

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

The issue of relationship among teachers, student's learning style, educational communication and teaching material becomes the mainstream argument specifically in the digital communication today. The lessons deployed are rather interchangeable in online communication. The question on how teachers and students construct meanings or how the meanings can be constructed through online media is challenging. Thus, how modalities can be deployed to students in digital practice is frequently initiating for the contribution of communication comprehension.

Since language teaching and learning is forced to rely on communicative interaction, multiple modes of message transmission are involved. As nonverbal expressions are linked to the content and discursive features of teachers (McNeill, 1992), it follows that teachers require not only linguistic knowledge, but also a greater understanding of the nonverbal cues of their students or of themselves. In this way, gesture and speech are integrated to reveal a deeper meaning that cannot be fully comprehended through one or two modalities alone. This integration of gesture and speech yields a meaning that is more expansive than the meaning conveyed through speech or gesture alone, because the two modes form an integrated system for constructing meaning.

Currently, the accelerating development of new technologies has resulted in a rapid shift toward multimodal knowledge and content representations. Referring to Kress (2003:5), multimodality is made more habitual and natural by technologies that aid social practice in the construction of meanings. Kress (2010:79) also explains that mode is a socially formed and culturally regarded semiotic resource for constructing meaning. Meaning is achieved through the interaction of multiple simultaneous semiotic modes that can manifest in more than one medium of production, according to this sociocultural perspective.

Further, some of teachers are mediocre in presenting the online lessons, yet there are those who have been experienced in the online discourse. The mediocre teachers were considered less experienced in utilizing both verbal and non-verbal resources. They faced serious challenges to get along with their students during online classes either in managing classes or in communicating ideas. This phenomenon must be addressed by English practitioners in order to encourage students' effective communication.

Related to the previous observation, the teachers differently utilized semiotic resources or modes in their online discourses. It was found out that there was a teacher who was inclined to construct less-effective resources. Take for example, when a teacher spoke: "Today, my house is really crowded, many people over here. "Okay, I hope you still focus on your screen first today because today we are going to discuss about your lesson next chapter four for our English subject", the teacher kept sitting on his chair along with the computer facilitated table in the special room. He even focused his eyes on the screen while moving the mouse with his

right hand to click the screen. In fact, what the teacher did really made his six grade students confused as he did not signify the intended meaning of the utterance that he spoke: “Today, my house is really crowded, many people over here“. Some of the students could not completely relate the utterance “My house is really crowded, many people over here” to the utterance “You have to focus on the screen”. In this case, although the teacher utilized the verbal texts which were equipped with ICT, the meaning was not effectively communicated for the teacher did not employ the gestural language and paralinguistic behavior to emphasize what he meant with his utterances.

The examination on the area of online discourse is extremely significant to document how differently they deploy semiotic resources to express meanings. As the deployment of multimodes is a process of meaning-making, it is crucial to examine the metafunctions through verbal and nonverbal cues administered by mediocre teachers. When teachers implement the lessons, they essentially transfer meanings to students (Eggins, 2004; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). To effectively communicate semiotic resources, teachers must select modes that meet their communicative objectives. These modes are orchestrated so as to improve the interpretation of meanings.

The realization of interpersonal meaning in online discourse is significant to be performed since there have been some studies that inquire about it. Online discourse is a multimodal experience involving the interaction of multiple modalities, including the spoken modality of teacher-student communication and the text, image, and video modalities communicated by Zoom, Google Meetings,

and other applications. Even though spoken language is the primary mode of online instruction, it cannot automatically complete the teaching task. Other modalities, specifically nonverbal cues, must supplement spoken language. Therefore, there is a synergistic relationship between other media and spoken language.

The above-mentioned phenomenon is not only attractive but also extremely important to be analyzed. By investigating the teachers' performances in deploying the online discourse, the gaps can be exposed. These exposures might be useful for the teachers to enhance their performances in utilizing different kinds of modes so as to make the students communicate effectively. Even though multimodal research is crucial to do, few researchers have conducted the significant studies on it, which are capable of examining the utilization of different modes in online discourse. The relevant studies only gave more concentrates on the single mode of communication applied in the teaching: mostly the spoken language produced by the teachers and less attention has been given on the investigation of verbal and nonverbal languages conducted by the teachers.

In academic context, there have been a substantial number of studies examining the issue of multimodality. However, few researchers have examined how metafunctional meanings are conveyed through the use of various modes. Despite the numerous studies conducted on discourse and multimodality, there are still essential aspects that have not been thoroughly investigated. Multimodally, Febrianti (2020) investigated how the meanings of posters and films were constructed. She demonstrated that university brands are created through a combination of advertising poster and film styles. In addition, Yolanda and Debby

(2019) examined textual metafunction and compositional meaning to characterize the verbal text and the visual image. She demonstrated that there are connections between textual and compositional elements in these children's picture books. More interestingly, Jaipal (2008) revealed that the multimodal semiotics framework is useful for depicting how semiotic and epistemological functions of modalities compounded meanings, which has the potential to serve as a metacognitive tool for teachers to select, sequence, and scaffold modalities as well as a framework for educational researchers to analyze meaning making in science teaching and learning. Taylor (2014) asserted how embodied modes such as gesture, posture, facial expression, gaze, and haptics relate to speech in children's collaborative knowledge construction in terms of multimodal meaning making. Taylor demonstrates how children construct meaning by judiciously employing all available semiotic resources.

Relating to the importance of different modes in online discourse, there are three principal issues need to be analysed further. In the first place, the reviewed researches have not pointed to the significance of becoming the teachers who multimodally teach in the schools. Their focuses do not depend fully on communicative modes meanwhile communication is multimodally deployed. They frequently employ different semiotic resources, such as gestures, space, gaze, and posture, when speaking to their interlocutors (Norris, 2004). In short, the monomodal deployment in communication, namely verbal language, is insufficient to spread a better understanding of the speakers' intended message (Camiciottoli & Fortanet-Gomez, 2015; Fortanet-Gomez & Ruiz-Madrid, 2014; Kress, 2000,

2011a, 2011b; Wandera, 2016). Therefore, it is crucial to investigate the transition from monomodal to multimodal instruction (Kress, 2011b; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001).

In the second place, few studies have investigated the use of metafunctions of language. There are some researchers that examine metafunctions of language (see Apriliani & Priyatmojo, 2016; Bumela, 2012; Khalim & Warsono, 2017; Mujiyanto, 2017; Sutopo, 2014), however, it was unfortunate to find out that their research focus is not on the multimodal deployment. Finally, the performances of the well-experienced teachers in online discourse are difficult to obtain. In fact, the studies that aimed at investigating the multimodal deployments are extremely needed to benefit the mediocre teachers about the language and skills as being expected.

Systemic functional grammar (SFL) emphasizes the categories of situational context that include field, tenor and mode. In any social semiotics, the semantic stratum is affected by the three metafunctions: ideational meaning for representation, interpersonal meaning for interaction, and textual meaning for information flow. Consequently, the organization is applied to the context and is represented by three registers: field, tenor, and mode. Field refers to what is occurring in social practices and the essence of the social activity; tenor refers to social relations: who is participating and the nature of participants: their status and roles; mode refers to the role and channel semiosis plays, as well as the participants' expectations of these semiosis in a given situation (Martin, 1997). According to the modality theory proposed by Halliday (1994), the types of modality employed by

teachers will be categorized as modalization (probability and frequency) and modulation (obligation and inclination).

After the process of evaluation on modality value, the gestures from nonverbal language were investigated by using multimodal discourse proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, 2006) relating to the reading of visual images. According to Thompson (2004), the interpersonal metafunction allows the researcher to investigate the way where teachers interact with one another, and how the teachers negotiate the information exchange or services. The joining of semiotic resources or different modes to construct meaning, recognized as 'multimodality', may be similarized to the way where certain lexicogrammatical configurations that can be applied by the teachers so as to communicate certain meanings to the students (interlocutor/reader) of their text, as was first introduced by Halliday (1985).

1.2 The Focus of the Study

This study was aimed at investigating the systems of modalities deployed by English language lectures to students with different learning styles in Medan with reference to the theory of systemic functional linguistics. The focuses were on verbal and nonverbal languages as resources of making meaning which were obtained from the online discourses from the university in Medan. The modalities cover the use of written and spoken language, and images.

1.3 The Problems of the Study

Based on to the background the study, there are three questions formulated as follows:

1. What systems of modalities are multimodally used by the lecturers in addressing students with different learning styles by verbal and nonverbal mode?
2. How are the systems of modalities realized multimodally by the lecturers in addressing students with different learning styles by verbal and nonverbal mode?
3. Why are the systems of modalities realized multimodally by the lecturers in addressing students with different learning styles by verbal and nonverbal mode in the ways they are?

1.4 The Objectives of the Study

Multimodal EFL practice is a relatively new pedagogical issue and is, therefore, still fairly under the examination. For this reason, the current study attempts to assist the understanding of how multimodality can reveal new insight of EFL practice. Hence, the objectives of this study are to analyze the online discourse deployed multimodally by the lectures to the students with different learning styles in Medan, so as to sort out how language is merged with other

resources throughout the lessons explained. In line with the previously formulated problems, the objectives of the study are:

1. to analyse the systems of modalities used multimodally by the lectures in addressing students with different learning styles by verbal and nonverbal mode.
2. to evaluate how the lectures multimodally use the systems of modalities in addressing students with different learning styles by verbal and nonverbal mode.
3. to give reasons for the use of systems of modalities multimodally by the lecturers in addressing students with different learning styles by verbal and nonverbal mode.

1.5 The Significances of the Study

This research is closely related to a multimodal discourse analysis of English lessons deployed to the students in Medan through online way while explaining the lesson, and identifying which multimodal modes and semiotic resources are used during the process of explanation. For this reason, the researcher has taken the lessons deployed by English teachers in Medan to be a sample for the study so as to analyse the discourse, and to find out how language is used in combination with other resources as long as the lessons are being explained. Since communication has changed from a monomodal aspect to a multimodal one, putting into practice

multimodality in various contexts is of an extremely important thing, because it is not sufficient to only learn the idea of multimodality as a separate area without putting it into practice.

Therefore, the findings of the study are expected to provide theoretical and practical benefits as a process and product, specifically the pedagogical sides. The significances of this study are explained as follows:

1. Theoretically, the findings of the study are expected to be relevant for the institutions of higher education are increasingly turning to technology for their transfer of education. Additionally, students are increasingly using technology to complete their educations at a distance. To meet the needs of students who use technology, it is necessary to conduct ongoing research into the most effective solutions. This study provides additional insight and contributes to the body of knowledge by introducing new distance education delivery methods.
2. Practically, the results of the study are expected to be useful for language teachers that teach English as Foreign Language (EFL), and other researchers as well. In spite of all the efforts that have been made by the government to accommodate schools with the sophisticated digital technologies, evidence proposes that information technology has not yet been integrated entirely into the curriculum especially the schools in Medan. In order to have it attained, the teachers' readiness to put technology in their practice should be considered as a significant factor. This research seeks to examine one of the key factors that affect teachers' readiness for the implementation of digital curriculum. The results will be beneficial for the decision makers of curriculum in educational

ministry so as to make them qualified in implementing digital curriculum. And last but not least, other researchers can use the results of this study as references in conducting potential research ahead.

