CHAPTER TWO

BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS BROCHURES AND SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL MULTIMODAL ANALYSIS

2.0 Introduction

This study analyses the multimodal texts of Malaysian business-to-business (b2b) brochures based on the functional tradition of systemic functional theory. The analysis entails identifying the different semiotic modes that make up the genre of Malaysian business brochures and examining how cohesion is achieved between the different modes. Therefore, this chapter will begin by describing the b2b brochure (Section 2.1) and determine its place in the context of business and promotional discourse (Section 2.2). This is followed by Section 2.3 which provides a brief overview of genre analysis and by Section 2.4 with a discussion of genre in systemic functional theory. Section 2.5 will review studies in multimodal research and provides a summary of the semiotic resources and the types of discourses that have been analysed multimodally. It will also include a discussion of studies on the cohesion ties of these semiotic resources. The issue of empiricism in multimodal research will also be discussed in the section. This chapter ends with a summary in Section 2.6.

2.1 Business-to-business Brochures

Business-to-business (b2b) brochures are brochures targeted at companies that buy products or services to use in their own business or in making other products (Wells, Burnett and Moriarty, 2000; Belch and Belch, 2004; Arens and Shaefer, 2007). This is unlike business-to-consumer brochures which target consumers at large. As such, business markets consist of organizations, whether profit or non-profit, public or private, that acquire goods and services to support organisational needs.

Business marketing is different from consumer marketing in many ways. Firstly, the market concentration is small and targeted in business marketing and secondly, decision-makers in business markets are professionals who use rational criteria when comparing choices and who have technical and expert knowledge about the product advertised. With regard to quality, business customers search for quality levels that are consistent with company standards such that they are reluctant to pay for extra quality or on the other hand to compromise quality for a reduced price. Furthermore, the buying process of business-to-business products is more complicated than that of consumer buying. The business buying process usually consists of six stages namely:

1) identification of needs;
2) information gathering;
3) identify vendors;
4) evaluate vendors;
5) select vendors;
6) purchase negotiations.

(Coe, 2004; Clow and Baack, 2007).

The stages in the process imply the complexity and time-consuming nature of the entire endeavour. In addition, decision-makers in the buying process can consist of as many as 15-20 people and with the elaborate buying stages, the process can take days or even months, unlike in consumer buying where purchase can be a spur of the moment decision.

Table 2.3 provides information about the group of individuals in the decision making unit of the organizations contemplating the purchase of business products.

Table 2.1
The decision making unit in a business buying process (Pearson, 1996: 38)

	Group	Individuals in organization	Role
1	Decider	Senior management	Motivated by impact of purchase on the company's competitive image
2	Authoriser	Financial management	Concerned with budgeting, the financing of purchase and the stability of the supplier
3	Gatekeeper	Technical specialists	Concerned with specification of the solution and its fit with the company strategy
4	Purchaser	Operational managers	Concerned with the suppliers ability to deliver a solution that is efficient and effective
5	User	Managers and staff	Concerned with ability of their solution to enhance their working lives

Therefore, with business marketing, advertisers face the challenge of reaching the various decision-makers in order to meet their specific information needs. Similarly, the business-to-business brochures of this study are produced by companies that advertise training programmes to corporate companies or government organizations.

2.2 The Business Promotional Discourse of B2b Brochures

Business discourse is defined as a discourse in which "people communicate using talk or writing in commercial organizations in order to get their work done" (Bargiela-Chiappini, Nickerson and Planken, 2007:3). It has its roots partly in the business communication tradition of North America and the applied linguistics tradition. Business communication is described as "any communication used to build partnerships, intellectual resources, to promote an idea, a product, service, or an organization – with an objective of creating value for your business" (Kotelnikov, 2007:1) or in other words, to communicate in order to create value for the organization. As the b2b brochures of this study are texts written by business organisations whose purpose is to promote training programmes (the product) to other business entities, they can therefore be described as a form of business discourse.

Bhatia (1993, 2004) has also identified brochures that advertise products or service such as the brochures of this study, as a type of promotional genre. He categorizes different kinds of brochures to be in the same colony as other forms of advertisement like promotional letters and book blurbs even though they are different in terms of the product they advertise and the market or audience they target. These texts have a common communicative purpose but they use different promotional strategies such as 'product appraisal', 'establishing credentials' or 'visual input'. These forms of advertisements are described as primary members of the colony. On the other hand, fundraising letters and grant proposals also have strong promotional concerns even though they are not promoting a product or service for they usually promote an idea or a proposal. These are considered as secondary members of the promotional genre (Bhatia, 2004) as shown in Figure 2.1.

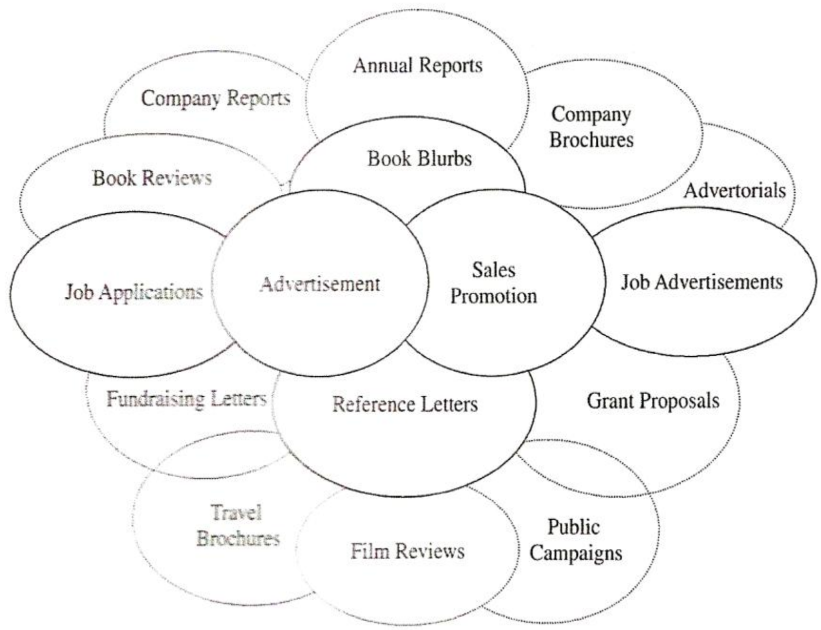

Figure 2.1
Colony of promotional genres (Bhatia, 2004:62)

The members of the promotional genre use advertising discourse as a means to realize the promotional purpose of the genre. As such, it can be concluded that the b2b brochures of this study are a type of business discourse and also a type of advertising discourse or put together they could be described as belonging to the *business promotional genre.* Table 2.2 lists some of the major research in business promotional genre compiled by this study.

Table 2.2 shows that the early 1990s was characterised by the analysis of the business letter, as an important genre of communication in the setting at that time (Bargiela-Chiappini, Nickerson and Planken, 2007). The continued interest in business letters is seen in a number of researches which highlighted the way the genre has been subsumed into other genres such as the annual general report and email correspondence (Gotti and Gillaerts, 2005) and in job application letters (Henry & Roseberry, 2001). Other direct forms of business promotional texts include product advertisements in print media,

Table 2.2
A summary of research in business promotional discourse

No.	Data	Researcher(s)
1	Sales promotion letters	Bhatia (1993)
2	Business letters	Ghadessy (1993)
3	Company brochures	Askehave (1997)
4	Application letters	Connor et. al (1997)
5	Direct mail sales offer	Van nus (1999)
6	Mass produced commercial letters	Sless (1999)
7	Corporate brochures	McLaren (1999)
8	Business correspondence	Upton (2001)
9	Tourist brochures	Guijarro and Hernandez (2001)
10	Job application letters	Henry and Roseberry (2001)
11	Annual reports	Courtis and Hassan, (2002)
12	Business proposals	Lagerweft and Bossers (2002)
13	Business brochures	Sobhie (2003)
14	Product advertisements	Hoeken, van den Brandt, Crijns, Dominguez, Hendriks, Planken and Starren (2003)
15	Product and service advertisements	Cheong (2004)
16	Job application letters	Al –Ali M (2004)
17	Business-to-customer web pages	Hu, Shima, Oehlmann, Zhao, Takemura and Matsumoto (2004)
18	Business marketing literature	Poncini (2004)
19	Annual general report	Gotti and Gillaerts (2005)
20	Print advertisements	Nickerson et. al (2005)
21	University brochures	Osman (2006)

corporate business and university brochures and in the new media of business-to-customer web pages.

Research in business discourse at work usually refers to a number of fields and disciplines such as genre theory, discourse analysis, organizational communication and applied linguistics. Thus, it is a cross disciplinary field of research which has led to different ways of analysing business language and different variables that can influence how people communicate at work. Among the disciplines, genre analysis, which itself allows for a combination of different methodologies, has been widely used in the analysis of written business discourse.

The work of Bhatia (1993), a genre analyst, introduces the ESP approach to genre analysis pioneered by Swales (1990) for academic writing by reapplying it to professional discourse in analysing sales letters and application letters. The study remains an influential account of how text and context are intertwined and how writers use a genre to achieve their intentions (Bargiela-Chiappini, Nickerson and Planken, 2007).

Other methodological approaches have also been utilised in analyzing business discourse which include surveys (quantitative approaches), text-based analysis and ethnographic case studies. Surveys were used in researching business writing in organisations such as that undertaken by Louhiala-Salminen (1999) who surveyed the use of foreign language in written documentation of German, French and Dutch companies and research by Nickerson (2000) on the use of English by non-native writers of British multinationals in the Netherlands. Interpretative approaches in business writing such as ethnographic case study accounts have also been undertaken. Nickerson and Mulholland (1999) used case studies to investigate the relationship between aspects of email use and the institutional environment conducted in a multinational corporate context. Similarly, Gemenez (2002) adopted a case study approach to investigate the role of email and fax in communication between a multinational company and its Argentinian subsidiary.

Thus, the studies discussed provided information about writing in organizational settings and its contributions to the construction of social and communication structures of organizations. They also highlighted information on the use of foreign language especially English in written business discourse in multinational and intercultural contexts.

Although some studies have been conducted with regard to business brochures, such work has yet to be carried out in Malaysia. As such, this study will provide the needed information on business brochures in the Malaysian context.

2.3 Genre Analysis

Genre analysis has been regarded as a relatively new research approach in applied linguistics (Bargiela-Chiappini, Nickerson and Planken, 2007). However, the work of Michell (1957) proves that studies on genres started as early as the 1950s. Mitchell's study of buying and selling in a Libyan community has been described as a type of genre analysis for he analysed the relationship between speech and the situation of utterance. This was carried out by identifying the participants and elements involved in the situation and dividing the buying and selling process into stages based on content criteria. Mitchell's uses of the term 'stages' linked his study to the type of genre analysis within the context of systemic functional theory (Martin and Rose, 2008). Nevertheless, actual work in genre analysis started in the early 1980s with the work of Swales (1981) and

Dudley-Evans (1986) and has been developed extensively since then (Martin and Rose, 2008).

The genre movement has now moved into its third decade and there are three broad perspectives of genre theory. The first theory is known as the New Rhetoric group consisting mainly of North Americans working within a rhetorical tradition (Miller, 1984; Bazerman, 1988; Freedman and Medway, 1994; Berkenkotter and Huckin, 1995). The second is the Australian Genre theory also known as the Sydney School working on the basis of Halliday’s (1985) systemic functional linguistics. Linguists such as Martin (1992) and Eggins (1994) have used the concept to complement the Hallidayan notion of register (Cope & Kalantziz, 1993; Martin 1992, 1997; Christie and Martin, 1997). The third perspective is the ESP approach based on the Bakhtinian notion of intertextuality and dialogism, systemic functional understanding of text and structure and Vygotskyian principles of pedagogy (Martin and Rose, 2008). The seminal work of Swales (1990), Yates and Orlikowski (1992), Paltridge (1997) and Hyland (2000) have contributed to a wide understanding of the concept of genre by introducing models for analysing genres. In Hong Kong, Bhatia (1993) has paved the way for the practical application of genre theory forwarding a framework for analysing English for Specific Purposes (ESP) texts (Askehave and Leenrup, 2005). Table 2.3 provides a summary of the three approaches to genre.

Table 2.3 shows that the three perspectives represent different conceptions of genre in terms of research and pedagogies they encourage (Hyland, 2002) but they overlap in their approaches. This study is interested in adopting the Australian genre theory or otherwise known as the systemic functional approach in analysing the genre of the Malaysian b2b brochures.

Table 2.3
A summary of the three approaches to genre (Kobayashi, 2003:7)

	New Rhetoric Studies	Australian Genre Theories	ESP Analysis
Researchers	North American scholarship interested in L1 teaching	Systemic-functional linguists	ESP scholarship
Objective	Pedagogical	Pedagogical	Pedagogical
Setting	Native speakers of English	Primary, secondary, adult education for minorities, migrant workers and other mainstream groups	Non native speakers of English, English for Academic Purposes, English for Professional Communication
Genre Theory	"Genre as social action with social purposes" (Miller, 1984)	Genre as "staged-goal oriented social processes" (Martin, 1987)	Genre as "communicative events characterized by their communicative purposes" and by various patterns of "structure, style, content and intended audience" (Swales, 1990)
Text Analysis	Text analysis based on ethnographic methods.	Analysis of linguistic features within Hallidayan schemes of linguistic analysis	Structural move analyses to describe global organizational patterns

Genre analysis is based on two central assumptions. Firstly, "the features of a similar group of texts depend on the social context of their creation and use" and secondly, "those features can be described in a way that relates a text to other texts like it" (Hyland, 2002: 114). Swales (1990) provide a definition of genre that focuses on the communicative purpose of discourse:

> A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style. Communicative purpose is both a privileged criterion and one that operates to keep the scope of a genre as here conceived narrowly focused on comparable rhetorical action.
>
> (Swales, 1990: 58)

Based on this description of genre, Swales (1981) investigated 45 research article (RA) introductions and reports that the introductions follow a 4-move rhetorical pattern: (1) establishing the field, (2) summarising previous research, (3) preparing for present research, and (4) introducing present research. In a later study, however, Swales (1990) revises his move model and proposes a more elaborate approach which he calls a 3-move "Create-A-Research-Space" (CARS) model consisting of: (1) establishing the territory, (2) locating a research niche, and (3) occupying the niche.

Following this move tradition, studies have been carried out on other academic genres such as grant proposals (Connor & Mauranen, 1999; Connor, 2000), discussion sections of research articles (Holmes, 1997; Biria & Tahririan, 1997; Fallahi & Erzi, 2003), abstracts (Hyland, 2000), science books (Fuller, 1998), Ph.D. dissertations (Bunton, 1999), school textbooks (Eggins et al., 1993; Love, 1993; Coffin, 1997; Veel, 1998, Ansary & Babaii, 2000), dissertation acknowledgements (Hyland, 2003, 2004), editorial letters (Flowerdew & Dudley-Evans, 2002), academic book reviews (Motta-Roth, 1995, Babaii, 2003, Babaii & Ansary, forthcoming), academic e-mails (Amirian & Tahririan, 2003) and graduate student seminars (Weissberg, 1993).

Some other studies, based on the same tradition, have explored business genres such as sales letters (Bhatia, 1993), direct mail letters (Upton, 2001), job application letters

(Henry & Roseberry, 2001), business faxes (Akar & Louhiala-Salminen, 1999); legal genres such as Malaysian Arbitration Act (Azirah, 2004) and Industrial Law Reports (Norizah, 2008); medical genre (Azirah, 1996) and engineering genre such as engineering journals (Sze, 2003).

Therefore, these studies show that genre, which has traditionally been a literary concept, has become a popular framework for analyzing the form and rhetorical function of non-literary discourse such as research articles, theses/dissertations, textbooks, business letters and legal texts. It thus serves as a tool for developing educational resources in rhetoric, linguistics, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and in English for Academic Purposes (EAP).

Thus far, almost all genre-based studies have employed one or the other of Swales's move-analytic models of text analysis to investigate whether the generic prototypical rhetorical patterns that he has introduced exist universally. The present study, by contrast, utilizes the Systemic Functional (SF) theory of language as a text-analytic tool to examine the distinctive rhetorical structure of business brochures genre with the aim of formulating the *Generic Structure Potential* (GSP) of business texts that may capture the actual patterns of text development and components in business brochures. The following section will discuss the systemic functional approach to genre analysis.

2.3 Genre within Systemic Functional Theory

Genre in systemic functional terms is defined as staged, goal-oriented social processes (Martin, 1994; Martin and Rose, 2008) where local patterns or schematic structures can be recognised and labeled based on the function of each stage in the pattern. Thus, genre analysis within systemic functional theory is described as a study of functional variations of language and has received considerable attention since its introduction in the 1960s.

The functional genre movement gathers momentum in the early 1980s and brought with it the view that genres are best conceptualized as goal-directed or purposive (Martin, 1985; Swales, 1990; Bhatia, 1993; Eggins, 1994; Eggins and Martin, 1997). The shifting of focus to functionality is best reflected in the definition of genre by the systemic functional linguist, J.R. Martin, who described genres as "how things get done, when language is used to accomplish them" (Martin, 1985:250). Thus, when trying to define and describe a genre today, the identification of the purpose of a particular language variety is regarded as a useful place to begin (Askehave, 1997). This will be further discussed in Chapter 5 of this study.

This study adopts the Hallidayian Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) model of text analysis as a workable theoretical framework for the analysis of business promotional brochures based on several theoretical grounds. Firstly, SFL "interprets language as being a system network of meaning *potential"* (Morley, 1985:42) and describes language as being "made up of systems, each having a set of features which are in contrast with one another" (ibid). SFL thus accounts not only for *paradigmatic* relations of systems, but also for *syntagmatic* relations of structure and sequence. Secondly, for Halliday (1990), SFL is particularly suitable for the type of investigation that

> … enables us to analyse any passage and relate it to its context in the discourse, and also to the general background of the text: who it is written for, what is its angle on the subject matter and so on.
>
> (Halliday, 1990: 34)

Furthermore, SFL not only provides a detailed description of the rhetorical functions and linguistic structures of English (Halliday, 1985 a & b, 1994), but it could also relate the contextual dimensions of register/genre to the semantic and grammatical organization of language itself. Similarly, it has the potential to describe how genres can relate to and evolve into other genres, thus providing descriptions of *different* genres in a *single* culture and of *similar* genres *across* cultures (Martin and Rose, 2008). Finally, although not so much related to the purposes of this study, the SFL approach to genre analysis can recognise that the similarities and differences between texts are also the reflection of a more abstract contextual dimension that may be called *ideology*.

2.4.1 Genre versus Register

Systemic functional genre analysis is grounded in two levels of social context, Context of Situation and Context of Culture. Context of Situation (CS) accounts for usage variation with reference to a specific situation (Eggins & Martin, 1997). This variation is explained by reference to the three variables that constitute a register of a text (Halliday, 1973, 1978, 1985). The variables are: *field* (what is happening in the social action), *tenor* (who is taking part in the action, their status and roles), and *mode* (what part the language is playing in the situation). Thus, each social situation has its own configuration of values derived from the three variables which help to interpret the social context (Halliday and Hasan, 1989).

Secondly, in the SFL approach to genre, different genres are seen as different ways of using language to achieve different culturally established tasks, and that texts of different genres are texts which are achieving different purposes in the culture (Martin and Rose, 2008). In this approach, a text's genre is identified by the sequence of functionally distinct stages or steps through which it unfolds. Therefore, the major difference in genres is the staging structure of texts. These are captured with reference to the Context of Culture

(CC) in which the texts are produced and which would account for the ways in which the social purpose of a text can be determined.

Thus, register and genre approaches in SFL seek to explain variation in texts by reference to variation in context. That is, explicit links are made between features of the discourse and variables of the social and cultural contexts in which the discourse is enacted. The implications are that (a) genre is realized through register and register, in turn, is realised through language; (b) context has two layers - a generic layer above and beyond register and a register layer above language; (c) within the approach outlined, register and genre are two realisational planes in an SFL view of texts. In fact, two texts may be from the same genre, but show variation in register, for example, the genre would be texts about childcare but they are written for different readers, one for the general audience and another for trainee-nurses.

2.4.2 Generic Structure Potential (GSP)

The context of culture (CC) of SFL is further enhanced by the concept of *Generic Structure Potential* (GSP) introduced by Halliday and Hasan (1989). GSP is a condensed statement identifying the obligatory and optional rhetorical elements that are described as macro-structural elements that make up a text and which are sequenced in a specific order. The obligatory elements define the genre to which it belongs such that their absence means that the text would not be interpreted as the genre to which the text belongs. On the other hand, an optional element can occur but is not obliged to occur in the configuration of the GSP. In their study of spoken texts, Halliday and Hasan (1989) establish the GSP of the genre "Service Encounter" as

[(G)**.**(SI)^][(SE).{SR^SC^}^S^] P^PC(^F)

In this GSP, it is suggested that any shop transaction in English potentially consists of the following macro-structural elements: Greeting (G), Sale Initiation (SI), Sale Enquiry (SE), Sale Request (SR), Sale Compliance (SC), Sale (S), Purchase (P), Purchase Closure (PC), and Finis (F). The round brackets in the above GSP indicate optionality of the enclosed elements. Therefore, G, SI, SE, and F are optional and SR, SC, S, P, and PC are obligatory. The dot between elements means 'more than one' option in sequence while the braces with a curved arrow indicate that the degree of iteration for elements in the square brackets is equal. That is to say, if SR occurs twice, then SC must also occur twice. Finally, the caret sign (^) shows sequence.

Based on the proposed GSP, it is, therefore, possible to express the total range of optional and obligatory elements and their sequence, that all the possibilities of text structure for every text appropriate to a specific CC may be exhausted. In other words, it is possible to state the *Generic Structure Potential* (GSP) of a genre. Applying this theoretical model to a different genre, the present study will establish the GSP of Malaysian business-to-business brochures.

2.4.2 Previous Research on the GSP of Various Genres

Mitchell's study (1957, 1975) is one of the earliest attempts to identify the GSP of a genre although he did not use the term then. He outlines the following elements in the genre of *Shop Transaction* in Libya:

> Salutation (S), Inquiry as to the Object of the Sale (IOS), Examination of the Object of the Sale (EOS), Bargaining (B), and Conclusion (C).

In other words, Mitchell (1975) identifies the *rhetorical structure* of the genre of *Shop Transaction* in Libya as S^IOS^EOS^B^C. The comparison of this GSP with the GSP that Halliday and Hasan (1989) proposed for the genre of *Shop Transaction* in England is illuminating. In another earlier work, Hasan (1977) identified the obligatory stages in the schematic structure of making appointment as:

Identification^Application^Offer^Confirmation.

Hasan's work continues in analyzing the GSP of nursery tales and service encounters in Australia (Hasan, 1984, 1985).

Following a similar theoretical model, Paltridge (1993) investigates the rhetorical structure of the Introduction sections of research articles taken from the most cited specialised journals in order to explore the possibility of disciplinary variation across three fields: environmental studies, linguistics and geography. The study does not present evidence of any significant disciplinary variation. However, he discovers that the GSP of this (sub)genre contains the following elements: Background Information (BI), Indicating a Gap (IG), Rationale for Study (RS), Previous Research (PR), Justification for Study (JS), Purpose of Study (PS), Question Raising (QR) and Context of Study (CS). Of these, only two elements emerge as being "obligatory": PR and PS while all other elements are found to be "optional" or in Hasan's (1984) terms, *elaborative*, that is, they contribute to the development of a more elaborated text, but are not essential to the creation of the texts.

Applying Halliday and Hasan's (1989) theoretical model to a different genre, Ghadessy (1993) establishes the GSP of *Business Letters* (BLs). He suggests that BLs essentially include an initial Reference (R) category followed by the category of Addressing the Issue (AI), and finally a Closing (C) category. The boundaries of this discourse structure are identified as the Initial Greeting (IG) and the final Complimentary Close (CC)" (Ghadessy, 1993:162). He also proposes the following model for business communication in general I^(R/I)n^R in which 'I' and 'R' stand for Initiation and Response, (^) and ( ) mean 'followed by' and 'optional' respectively, and (n) refers to the iteration of R/Is.

In an attempt to identify the GSP of Introductions and Endings of essays, Henry and Roseberry (1997) analyze 40 essays taken from different newspapers, magazines and encyclopedia entries. They contend that the communicative purpose of essays is "to put forward a point of view and to either defend or explain it" (Roseberry, 1997: 480). They discover the GSP of the Introductions of essays to be (IT)^(NF)^CI suggesting that there are three rhetorical elements in the Introductions of essays, those of Introducing the Topic (IT), Narrowing the Focus (NF), and stating Central Idea of the essay (CI). Only the last one is an obligatory element while the first two optional elements merely provide sufficient background information such that the main propositions can be presented. As to the structure of the Endings of essays, however, they identify the following elements: Commitment to Central idea (CC) and Expansion (EX).

In summation, these studies show that GSPs of various discourses have been developed and this study would contribute to such knowledge by identifying the GSP of the Malaysian b2b brochures, a set of data from an Asian business discourse.

2.5 Multimodality and Systemic Functional Theory

Multimodality is concerned with studying meaning-making potential of the different individual semiotic modes in the design of semiotic product or event and also of their interaction (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001). The publication of Kress and van Leeuwen's groundbreaking books '*Reading Images'* (1990) and '*Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual design'* (1996) is seen by systemic linguists as the birth of multimodality research

(Kaltenbacher, 2004) and from where the term ‘multimodality’ originates (van Leeuwen and Jewitt, 2000).

Even though multimodality comes into prominence in the 1990s, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) stress that texts have always been multimodal and that purely monomodal discourse does not exist for “spoken discourse does not exist without its accompanying gestures, facial plays, body postures and eye movements, just as written text does not exist without frames, spaces, typeface and colour” (Kaltenbacher, 2004:194). Multimodality is especially prominent today with the increased ubiquity of sound and image through TV, computer and the internet and the advances in desktop publishing that make texts either printed or electronically produced even more multimodal and that language no longer the center of all communication as

> …all texts are seen as multimodal and are described in that way. Language is likely to be a part of these semiotic objects - though it might not – and often it might not be the dominant or most significant mode.
> (Kress, Ogborn and Martin, 1998)

Researchers working in the field of multimodality are usually from the school of systemic functional linguistics. This school extends Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistic Theory to the interpretation of the ways that various visual modes realise their meanings in social contexts (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1990, 1996, 2006; O’ Toole, 1994). In Kress and van Leeuwen’s work (1996, 2006), the metafunctional dimensions of language in SFL are analogous to the three elements of visual grammar. The ideational metafunction is analogous to representation while textual metafunction is to composition and interpersonal metafunction to interaction of visual representation in texts. This is described in greater detail in Chapter 3. Based on this theoretical framework, various semiotic resources have been analysed to discern their meaning potential in various discourses.

2.5.1 Multimodal Research and Semiotic Resources in Various Discourses

Multimodal analysis or analysis of meaning-making potential has been carried out on many semiotic resources which are presented in the following list:

- built spaces (O' Toole, 2004; Alias, 2004)
- colour (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2002; van Leeuwen, 2005)
- gesture (Muntigl and Kendon, 1990; McNeill, 1992, 2001)
- image, film, cartoons (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1990, 1992, 1996, 2006; O'Toole, 1994; Hodge and Kress, 1988; Eckkrammer, 2004; Kandl, 2004; Stockl, 2004; O'Halloran, 2004)
- layout (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, 2006; Pang, 2004; van Leeuwen, 2005; Bateman, 2008)
- mathematical symbolism (O'Halloran, 2005)
- movement (Martinec, 1998, 2000, 2001)
- speech/music/sound (van Leeuwen, 1991, 1999; McDonald, 2000; Callaghan and McDonald, 2002)
- typography (Walker, 1988; van Leeuwen, 2005)

The list shows that images, layout and speech have continuously been studied for their meaning potential in the Western context. Similarly, the current study will continue this effort by studying images and layout but they will be analysed in the Malaysian context, an Asian context.

Furthermore, the range of semiotic resources that has been subjected to multimodal analysis is from a variety of discourses as summarized in Table 2.4. The summary shows that research has been carried out in the academic, media, entertainment, architecture and hypertext contexts.

Nevertheless, very little research has been conducted in print business discourse especially that targets corporate customers as readers of the texts. This study will bridge the gap by analysing the semiotic resources of language, image and layout in Malaysian business brochures produced for corporate companies.

Table 2.4
Types of discourses subjected to multimodal analysis

Discourse	Researcher(s)
advertising in print and television	Thibault, 2000; Cheong, 2004; Baldry, 2004; Baldry and Thibault, 2006
architecture	Alias, 2004; O'Toole, 2004
face-to-face interaction	Norris, 2004
film and video	Iedema, 2001; Martinec, 2000; O'Halloran, 2004; van Leeuwen, 1991, 1996, 2005; Baldry and Thibault, 2006
history texts	Martin and Rose, 2008
hypertext	Lemke, 2002; Kok, 2004; van Leeuwen, 2005; Hassan, 2005
hypermedia applications	Baldry, 2000; Jewitt, 2002; Kaltenbacher, 2004; Baldry and Thibault, 2006
medicine	Buhrig, 2004
museum exhibition	Hofinger and Ventola, 2004; Pang, 2004; van Leeuwen, 2005
news stories and newspapers	Kress and van Leeuwen, 1998; Macken-Horarik, 2003
song	Steiner, 1988
textbooks, classroom interaction, discourses of mathematics and science	van Leeuwen, 1992; Kress et. al. 2001; Lemke, 1998; 2002; O'Halloran, 1999, 2005; Guo, 2004; Baldry and Thibault, 2006; Martin and Rose, 2008

The lists provided pertaining to the type of semiotic resources analysed in multimodal texts and in multimodal integration are necessarily selective but it shows the multiple and multifaceted applications of systemic functional theory in explorations of multimodal discourse. The length of the lists also reveals why these systemic functional multimodal studies of non-verbal semiotic cannot be fully reviewed in this study.

2.5.2 Multimodality and Business Promotional Discourse

Multimodal analysis has made its presence in business promotional discourse research especially with the advent of technology today. One such example is the study by Askehave and Nielsen (2005) on homepages which applies genre analysis from a multimodal perspective. Lemke (2002) combines hypertextuality with multimodality thus expanding meaning creation into hypermodality. In hypermodality, linkages are established with text units of various scales and among text units, visual elements and sound units (Lemke 2002:301). With reference to Lemke's work, Chiappini (2005) investigates new meaning creation on a website by illustrating how the traditional promotional letter genre is re-interpreted as a hypermodal discourse on a UK banking website. Another study of websites was carried out by Garzone (2002) which demonstrates how the various components of a website, linguistic and iconic elements, interact in the construction of multiple meanings.

With regard to static web pages, Hu, Shima, Oehlmann, Zhao, Takemura and Matsumoto (2004) compare first impressions of Business to Customer (b2c) on such texts in three countries, Japan, China and the UK. The web pages were found to have a combination of eight design elements: title format, title position, menu size, clipart size, main colour, background colour, colour brightness and colour harmonisation. Their findings show that designers of b2c websites have to localise the visual design on international pages to avoid negative first impressions on the part of the potential internet customers of various cultures. Similarly, De Groot, Korzillius, Nickerson and Gerritsen (2006) use the multimodal discourse approach to analyse visual themes employed in a corpus of Dutch-English and British managerial forewords to annual reports. To date, research in business discourse that applies the multimodal approach is focused on web pages and websites. This study will, however, analyse print business-to-business brochures and thus would inform the research area of business discourse and multimodality on the semiotic modes present in this genre and how these modes integrate such that cohesion is established in the business brochures.

2.5.3 Research in Multimodal Interaction

Multimodality is also about analysing interaction between the different modes and how they are made cohesive in texts. Within systemic functional linguistics, the theory of cohesion was developed by Halliday and Hasan (1976) in *Cohesion in English* which recognises four categories of semantic cohesion in English texts: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical organization. Martin (1983, 1992) elaborates on much of their work focusing on the concepts of reference, conjunction and lexical cohesion. Subsequently, these linguistics concepts have been applied in analysing cohesion and integration of semiotic modes other than language and between language and other semiotic modes in multimodal texts.

The pioneering work on cohesion between the semiotic modes is that of van Leeuwen (1991) who studies the conjunctive structure of the visual and verbal tracks of film and television documentaries. Royce (1999) described such relations between the different semiotic resources as *intersemiotic cohesion.* In his study, Royce uses terms like intersemiotic repetition, intersemiotic synonymy, intersemiotic hyponymy and intersemiotic meronymy, terms adopted from the lexical semantics of Halliday and Hasan (1976), in describing the various forms of intersemiotic cohesion.

Apart from analysing intersemiotic relations in terms of lexical semantics, coherence in text can also be established by describing the relations between clauses in terms of the logico-semantic system of expansion and projection (Halliday, 1985, 1994). In expansion, one clause expands on the meaning of the other through 1) elaborating 2) extending and 3) enhancing while in projection, a secondary clause is projected through the primary clause which instates it as locution or an idea (Halliday, 1994:219). These concepts are rather similar to the concepts of anchorage and relay proposed in a classic semiotic approach to text-image relations by Barthes (1977). Anchorage is similar to Halliday's concept of elaboration (van Leeuwen, 2005) where one mode elaborates on another by way of explaining or exemplifying, while in relay, text and image stand in complementary relationship which is quite close to Halliday's concept of extension that explains how two different modes are providing 'semantically related information' (van Leeuwen, 1991, 2005).

A number of multimodal discourse analysis studies within the systemic functional framework use the resources of logico-semantic and lexical semantics relations to study intersemiosis. These studies include:

1) Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) text and image relations in various texts;
2) Royce's (1999) study of textual and visual relations in economics texts;
3) Thibault's (2001) use of projection and expansion for describing visual-verbal relations in biology textbooks;

4) Rowley-Jolivet’s (2004) study of verbiage-image relations in conference presentations;
5) Unsworth’s (2004) study of verbiage-image relations of expansion in explanations in science textbooks, CD-ROMs and websites;
6) O’Halloran’s (2005) exploration of both intra- and inter-semiotic logico-semantic relations in mathematical discourse;
7) Salway and Martinec’s (2005) application of expansion categories to relations between images and the static verbal text that accompanies them on pages of gallery, news and science education websites;
8) van Leeuwen’s (2005) analysis of the logico-semantic relation type and directionality of hypertextual relations in two educational CD-ROMs (for young and older children);
9) Hassan’s (2005) application of expansion categories with Barthes’s (1977) categories in analyzing verbal-visual relation in homepages, web pages and websites;
10) Royce (2007) proposal of intersemiotic complimentarity in analyzing multimodal discourse.

Thus far, most studies on cohesion in multimodal texts within the systemic functional theory are focused on identifying cohesive ties between different semiotic modes that is between verbal and visual semiotic modes present in the texts. These connections have been described in terms of *semantic connections* as logico-semantic relations and lexical organisation concepts of systemic functional linguistics are employed to explain the relations between the semiotic modes. Therefore, these studies tend to focus on semantic continuity (Ventola, 1999) as an expression of cohesion in multimodal texts.

This study, however, will analyse how the modes coexisting in the b2b brochures are made coherent through visual and compositional resources, a set of resources proposed by this study for multimodal integration analysis. With the proposed analytical framework, cohesion analysis can now be based on visual resources as well as logico-semantic resources as previously carried out in studies.

2.5.4 Empiricism and Multimodality

Multimodal research are sometimes to be derided by linguists and communication experts for its lack of strong empirical evidence to support the many claims made (Kaltenbacher, 2004; Bateman, 2008). However, several projects have been undertaken to address the issue by putting multimodality research on a more empirical, quantitative basis to validate the claims. Methods for multimodal document transcription have been developed by researchers in Italy (Baldry, 2000a, 2000b, 2004; Thibault, 2000, Taylor, 2000; Baldry and Thibault, 2006) which contributed to the development of multimodal corpus linguistics. Baldry extended the transcription aand in turn developed an online multimodal concordance called the Multimodal Corpus Authoring (MCA) which "provides the possibility to search for visual patterns and types in films and videotexts" (Kaltenbacher, 2004).

Another group of systemic functional and computational linguists from the universities of Bremen, Nottingham Trent, Stirling and Bradford is engaged in a project known as the GeM project (Genre and Multimodality) which developed an XML-based annotated multimodal corpus that integrates tagging procedure from traditional corpus linguistics with new annotation procedures (Bateman, Delin, Henschel and Allen, 2000; Bateman, 2008). The tagged corpus provides information about the multimodal layout structures of various semiotic resources like sentences, headings, figures, tables, icons and footnotes. This study will address the lack of empiricism in multimodal research by analysing a set of sixty-three b2b brochures. However, at the time this study was undertaken the MCA concordance and the GeM procedures were not at the disposal of the researcher in terms of the availability of the computer programme and knowledge to subject the data of this study for computer analysis. Therefore, the researcher undertook a rather challenging manual transcription of the data to account for the semiotic resources in the brochures. However, before the transcription could be carried out, the researcher is faced with the task of putting the resources into manageable units of analysis. Departing from Baldry and Thibault's (2006) method of clustering elements in printed texts, this study not only refined the method but also developed a six-step procedure in handling a large corpus for manual transcription (Chapter 4). Thus, based on the proposed procedure, it is possible to manually transcribe a larger set of data than that usually carried out in manual analysis of multimodal texts. The proposed procedure would be an alternative to using computer software and would be useful for sets of data that are not large enough to warrant the use of computer analysis.

Nevertheless, the MCA concordance and GeM procedures would make it possible to analyse even larger sets of data such that it would encourage empirical analysis to gain ground in multimodal research.

2.6 Summary

This chapter discussed and reviewed literature related to the main aspects of the study. It described b2b brochures and placed them in the context of business promotional discourse. Not much research was found to have been carried out within the discourse of business-to-business brochures and multimodal texts in general that focused on the Asian context. Similarly, the review of the literature showed that there was a need to establish cohesion among the various semiotic resources based on visual perspectives as most studies have employed the lexical and logico-semantic relations in their analyses. The discussion in this chapter ends by addressing the issue of empiricism in multimodal research which has been the concern of researchers in the field.