CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides general information of the study which covers the background of the study, research questions, aims of the study, significance of the study, the methods used in the study, the collection of data, data analysis, the clarification of terms and the organization of the paper.

1.1 Background of The Study

At the end of 2014 people of Indonesia were surprised by grief news of an aircraft accident from Air Asia, one of public airlines operating in Indonesia. As reported in The Jakarta Post (December, 28) on Sunday morning around 6:17 a.m. local time, a plane of Air Asia with flight number QZ8501 was reported missing due to a lost contact between the plane and the air traffic control. The missing plane was supposed to conduct a flight from Surabaya to Singapore with 155 passengers and seven crew members on board. It was reported three days after the accident, the debris of the plane and the bodies of the victims were found in the Karimata Strait, Central Kalimantan (Kompas.com). This accident surely became an ordeal for Air Asia airline. Besides being addressed for several accusations regarding the airline’s carelessness, Air Asia also has a lot of homeworks to regain its customers’ trust.

Soon after this accident happened, many local and international mass media especially daily newspapers published articles about this misfortune. What is interesting is how the accident is covered by mass media. One well known online daily newspaper, The Jakarta Post, in this case, published several articles concerning the aircraft accident through which we can see how they picture the accident. According to van Leeuwen (2009), an aspect of reality could be repeated
or paraphrased or in other way reconstructed through different ways in different texts. It means that two different texts that circulate in the same context will have different views of a certain social practice and therefore different representations of the social practice.

This representation of a social practice could be analysed using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) frameworks. CDA according to Wodak and Meyer (2009) is an area of study that is concerned with the study of social phenomena. Wodak (2002) stated that the main interest of CDA is the relationship between language and power, and it sees discourse as a form of social practice. In line with this, van Dijk (2001) stated that CDA is a kind of analytical study of discourse that mainly investigates how discourse enacts and reproduces social domination, abuse and inequality in the context of social and politics. CDA, according to Paltridge (2006), mainly investigates how discourse is used in social and cultural issues and what can be implied by this use of discourse. It is the aim of CDA, Paltridge explained, to help discover the hidden values, positions and perspectives in a discourse.

One approach of CDA, and that is used in this study, is Norman Fairclough’s three-dimensional conceptions. This framework based on Fairclough’s consolidation of CDA as a three-dimensional framework with a particular objective:

“…to map three separate forms of analysis onto one another: analysis of (spoken or written) language texts, analysis of discourse practice (processes of text production, distribution and consumption) and analysis of discursive events as instances of sociocultural practice.” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 2)

The term discourse is used by Fairclough to mainly refer to the use of spoken and written language that includes semiotic practice (Fairclough, 1995). Considering language as a discourse, Fairclough sees language as a form of social practice or a mode of social action (Fairclough, 1995). Any discursive event,
Fairclough stated, is simultaneously perceived as a piece of text, a case of discursive practice, and a case of social practice (Fairclough, 1992).

This approach enables one to access the relationship between discursive and social change and to see the linguistic resources used in the text to describe the action and make an interpretation of the thoughts involved in the text. According to Fairclough (1992) there are three stages of discourse analysis which are description, interpretation and explanation. Description concerns with the analysis of text. At this level of analysis, all linguistic features will be first identified. After the linguistic features are all identified, the analysis moves to the second stage which is interpretation. This stage concerns with the analysis of discourse practice which the objective is to find the social meaning expressed in the discourse or in the other words the relationship between text and interaction. The last stage is explanation. It deals with the analysis of social practice. It is an explanation of the relationship between interaction and social context, or in other words this stage aims to identify the social determination and social effects of the discourse, as Fairclough (1989) stated:

“The objective of the stage of explanation is to portray a discourse as part of a social process, as a social practice, showing how it is determined by social structures, and what reproductive effects discourses can cumulatively have on those structures, sustaining them or changing them.” (p.163)

One study that employs Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework was conducted by Kaur, Arumugam, and Yunus (2013). Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework was applied to examine beauty advertisements in local English magazines. The use of language in those advertisements and also the strategies used by the advertisers to persuade their customers were the main focuses of their study. The framework demonstrated how the concept of beauty was produced and reproduced through advertisements in those local magazines. They found that the advertisers used numerous strategies to persuade their women customers by giving an idealized lifestyle of beautiful women or by stereotyping
how beauty products are synonymous with a better life (Kaur, Arumugam & Yunus, 2013).

Other study that used Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework was conducted by Qiu in 2013. Twenty English eco-hotel profiles were examined to find out the ecological thoughts existed in the profiles. Employing Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework, this study followed three stages of analysis: description of linguistic features using transitivity, interpretation of ecological thoughts, and explanation of social reason. The findings of this study are, first, various linguistic resources were used in those English eco-hotels. Second, certain kinds of ecological thoughts were expressed through those linguistic resources used in the profiles. It was expressed that to live in harmony with nature, we as human beings should identify ourselves with nature and view ourselves as part of nature. The language use in the profiles helped to convey those ecological thoughts or ideology to the readers and therefore, influence their ecological ideology by directing their human-centered values into eco-centric values.

The representation of the accident in daily newspaper articles is the main concern of this study. Applying Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework and Halliday’s transitivity, this study tries to investigate how the aircraft accident is represented or reconstructed by The Jakarta Post.

1.2 Research Questions

In conducting this study, the following research questions have been formulated as follows:

1. How is the aircraft accident represented by The Jakarta Post?
2. What do these representations mean?

1.3 Aims of the Study
This study aims to:

1. Investigate how the QZ8501 accident is represented by The Jakarta Post
2. Reveal what is implied by the representations

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study is concerned in analyzing five articles from The Jakarta Post related to the aircraft accident. Fairclough’s framework and Halliday’s framework of Functional Grammar are used to reveal the representation of the accident.

1.5 Research Methodology

Since this study mainly focuses on analyzing, describing and interpreting the representation of a social action in texts, qualitative descriptive is the most suitable method to be used in this study. In a simplified definition qualitative research is empirical research that the form of its data is not numbers (Punch, 2009). In line with this, Creswell (2009) explained that qualitative research is an approach used to investigate and understand meaning which is attributed to social problems by certain individuals or groups. As for descriptive research, it is a method used to describe how reality is and not to formulate hypotheses or to develop a theory (Lans & van Der Voordt, 2002).

1.5.1 Data Collection

The data for this study were taken from a daily online newspaper, the The Jakarta Post. Five articles from The Jakarta Post were used as the data for this study. The articles from The Jakarta Post are all concerning the aircraft accident.
1.5.2 Data Analysis

Since this study is based on Fairclough’s three-dimensional conceptions framework, there are three stages in analyzing the data. The first stage is textual analysis which deals with the linguistic features used in texts. Halliday’s transitivity is employed in conducting the first stage. The second stage is discourse practice analysis. The main objectives at this level of analysis are to find the texts’ production and consumption, power relation, and strategies used in the discourse. The last stage is social practice analysis. In this stage, the analysis concerns with the explanation of the relationships between the social events and the social structures or the societal currents which shaped and are shaped by the events (Fairclough, 1989).

1.6 Organization of The Paper

This paper is organized into five chapters as follows:

Chapter I

This chapter provides general information of the study which covers the background of the study, research questions, aims of the study, significance of the study, the methods used in the study, the collection of data, data analysis, the clarification of terms and the organization of the paper.

Chapter II

This chapter presents explanations of the theoretical frameworks that are used to support the analysis of this study and some related previous studies.

Chapter III

This chapter describes the method used in this study, research design, data collection and data analysis.
Chapter IV

This chapter provides the results of the study.

Chapter V

This chapter presents conclusions of the findings and suggestions for further study.