CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This section presents an outline concerning the introduction to the research. The section commences with the delineation of the background of the study pointing out some essential current issues on the topic under investigation. The sections following this are the presentation of the research questions formulated from the research problems in the background, the elaboration of the purpose of the study, the discussion of some points regarding significance of the research, the clarification of some key terms used in the study, and the elaboration of organization of the research.

1.2 Background of the Study

The 21st century along with the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) era has witnessed an accelerating and fast-shifting global economy and automation of knowledge due to the fusion of several technologies in which information could be found everywhere in the form of big data (Gleason, 2018). These alterations have indisputably impacted the ways learners learn, think, and communicate (Suherdi, 2019; Prensky, 2001) as they are massively bombarded with digital technologies and the World Wide Web. In light with this, interactions with one another are not only performed with language through writing and speaking but also are performed with symbols, images, emojis, gifs, emoticons, and other digital media platforms. Communication patterns have become intensely multimodal. Diverse multimodal text forms, such as hypertexts, videos, visual images, audio clips, and graphic user interface elements along with written texts in digital contents can be found everywhere. These new hybrid forms of communication and texts, undoubtedly, have led to the emergence of new literacies (i.e. multimodal literacy). As Kress (2003) argues:

> It is no longer possible to think about literacy in isolation from a vast array of social, technological and economic factors. Two distinct yet related factors deserve to be particularly highlighted. These are, on the one hand, the broad move from the now centuries long dominance of writing to the new dominance of the image and, on the other hand, the move

from the dominance of the medium of the book to the dominance of the medium of the screen. These two together are producing a revolution in the uses and effects of literacy and of associated means for representing and communicating at every level and in every domain. (p. 1)

Therefore, to be literate in today's world means having the ability to read and write the linear texts and the ability to view and represent meaning-making in multimodal ways. In other words, to be literate in this day and age is the ability to communicate effectively using multimodal resources. As regard with this issue, Zammit & Downes (2002) state that

being literate in today's society and in the future is more than just being able to read and write the written word. With advances in technology in educational settings, students are reading and viewing as an increasingly complex and diverse range of multimodal texts. Literacy and learning in these new environments require students to be multiliterate (p. 24)

Accordingly, a number of literacy scholars (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Gee, 2003; Kress, 2010; Lankshear & Knobel, 2003, 2006, 2008; Serafini, 2011; Walsh, 2010) are currently encouraging educators to raise their awareness on the nature of the changing literacy practices and advocate them to cultivate and elevate multimodal literacy practices among English language learners.

The importance of developing students' multimodal literacy is also brought to light by Leeuwen (2017). He proffers that multimodal literacy has now become an essential part of workplace and life skill which requires not only a working knowledge of multimodal ways of making meaning but also of the rules and conventions for using multimodal meaning making in specific contexts. In this line, Hafner (2014) points out that English language teaching should "be expanded beyond the traditional focus on speech and writing to the production of multimodal ensembles, drawing on a range of other semiotic modes" (p. 655). In addition, Shoffner, de Oliveira, & Angus (2010) affirm that today's English classrooms are required to extend and enact the English literacy teaching beyond all-inclusive single literacy and include the flexible nature of literacies that address diverse areas of literacies, such as technology, multimedia, relationship, and culture. Other literacy scholar, Edwards-Groves (2011) contends that classroom practice should provide rooms for multimodal, collaborative and interactive learning between students, between teachers and students and between students and online learning spaces. Also, Siegel (2012) has suggested the inclusion of multimodality in the

classroom for two reasons: students live in an era that demands new literacies, and they often bring multimodal practices to school. Hence, there is an urgent need for EFL teaching to develop complementary competencies beyond communicative competence, which remains foundational, into multimodal communicative competence (Royce, 2002, 2007), the one which recognizes the interrelationship between language and other semiotic resources.

In a similar vein, in the context of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instructed in EFL settings, the pedagogical practices commonly take primary focus on learning grammatical structures, vocabulary, and reading comprehension and tends to ignore the development of the 21st-century texts. ESP learners are not trained in such a way to deal with the complexity of text forms delivered through digital media. The current instructional practices in ESP mostly adopt content-based approach (Ngan, 2011; Yang & Chen, 2015), corpora-based approach (Quero & Coxhead, 2018; Wilson et al, 2014) and genre-based approach (Albi et al, 2014; Sadeghi, et al, 2013). The use of multimodal approach in ESP teaching process has still not received sufficient attention in the teaching and learning process (Plastina, 2013). Therefore, the ESP learning should consider these alterations and development of the new form of literacy.

One pedagogical approach which has been suggested to be applied to improve multimodal literacy is multiliteracies pedagogy which was developed by a group of literacy educators, linguists, and educational researchers named the New London Group (1996). This multiliteracies framework attempts to extend the traditional definition of literacy – the ability to read and write – to encompass dynamic, culturally and historically situated practices using and interpreting diverse written and spoken texts to fulfill particular purposes (Kern, 2000) with the goal of preparing foreign language (FL) learners to participate in diverse discourse communities, both at home and in the target culture (e.g., with other FL students, target language youths, online communities, etc.). In this regard, Ajayi (2009) points out that:

> multimodal/multiliteracies pedagogy has the potential to provide opportunities for ESL students to learn about different text types in ways that enhance the expansion of interpretation of texts. Multimodal pedagogy goes beyond language to promote alternative ways of reading, interpreting and text composing. (p. 586)

Within multiliteracies framework, reading and writing are integral to meaning construction rather than support skills. Therefore, multiliteracies pedagogy focuses more on modes of representation that is broader than the concept of language teaching. Two main crucial elements of multiliteracies pedagogy are salient in the instructional practice: design and multimodality. In terms of instructional procedure, multiliteracies pedagogy offers a pedagogical model involving a complex integration of four dimension: situated practice (integrating learners' previous and current experience with their learning community and texts), overt instruction (scaffolding learning activities), critical framing (encouraging critical thinking and analysis), transformed practice (applying learning to a new context). These four components of multiliteracies do not follow a hierarchical order, but are interactive in complicated ways.

In respect to the inclusion of multiliteracies instruction in English language education worldwide a considerable body of works has been undertaken to investigate its pedagogic potentials within multimodal-based setting (e.g. Angay-Crowder et al., 2013; Burke & Hardware, 2016; Coccetta, 2018; Ganapathy, 2015, 2014; Hafner, 2014; Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Lee et al., 2016; Lenters, 2016; Lim 2018; Puteh-behak et al., 2015; Rowland et al., 2016; Royce, 2002, 2007; Shoffner et al., 2010; Souzandehfar et al., 2014; Stenglin & Iedema, 2001; Yi & Crowder-Angay, 2016; Zammit & Downes, 2002). The work undertaken by Angay-Crowder et al. (2013), for example, had discovered the beneficial impacts of implementing multiliteracies practices in that this approach could provide a powerful venue to enhance learners' multimodal literacy competence and help them expand their literacy repertoires and means of expression. This study assigned multimodal composing projects accomplished through the use of both conventional print-based and computer-based tools to 12 adolescent multilingual students in a digital story telling class.

In the context of English language teaching in Indonesia, several studies on the pedagogic potentials of multimodal approach have also been acknowledged. These studies were conducted in diverse levels of schooling including in primary level (Dafit, 2017; Ikasary et al, 2019; Nuryani, et al, 2019; Susilo & Garnisya, 2018) in secondary level (Juniarti & Nima, 2018; Suherdi, 2015;); and in tertiary

level (Cahyaningati & Lestari, 2018; Drajati, et al., 2018; Hapsari, 2019; Khairi et al., 2017; Nabhan & Hidayat, 2018; Nabhan, 2019). In secondary level of schooling, Suherdi (2015), for example, had investigated the deployment of multimodal texts in a series of genre-based teaching in a senior high school. The results of this study offered a suggestion that appropriate utilization of multimodal texts in the instructional process could likely yield positive learning outcomes in such a way that learners' learning engagement and motivation improved significantly.

Through an analytical review of studies concerning the enactment of multiliteracies pedagogy in English language teaching contexts, there exist several gaps to be filled. First, a number of studies are mostly undertaken in English-speaking countries and in ESL settings and limited number is implemented into EFL in the context of ESP. In this regard, Prior (2013) contends "nevertheless; multimodality seems to have remained a somewhat peripheral area of ESP research [...] the dominant research questions continue to be questions of language forms in monomodal frames [...]" (p. 520). In this regard, Jewitt (2005) proffers that language education policy worldwide keeps on promoting a linguistic view of literacy and linear view of reading even though ESP learners nowadays belong to the net-generations.

Second, this approach is mostly implemented in primary and secondary level of schooling and limited study is undertaken at tertiary or university level. The studies of this kind are not yet conducted in the context of college-level ESP courses in Indonesia. In addition, the necessity to increase awareness of the role of multimodality/multiliteracies during the communication process by implementing new practices for teaching and learning in the university English language classroom is advocated by O'Halloran et al. (2016 as cited in Camiciottoli & Campoy-Cubillo, 2018):

> Changes in higher education, especially in the use of digital technology, have revolutionized traditional academic practices, with an increasing recognition of the need for students and teachers to develop multimodal competencies across a range of communicative platforms. (p. 256).

Therefore, for tertiary students, a fluency in multimodal, or new media, literacies is critical to their participation in Web 2.0 environments that include

social networking sites, blog networks, video broadcasting sites, and instant messaging services (see Thorne & Black, 2007; Thorne & Reinhardt, 2008).

This present study addresses these gaps by examining the enactment of multiliteracies pedagogy in an EFL setting in the context of ESP by way of finding out how this pedagogy facilitates learners in the consumption (viewing) and production (representing) of digital multimodal texts in a content-specific language area. Thus, the aim of the study is to investigate the multiliteracies pedagogy to teaching multimodal literacy in an ESP context in higher vocational education in Indonesia. The multiliteracies teaching program were conducted over one semester course of study and were carried out in a systematic and structured manner following the four instructional elements suggested by the New London Group (1996, 2000). This study also attempts to explore the students' perceptions toward the implementation of this pedagogy.

1.3 Research Questions

This research provides an overview of the implementation of multiliteracies pedagogy in an ESP setting in a technology-supported environment to help learners in multimodal literacy learning and to explore learners' responses toward the implementation of this pedagogy. Therefore, the guiding questions in this study are as follow:

1. How does multiliteracies pedagogy facilitate multimodal literacy learning in a technology-supported ESP course?
2. How do the students perceive the implementation of multiliteracies instruction in their ESP learning?

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the implementation of multiliteracies pedagogies within ESP classroom in which a technology-rich environment is set up as an attempt to facilitate learners develop capacities in digital composing content-specific multimodal texts. Specifically, this study explores the degree to which multiliteracies pedagogy facilitates ESP students' learning in the consumption and production of digital multimodal texts, and discovers the students' responses regarding the teaching program implemented.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant in three crucial aspects. Firstly, in terms of theoretical aspects, the results of the study can have significant contribution to enrich the theory of multiliteracies pedagogy and its classroom practice. Although multiliteracies have been well theorized in recent years, the practical elements of developing a sound curriculum of multiliteracies in a technology-supported ESP setting where students engage in digital multimodal text constructions were under researched. As contended by Cope & Kalantzis (2009b) and Cooper, Locker, & Brown (2013) that currently there is a critical disconnection between the theory of multiliteracies and classroom pedagogy. Another significant dimension from this aspect is the innovative element of this research because it uses a multiliteracies pedagogy to teach English in the context of EFL in an ESP classroom setting.

Secondly, in terms of practical aspects, this work extends the pedagogical curriculum to focus on multimodality in that it would cater the needs of ESP learners in second and foreign language contexts in the consumption and production of multimodal texts for which they are highly engaged in. In addition, the results of this study are intended to provide a framework for other teachers who are interested in implementing multiliteracies pedagogy in ESP teaching and to provide them with a strategy that would help them adopt this pedagogy in their classroom practices.

Lastly, in terms of policy, the results of this study can be a great contribution in providing insights as to whether or not this pedagogy needs to be adopted in broader contexts of English language teaching practices in Indonesian tertiary level of education, and what practical requirements are necessary to make this teaching program possible to be conducted.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

a. Multiliteracies

A term used to refer to the expansion of the notion of traditional literacy beyond language dominant to include multimodal ways of meaning making.

b. Multiliteracies pedagogy

An approach to literacy education that recognizes multimodal ways in which people make meanings and represent themselves to others based on their shared identities, motivations, histories, and sociocultural aspects. This

pedagogy comprises of four related strands: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice.

c. Multimodality

An orchestration of multiple making-meaning resources that include linguistic, audio, spatial, gestural, and visual modes to represent and communicate their understandings to others shaped and carried by historical, cultural, and social aspects (New London Group, 1996). This diverse of modes of representation are used to create a single, unified message (Kress, 2003; 2010).

d. Multimodal text

A print-based and digital text that utilizes multiple modes or semiotic resources to represent meaning potentials, where mode is defined as a socio culturally shaped resource for meaning making.

e. Multimodal literacy

The ability to successfully engage and construct the meanings of texts which consist of diverse modes of communication. Multimodal literacy highlights the design of multimodal texts by analyzing and describing the contributions of specific semiotic resources, (e.g. language, gesture, images) orchestrated across various modalities (e.g. visual, aural, gestural), as well as their interaction and integration in constructing a coherent multimodal text (such as advertisements, posters, news report, websites, films).

1.7 Organization of the Research

This dissertation study is structured in five chapters. Chapter One covers discussions of the introductory part, statement of the problem, research questions, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, and definition of terms. Chapter Two includes discussions of related literatures on the history of literacy, the multiliteracies conception, the form and the content of multiliteracies pedagogy, contributing theories to multiliteracies, multimodality, multimodal literacy and

technology integration in multiliteracies. Chapter Three contains discussions of research methodology, case study design, setting and participants, measuring instruments, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter Four covers discussions of research findings and discussion. Chapter Five encompasses conclusions and suggestions, limitations of the study, implications, and considerations for future research.