

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Literature is the use of well-chosen words to tell a story through narrative, involving characters in conflict, or to express an emotion or idea through artfully arranged images (Hornby, 1994:728). The issue of power relation can be presented in literary works. It becomes a common topic which reveals any practices and dominant force in a society that could construct version of reality and favor different interests. Most of our relationship can be categorized into relations of power such as relation between teacher and student, parent and child, and owner and worker. These kinds of power relations can be found not only in the real life but also in the imaginary world, such as in a novel.

Power, the main concern of the study, is a topic that some of us share in our real life. People, realizing it or not, surely experience both the states of being the agent of power and the subordinate person who is repressed by the power. Power can cause conflicts in characters. The conflict itself emerged due to the existence of power. People who have power may treat others as they like.

The concept of power that has been discussed in several previous studies such as Riesky (2004), Yunita (2004), Gusyarani (2004), Wulan (2006) may bring up similar issue as in the case of N.H Kleinbaum's *Dead Poets Society*. However, the fact that people of letters have their own individual style of writing makes

their literary works distinctive from one another. Style, as stated by William (1993), “embodies the uniqueness of a writer’s way of looking at things”.

The present study examines a literary work in the novel “Dead Poet Society“. The reason why the novel is appropriate to be analyzed using power relation theory is that there is relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed, or the powerful and the powerless. In this context, one particular chapter, i.e. chapter ten, was selected. The selection was based on the reason that the chapter offers many conflicts to analyze. The investigation employs framework of Systemic Functional Grammar (Halliday, 1994) and Foucault’s theory of power (1982).

## **1.2 Research Questions**

The problems of the present study are formulated in the following questions:

1. What kinds of power relation are exercised by the characters in conflicts of interests in the novel *Dead Poets Society*?
2. In what ways is power exercised in the novel *Dead Poets Society*?

### **1.3 Aims of the Study**

Based on the research questions formulated above, the aims of the study are:

1. to investigate the kinds of power relation exercised by the characters in conflicts of interests in the novel *Dead Poet Society*.
2. to analyze the way power is exercised in the novel *Dead Poet Society*.

### **1.4 Research Methodology**

This study is largely qualitative. The qualitative study can be used to uncover and understand what lies behind any phenomenon about which little yet known (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

The data were selected purposively. In this context, one particular chapter, chapter ten was selected. The selection is based on the reason that the chapter offers many conflicts to analyze.

As the tool to analyze the data, this study employs systemic functional grammar which is originally developed by Halliday (1960). Fawcet (2000) also states that Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) can be used to analyze the structure of text - primarily that of the clause - in functional terms. The use of Functional Grammar also aims to enhance the validity of interpretation (Hasan 1985:65).

In close relation to systemic functional grammar, the present study focuses on one unit of analysis, i.e. mood. The mood elements, particularly subject, modality and polarity are employed in this study to figure out the representation

of power relation (see Halliday 1994). Supporting this use of Systemic Functional Grammar, Foucault's theory of power is also employed in the present study.

### **1.5 Organization of the Paper**

The present research is presented in five chapters. Chapter I introduces the present study. Chapter II reviews some theories in relation to the present study. Chapter III comprises the methodology of the research that includes formulation of the problems, aims of the present study, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter IV presents analysis, findings, and discussion from the present research. Chapter V reviews conclusions based on the conducted research and suggestions for further research.

