

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

The final chapter summarizes the study related to the analysis of ideational meanings in Malaysian billboard slogans. Section 5.1 presents a summary of the findings with regards to the research questions while Section 5.2 provides the key contributions of the present study and the implication emerging from these contributions. Section 5.3 presents recommendations for future research and Section 5.4 concludes the chapter.

5.1 Summary of findings

The main aim of the study is to analyze how the ideational meanings are conveyed in the genre of billboard slogans at the rank below the clause, which is the rank of groups and phrase. The summary of findings are based on two research questions; Research Question 1 and Research Question 2 which contribute answers to the Grand Tour Question as introduced in Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4.

5.1.1 Research Question 1: What are the experiential meanings expressed in Malaysian billboard slogans?

The findings show that groups and phrase play an important role in imparting the message of slogans to the readers. In terms of the experiential meanings, the Nominal Group (NG) seems to be the most predominant group utilized by the advertisers in making their slogans more appealing to persuade the readers to purchase the products. The use of elements of the NG, namely the Deictic, the Numerative, the Epithet, the Classifier, the Thing and the Qualifier are deeply meaningful in that they make the slogans more powerful to capture the readers' awareness. Compared to all the themes, the Technology theme has the most number of Nominal Group elements. As the slogans in the theme, Technology focus mainly on the solid product, the NG may be appropriate in bringing out the meanings of the texts.

Apart from that, the Verbal Group (VG) too suits the context of the themes in this study. The Verbal Group consists of three types, which are the Finite only, Finite plus Event only and Finite plus Polarity plus Event only. Compared to all the themes, the Technology and Automotive themes are presented by all three (3) types of the VG. The VG guides the interpretation of the text as it relates to the context of the themes and pilots towards the meaning the advertiser intended the consumers to catch.

The Adverbial Group (AG) though is not significantly found in all the themes, this group also contributes to the experiential meanings of the texts. The AG functions as the Circumstantial Adjuncts, which are made up of mainly the circumstances of time, and manner. The function of AG as an adjunct intensifies the meaning of the texts as a whole. As a matter of fact, the AG offers information of the product.

The advertisers have utilized the Prepositional Phrase (PP) as Qualifier within the groups. In terms of the experiential meanings, the PP functions as a minor process but provide the circumstances related to the context of the themes. Out of these contexts, the Automotive theme has the most Prepositional Phrases. The findings unveil that the circumstance of Matter is the most prominent Prepositional Phrase structure found in the slogans, followed by the circumstance of Location.

As language is a powerful tool to influence people, the experiential meanings found in this study are fulfilled with the situation of context of the themes. The short and precise slogans can produce an impact by attracting attention and arousing interest of the readers on the products and services through the experiential meanings conveyed using groups and phrase.

5.1.2 Research Question 2: What are the logical meanings expressed in Malaysian billboard slogans?

In terms of the logical meanings of groups and phrase, the meanings of the texts are expressed mainly through the Nominal Group. The NG consisting of the Pre-Modifier + Head generate more information of the product compared to the other structures of the NG. The advertisers focus on the Pre-Modifier element to create the meaning of the Head as well as the text as a whole. The use of Pre and Post-Modifiers in the texts also suggests that the advertisers could achieve the purpose of advertising successfully. The findings also reveal that the Head + Post-Modifier element is in very limited quantity in this study because advertisers believe expressions before the Head plays a better role in capturing readers' attention compared to expressions after the Head. Here, it can be concluded that words play a major role in marketing a product or

services. However, in some texts, the Head element could stand on its own because of its brand's image. These products have already created a stand in the market; consequently, they do not need any further expansion of the products. Furthermore, brand names can easily be remembered such as 'Panasonic'. The findings of the study concurs with the views of Gilson and Berkman (1980) that some companies come up with a brand name rather than a slogan, because they believe a brand name will be unique and easily recalled at the point of purchase. In fact, the finding is also in accordance with Diggs (1991: 118) views that "This is the sort of name recognition and product identity that adds up to successful marketing."

The use of VG also conveys the logical meanings through its tenses. As SFL views language as a series of options from which choices are made, the VG enables the readers to see the logical meanings of the texts through the choice of words and tenses being used. A unified pattern of tenses is found in the current study. The most central use of tenses in this study is the Present Tense, which creates a better outlook of the messages regarding the products in the market. Although the presence of the Past Tense is very limited, this tense still contributes to the logical meanings of the texts, especially in the theme, Automotive.

As for the AG, the adverbs mainly function as the Head element. The theme, Technology employs more of the AG compared to the other themes. The Head + Post-Modifier element is frequently found in this study as the Head element could not convey meaning on its own. For instance, the Head 'Even' and 'Always' would not be able to bring out the meaning of the texts without the Post-Modifiers. The Post-Modifiers in this study are mostly that of adjectives, especially indicating comparison.

However, in themes such as Automotive, Lifestyle, Places and Business, the AG is not utilized because the advertisers may want to introduce the product as it is and do not want to exaggerate them. Similar to the VG, the AG needs to be complemented by other groups and phrase in order to boost the selling of the products or services being advertised like in text T48. G4.1 the adverb 'Great' is complemented by a PP 'From Every Angle'.

The PP serves as the Post-Modifiers of the groups in this study. Most PP complements the Nominal Group, followed by the Verbal Group and the Adverbial Group. The Nominal Group + Verbal Group + Prepositional Phrase are solely found in the Automotive theme. The advertisers add the PP in the texts as they want to specify the products. For example, in T78. PP17, 'Tyres Engineered In Germany', the PP 'In Germany' indicates the place where the tyres were manufactured. An advertiser may find it necessary to have additional information in order to enhance the purpose of advertising. Without the PP, the text may not be comprehensible to the readers.

Being familiar with the context of the texts, the advertisers play upon the words to gain more control of the texts as well as to create a greater sense of drawing the readers' interest. On the whole, the choice of structure conveys the meanings of the text according to the themes analyzed.

5.1.3 Statement of key findings related to the Grand Tour Question: How are ideational meanings expressed in Malaysian billboard slogans?

As a result of seeking answers to the grand research question for this research, a number of contributions to knowledge have been achieved. Overall, the major contributions of the study to knowledge are related to the use of SFL principles and

theory, the structure of groups and phrase in the texts of billboard slogans and the understanding of semantics of a genre, particularly in the genre of advertisement.

The first major contribution of the research to knowledge is the use of SFL principles to describe the text of advertisements. The research extended to analyze and describe especially billboard slogans at the rank below the clause, which is the system of groups and phrase. Since the billboard slogans are usually short texts and relate to the context of situation, the SFL theory, focusing on groups and phrase, is feasible to analyze the texts. As such, the research is not merely on commenting the use of groups and phrase, but shows an analysis that is dealt with the theory of SFL, especially in the experiential and logical meanings.

The structure of groups and phrase is explored experientially and logically. Based on the findings of the current study, the Nominal Group is widely used in both experiential and logical structures to bring out the meanings of texts. Experientially the elements of Nominal Group provide further descriptions of the products advertised and it is commonly used in the theme, Technology, followed by the themes, Automotive and Lifestyle. The structure of Pre-Modifier + Head is used widely in all the texts. The use of the Pre and Post-Modifiers add richness to the description of a product, which could convince the readers to purchase the product. There are also some texts with only the Head element. Since the brand name of a product has already marked a stand in the market of business, its name is enough to convince the readers to purchase it. The least used structure is the Head + Post Modifiers element.

The Verbal Group is expressed experientially by verbs indicating actions related to the context of the themes. For instance, verbs such as ‘Drive’ and ‘moves’

descriptively describe the actions related to the theme, Automotive. The types of Verbal Group pertaining to Finite or Event structure is predominantly found in all the themes, especially in the theme, Automotive compared to the other structures of the Verbal Group. The logical structure of the Verbal Group shows that there is a uniformed pattern of organization of structure in the texts. The Finite pertaining to Present Tense is commonly used in all the themes. Since the products advertised are currently in the market, the use of the Present Tense brings the events into the immediate frame of time.

As for the Adverbial Group, it is rarely used in all the themes. Only themes such as Technology, Food and Beverages, and Health Care have utilized the Adverbial Group. Although the use of this group is very limited in quantity, the themes, Technology and Food and Beverages have the highest proportion of the Adverbial Group compared to the theme, Health Care in the experiential structure. Most of the Adverbial Group functions as circumstantial adjuncts referring to Time and Manner circumstances. In terms of the logical structure, the Head of the Adverbial Group is complemented by the Post-Modifier element to shed light to the meanings of the text. The Adverbial Group is used merely to intensify the use of the products.

Meanwhile, the Prepositional Phrase functions as Qualifiers within the Nominal Group, Verbal Group and Adverbial Group. The Qualifiers provide descriptions of the Thing in the experiential structure. However, the Prepositional Phrase is rarely used in themes, such as Lifestyle and Health Care. In terms of the logical structure, the PP is expressed as Post-Modifiers of the groups. The analysis shows that the PP predominantly complements the Nominal Group, followed by the Verbal Group. Without the PP, the readers may not understand the meaning of a text.

In general, the main findings of this research can be summed up as follows:

- a) both the experiential and logical meanings of the groups and phrase were able to bring out the texts and their meanings to the readers. In terms of ideational meanings, the use of NG is significant in the genre of advertisement as it clearly conveys the meanings of texts according to the themes.
- b) the semantic choices of the texts enable us to acquire a better understanding of the ways language construes meaning in the advertisement genre. Since the form of a language is fully determined by the meaning, when a writer chooses a meaning, it should be an element associated with a particular situation or context.

The analytical framework of Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) provided a method to describe the use of SFL theory in describing the texts. Additionally, SFL can be used to analyze different aspects of text structure and this framework might contribute to a better understanding of how to interact with the text for more efficient and effective learning about a genre.

In the current study, it is identified that advertisements have their own particular language. Their aim is to communicate information about the company and the image they want to create, to the audience. The word choices of the groups and phrase with various denotations in both experiential and logical meanings hold together to bring to light the meanings of the texts to the readers. As words are most often used in advertisements to reaffirm the impression that companies want the audience to feel, the current study agrees with Dyer's (1982) observation that language is used in advertisements to implant ideas or images into the mind.

The findings of the analysis of the groups and phrase from the SFL point of view unveils that semantically the groups and phrase convey meanings of the texts according to the context of situation in the themes analyzed.

5.2 Implications of the Study

This research has attempted to provide a system to describe the billboard slogans. Using the groups and phrase structure, the current study provides insights on how to bring out the meaning and effectiveness of a text, which is functional and meaningful.

By analyzing the texts in terms of ideational meanings, the findings show that the choice of words made by the advertisers experientially imparts the information of the products on sale. As a matter of fact, the choice of words relates to the themes, accordingly. The knowledge of Groups and Phrase in SFL theory may furnish the advertisers to create attractive and attention-grabbing slogans. Thus, the advertisers may refer to the Groups and Phrase structure in order to understand how to bring to light the meanings of a text, which is a slogan.

In the educational field, this research may provide guidance for teachers to explicitly teach about SFL as a system of socially constructed meanings. In fact, this could be a framework for teachers and students to assess and evaluate how texts are created and use the knowledge to create text according to the context of situation.

Apart from using traditional grammar, this research could provide teachers and students a way to describe a text in a particular environment because a functional grammar interprets the wording by reference to what it means. As part of learning about a text, students could learn about the written texts and how they are constructed in a

particular context of situation. Being aware of the construction of the structure of groups and phrase could possibly assist students to consider how the meanings being conveyed in the billboard slogans contribute to the function of the advertisements. Using SFL as a framework to analyze and describe a text in a systematic and meaningful way might possibly be useful in assisting students to employ more effective techniques in the written texts. Apart from learning how the texts are created in constructing meaning, students might possibly use their knowledge and understanding about the resources of creating their own texts.

Besides that, media, especially the newspaper media advertises many competitions related to slogans. Thus, by teaching the students how to create their texts according to the context of situation, it would help and encourage students to participate in this type of competitions. In point of fact, it would also lead a way for the students to step into the advertising industry once they have completed their studies.

Using authentic materials is practical in the current educational system as they can develop the background knowledge of a subject, for example, the English Language. Furthermore, authentic materials enhance students' knowledge and they can contribute to the development of the students' preference of career, especially in the field of advertising in future.

Generally, advertisements are a common and accepted part of daily life, in print in magazines and newspapers, as well as in vision on television and cinema screens and increasingly on the Internet. Advertisements can be studied in terms of appearance, the language and many more. However, in the current study, advertisements are studied in terms of the language being used, the structure and the meaning from the point of view

of the groups and phrase. By studying them in these terms, we are able to investigate the advertisements in order to discover how they make one to purchase those products or services.

5.3 Recommendations for Further Research

Although this research has provided specific contributions to knowledge, it has to be recognized that there are also limitations to the study with regard to the number of data and type of text.

The study was based on the billboard slogans and further research can be carried out to broaden the scope of this research to other types of advertisements. If possible, a comparison between the billboard slogans in the English language and Malay language using groups and phrase structure should be carried out too to reveal how meanings of texts conveyed in different languages using the groups and phrase structure.

Apart from that, slogans need to be investigated in order to further test the research on the advertisement genre using a different approach of the ideational metafunction. This could provide knowledge on SFL on how meanings of texts are conveyed in different metafunctions.

Another area for future research could also be done on the multi-modality features in advertisements. Even though language plays a role in bringing out the idea of advertising, it cannot be denied that the pictures and images portrayed in advertisements are also powerful and effective. The combination of texts and pictures could add more knowledge on SFL theory. The findings of such a study will enhance the meanings of the texts.

5.4 Conclusion

The current study on the genre of advertisement generally expresses that in order to sell products, advertising has to appeal to people's needs, and one of the significant way in which meanings can be brought out from the texts is through the use of the groups and phrase structures in the SFL theory.

As SFL is an approach to studying language, the knowledge of its theory could help one to create their own text according to the social context within which language takes place. As the goal of an advertisement is ultimately to sell a product or service, the nature of the advertisement language is purpose-designed. Thus, the advertisers seem to disregard rules and conventions by focusing the reference to the product only. This pattern is valuable to the realm of advertisings as it enables the advertisers to achieve the goal of marketing a product.

It can therefore be concluded that in the current study by the means of the analysis of context using the SFL theory, the ideational meanings of the slogans according to the themes analyzed, have been dug out using the groups and phrase structures. This concurs with Ravelli's (2000: 37) statement that 'a functional analysis is not simply a question of labeling; the labels reflect a semantic and grammatical interpretation of a text.'

In fact, this study has provided insights of how SFL can be used in a fruitful way to understand the ideational meanings of texts, especially the slogans of billboard advertisements.