

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the essential information of the general introduction of the topic being studied which consists of research background, research questions, research objectives, research significances, definition of terms and the organization of thesis.

1.1 Research Background

To be able to communicate in an effective way is perhaps the most crucial skill among all life skills for human beings as it enables people to do many things, such as to interact with one another, to establish relationships and to change others' behaviors or thoughts (Wrench, 2013). Communication now becomes one of the abilities that today's students need to succeed in their careers during the Information age. As a matter of fact, communication is not only about the way of utilizing language as a means to convey the ideas in mind. More than that, the nature of communication that is always multimodal (Jewitt, 2013; Kress, 2009) deduces the notion that communication does not only involve language as the only mode to produce meaning; there is a plethora of modes which constitutes constraints and possibilities for meaning-making in communication. In the practice, communication is often a combination of several of modes such as gesture, gaze, posture, and language. Language is only one of many modes available which can be chosen by someone to be used and combined with other modes to create meaning. This act of communication that relies on different modes and ways of expressing messages is dubbed multimodality (Hafner, 2014; Jewitt, 2009; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001).

Multimodality, as a matter of fact, is also present in classroom communication. Kress et al. (2005) argue that the process of teaching and learning can be basically understood as the place where communication and learning do not only involve spoken and written activities but also activities that encompass gestures, postures, and deployment of visual objects which are crucially important to meaning-making. In line with that, Taylor (2014) suggests that classroom

communication naturally involves various semiotic resources such as body movement, verbiage, and image. Moreover, Lim (2019) suggests that from a multimodal perspective, meanings are made in the classroom through the teacher's use of modes such as language, gesture, space, and positioning, as well as resources such as textbooks, whiteboard, and educational technology.

The practice of involving more than one semiotic resource in the process of meaning-making itself is not an avant-garde practice in language classrooms; teachers of EFL commonly have been involving various semiotic resources when they deliver the teaching materials in the classroom. Moreover, the advancement of technology has provided people, including the language teachers with the opportunity to communicate using different modes and expressions (Sukyadi, Hermawan, & Dallyono, 2016). That is to say that the incorporation of multimodal texts such as PowerPoint slideshow, videos, games and other kinds of media that contain the combination of semiotic resources in the classrooms has become a common way of enhancing language learning. Numerous studies have been conducted with the aim of finding out the effect of multimodality on learning. For instance, research on multimodality and reading comprehension (Early & Marshall, 2008); critical reasoning and problem-solving (Lotherington, Holland, Sotoudeh, & Zentena, 2008; Potts & Moran, 2013), and written genre mastery (Adoniou, 2013; Vasudevan, Schultz, & Bateman, 2010).

In the meantime, several studies covering the incorporation of multimodality in the improvement of language learning in the Indonesian context have been successfully conducted. For instance, Kamilah (2013), Khalidiyah (2015), and Sari, Sudarsono, & Arifin (2014) examined the effect of video as multimodal ensemble on language learning. Lubis (2018) and Wijaya (2016) studied the incorporation of PowerPoint which enables multimodal orchestration in language learning. Moreover, the use of visual textbooks (Cahyono & Widya, 2017) and games and applications (Adisti, 2016; Purnawarman, Susilawati, & Sundayana, 2016; Wijaya, 2016) which contain more than one mode in the teaching of language were also have been examined. Notwithstanding their fruitfulness, these studies still put more focus on the language while the other semiotic resources were being neglected.

Given the idea that classroom discourse is multimodal in nature, it is imperative to consider the involvement of various semiotic resources in the meaning-making process if to understand how communication takes place in the classroom is being sought. It is in line with what Baldry & Thibault (2005), LeVine & Scollon (2004), and Prior & Hengst (2010) have argued, that understanding the contemporary communicative landscape requires addressing the full range of semiotic resources used within a community and/ or society, which in this case is the classroom. Therefore, it will be beneficial for the researchers who want to investigate the pedagogic discourse to take into consideration its multimodal aspects; to see it through multimodal lenses.

While there are numerous issues in the pedagogic discourse which are potential to be investigated through multimodal standpoints, one of the interesting issues to put in the spotlight is as to how language teachers utilize different semiotic resources available in the classroom and how they orchestrate those semiotic resources to produce meaning in the classroom. This examination is valuable since it will give useful information on how multimodal practices are established by the teachers thus providing useful insight on how to use and orchestrate the semiotic resources effectively to achieve the goal of learning.

In the meantime, several studies have been done by researchers with the aim of examining how semiotic resources in language classrooms are orchestrated and utilized by the teachers. The studies focus on the exploration of semiotic resources utilization and orchestration in pedagogic discourse as well as other aspects related to multimodality such as gesture, spatial pedagogy and their intersemiosis (Lim, 2011); the interaction between images and texts in meaning-making (Mestremestre, 2015); transduction and transformation of semiotic resources (Sukyadi et al., 2016); spatiality, gaze, and gesture in specific genre (Amundrud, 2017); gestures, proxemics space, and images and their intersemiosis with language (Kamelia, 2017); the intersemiosis of gesture and language (Lim, 2017); orchestration of semiotic resources to improve skills and participation (Peng, Zhang, & Chen, 2017); orchestration of language, gaze, and gesture in material development (Mohammadi et al., 2018) and; space, gaze, and language and the construction of interpersonal meaning (Komarawan, 2019).

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The above studies have shed some light on the investigation of the use of semiotic resources by the teachers in the classroom discourse which put emphasis on the involvement of other than verbal modes in the classroom. However, research investigating how semiotic resources are deployed in the lesson and how lesson is structured and enacted through the co-deployment of those semiotic resources has not been fully reported in the literature. Therefore, the present study attempts to examine how EFL teachers use semiotic resources in the lessons and how the lessons are structured and enacted through the co-deployment of those semiotic resources. In addition, this study seeks to contribute to the discussion as to the potential of semiotic resources in the meaning-making process in the EFL classroom by involving two teachers from different sites as the participants since the study exploring multimodal practices in the classroom which involves more than one participant is scarcely found.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the issues above, the present study attempts to address the research questions which are formulated as follows:

- a. What types of semiotic resources are frequently used by the teachers in their lessons?
- b. How are those semiotic resources deployed in the lesson stages?
- c. How are the lessons enacted and structured through the co-deployment of those semiotic resources?

1.3 Research Objectives

In line with the research questions formulated above, this study aims to explore EFL classrooms from multimodal standpoints. Specifically, this research is aimed at finding out what kind of semiotic resources frequently used by the teachers in their lesson, how those semiotic resources are instantiated by the teachers in the lesson stages and how the lessons are enacted and structured through co-deployment of those semiotic resources.

1.4 The Significance of the Research

It is hoped that the results of this study will contribute theoretically and practically to Indonesian education. Theoretically, this research can shape a new understanding

of how English is taught from multimodal lenses and provide literature of a salient approach namely multimodal analysis approach in analyzing EFL classrooms. Practically, this study is expected to provide EFL teachers an important idea in English language teaching namely multimodality. Based on this information, the teachers are encouraged to make use of different semiotic resources available and to be creative in incorporating and orchestrating those semiotic resources in the process of language teaching.

1.5 Definition of Terms

So as to avoid misunderstanding, it is important to give clear definitions of the terms that are used in this research.

a. Multimodality

Multimodality is defined as a set of approaches transferring a representation of individuals' communication beyond language to the application of a variety of communicational forms or modes such as gesture, gaze, posture, and image as well as their integration (Jewitt, 2013). It is an approach that sees that communication relies on different semiotic resources and ways of expressing messages, emphasizing the interplay of those semiotic resources.

b. Semiotic resources

Semiotic resource is a term used in social semiotics and other disciplines to refer to a means for making meaning which can be produced physically (such as gestures and facial expression) or technologically (such as a digital picture) (van Leeuwen, 2004).

1.6 Organization of Thesis

This thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter one covers an introduction of the study which discusses the research background, the research questions, the objectives of the study, the research significances, the definition of terms, and the organization of thesis.

Chapter two provides theoretical foundations related to the present study which cover multimodality, EFL learning, multimodal analysis approaches, and previous studies.

Chapter three focuses on the detail explanation of the research methodology. The parts discussed in this chapter include research design, research sites and participants, data collection procedure and the way the data are analyzed.

Chapter four provides the research findings and its discussion which are elaborated with theories and the previous research.

Chapter five presents conclusions and suggestions for EFL teachers, teacher training institutions as well as other researchers who are interested in exploring similar topics.