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MULTIMODAL PEDAGOGY IN TEFLIN CONTEXTS

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Abstract:

The advance of ICT is driving human communication to more complex and multimodal networks. The language used, including English, in the communication appears more in the forms of multimodal, which include not only verbal, but also images, graphics, cyber links, and other semiotic resources rather than mono-modal texts, which include only one mode of meaning-making, usually verbal. Therefore, the teaching of languages, including English, can no longer be developed in traditional, mono-modal fashions; and to give appropriate responses to the challenge, approaches to teaching multimodal texts in multimodal fashions needs to be specifically developed. This article is intended to present an analysis of a series of teaching-learning processes applying multimodal pedagogy to a genre-based teaching of English in a senior high school in Indonesia. Based on the result, some pedagogic principles and relevant models of teaching are then suggested to be applied in the Teaching of English as a foreign language in Indonesia (TEFLIN) context.

Keywords: multimodal pedagogy, genre-based teaching, semantic resources

INTRODUCTION

The development of ICT has led human communication to a stage in which mono-modal fashions of language communication can rarely take place in

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oursociety. Language as the most dominant element in human communication appears more frequently in multimodal forms. Our texts, even those of younger children, involve more than just verbal elements. They involve images such as photos, pictures, emoticons, and graphics; and cyber links that connects texts in a single display. This kind of texts requires new approaches to meaning-making which serves as the heart of every communication. Understanding how language is being used to express ideas, feelings, and attitudes; how images are being utilized to replace or support the language elements; and how links are being developed to connect the texts and/or elements of the texts are now integral parts of our daily communication business. Thence, understanding multimodal texts and approaches to analyze them is imperative if successful communication is being sought.

Studies on multimodal texts and relevant analysis tools have been done by several authors such as Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) on visual communication; van Leeuwen (1999), on speech, music, and sound; Kress et al. (2001) on multimodal perspective on teaching and learning; Jewitt et al. (2001), on visual, action, and linguistic communication; Bowcher (2007), on the interrelationship between images and written language; and Serafini (2010, 2011) on perceptual, structural, and ideological perspective on multimodal texts; and visual images in multimodal texts.

In the meantime, multimodal teaching is by no means new. Works on this focus have been developed in 1980s, and culminated in Kress, et al. (2001), Jewit (2001), Bezemer and Kress (2008), Serafini (2011). All the aforementioned works have consistently been devoted to developing the concepts, theories, and practical aspects of multimodal texts and the teaching principles. However, studies on what this modes of teaching mean for better students learning may have been very few, especially in the context of the teaching of English as a foreign language in Indonesia (TEFLIN). For the very reason, this study is trying to answer the following questions: (1) What kinds of multimodal texts are utilized by the teacher? (2) How multimodal texts help students improve their learnings? And (3) How is multimodal teaching of multimodal texts implemented in the classroom?

METHOD

This study is designed to take qualitative analytical approach as the main tool to answer the questions stated in the introduction section. This approach is selected to guarantee a thorough and in-depth description on how multimodal teachings are working to help students understand and develop multimodal texts of English in Indonesian schooling settings, especially in this study setting.

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A series of genre-based teaching (Christie, 1994; Martin, 1985, 2015; Martin and Rothery, 1980; Dudley-Evans, 2002; Gibbons, 2002; Hyland, 2003; Emilia, 2005) of news item texts in a senior high school class has been selected to serve as the source of the main data. The teaching sessions involve a teacher and thirty two tenth-graders. As required by the curriculum, the texts taught was within news item genre. The whole series took six sessions starting from 4 - 21 May, 2012, consisting of the teaching of spoken texts (4 – 7 May) and written texts (11 – 21 May). The whole series was video-taped and some relevant parts were transcribed.

The resulted recordings and transcriptions were then analyzed through the process of coding, categorizing, patterns identifications, and metaphors development. The resulted metaphors were then interpreted and discussed in the light of relevant theories of multimodality and multimodal pedagogy as well as genre-based teaching.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

From the recordings and the transcriptions, some relevant data and their patterns have been identified and analyzed. The result of analysis has been organized in terms of the questions that this study is trying to answer. Hence, each data will be presented in accordance with the questions.

Question 1: What kinds of multimodal texts are utilized by the teacher?

This question seeks to find multimodal texts, both oral and written, during the teaching-learning processes in the series. During the oral cycle, there have been 5 occasions in which multimodal texts were utilized by the teacher to help students develop better learning. The whole data may be summarized in Figure 1 below.

As indicated in the chart, multimodal texts were used by the teacher in the modeling stage, particularly in developing students' knowledge of the field, i. e. natural disaster (landslide), especially that happened in Bangli Bali. The video recording of Liputan 6 News was presented to involve students in listening to and talking about the news of the landslide. The news was in Bahasa Indonesia and the students were assigned to listen to the content of the news, and take notes on some key information. After the presentation, the students were asked to mention the key information they could catch from the video-taped news broadcast. They came up with the following Indonesian words: longsor, korban, tewas, luka-luka, Bangli, Bali, which were then translated and written on the board by the teacher in English:

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Landslide	Bangli
Victims	Bali
Dead	Injured

No.	Teaching Stages	Elements Involved	Content
1	Modeling (OC)	Video scenes, Oral text	Liputan 6 SCTV “Longsor di Bangli”
2	Modeling (O/WC)	Video scenes, Oral text	News reading exercises
3	Joint Construction (OC)	Oral text, Chart	Topics and Relevant Keywords
4	Joint Construction (WC)	Written Text, Photo	Landslide in Bangli Bali
5	Independent Construction (WC)	Web Page + Cyber links	Similar Texts in Internet

Figure 1 Chart of Multimodal Texts Identified in the Data of News Items Teaching Series

The students were given another chance to listen to the news to get a better understanding on the news. When asked to mention other information they got, they came up with: hilang, hujan lebat, dan disebabkan oleh.

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Missing
heavy rain
caused by

Other occasion where multimodal texts were involved happened in other modeling stage (video of news reading exercises), joint construction stage (chart of topics and relevant keywords), and independent construction (web page and cyber links).

Question 2: How do multimodal texts help students improve their learnings?

Answers to the second questions is related to those of the first question. This seek answers to how multimodal texts help students in improving their learning. The data of how multimodal texts help students improve their learning has been summarized and presented in Figure 2.

No.	Elements Involved	Helps
1	Video scenes (LIB), Oral text	give context and build the knowledge of the field
2	Video scenes (NRE), Oral text	give exposure on how to read news on TV
3	Oral text, Chart	summarize key words across topics
4	Written text, Photo + Text	highlight some important points in the news
5	(Written) Web Page + Cyber links	develop skills on news searching and intertextual relations

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Figure 2 Chart of the Ways Multimodal Texts Help Improve Students Learning

The chart in Figure 2 shows that in the first occasion, the multimodal text presented consisted of oral text and video scene. The video scenes were the main, while the oral text was the supportive elements. The video scenes presented the context to the topic being discussed. Besides, it also built the knowledge of the field in the part of the students. Through listening to the news, the students were informed of the landslide and its related concepts such as the victims, the cause, and the sites. In the second, though similar to the first, the students were getting exposed to ways of presenting or reading news. This was intended to serve as the model for them to imitate or even emulate.

Screen 3

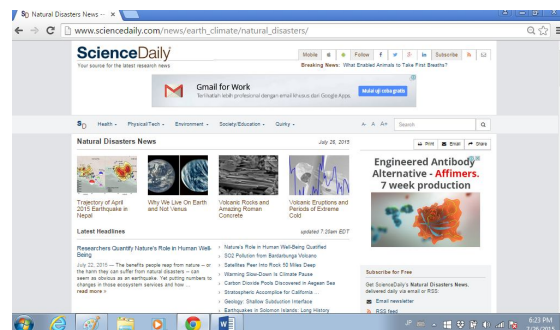


Figure 3 Examples of Web Page on a Search Engine

Different from the first and the second, in the third, the oral text was the main while the chart was the secondary. While the oral text was used to elicit and explain various topics and their relevant key words, the chart served to summarize the information elicited and then explained by the teacher. In the fourth, the photo presented beside the text served only to highlight the main points of the text. In the meantime, the most complicated multimodal text was the fifth, in which written web pages were supported by required links. To illustrate, see Figure 3 and Screen 1-2 in the Appendix.

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To be able to come to the texts they wanted to learn, students were expected to go through several steps, among others, are (1) writing the key words in the search engine, (2) selecting relevant options by clicking one of the topics available, (3) selecting the texts they wanted to read by clicking the text that wanted to read, and so on. As indicated in Screen 3, all alternative texts available in the screen are in multimodal forms.

Question 3: How is multimodal teaching of multimodal texts implemented in classroom teachings?

Close observation on what was going on in the teaching-learning processes shows detailed intricacy of students-teacher interactions as well as how the teaching-learning processes went on recursive patterns that might characterize the series, i. e. oral to written cycles (OTW), implicit to explicit learning (ITE), low-order thinking skills to high-order thinking skills (LTH), local to global insights (LTG), and religiosity-based to science-based (RTS). These may be diagrammatically represented in Figure 3.

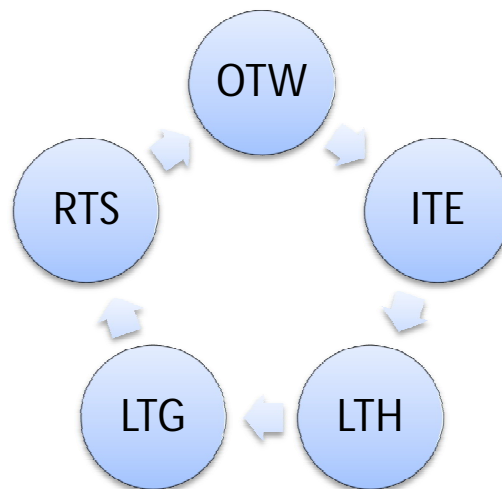


Figure 3 Five Pedagogic Principles of Multimodal Teaching of Multimodal Texts in TEFLIN Contexts

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As far as TEFLIN context is concerned, the aforementioned five pedagogic principles identified are critical if successful English teaching in schooling context is being targeted.

OTW signifies the importance of starting teaching by developing oral or spoken language skills. This is by no means easy in the beginning for Indonesian students tend to shy away from participation, and oral performance presentation (Suherdi, 2012b). However, once this is established, they will be motivated, confident, and less anxious (Suherdi, 2012).

ITE requires that implicit learning should precede explicit learning. This means that explicit learning is paramount in Genre-based teaching (Christie, 1986; Martin, 1985, 2015; Martin and Rothery, 1990; Richardson, 1994; Gibbons, 2002; Hyland, 2003; Emilia, 2005), as far as TEFLIN is concerned, implicit teaching better comes before explicit one.

LTH requires teacher establish strong low-order thinking skills (LOTS) before developing high-order thinking skills (HOTS) (Orlich, et al., 1985; Emilia, 2005; Suherdi, 2012a). HOTS should be the main target of school community; however, attaining them before establishing LOTS is by no means sufficient.

LTG recommends that the topics discussed is started with locally related issues before discussing global ones. Taking local issues in the outset will give them feeling and deeper sense than taking global issues to begin the lessons (Suherdi, 2012a).

RTS recommends that in the TEFLIN contexts founding strong religious basis for good learning is far more productive than going straightly to establishing scientific attitudes (Suherdi, 2012a, 2013).

Discussion

There is no doubt that multimodal texts are getting increasing significance in our today's communication. As highlighted by Kress et al. (2001) that communication in today's world involves the use of various kinds of modern technology such as PCs, Playstations, mobile phones; and as we all witness even young children use smartphones, iPads, and other 'sophisticated' means of multimodal communication. Hence, it is not surprising if language teaching is also required to take this into consideration (See Kress et al., 2001; Jewitt et al., 2001; Hampel, 2006; and Salmon, 2011). In relation with the findings of this study, as suggested by the research questions, it will be discussed

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(1) the kinds of multimodal texts, (2) how they improve learning, and (3) how the teaching is implemented.

In relation to the kinds of multimodal texts, the findings show that there seems to be a linear relationship between pedagogical objectives and the kinds of semiotic resources utilized to attain them. As indicated in Figure 1, in the first occasion, in which the objective is building students' knowledge of the field, the texts used consist of video-taped oral news presentation, recordings of news-related persons, events, and captions (See Sample Scene 1 in the Appendix) as well as the teacher's guiding talks. This use of multimodal texts help students develop appropriate attitude (See Gardner, and Lambert, 1972; Suherdi, 2012b), metacognitive (Goh, 1997; Kuhn, 2000; Bendixen and Hartley, 2003; Young and Fry, 2008), and relevant skills in dealing with the genre taught, i. e. news items. To develop students' mastery of the genre, the teacher used the materials contained in the main textbook, in which 'natural disaster' is being taken as the main topic in the texts developed.

As indicated by the transcripts of some parts of the modeling stage in the first session, students started to be engaged in English learning interaction as soon as the teacher was putting their answers in Bahasa Indonesia into English and getting more motivated as the schema of the topic was developing along with the development of the interaction in understanding the key words in the news items (See Sample Scene 2-3 in the Appendix). All these are made possible by the virtue of the multimodal video-taped news presentation, supported by the teacher's oral guide, and signified by motivated teacher-students interaction. These clearly encourage students to learn far better than what mono-modal texts can do. This is also the case or at least similar to other instances of multimodal texts identified in the data.

In the meantime, the way teaching-learning processes proceeded has made students' positive attitude, strong metacognitive, and relevant skills gain their maximum zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). The data shows that putting oral texts mastery in the outset established a productive foundation for good learning. Success in oral performance very often entails success in developing good communication, confidence (Cf. Clément, Dörnyei, dan Noels, 1994; Clément, Gardner, dan Smythe, 1977, 1980; Gardner, and Tremblay, 1994; Clément dan Kruidenier, 1985), and self-efficacy (Cf. Ames and Ames, 1985; Bandura, 1982a, b, 1986, 1992a, b, 1995, 1997). This very often encourages students to 'go more and more extra miles' in learning. This is proved, among others, by the whole class participation in communicative activities, both in groups and in individual assignment.

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The implicit ways of learning the texts in the beginning parts of the lessons give a kind of ‘psychological relief’ for most Indonesian students from the trauma of experiencing ‘pre-mature’ explicit teaching (Suherdi, 2012b). The ‘traumatic experience’ has been ‘most discouraging’ for successful English learning in Indonesia and some other countries with similar situation. Students’ subconscious involvement in ‘cheerful whole class’ communicative activities (See Sample Scene 2 in the Appendix) helped them forget the trauma and started a new experience with ‘easy’ learning of English. On this basis, explicit learning comes more smoothly than what cognitive code experience did in similar context in Indonesia (See Suherdi, 2012b).

As for low-order and high-order thinking skills, the data shows that students’ motivated involvement in psychologically challenging activities was due to the low-level of learning complexity that it demanded, i. e. imitating the dialog. The session helped students in mastering the correct, confident, and yet natural way of pronouncing, expressing, and doing the conversations (See Sample Scene 3-5 in the Appendix). This has helped them accommodate the demands of developing new and their own dialogs, which requires higher-order thinking skills. Similar case is also evident in the choice of putting local issues prior to global one (Suherdi, 2012a, b).

The last and may be the most significant factor for the success in the teaching series in the use of religious prior to scientific foundations. For most Indonesian, at least for the subjects of the study, to have scientific attitude is a new, unfamiliar, and even a little strange issue than to have religious ones. Hence, arousing students’ interest and motivation to learn (Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels, 1994; Clément, Gardner, and Smythe, 1977; Clément, Gardner, and Smythe, 1980; Clément, and Kruidenier, 1985) through religious approach is far more productive than through scientific approach (Cf. Suherdi, 2012b; and See Sample Scene 1-5 in the Appendix). This is evident in the data: teacher’s patience, respect, and friendliness lead to students’ curiosity, search, and experiment with English.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This article has presented the significance of multimodal pedagogy for multimodal English texts teaching, particularly in the TEFLIN contexts. Apart from its clarity, the study discussed is confined to a series of genre-based teaching to a class of a school in Indonesia. More extensive and intensive studies are then recommended to be conducted to cover larger samples, more intensive analysis, and more aspects of students’ learning and teachers’ teaching behaviors.

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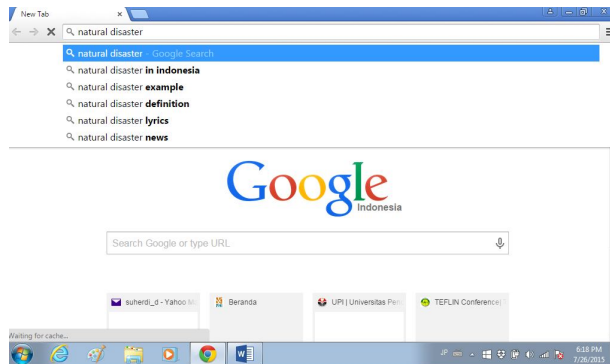
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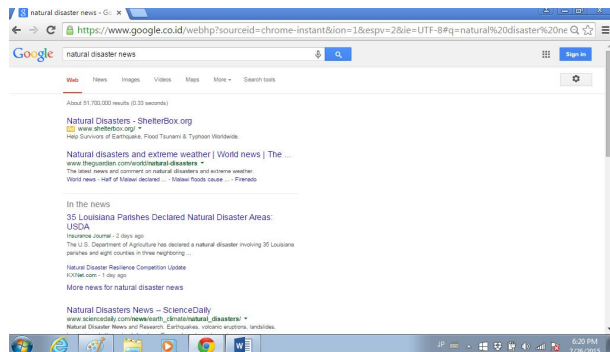
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APPENDIX
DATA PRESENTATION AND REPRESENTATION

Screen 1



Screen 2



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Sample Scene 1



Sample Scene 2



Sample Scene 3



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Sample Scene 4



Sample Scene 5

