity can cause misunderstandings and confusion, making it more difficult for pupils to comprehend verbal and written communication (Levinson, 1983).

Students' diverse cultural backgrounds and past experiences can make it difficult for them to comprehend semantics. Depending on the cultural context, words and phrases might have diverse meanings, which could result in misunderstandings. Furthermore, learners who have a broad vocabulary or a variety of learning styles might find it difficult to understand the nuances of meaning that are expressed through different linguistic components (Cummins, 1994). The prevalence of conventional educational methods, which frequently emphasize rote memorization and decontextualized vocabulary learning (McKeown, 2019), is another contributing factor. This method may restrict students' comprehension of how semantics is dynamic and how to use it in authentic communication situations (Snow & Uccelli 2009). Lastly, the issue may be made worse by the curriculum's lack of specific teaching and time allotted for semantics. It takes careful organization and resource allocation to incorporate activities and conversations that are explicitly focused on semantic awareness within the already rigorous teaching schedule.

As a result, there are many obstacles to overcome while teaching semantics in the classroom, ranging from the intrinsic complexity of the language to the wide range of student demands and the constraints of conventional teaching approaches. A multidimensional strategy that emphasizes contextualized vocabulary acquisition, explicit instruction, and activities (Baker, 2006; Glahn & Gruber, 2020), that encourages critical thinking and reflection on the subtleties of meaning in communication is needed to address these issues. Through recognition and resolution of these challenges, educators may establish a classroom atmosphere that enables learners to develop into self-assured and proficient communicators.

### *1.3 Importance of Understanding Semantics in the Classroom*

It is not only necessary to understand semantics, the study of language meaning, for academic purposes; in the dynamic classroom setting, it is of utmost relevance. Teachers provide their pupils with the skills they need to become proficient communicators in the classroom and beyond by stimulating their semantic knowledge (Hornsby & Stanley, 2005). Improved reading comprehension is among the main advantages of knowing semantics (Supramaniam & Zainal, 2014). Students are better able to derive deeper meaning from texts when they understand the denotative and connotative meanings of words (Cruse, 2010). They can comprehend the nuances and intricacies of the author's intended meaning in addition to just understanding specific words and sentences. For example, by recognizing the many meanings attached to terms like "brave" and "reckless" in a work, students may comprehend the subtleties of character development and the author's main point of view.

Moreover, a firm understanding of semantics promotes improved writing abilities. Students can communicate more effectively and clearly when they grasp how context, sentence structure, and word choice affect meaning. Students can make deliberate decisions when building their communication through exercises including finding synonyms and antonyms, examining how word choice affects tone, and breaking down sentence structure (Top Teaching Tasks, 2023). This knowledge enables authors to adapt their writing to certain audiences and goals, assuring that the intended receivers will understand what they're trying to say. Additionally, semantics is essential for the growth of critical thinking abilities. Through investigating how language creates meaning, students can examine, scrutinize, and question presumptions. They can dissect biased language, recognize logical fallacies, and conduct an in-depth study of arguments made in talks and writings (Grice, 1975). They can negotiate the intricacies of the information-rich world around them with the help of this critical thinking capacity, which will enable them to become responsible and educated citizens. Beyond the benefits to academic performance, learning semantics helps students become more proficient communicators in their social and personal lives. By acknowledging the possibility of ambiguity and the impact of context, they can precisely decipher communications, preventing misunderstandings and misinterpretations. Furthermore, by being conscious of language's power, people may use it carefully and sensibly to promote empathy and build strong bonds with others (Levinson, 1983).

### *1.4 Goals of the Research*

1. To look into how pupils, understand written and spoken communication in the classroom when it comes to semantics.



2. To investigate the difficulties instructors have when teaching semantics and how they work to overcome these difficulties.
3. To investigate how students' grasp of semantics is shaped by their cultural background and prior experiences.
4. To evaluate how well the existing teaching strategies are fostering students' communication and semantic awareness.
5. To make recommendations on how to include exercises in semantic awareness into the curriculum to improve student's communication skills.

### 1.5 Research Questions

1. What impact does semantics have on students' understanding of written and spoken communication in the classroom?
2. What are the key obstacles that instructors teaching semantics must overcome, and how do they overcome these obstacles?
3. What effects do students' prior experiences and cultural backgrounds have on their comprehension of semantics?
4. How well do the educational strategies used today help students develop their communication and semantic awareness?
5. What methods may be suggested to include exercises in semantic awareness into the curriculum to improve students' communication skills?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Definition and Theories of Semantics

Linguistically speaking, semantics refers to the meaning that words have. Semantics is important because it helps us understand how meaning is expressed through words, phrases, and sentences, as well as how language is utilized to represent different concepts, opinions, and feelings. In contrast to syntax, which analyzes sentence structure (Zhang et al., 2023), semantics focuses on how language is employed in communicating meaning. The meaning analysis takes place at the semantic level of language study. It is the greatest conceptual stage in linguistic research since content cannot be heard or seen in the same manner that sounds can be heard and recorded. The human ability to reason and comprehend things is intimately linked to meaning. As a result, when we attempt to examine meaning, what we are doing is attempting to comprehend and evaluate our mental capability (Bagha, 2011). According to Leech (1981), semantics is concerned with "giving a systematic account of the nature of meaning."

Semantics delves into the world of meaning in language. The study of the connection between language form and meaning may be a more precise definition. There is no doubt that rules govern this relationship, just as they do other aspects of language structure. It is a common misconception, for instance, that language speakers learn every conceivable sentence by heart. However, this is untrue, as speakers continuously produce innovative and distinct comprehensible sentences to others who are listening to them for the first time. Rather, students of languages learn a series of rules for assembling vocabulary words into coherent sentences (syntax) in addition to a vocabulary (lexicon). For the same reason, we have to accept that language students must acquire a set of rules for understanding word combinations in addition to the meanings of vocabulary words. For spoken language interaction to occur, all of these components must be shared by the speech community. Understanding this shared list of guidelines that helps listeners to accurately decipher what speakers mean to say is our goal while studying semantics (Kroeger, 2023).

To investigate how semantics affects classroom communication, one must grasp several theoretical frameworks that serve as glasses through which to view this intricate phenomenon. Here, the researcher examines four important theories:

### 2.2 Formal Semantics

Formal semantics is concerned with the formal representation of meaning in language and has its roots in logic and philosophy (Cruse, 2010). This theory investigates how sentence formation is influenced by components such as reference and truth conditions. Formal semantics can be applied in the educational setting to: Examine the effects of sentence structure and word order on meaning. The significance of syntax in meaning communication is demonstrated by the fact that the sentences "The student greeted the teacher" and "The teacher greeted the student" have distinct meanings. Analyze how reasoning and logic are used in academic writing and conversations. Students who comprehend the logical connections between ideas and propositions are better able to organize their arguments and follow the logical progression of ideas in academic discourse. Formal semantics, however, has its limits in the classroom. It frequently emphasizes language that has been taken out of context and might not adequately convey the subtleties of meaning that are influenced by social context and cultural background (Levinson, 1983).



### 2.3 Semantics of Cognition

The focus of cognitive semantics is on the mental operations required to comprehend meaning (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). According to this idea, intellectual analogies, mental images, and our embodied experiences form the foundation of our comprehension of language. Cognitive semantics can be applied in the classroom to: examine how analogies and metaphors can improve comprehension of difficult ideas. For instance, teaching students that "learning is like building a house" might help them comprehend that information is acquired incrementally. Examine how pupils' past experiences and knowledge affect the way they understand language. Teachers can modify their lesson plans to help students make the link between new ideas and their previous experience by getting to know the mental models that they bring to the classroom. However, in schools with a variety of cultural backgrounds, cognitive semantics could encounter difficulties. Cultural context can influence how metaphors and other figurative language are interpreted, thus educators need to be aware of the possibility of misconceptions (Holcomb, 2006).

### 2.4 The Pragmatic Approach

The link between language and social environment is the main emphasis of social pragmatics (Grice, 1975). This theory highlights how language and context, as well as individuals' shared knowledge and intentions, all contribute to the meaning that words and grammar convey. Social pragmatics in the classroom can be used to: examine how students utilize language to accomplish various communicative objectives, such as expressing thoughts, obtaining information, and convincing others. Increase students' comprehension of nonverbal clues, such as tone of voice, gestures, and facial expressions, which are important for meaning-making in classroom communication (Anderson et al., 2017). However, pupils who struggle with nonverbal communication or have low social interaction abilities may find social pragmatics challenging. To ensure that every student engages in class discussions and participates successfully, educators must take into account each student's unique requirements and offer extra assistance.

### 2.5 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

The ideological and social power dynamics ingrained in language use are the subject of CDA (Fairclough, 2003). This theory looks at how language may perpetuate social inequality, preserve power hierarchies, and form knowledge. Using CDA in the classroom may be used to: examine how certain knowledge views or cultural biases may be portrayed in textbooks and other educational resources. Students' critical thinking abilities are strengthened as a result, giving them the ability to challenge the presumptions and ideals ingrained in language. Consider how instructors' dominance of conversations or their silencing of specific perspectives can be examples of how classroom discourse itself can perpetuate power disparities. Teachers who acknowledge and address these issues can create a more equitable and inclusive learning environment. Nevertheless, CDA may be a sophisticated and nuanced method that calls for extensive teacher preparation as well as setting aside time for study and conversation. Teachers must make sure that students at varying ages and developmental stages can access and understand CDA by providing the proper complexity and scaffolding.

Through an examination of these many theoretical frameworks, educators may get a more profound comprehension of the complex aspects of semantics in classroom communication. Every theory provides a unique perspective through which to examine the processes of meaning construction, interpretation, and contextual and linguistic influences. Through the integration of diverse perspectives and customization to meet the unique requirements of their pupils and learning context, educators can create a learning environment that enhances communication clarity and effectiveness, develops critical thinking abilities, and equips students to effectively navigate language complexities in both their personal and academic lives.

### 2.6 Previous Studies on Semantics in Education

In the setting of public primary schools in the Sameta district of Kenya, Wilfred's (2013) study offers insightful information about the relationship between semantics and communication. The results show that semantics matters in communication and the degree of communication and semantics are positively and significantly correlated. These results are in line with earlier studies that emphasize how crucial semantics are to good communication. Significantly, Wilfred's research highlights the difficulties educators encounter when instructing semantics and the consequences these difficulties have for classroom communication. An extensive knowledge of the context in which semantics and communication function is provided by the study's focus on the profile of respondents regarding gender, age, marital status, professional qualification, and kind of school. The study's primary finding—that male teachers predominate in the majority of schools—highlights a possible gender imbalance in the teaching profession in the area.





This research presents significant issues on how gender affects classroom communication and instructional strategies. Furthermore, the study's conclusions about the state of semantics and communication in the schools that were sampled point to the need for additional investigation and intervention to improve instructors' and students' semantic awareness and communication abilities.

The significance of semantics in language acquisition and communication is emphasized by Alsayed's (2019) research, especially for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The study places a strong emphasis on how semantics helps students become more aware of and knowledgeable about speech, sentence structure, and word meaning. Through an emphasis on Semantics maps, which graphically represent the meaning-based relationships between words or concepts, the research offers a useful strategy for improving semantic comprehension. The study's theoretical underpinnings stem from the notion that effective human communication depends on making use of meaning mechanisms. Short-term vocabulary improvement and long-term language proficiency are the study's goals. Key terminology in semantics is taught, the Semantics Analysis of Writing (SAW) approach is used, and the 'agent-action-goal with real-life action' strategy is employed. Alsayed's study makes a significant contribution by emphasizing the structuring of semantic information using L2 vocabulary methods (Jiang, 2004). This method emphasizes the interconnectedness of language abilities and acknowledges the significance of incorporating semantics into more comprehensive language development strategies. The study also indicates that putting semantics strategies into practice can assist reveal the connection between teaching semantics and enhancing English language learners' language proficiency. Alsayed's study provides excellent insights into how semantics affects classroom communication and how it can be successfully integrated into language teaching methods by offering a realistic and theoretically solid way to teach semantics.

The knowledge, attitudes, and practices of speech-language pathologists (SLPs) about kids who have semantic deficits and their interactions with classroom instructors are the main subjects of Dudek's (2013) study. The goal of the research is to determine how much SLPs and teachers collaborate to develop and carry out treatments for kids who have semantic delays, as well as how much SLPs know about semantic and metalinguistic abilities. The survey used in the study, which involved 101 school-based SLPs in Illinois, included multiple-choice questions, Likert scales, and demographic inquiries. The findings showed that participants' understanding of semantics and metalinguistic techniques was sufficient. Furthermore, over 90% of participants rated the importance of themes like semantic interventions and teacher communication as moderate to extremely significant. One of the studies' main conclusions was that, in regards to semantic interventions, at least 75% of participants had some communication with teachers. This emphasizes how crucial multidisciplinary cooperation is to meeting the requirements of pupils who are semantically delayed. According to the study, SLPs understand the value of teacher-student communication in helping students use their semantic abilities in a variety of contexts. Ultimately, the study's conclusions point to SLPs' extensive understanding of semantic abilities and their appreciation of cross-disciplinary communication when implementing semantic treatments.

### *2.7 Role of Semantics in Effective Communication*

For communication to be effective, semantics is essential since it affects how other people understand and comprehend messages. People can become more proficient communicators by learning the definitions of words and the many situations in which they are used. Semantics is examined in this part with a focus on how it affects language understanding, expression, and interpretation to facilitate effective communication. Semantics's ability to clarify meaning is one of its main features. To ensure that their communication is understandable and clear, semantics assists people in selecting the best words (Clark & Clark, 1977). For instance, the term "hot" might indicate multiple things depending on the context of a discussion about the weather. To ensure that the message is understood appropriately, semantics clarifies if "hot" relates to temperature, spiciness, or popularity. Additionally, semantics is essential to language understanding. People can make sense of the information they are given and react properly if they can comprehend the meaning of words and phrases (McRae et al., 2005).

Semantics aids in the understanding of the connection between the words and the actions they describe, such as in the case of reading a phrase like "The cat chased the mouse," enabling readers to visualize the picture in their minds. Semantics also affects how people understand nonliteral languages, such as idioms and metaphors (Gibbs, 1994). It is necessary to comprehend the underlying semantic ideas to decipher the meaning behind these statements. For instance, the metaphor "time is money" emphasizes the significance of time management by suggesting that time should be seen as valuable as money. Language ambiguity resolution also involves semantics. Semantics aids in determining the intended meaning depending on context, as many words and phrases have numerous meanings (Hoffman et al., 2013). Semantics aids in discerning the intended meaning of a particular situation. For



instance, the term "bank" might denote both a financial institution and the bank itself. Lastly, semantics is necessary for cross-cultural communication to be successful. Semantics aids people in navigating the meanings and connotations of words and phrases that may change between cultures (Gumperz, 1992). Semantics is therefore essential to good communication since it helps with meaning clarification, language understanding, nonliteral interpretation, ambiguity resolution, and cross-cultural communication. Learners may improve their communication abilities and make sure that their communications are correctly read and comprehended by being aware of the function of semantics.

### *2.8 Impact of Semantics on Learning Outcomes*

Learning outcomes in a variety of domains, including language acquisition, cognitive development, and academic accomplishment, are greatly influenced by semantics. This section examines how semantics affects learning outcomes, emphasizing how knowledge and skill acquisition are influenced by a grasp of meaning. Semantics' importance in language acquisition is one of its main effects on learning outcomes. Learners can expand their vocabulary and grasp difficult texts by using semantics to assist them in understanding the meanings of words and phrases (Nagy et al., 1985; Rohman, 2017). For instance, mastering the semantics of words and grammar rules is crucial to speaking successfully when learning a new language. Semantics also affects how people understand and remember information. Learning and memory are facilitated when people can make mental connections between new information and prior knowledge through a comprehension of concept meaning ( Craik & Lockhart, 1972). For instance, knowing the definitions of terms like "orbit" and "axis" during a solar system lesson improves students' comprehension of the material.

Additionally, semantics is essential to problem-solving and critical thinking. People are better able to assess situations and make educated decisions when they comprehend the meaning of information and instructions (Kuhn, 1999). For instance, doing a science experiment correctly and interpreting the findings depend on one's ability to understand the semantics of the technique. Semantics also affects the way people express their ideas and opinions. People can communicate more efficiently and clearly when they use terms that have exact meanings (Tannen, 1994). For instance, knowing a word's semantics helps someone present their case more persuasively during a debate or argument. Furthermore, by affecting how people interact with academic content, semantics promotes academic success. Success in school and postsecondary education depends on having a solid understanding of academic topics and terminology (Gee, 2004). For instance, correctly answering problems in mathematics requires a comprehension of the semantics of mathematical symbols and procedures. Semantics hence, significantly affects learning outcomes in a variety of fields. Students may improve their language learning, cognitive growth, critical thinking, communication abilities, and scholastic success by learning the meanings of words and concepts. Thus, a thorough grasp of semantics is necessary to promote efficient learning and enhance academic results.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

### *3.1 Design*

The present study used a qualitative research method of thematic analysis. The term "thematic analysis" can be used in studies and later categorized as qualitative research; however, the mere fact that an analysis of this kind was carried out does not automatically indicate a comprehensive qualitative study (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). One popular, but sometimes misinterpreted, method for analyzing qualitative information is thematic analysis. Ambiguity around the method's conceptual underpinnings and vague definitions have hindered its implementation and acceptance among investigators, even though it is a useful and approachable instrument for qualitative researchers (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). Thematic analysis is therefore easy to use, flexible, and gaining popularity as a method for examining qualitative data. Acquiring this knowledge gives the qualitative investigator a solid basis in the fundamental abilities required to work with different qualitative data analysis methods (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

### *3.2 Participants*

From the University of Technology and Applied Sciences in Salalah, the Sultanate of Oman, twenty-eight male and twenty-two female students, their mean age is about 19.5 years. representing Level 4, Groups 9 and 10 English Language Unit, Preparatory Studies Center were included in the study.



### 3.3 Procedure

The researcher chose 50 students at random to take part in the study from among the 54 students who were enrolled in the program (Group 9 and Group 10). The students were informed of the study's objectives and given consent forms to sign in the research that they chose to take part. It was made obvious that taking part was completely optional and that all information would be kept confidential. The study was carried out as a component of an investigation of communication in the classroom.

### 3.4 Data Collection

To learn more about the experiences and perspectives of 50 undergraduate students from Level 4 (Group 9 and Group 10) at the English Language Unit, Preparatory Studies Centre, UTAS, Salalah, Oman, open-ended questions are employed with twenty-eight of the students being male and twenty-two of the students being female.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis, a technique that entails identifying structures, themes, and categories in the information, was employed to analyze the data obtained from the open-ended questions (Corr et al., 2015). To find early themes and trends, the data were initially coded line by line. First themes were developed based on these codes, identifying recurrent topics or ideas in the data. Based on their applicability and resemblance, these original themes were subsequently combined into ten comprehensive themes. To convey the core of each topic, in-depth explanations were created. The themes were analyzed in light of the study question and body of current literature during the subsequent phase of data interpretation. This required taking into account how the results might affect theory, practice, and upcoming studies on semantics and classroom communication. The results were presented in a thorough report that used participant quotations to highlight important issues. A thorough explanation of the phenomena based on the experiences and perceptions of the participants was provided by discussing the significance of the findings for comprehending how semantics affects communication in the classroom.

## 4. RESULTS

### *Theme 1 - Critical Role of Semantics in Classroom Communication*

Each of the 50 participants emphasized how important language semantics are to classroom communication. They stressed how semantics help students comprehend teachers' and classmates' intended messages clearly, avoiding misunderstandings and promoting efficient learning. Participant (29) said, "Since language semantics establishes the meaning of words and phrases, they are vital to classroom communication since effective comprehension of instructions and conversations depends on it". Likewise, one participant (47) stated, " Because language semantics help us understand the meaning of words and phrases, I believe that language semantics is crucial for classroom communication. If semantics are not grasped, misunderstanding can occur easily." These ideas recur often in the replies, demonstrating how well the students understand semantics as the cornerstone of effective classroom communication.

### *Theme 2 - Handling Difficulties and Clearing up Misunderstandings*

Several participants (3, 7, 11, 21 and 30) shared personal experiences in which difficulties arose from a lack of knowledge of language semantics. Participant 27 said, " One difficult situation I encountered was in a debate where there was a misunderstanding about the meaning of a crucial phrase, which caused confusion and caused my point to be misunderstood." "I once encountered a difficult situation when participating in a group discussion on a difficult subject," said Participant 32, who had a similar experience from a group discussion. "I had trouble getting my points across clearly, and I thought my group members didn't understand me." These incidents demonstrate how even tiny semantic misunderstandings can cause serious communication failures.

The pupils also discussed how they planned to get beyond these obstacles. In pointing up the value of open communication (Atwater & Waldman, 2007), Participant 3 said, " We talked about our interpretations and it cleared up the confusion." The importance of communication and explanation was also highlighted by Participant 9, who said, " By having an honest conversation and elaborating on the intended meanings of the words applied, they were settled." These answers imply that clearing up semantic misconceptions and promoting successful learning depends heavily on open communication and a readiness to elucidate knowledge (Salamondra, 2021).



### *Theme 3 - The Effect of Cultural Context*

The respondents (2, 18, 19, 28, and 35) acknowledged that their cultural origins had a big impact on how they understood language semantics. Participant 44 stated, " My cultural identity shapes my interpretation of terms and phrases based on my experiences and upbringing, which affects how I comprehend language semantics." In the same way, Participant 10 said, " My interpretation of particular terms and idioms is shaped by my cultural background, which also affects how I comprehend language semantics." These answers demonstrate the variety of languages used in classrooms and the possibility that cultural variations might affect how language is understood (Fujiwara, 2011; Hossain, 2024). Several students stressed how crucial it is that teachers consider these cultural variations. Participant 26 said, " To ensure that language semantics are taught in a way that appeals to every student, educators must be cognizant of the cultural backgrounds of their pupils." Similarly, Participant 39 made the following suggestion: " I think that when teachers are teaching language semantics, they should be aware of the cultural backgrounds of their students. Teachers need to be aware of the significant impact that cultural differences may have on students' language interpretation." These viewpoints emphasize how important it is for educators to design inclusive classrooms that take into account the many cultural backgrounds of their pupils (Sanger, 2020).

### *Theme 4 - Acquiring Knowledge via Participation and Utilization*

When it comes to understanding language semantics, a recurring element in the student comments is their preference for interactive learning approaches (Dakhi et al., 2020). Participants (15, 26, 31, 41 and 50) frequently emphasized the value of dialogues, real-world examples, and exercises like role-plays and group debates. "Participatory exercises such as role-plays and group discussions enable me to practice applying semantic concepts in context," elaborates Participant 13. These teaching strategies provide students the chance to actively interact with the content, take part in conversations, and apply what they've learned to real-world situations (Eli, 2021). Additionally, several respondents (1,14, 16, 37 and 38) stressed the importance of peer contact and teamwork. According to Participant 4, " I find that discussing semantic concepts with peers and applying them to real-world scenarios are the greatest strategies." Deeper comprehension is promoted by this collaborative learning technique through the sharing of ideas and a diversity of opinions (Barkley et al., 2014; Jung, 2021).

### *Theme 5 - The Distinctiveness of Teaching Semantics*

The participants (4, 17, 27, 36 and 45) recognized that teaching language semantics was taught differently from other language-related topics like grammar or vocabulary. Participants (8, 22, 32, 44 and 49) repeatedly noted that conversations, interactive exercises, and real-world examples are frequently used to teach semantics. Participant 5 said, " Unlike how grammar or vocabulary are taught, I've discovered that language semantics are frequently taught through participatory activities and debates." This implies an awareness that learning language semantics involves active participation and context-based comprehension in addition to rote memory (Nguyen, 2022). Furthermore, a few respondents (5, 9, 3, 46 and 48) observed that teaching semantics is theoretical and abstract, making it difficult for them to apply the principles in practical settings. Participant 47 said, " Unlike other parts of language, language semantics are frequently taught more abstractly and academically, which can make them difficult to comprehend." This emphasizes how important it is for educators to close the knowledge gap between theory and practice by including more real-world examples and interesting activities in their lesson plans (Kinyaduka, 2017).

### *Theme 6 - The Value of Cultural Intelligence*

All of the students emphasized how important cultural sensitivity is to the successful teaching of language semantics. They realized that people's cultural origins have a big influence on how they comprehend and use language, which might cause misunderstandings if it's not addressed. Participant 8 pointed out, "Whenever teaching language semantics, teachers should take into account the cultural backgrounds of their pupils to prevent misconceptions and encourage inclusive learning." Teachers may accommodate different learning styles and prevent the reinforcement of cultural prejudices by being aware of this. Instructors might establish a more welcoming classroom (Li & Singh, 2022), where all pupils are at ease and encouraged in their grasp of language semantics by including examples from many cultures and encouraging open conversation in the classroom.

### *Theme 7 - Improving Interaction Using Semantics*

The majority of participants (6, 25, 29, 33, 42, 10, 12, 24, 34, 40, 13, 20, 39, 43, and 47) stated that they thought semantics-based activities would greatly enhance their communication abilities. " Semantics exercises might improve my communication





abilities by raising my awareness of the meaning that language conveys.," said one participant, among others. The goal of these activities is to increase awareness of word choice, linguistic subtleties, and how they may affect interpretation. This knowledge enables pupils to make more thoughtful word choices, which results in communication that is clearer and more efficient (Rubel & Wallace, 2010).

### *Theme 8 - Handling Miscommunications*

The respondents (5, 9, 3, 46 and 48) admitted to running into misconceptions about language semantics in a variety of contexts, but especially in the classroom. These misinterpretations of words or phrases, which may have been affected by cultural backgrounds, were frequently the cause of these misunderstandings. Participant 11 said, "I've seen false beliefs regarding language semantics in educational settings. The teacher's comments and explanations frequently dispelled these misunderstandings." Appreciatively, the majority of students stated that conflicts were resolved with clear and honest communication, underscoring the significance of dialogues in closing communication barriers (Bruni, 2013).

### *Theme 9 - Encouraging Inclusive Educational Settings*

As they discussed language semantics, participants (2, 18, 19, 28, and 35) underlined the need for inclusive teaching strategies. They repeatedly recommended teachers employ case studies, role-plays, and real-world examples, among other teaching strategies, to meet the diverse learning styles and cultural backgrounds of their pupils. Participant 50 made the following suggestion: "I would counsel instructors to use case studies and real-world examples from diverse cultural backgrounds to illustrate semantic concepts. This may enhance students' understanding of the material." This method makes sure that all students feel involved in the learning process and encourages comprehension and engagement for students from all backgrounds.

### *Theme 10 - Semantics' Importance in Communication*

All of the students agreed that language semantics plays a critical role in their capacity to communicate well in both academic and non-academic contexts. They admitted that by comprehending semantics, they are better able to express their ideas clearly and be sure that others would grasp them as intended. Participant 33 said, "I think language semantics has a big impact on my ability to communicate effectively in both academic and non-academic settings. Understanding semantics helps me communicate more effectively and appreciate other people's perspectives." This comprehension promotes more effective communication, lessens miscommunication, and fortifies interpersonal relationships in a variety of settings (Zandvliet, et al., 2014).

The impact of cultural background on the understanding of language semantics was one of the major themes that surfaced from the replies. The students admitted that their cultural background affected the way they understood particular terms and expressions, emphasizing the need for professors to consider these cultural differences into consideration. To establish a more inclusive learning environment, they underlined the significance of inclusive teaching practices that take into account the varied cultural backgrounds of pupils. When it comes to comprehending language semantics, the students indicated that they preferred interactive learning strategies. They underlined how beneficial conversations, practical examples, and activities like role-plays and group discussions are for improving students' understanding of semantic ideas. This shows that for language semantics to be learned effectively, active engagement with the material and participation are essential (Strachan & Liyanage, 2015).

Additionally, the students pointed out that teaching language semantics differs from teaching grammar or vocabulary, two other language-related subjects. They noticed that, as opposed to rote memorizing, semantics is frequently taught through participatory exercises and debates, which call for a deeper understanding. Additionally, they emphasized how crucial it is to teach semantics by overcoming the barrier between theory and reality by incorporating more real-world examples and hands-on exercises. Therefore, the students realized how crucial language semantics is to their capacity for successful communication in both formal and informal contexts. They underlined that having a solid knowledge of semantics enables individuals to communicate ideas more effectively and comprehend the viewpoints of others, fostering deeper interpersonal bonds and more fruitful conversations. To improve students' comprehension of language semantics, educators must be aware of cultural differences, employ inclusive teaching practices, and offer dynamic and interesting learning opportunities (Kinanti & Hernawan, 2022).



## 5. DISCUSSION

### *Research question 1 - the influence of semantics on students' comprehension of written and spoken communication in the classroom*

Semantics has a significant impact on students' comprehension of verbal and written communication in the classroom, according to the study. Participants often underlined the significance of semantics in comprehending peers' and teachers' directions, emphasizing its function in avoiding misunderstandings and promoting effective learning. This is consistent with other research, including those done by Salamandra (2021) and Atwater & Waldman (2007), which highlight the importance of good communication in the learning process. Students also noted that cultural context had a significant role, pointing out that their backgrounds influence how they understand meaning. This implies that to promote greater comprehension, educators need to be sensitive to cultural differences (Hossain, 2024). Students preferred interactive learning techniques for their ability to apply semantic ideas practically role-plays, real-world examples, and debates (Dakhi et al., 2020). Semantics therefore not only facilitates knowledge but also improves students' capacity for successful cross-cultural communication, calling for instructional strategies that incorporate cultural sensitivity and student participation.

### *Research Question 2 - Challenges in the Classroom: Obstacles and Strategies for Teaching Semantics*

The study's findings point to several significant challenges that semantics teachers must address. The variety of pupils' cultural origins is a serious problem as it affects how well they comprehend language semantics. Teachers need to be aware of these cultural differences to prevent miscommunications and provide inclusive learning environments. Incorporating examples from many cultural contexts (Archer et al., 2013) and promoting candid discussions to elucidate meanings are two effective techniques to address this (Theme 3). Semantics' abstract character is another barrier that might make it challenging for pupils to understand theoretical ideas. To assist in closing the gap between theory and practice, instructors address this by implementing interactive and participatory learning techniques including role-plays, group discussions, and real-world examples (Themes 4 and 5) (Kinyaduka, 2017). Teachers also need to address the problem of students misinterpreting meanings in class. Resolving these misunderstandings and guaranteeing effective comprehension need open and honest communication in addition to a readiness to clarify and expand on intended meanings (Themes 2 and 8). Thus, teachers may effectively teach semantics by promoting cultural sensitivity, utilizing active learning methodologies, and upholding clear communication.

### *Research Question 3 - Bridging the Gap: How Culture and Experience Shape Students' Understanding of Meaning*

The findings demonstrate the profound influence that students' cultural origins and past experiences have on their understanding of semantics. The participants consistently stated that their cultural identities influence how they comprehend language semantics in general and how they interpret words and phrases in particular. This result is consistent with studies that show how cultural context affects how language is understood (Hossain, 2024). Students, for example, claimed that communication difficulties in the classroom frequently resulted from misconceptions that occurred from divergent semantic interpretations rooted in their varied cultural backgrounds. Because inclusive teaching methods may reduce misunderstandings and promote productive learning settings, educators need to acknowledge and accommodate these cultural variations (Sanger, 2020). Additionally, students favored interactive and culturally sensitive teaching strategies like role-plays and conversations, suggesting that active participation and practical application of semantic ideas improve understanding. This emphasizes how important it is for teachers to incorporate cultural sensitivity into their teaching strategies to help students with their semantic comprehension and general communication abilities (Li & Singh, 2022).

### *Research Question 4 - How Educational Strategies Foster Communication and Semantic Awareness*

The triangulated study results show that the instructional methodologies employed today have a substantial impact on student's development of communication and semantic awareness. The first theme highlights the importance of semantics in classroom communication and stresses the need for a thorough awareness of word meanings to facilitate learning. Theme 4 highlights the effectiveness of interactive and participatory learning approaches, such as role-plays, debates, and real-world examples (Kinyaduka, 2017), in improving students' communication and semantic awareness. These techniques encourage participation and real-world application, which are essential for understanding abstract ideas like semantics. Theme 9 also emphasizes the value of inclusive teaching methods that take into account students' varied cultural backgrounds and improve semantic comprehension. Theme 5 highlights that teaching semantics can be more theoretical and abstract than teaching other language-related topics, indicating the need for additional real-world examples and interesting exercises to close the theory-practice



gap. The utilization of real-world applications and culturally inclusive methods can help make semantic concepts more relevant and accessible, even though present teaching methodologies are generally effective.

### *Research Question 5 - Exercises to Boost Semantic Awareness and Communication Skills*

The results of the study show that including exercises in semantic awareness in the curriculum can greatly improve students' communication abilities. The first theme highlights the significance of semantics in comprehending classroom communication and the necessity of precise comprehension to prevent misconceptions. Themes 4 and 9 stress interactive and practical learning approaches as useful approaches for teaching semantics. Students are actively engaged through role-plays, group discussions, and real-world situations, which foster deeper comprehension. Theme 5 highlights the need to teach semantics through interactive exercises as opposed to rote memorizing, pointing out the necessity of applying semantic principles in real-world contexts. Teachers should include these strategies in their curricula to help students become better communicators. Themes 4 and 9 discuss case studies and role-plays as examples of activities that might assist close the knowledge gap between theory and practice. Theme 6's goal of cultural intelligence also emphasizes how important it is to take pupils' varied cultural backgrounds into account while designing semantic tasks. Through the implementation of inclusive teaching approaches and the provision of dynamic, context-based learning opportunities (Kecskes, 2008), educators may improve students' general communication skills by raising their level of semantic awareness.

#### *5.1 Implications*

This study highlights the importance of semantics in classroom communication and the demand for participatory (Jaszczolt, 2005), culturally aware teaching approaches (Machery et al., 2004). The results emphasize how important it is for teachers to recognize and take into account the varied cultural backgrounds of their pupils to avoid misconceptions and provide an inclusive learning environment (Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2018). Teachers may close the gap between theoretical semantic concepts and practical application by using participatory learning strategies including discussions, role-plays, and real-world examples (Kinyaduka, 2017; Worthington, 2018; Dracup, 2012). This will improve students' understanding and communication abilities. Furthermore, the research indicates that students' comprehension may be greatly enhanced and semantic misconceptions can be decreased by addressing the abstract character of semantics through hands-on activities and clear communication. Semantic awareness activities are an essential part of the curriculum because they help students become more adept at navigating and interpreting language in a meaningful way, which improves their communication skills in general. This method encourages deeper learning and engagement while also preparing students for successful interactions in multicultural and varied environments. This study's result urges a pedagogical shift in semantics education toward participatory, culturally inclusive, and useful teaching methods. These techniques are essential for raising students' communication and semantic awareness levels and creating a more welcoming and productive learning environment.

#### *5.2 Limitations and Recommendations*

The study targeted fifty students from one Omani university. This restricts the findings' applicability to students in various educational contexts and backgrounds. For a more thorough understanding, participants in future studies should come from a variety of age groups, cultural backgrounds, and educational settings. Students' self-reported experiences and views were used in the study. Although this offers insightful qualitative information, replies may be influenced by social desirability bias. To triangulate the results, future research might include activities involving language creation, instructor interviews, or observations. Even though the study showed that interactive learning is valuable, more research on particular approaches to teaching semantics would be helpful. Future research might monitor efficient teaching methods (Charlton et al., 2012) in the classroom or carry out intervention studies to assess how various teaching pedagogies affect students' communication and semantic awareness. Since a cross-sectional design was employed, it was more difficult to determine causal links. Studies that follow students' semantic evolution over time may be able to shed more light on how teaching methods affect students' communicative abilities.

The foundation this study established for understanding the value of semantics in the classroom and the ways that culturally sensitive instruction might enhance communication (Al-Fayed et al., 2020; Mostafazadeh et al., 2015). However, additional study needs to be done in the future to provide an even greater understanding. Incorporating individuals from varied origins and educational settings into comprehensive comparative research would offer a more comprehensive awareness of these concerns in various cultural contexts and educational settings. It is also essential to look at the efficacy of particular teaching methods through



observations in the classroom or interventions. Research may contrast interactive techniques with conventional methods or examine the effects of technology-assisted learning on students' semantic understanding (Haleem et al., 2022). Finally, it would be very helpful to do longitudinal studies that monitor learner's development over time. Researchers could learn a great deal about the long-term effects of different teaching strategies by tracking students and assessing their communication and semantic awareness at various periods. By working together, we will be able to develop a more sophisticated knowledge of how to best teach semantics to all students, promoting efficient communication techniques and establishing inclusive learning settings (Worthington, 2018; Dracup, 2012). Furthermore, a more comprehensive dataset would be provided by employing mixed-method techniques that incorporate language production tasks together with classroom observations and student interviews. This would enable researchers to examine how students' semantic awareness transfers into real-world conversation in addition to receiving the students' viewpoints.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Semantics is another discrete language topic that the students correctly recognized as requiring concentrated skill development (Pearl & Arunfred, 2019). This study looked at how semantics—the study of word meaning—is essential to effective classroom communication (Dash, 2014). According to the study, linguistic differences might lead to misunderstandings between pupils from various cultural backgrounds. The study proposes interactive learning activities, such as role-playing, conversations, and real-world examples (Kinyaduka, 2017; Worthington, 2018; Dracup, 2012), as particularly effective ways to solve this while teaching semantics. Furthermore, fostering inclusive learning environments requires the use of culturally sensitive teaching strategies that take into account the backgrounds of the students. This study emphasizes how critical it is to teach semantics and employ culturally sensitive teaching strategies to enhance students' communication abilities and how important it is for educators to employ participatory, culturally aware teaching methods in their classrooms and to be conscious of how other cultures understand language. The study's conclusion recommends that future investigations emphasize the efficacy of certain teaching strategies and the long-term effects of various instructional theories on students' communication skills.

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