C H A P T E R 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

Language has commonly been conceived as the central building block to meaning making and to communication. Today, whichever way we turn, our senses are assailed by an array of signs and visual modes of communication, from mobile phone to the internet, advertising, graphic novels and cinema. Technological advances force language to take a back seat in favor of images and sounds, and results the division between form and expression of meaning.

The emergence of digital technologies has changed the design of texts and our literate practices so that we now interpret and construct texts which have verbal, visual, audio and spatial dimensions for making meaning, that is, multimodal texts. Multimodal texts are defined as texts which communicate their message using more than one semiotic resource, or channel of communication. Examples are magazine articles, which use words and pictures, websites which contain audio clips alongside the words, or films (included the film trailers) which uses words, music, sound effects and moving images. Newspapers and magazines, computers, and mass media in general have articulated multimodal texts (combinations of video, audio, written text, etc.) that aim to reinforce, render more complex, or produce different meanings.

Anstey & Bull (2010) define multimodal text as a text which combines two or more semiotic systems. According to them, there are five semiotic systems in total: 1. Linguistic: comprising aspects such as vocabulary, generic structure and the grammar of

oral and written language, 2. Visual: comprising aspects such as color, vectors and viewpoint in still and moving images, 3. Audio: comprising aspects such as volume, pitch and rhythm of music and sound effects, 4. Gestural: comprising aspects such as movement, speed and stillness in facial expression and body language, 5. Spatial: comprising aspects such as proximity, direction, position of layout and organization of objects in space.

In analyzing a text which has verbal and visual dimensions in making meaning, a multimodal analysis should be conducted. Jones (2012) states that multimodal analysis is an approach which focuses on how meaning is made through the use of multiple modes of communication as opposed to just language. According to Halloran and Smith (2010), multimodal analysis includes the analysis of communication in all its forms, but is particularly concerned with texts which contain the interaction and integration of two or more semiotic resources – or 'modes' of communication – in order to achieve the communicative functions of the text.

By extending Halliday's theory of language as social semiotic in order to include other semiotic modes besides language (Halliday : 1978), Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996, 2001) have been influential in showing how meanings are produced not only through different modes, but also through their interaction and intersection with each other. They clarify that the ways in which the different semiotic resources integrate and combine, make meaning; that is the experiential meaning, the interpersonal, and the logical meaning, which belong to Halliday's concept. In the analysis of moving images, Iedema's (2001) three metafunctions, namely representational, orientational, and organizational metafunctions, correspond to those in Halliday's.

Multimodal text analysis has become a crucial part of research, teaching and practice for a wide of academic and practical disciplines. A variety of techniques, theoretical frameworks and methodologies have therefore evolved for such analysis. The complex ways in which meaning-making resources are orchestrated have been explored in various multimodal texts by numerous researchers such as Van Leeuwen (1998), Lemke (1998), Baldry (2005), Kress (2000), Thibault (2000), and Kress and Jewitt (2003). Besides these, in its use in various disciplines and professions, a variety of disciplines and theoretical approaches can be used to explore different aspects of the multimodal landscape – in anthropology (Goodwin, 2006), in psychology (Ainsworth. 2008); theories from those disciplines are brought to multimodal issues in the respective field of work. Anthropological theories and interests could be applied to examine how communities use multimodal conventions to mark and maintain identities. Psychological theories can be applied to look at how people perceive different modes or to understand the impact of one mode over another on memory, for example. As a consequence, multimodality is embedded in distinct approaches and shaped by them. Much of this has emphasized the ways that specific modes realize meaning.

There are several principle communicative components of multimodal texts, namely: written or spoken language, intonation, images (photographs, diagrams, drawings), and aspects of images such as color, sharpness of focus, spatial composition, etc, also other visuals such as logos, shop or road signs, gestures, facial movements, action (movement in film, for example). The study of multimodality involves looking at these components and the ways they communicate meaning, both separately and in

combination. Components of multimodal texts often take on new meanings, or connotations, when they interact in a complete text.

Multimodal texts make meanings by integrating resources from multiple modes of an organized set of resources for meaning-making. In line with the characteristics of multimodal texts, this study takes the data research from film trailer. There are several reasons that support film trailers to be chosen as the data. The first reason is due to the fact that multimodal refers to texts which use a range of language modes; and film trailer itself, is the combination of the visual, verbal, and other modes of communication. Maiers (2009) agrees to that and gives opinion that film trailers are multimodal texts in what several semiotic modes are combined and parts of texts created for other purposes are transferred, rearranged, and supplemented in order to attain a promotional purpose (Maier 2009 : 159).

Second reason, film trailers, which mostly last 2-3 minutes, are excellent examples of multimodal texts because of the involvement and interaction of various semiotic resources and they make meaning through a powerful combination of written text on screen, moving images, spoken language, sound effects, music, etc. Next, the writer also noticed that multimodal analysis on moving-image texts are not commonly carried out; then Maier has ever stated that film trailers have rarely been the object of academic research. Last but not least, film trailer is the product of modern technology in information and communication, besides, the analysis on multimodal has become worldwide trend nowadays in analysing text. All these reasons strengthened and made up the writer's mind to focus on the research.

In her study on the visual evaluation in film trailers, Maier (2009:163) states that in the last decade, multimodality has proven to be extremely influential in demonstrating how each semiotic mode is dynamically organized and transformed to make meaning in complex texts. Most linguistic analysts nowadays have developed new trends in analyzing a text; they tend to use integrative approach, which means they do not only analyze the text verbally, but also visually. The lattest is commonly known as visual representation aspect in text. But the reality is, there has been little work that specifically targets the nature of the intersemiotic semantic relationships between the visual and verbal modes, to explain just what features make multimodal text visually–verbally coherent.

Originally, trailers were very slowly edited and simple, with hardly any narration and just words all over the screen whereas nowadays film trailers are bursting with sounds, images and footage from the film that they are advertising. This is caused by heavy competition that film producers face, as new, more challenging films constantly seek to gain audience's attention. Over the last decade, film trailers have become one of the most important advertisements to promote a coming film, thus, larger amounts of money assigned to the making of film trailers. Film producers in this case are compelled to search for the best way to achieve their goals, so there is an increasing complexity of editing strategies and special effects that characterize the structure of film trailers.

In film trailers, film producers promote their coming film by employing a different and complex interplay of multimodal resources in order to build up the audience's curiosity to watch the film. Among the different film trailers, some of them only make use of the captions to display information to the audience, some adopt the

voice-over narration as a fundamental source of information, and some others use the combination of the shots from the film and the voice-over narration to expand the promotional purpose of a film trailer as a whole.

From the background above, the writer tries to study what type of multimodal resources are employed in the action film trailers, how these resources communicate the promotional purpose, and why the multimodal resources are not employed similarly in all trailers.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

Based on the background, the problems are formulated as follows:

1. What type of multimodal resources are employed in the action film trailers?
2. How do these resources communicate the promotional purpose?
3. Why are the resources employed differently in all the action film trailers?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

Based on the background of the study, the objectives of the research are:

1. To find out the type of multimodal resources employed in action film trailers.
2. To find out how the multimodal resources communicate the promotional purpose.
3. To describe why the resources are employed differently in the action film trailers.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

In this study, the writer will choose to analyze Hollywood action film trailers in order to answer the research problems. Since the action film genre itself still has the sub-

genres, namely action horror, superhero action, action thriller, action war, etc, thus the writer will just pick up two from action thriller trailers and one from action war trailers. The trailers are from the official film trailers released from the year 1990 up to around 2010. The different structure of context in trailers and the general structure of meaning-making resources will become the data of the analysis. The writer will not go into detail with every aspect of the trailers. For instance, she will not analyze every single utterance that was produced from the conversation among the characters in the trailers, but instead she will analyze how the verbal mode interacts with the visual mode. Neither will she employ reception analysis, because she will not discuss audience perception towards the coming film.
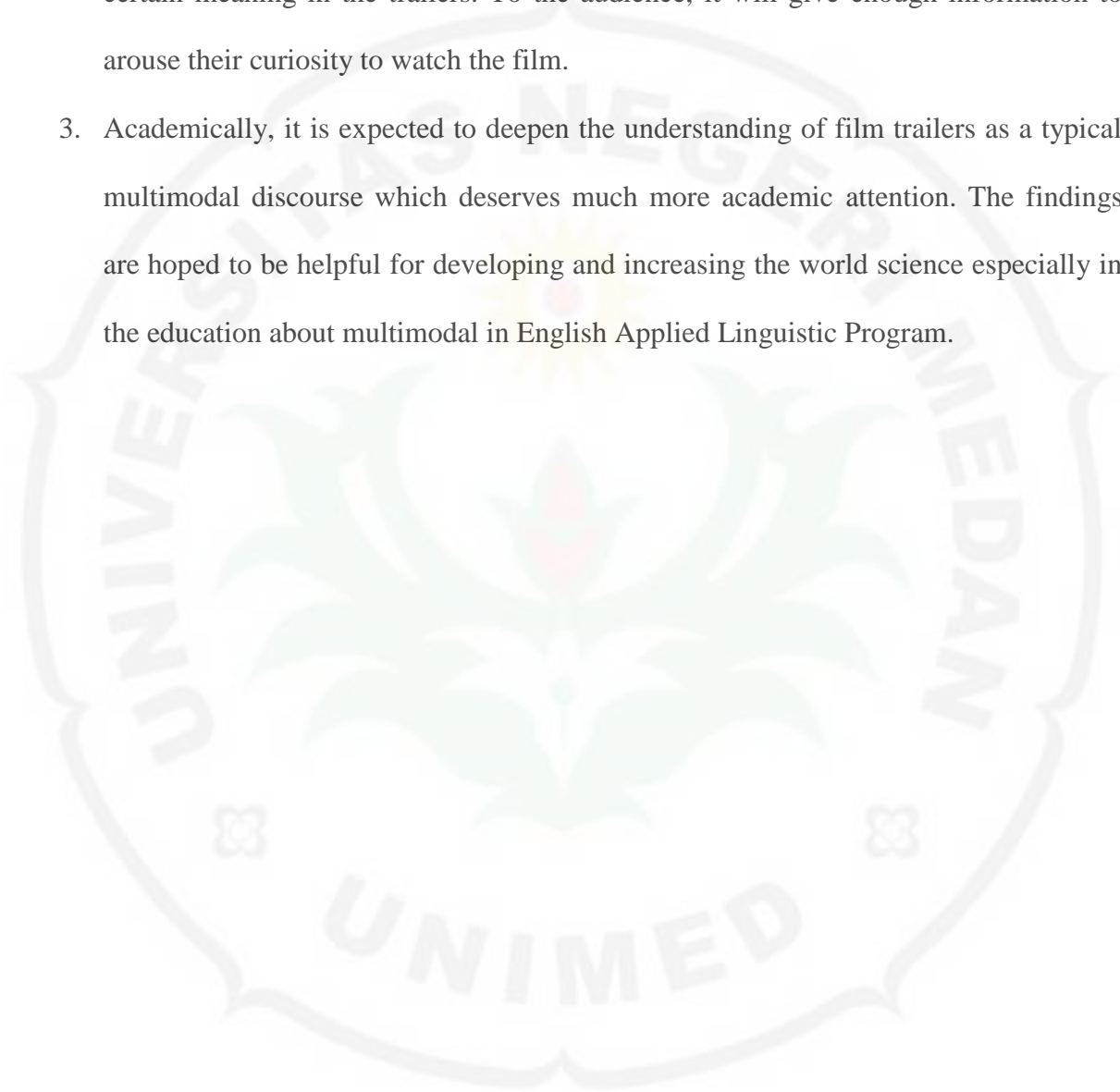
1.5 The Significance of the Study

Findings of this study are expected to be useful for theoretically, practically, and academically in some respects:

1. Theoretically, findings of this study will be expected to enrich the theories of multimodal analysis which has become a crucial part of research, teaching and practice for a wide range of academic and practical disciplines. Besides, findings are expected to be useful for other researchers who are interested in this multimodal analysis.

2. Practically, findings are expected to give contribution to the trailer producers as specialists and the common audiences as consumers. To the producers, it will provide an insight that the multimodal resources and the interaction among them can produce

certain meaning in the trailers. To the audience, it will give enough information to arouse their curiosity to watch the film.

3. Academically, it is expected to deepen the understanding of film trailers as a typical multimodal discourse which deserves much more academic attention. The findings are hoped to be helpful for developing and increasing the world science especially in the education about multimodal in English Applied Linguistic Program.