

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background

Today, media has increased rapidly. People have been using media as the tools in getting information more easily. Related to the size of the audience, media is divided into two kinds, mass media and non-mass media (Potter, 2008:16-17). There are two categories of media. First is print media, such as magazines, newspapers, and books. Second is electronic media for instance television, internet, film and radio. Among those two, printed media is more attract people, especially magazines. It is because they are cheaper than electronic media and rapidly used to reference.

Print media generally consist of images and texts. In order to keep their credibility among readers, publishers and editors of magazines might assemble writers, photographers, artists, and journalists to create sophisticated and differs array of articles. However, different people read articles different ways. Some people start at the top and read each word until the end. Others read the first paragraph and scan through for other interesting information, looking especially at images with brief elaboration. This kind of readers find it useful because when an image/photograph comes with a brief elaboration is more interesting to read and it is packed of information. According to Evan (2004:285), a few line of texts used to elaborate published photographs is called **caption** or **cutline**. When it attached

to a photograph, it is called photo caption. Wilson Hicks, an executive editor at *Life* said that a caption has great contribution in print media, especially in magazine, because it's an unfortunate fact of magazine life that in these kinds of publications many readers simply don't read the text, so the captions have to stand in for that.

As a media text, a good caption should meet the media language's unique characters. It should be short and simple. It should be not more than two concise sentences (Dr. Dorothy Bowles at the University of Tennessee <http://www.uanmont.edu/organizations/thevoice/sm/caption.html>). It should be dense and straightforward because it answers the information that readers need. It should be clear, because it should identify what is/are in the photo clearly. It should be smooth and interesting because it should draw reader's attention to the article.

Actually, they are the real discourse in such media where the writers and photographers through the caption interact with the readers. A good caption provide more than just the objects' name, it also provide readers with the information of what's going on in a photo and provide context for the photo itself, (John Smock. 2011. *Writing a Photo Caption*. <http://photo.journalism.cuny.edu/files/2011/02/caption-writing-revised.pdf>).

The language it uses is determined by its function. They can decorate, illustrate, explain, or complement the photograph (Roth et al., 2005). They can just elaborate, criticize, or even promote what is inside the photograph.

Its clarity, density and and simplicity in bringing information, make a caption become the third most looked on publicity after headlines and graphics (Jacci Howard Bear. <http://www.americanpressinstitute.org.html>). It is essential for maintaining the credibility of the print publication and its status in the community (John D. Simmon. Staff Photographer: The Charlotte Observer. [http://www.wikieducator.org/introduction\\_to\\_photography.html](http://www.wikieducator.org/introduction_to_photography.html)). To do that, the writers should be very creative in choosing the language for their caption.

In linguistics, the choice of language the writers of the caption use can be seen through 'register'. M.A.K Halliday (1976) interpreted the register "as the linguistic features which are typically associated with a configuration of situational features with particular values of the field, tenor, and mode". These values specify the context of situation of a text. Analyzing the register can identified the language varieties and language chosen by photo caption article writers as their strategies to meet their intentions. **Field** can find out the general topic of the photo caption articles. **Tenor** is the role relationship between participants in the photo caption articles. **Mode** can find out the channel for communication. But before analyzing these contextual dimensions, there is the need to analyze the text because according to Gerot and Wignell (1994), there is a systematic relationship between the register (field, tenor and mode) in the context and the metafunctions (the ideational, interpersonal and textual function) in the text.

Field is realized by Ideational function, Tenor is realized by Interpersonal function, and Mode is realized by Textual function. Those functions are realized by linguistic features in the level of wording (lexicogrammar).

To analyze, the Systemic Functional Grammar (Michael Halliday, 1985) theory will be used. Processes, participants, circumstances, and nominal groups will be analyzed to identify the Ideational function (Field) of the photo caption articles. Mood and Modality to identify the Interpersonal function (Tenor). And Theme and Rheme to identify the Textual function (Mode). These approaches will be discussed furthermore in the next chapter.

Two photo caption articles from *Harper's BAZAAR Singapore* magazine are chosen. As one of the additional edition of the American popular woman fashion magazine, *Harper's BAZAAR Singapore* photo caption article can be the most reliable corpus for this study. The photo caption article in this magazine placed in 'StarStyle' page where readers can see how the elaboration, either it is description, opinion, comment, critic, promotion or etc) of the published photograph(s) is delivered by the writer. There are two different types of captions in this magazine, short captions and long captions. So, the data are chosen intentionally to represent both types. They are March 2009 edition, which the captions are longer, and June 2009 edition, which the captions are short.

## 1.2. Research Question

### Main Question

1. What are the meaning-making strategies used by the writers to convey their intentions?

### Sub-questions

#### a. Field, realized by Ideational function.

- What processes are used?
- What participants are included?
- What circumstances are attached?
- What nominal groups are employed?

#### b. Tenor, realized by Interpersonal function

- What Moods are employed?
- What Modality are employed?

#### c. Mode, realized by Textual function

- What Theme and Rheme are employed in the two photo caption articles?

## 1.3. Objectives of the Research

This research aims to reveal meaning-making strategies used by the writers in employing their intentions by analyzing the three contextual dimensions (Field, Tenor, and Mode) realized by the three metafunctions of the two '*StarStyle*' photo captions articles.

This includes information about the photo caption's purpose(s) and various semantic functions of certain choice words or phrases used in the photo captions. The Field will reveal what the '*StarStyle*' photo caption articles are about and what for (intentions). The Tenor will reveal the attitude, the status, and the contact, among the writers, the readers, and the objects being talked. And the Mode will reveal the channel and the medium these articles' writers used to employ their intentions.

#### **1.4. Scope and Limitation**

This research is focused on the two photo caption articles taken from '*StarStyle*' rubric in the Harper's Bazaar Singapore magazines March and July 2009 editions.

The research is limited to the analysis of process types, participants, circumstances, and nominal groups to reveal the field, mood and modality to reveal the tenor, and theme rheme to reveal the mode of the photo caption articles. These analysis will reveal the meaning-making strategy used by the writers in making creative and effective photo caption to employ their intentions.

#### **1.5. Significance**

It is expected that this research will contribute something fruitful for readers, especially language-student readers, and photo caption writers as follows:

1. Giving the information about the meaning-making strategy of photo caption's writers in employing their intentions.

2. Providing an optional base for material design for the photo caption writer(s) that is applicable in order to be able to compose more effective and more creative photo caption.
3. Being one of the references in analyzing photo caption using Systemic Functional Grammar.