

How “My” Role is Concealed or Revealed: A Corpus-Based Research of Malaysian Airline Media Statements

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Abstract

This study adopts a corpus-based approach by creating two sub corpus comprising official media statements released by Malaysian Airline regarding its two captioned aeronautic incidents, namely MH370 and MH17 outbreak in the year 2014. Critical discourse analysis and systemic functional linguistics as two analytical frameworks empowered the corpus-based approach. Very distinctive self-portraits of Malaysian Airline in these two incidents have been found through the analysis of key wording, collocations and occurrence of wording. This study suggests that the deliberate choice of wording in media discourse by text producer is affected by its role in positioning in the regarding incidents. A combination use of different linguistic analytical frameworks can help us to understand how the hidden meaning by the text producer is implicitly mentioned or explicitly expressed through the passage of wording.

Key words: Corpus-based approach; MH370; MH17; Critical discourse analysis; Systemic functional linguistics; Media discourse

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INTRODUCTION

The year 2014 marked the disastrous and tragic fate of the passengers and the crew members on two Malaysian

Airline planes: MH370 and MH17. MH370, a regular international flight from Kuala Lumpur International Airport, Malaysia to Beijing Capital International Airport, People’s Republic of China was reported missing at 8:34 a.m. Beijing Time, on March 08, 2014, after eight hours of its departure. The number of the passengers is 239 from 14 different countries and the majority of them (159 passengers) are from China. Speculations together with investigations on what has happened to this flight remains heated across the world for several months, however, no unified consensus has been reached yet. While the aftermath of MH370 has not been properly resolved, another Malaysian Airline: MH17 was reported to be attacked by the missile from the separatists in Ukraine on 17, July 2014 when the flight was flying over the battle field in East Ukraine. 283 passengers and 15 crew members were reported to lose their lives in that incident.

These two incidents although may not be correlated, but did shock the world twice. These two incidents challenged the capability of the crisis management skills possessed by the owner of these two planes: *Malaysian Airlines System Berhad* (Hereafter: Malaysian Airline) as speculation and investigation towards each incident continue to be the headline on newspapers, Internet and TV programs for months. This study is designed to investigate how Malaysian Airline portrays itself in its online media statements in relation to the two incidents released on its official websites. Corpus-based research was conducted together with insights from critical discourse analytical framework and systemic functional linguistics in or der to depict how the official figure of Malaysian Airline was described in the collection of media statements.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Corpus has been treated as a methodological approach through which selected instances of phenomena of

language are considered. Typical corpus-based method includes the study of “wordlists, keywords, collocates, and concordances” (Cheng and Lam, 2013, p.174). Analytical frameworks such as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA hereafter) and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL hereafter) have been integrated with corpus-based approach in academia (see works by van Dijk, 2008; Warren, 2014; Gardner & Xu, 2019), with data analyzed from a qualitative perspective, addressing how semantic, functional and attitudinal meaning can be realized in the corpus (Sinclair 1996).

Being an analytical approach specifically designed to understand the ideological issues emerging from language, CDA proposed by Fairclough (1989) has a specific intention to underpin the power relations between text-producers and readers based on the evidence shown on language. Within the scope of CDA, media statements which are the official and formal responses to the public concerns on one or more issues, perform to express the official voice from the text producers. This official voice, as discussed by Fairclough (1989) is the combination of both how itself has been evaluated and the readers have been positioned (p.54). As for self-evaluation, it is enacted with the role that the text producer played in the regarded issue with reference to their capability in “handling causality and agency” (Fairclough, 1989, p.54). As for “positioning the readers”, it is enacted with what the potential readers were manipulated to read on the media statements. From the perspective of CDA, the pivotal issue is to discuss the power relationship and power difference between different participants. Substantial information needs to be represented based on the discourse.

A typical case of power difference between different participants can be found in education, especially between teachers and students with teachers as the role of Knower (Maton, 2013) possessing evidently more knowledge than the students. In the classroom, the teacher will not only be responsible for the transmission of knowledge to the students but will also regulate the demanded knowledge requirements for the students. Both intentions are achieved through language from a social semiotic perspective (Halliday, 1978). It is the teacher who has the controlling power, deciding what the students should know or shall not know.

Similar to education, power difference can be identified between the two major participants in the field of media. The first participant is the text producer¹ who has the power to draft, edit and release the news statements to the public. Knowledge in the territory of new media is somewhat different from its scope and sphere in education. Here knowledge denotes to the background information, the facts of the incidents and

other correlated information that has not been revealed to the public. The other participant is the potential readers who receive these news statements intentionally such as professional journalists, interested individuals or the government officers who have particular interests or unintentionally such as the news readers or the netizens who browse the information for entertaining in the domain of media discourse. Participant as the potential reader or text receiver is clearly in deficiency of certain knowledge compared with the text producer. Metaphorically speaking, the relationship between the text producer and the text receivers is more or less like the relationship between teachers and students with teachers possessing the ultimate controlling power with the right in deciding what they want the students to know about through the regulation of language as manifested in different types of pedagogical discourses (Bernstein, 2000), such as the classroom instruction, the handout, the video clips etc. Following this notion, the power relationship between different participants, especially between the text producer and the text receivers is “actually exercised and enacted” (Fairclough, 1989, p.43) in the process of discourse, with text producer frequently manipulating the production of text (Martin, 1992), emphasizing the disparity and diversity in terms of power between different participants. As addressed by van Dijk (1993), power in both spoken and written discourses “involves control”, and this control is to describe whether “members of one group” are “over those of other group” (p.254). In the specific field of media discourse, van Dijk (1995) believes that media discourse has “the potential to control to some extent the minds of readers or viewers” (p.10), or in other words, to persuade the reads to believe what was written or broadcasted in the media discourse through tacit wording. This manipulation of the ways to persuade and control the readers from the media discourse producers indicates his intention of affecting public opinions about their role in the regarded issue, highlighting what they want the public to believe rather than what the actual fact is. van Dijk’s (1995) assertion that language is used to manipulate the readers was echoed by Flowerdew (2002) as media discourse producers are thought to have the competence in enacting, reproducing and legitimizing their power over the readers through the language. Political discourse which is the extreme case of media discourse can also be interpreted from this perspective. For example, as Cheng and Lam (2013) argue, the political leaders are the common figures that are inclined to have the tendency and autonomy of manipulating language in their public speeches, official statements, and even in the emerging types of political discourse such as tweets, Facebook statements, and vlogs etc, in the age of Internet 2.0.

¹ The text producers include but not limited to the company, party, organization, country, etc. They all represent the sole interest of regarded text producer.

RESEARCH QUESTION

This study combines corpus-based approach together with critical discourse analytical approach and systemic functional linguistic approach. The central research question is to understand how Malaysian Airline portrays itself by considering the construction of power relationship between in two sub-corpus of media statements.

RESEARCH DATA AND METHODS

The research data is the media statements written in English released by Malaysian Airlines with reference to two incidents: MH370 and MH17 on its official websites (Malaysian Airline, 2014). The nature of these data is in written form. The data which was saved as corpus text files is divided into two sub-groups. The first sub-group on the MH370 incident is comprised of 27 English media statements released from March 08, 2014 to Nov 10, 2014, forming up the first set of corpus data of 32862 words. The second sub-group on the MH17 incident is comprised of 29 English media statements released from July 15, 2014 to August 23, 2014, forming up the second set of corpus data of 7434 words. It must be mentioned here that media statements in both Chinese language and Malaysian language can also be found. It is without doubts that these non-English media statements are also substantial in revealing the power relation between Malaysian Airline and the readers, but due to the nature of this study, this study is about to examine the power relation on the lexical level. It is not my intention to include the non-English versions in both the corpus and analysis at this stage.

As for this study, the detailed analysis of the media statements released by Malaysian Airline can help us understand how this famous airline plane company portrays itself and how their attitude towards the public audience from a discourse analytical perspective. The analysis in this study will enhance our understanding on the important role that language can perform by dismantling the responsibility from the crisis and reunite the relationship between the victims. A corpus-based approach utilized to assist the filing and grouping research data with technology while CDA and SFL as two analytical frameworks applied provide qualitative data analysis from the linguistic oriented aspect.

The underlying research framework adopted here is CDA (Fairclough, 1989) to underpin how Malaysian Airline portrays itself and how targeted readers have been handled by Malaysian Airline. Corpus linguistics and systemic functional linguistics as two supplementary approaches will complemented to CDA when necessary. The central focus of this study is to align the use of language with the construing of meaning, highlighting what Hasan (1998) argues that the choice of language such as the lexical-grammatical features in the discourse is closely related to the meanings being construed or in

Hasan's wording, meaning is "regraded as linguistically construed" (p.47). Systemic functional linguistic (SFL) framework will be used to supplementing CDA when focus on analysis shift to the interpretation of interpersonal relationship between different participants since "tenor" being a key factor of SFL foregrounds has been well-developed to deal with the interpersonal meaning emerging from the discourse (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Martin & White, 2005).

DATA ANALYSIS

In general, the research adopts the corpus linguistic software: Wordsmith 6.0 to process the media statements on Malaysian Airline with reference to two different incidents. The corpus data will first appear into the list of lexical items to suggest the preference of words from the Malaysian Airlines. In order that the research is more concise and representative during the manifestation of lexical items, only content words will be processed in the corpus. This choice of research target is majorly based on the register variable of field. Field in systemic functional linguistics (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) is chiefly concerned with what the discourse is about. The field of discourse, as considered by systemic functional linguists is majorly demonstrated through the use of content words such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Their notion of field could be incorporated in the corpus data of both MH370 and MH17 so that what these texts have been centralized on will be generated based on the selection of content words. In order to sort out the "Field" with assistance of Wordsmith 6.0, a list of "stop-list" was created which contains the common grammatical words such as the pronouns, conjunctions and prepositions. This stop list will be utilized in the process of data generating to prevent the content words from appearing in the generalized keyword list. The generalized keyword list will represent the field of each sub-corpus sample data if we treat all the media statements within each of the incident as the collective effort of one particular set. Table one illustrates the top 25 keywords adopted from MH370 data after the exclusion of grammatical words.

As could be generated from the Table 1, "search" stands at the top of the list indicating the most occurring content word stated by the Malaysian Airline. Apart from the specialized lexis in the scope of aeronautics such as: Airlines, Aircraft and flight etc, lexical items such as "families", "our", and "support" are also listed as some of the most occurring content words as written in the MH370 media statements. These lexical choices represent the preference of lexical items selections in general as perceived by the Malaysian Airlines (Fairclough, 1989). A closer and more detailed investigation on specialized lexical items is required in order to see the self-representation and the position of readers from the

collocation of lexical items. In order to achieve this purpose, the word cluster function on Wordsmith 6.0 was conducted based on the generated keyword list. Being the most frequently- occurring lexical choice, “search” was selected to undergo the word cluster functionality. The frequent collocations that co-occur with “search” have been listed in Table 2.

Table 1
The top 25 content words occur in MH370 media statements

Rank	Word	Occurrence
1	Search	423
2	Malaysia	367
3	Airlines	210
4	Families	209
5	Our	190
6	Aircraft	157
7	Minister	136
8	Also	127
9	Flight	124
10	Support	113
11	Team	108
12	Area	106
13	Information	94
14	Australia	93
15	Passengers	93
16	Family	89
17	March	89
18	Continue	86
19	Malaysian	86
20	China	85
21	New	83
22	Investigation	82
23	Rescue	82
24	S	82
25	International	77

Generated from the Table 2, as the central word, the most frequent collocation of “search” is “search and rescue” occurring 78 times. This co-selection with “rescue” through collocation and repetition implies a repeated manifestation of self-evaluation from the Malaysian Airlines through the accumulation of the media texts. The other collocation of “search” such as the “in the search”, “the search area” and “the search for” can be also used to suggest this continuous effort of “search”. Although rescue as a hypothesized derivative

effort of what “search” means for, there is no concrete evidence of “rescue” has been found in the incident of MH370 in reality at this moment. It is the deliberate choice of collocation of “search and rescue” from the media statements that highlights the unstoppable efforts devoted by the Malaysian Airlines. This repeated usage of “search and rescue” as one inseparable and frequently co-occurring collocation constantly implies a positive self-evaluation through the positive nouns of “rescue” (Martin and White, 2005). As for the other less occurring collocations, such as the “in the search”, “the search area” and the rest, none of the collocations of “search” is associated with negative evaluation of Malaysian Airlines itself, but expressing a neutral evaluation, indicating the state que of what the current situation is rather than diminishing the its figure through the choices of wording.

Table 2
The 25 most frequent collocations of “search” in MH370 Data

Rank	Word cluster	Occurrence
1	Search and rescue	78
2	In the search	58
3	The search area	52
4	The search for	50
5	The search and	49
6	Search for MH370	47
7	Of the search	35
8	The search operation	26
9	And rescue operation	25
10	The search operations	22
11	To the search	17
12	With the search	16
13	And rescue operations	16
14	To the search	17
15	With the search	16
16	And rescue operations	16
17	That the search	11
18	Involved in the	10
19	On the search	9
20	Search area and	9
21	Phase of the	7
22	Operations in the	7
23	Narrow the search	7
24	Search operation the	6
25	To search for	6

Although, the Malaysian Airline was fiercely criticized by the international media (such as British Broadcasting Corporation, Cable News Network, American Broadcasting Company and China Central

Television) for its incompetence in handling this accident from every perspective, throughout its media report, Malaysian Airline itself sticks to the positive portrait of its public image. For instance, in Table One, the content word “search” occurs 423 times to indicate the central focus during the post-accident period. Collocations such as: “search and rescue”, “the search area”, and “the search for” suggest a continuous effort from the Malaysian Airline perspective that the effort locally and internationally devote to the aftermath of the incident is enormous. In the portrait from the Malaysian Airline side, the “search” is entirely positively evaluated through the frequent collocations.

However, contradictory to the media reports observed world widely, the “search” as conducted by Malaysian Airline is described as “chaotic”, and “confused” (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2014). The frequent collocation list adhered to “search” such as “search and rescue” provided by Malaysian Airline does not reflect what news agencies believes.

Table 3
The top 25 word list of MH17

Rank	Word	Occurrence
1	Malaysia	106
2	Airlines	60
3	Malaysian	46
4	Flight	45
5	passengers	43
6	site	38
7	international	37
8	families	36
9	July	35
10	crew	32
11	minister	32
12	crash	31
13	remains	31
14	statement	30
15	team	30
16	media	29
17	end	28
18	GMT	28
19	incident	28
20	our	27
21	Netherlands	26
22	WHO	25
23	Investigation	24
24	Family	23
25	Prime	23

With respect to how the readers is positioned in the media discourses, another register variable: Tenor

within the systemic functional linguistics (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) can be enacted here as Tenor is concerned with the interpersonal relationship between the text producer and the text receiver. Due to the nature of media statements, the general target readers will be those who are interested in the statements however, within the scope of centralization of targeted audience, the family of the MH370 passengers were emphasized in the media statements. As have been mentioned in Table One, “families”, “our” and “support” have been listed among the top ten most frequently occurring content words in MH370 data. This centralized focus of mentioning how Malaysian Airlines deals with the relationship between the company itself and the family of the passengers has intended purpose that through these word choices, a designated figure of Malaysian Airlines can be built up among the targeted audience. To be more specific, the common collocations were selected to investigate how Malaysian Airline positioned the targeted readers and how it evaluates their role in handling the aftermath. Collocations for “support” are “to support” (20 occurrences), medical and emotional support (6 occurrences), etc, and for “family” or “families”, the frequent collocations are “for the families” (29 occurrences), to “care for the families” (5 occurrences) and “family support center” (5 occurrences).

Selected examples together with a complete list of the collocations suggest the positive evaluation from the Malaysian Airline. What is more, based on the media statement, Malaysian Airline also provides necessary support to the families of the MH370 passengers and it values the families and it cares for them. However, sharply contrasted to the description from Malaysian Airline, the shared belief perceived by the 159 family members in response to the role that Malaysian Airline plays in the MH370 incident was that Malaysian Airline was portrayed as “executors” and “killers” as stated in their declaration (159 family members statement, 2014). This entire negative evaluation towards the Malaysian Airline was not reflected in Malaysian Airline’s media statements. The avoidance of negative evaluation indicates the Malaysian Airlines’ consistent effort in protecting its public image in their media statement as the positive self-evaluation. The extraction of key wordings from the corpus approach together with the insights taken from systemic functional linguistics, gives rises to the critical analysis approach underlined by CDA. Since, CDA is to uncover the “relationship between language, power and ideology” (O’Halloran, 2011, p.446). Power, in CDA is concerned with the “relations of difference” (Kress, 1985, p.52). From a discourse analytical perspective, power is adopted to depict the relative social status between different participants, with regard to the equal or unequal distribution of ambition in dominating the

conversation between participants. As fore-grounded by van Dijk (1993), power “involves control”, and this control is to describe whether “members of one group” are “over those of other groups” (p.254) or vice versa. In the case discussed previously, the ignorance of the never-ending negative criticism from the family members and persistence its positive portray reflects its power over the audience in their right of interpreting the incident through the use of languages (Fairclough, 1989).

After MH370 data has been carefully processed and interpreted, the corpus-based approach was repeated to exercise the data of MH17 incident. Table Three below demonstrates the top 25 keywords list of MH17 incident.

Similar to the keyword list of MH370, lexical choices related with Aeronautics, has also been found in MH17 data. “Families” was also mentioned regarding with how the family members of MH17’s passengers will be dealt with. The centralized analysis on MH17 data has been supplemented with a comparison of *Keyword word list* of the MH370 data generated by the Wordsmith 6.0. Table Four is the generated comparison word list. The function of the comparable key word list is to see the preference of lexical choices in one corpus over the other.

Table 4
Comparable Keyword list: MH17 vs MH370

N	Key word	freq. in mh17 corpora data	%	Texts	freq. in mh370 corpora data
1	July	35	0.47	1	1
2	Site	38	0.51	1	3
3	Crash	31	0.41	1	1
4	Netherlands	26	0.35	1	2
5	Amsterdam	20	0.27	1	0
6	Victims	19	0.25	1	0
7	Bodies	18	0.24	1	0
8	#	474	6.34	1	1425
9	End	28	0.37	1	15
10	Agreement	22	0.29	1	8
11	Remains	31	0.41	1	25
12	Ukrainian	14	0.19	1	2
13	Black	15	0.20	1	3
14	Boxes	12	0.16	1	1
15	Ukraine	15	0.20	1	4
16	Kiev	9	0.12	1	0
17	Lives	9	0.12	1	0
18	Investigators	14	0.19	1	4
19	Justice	8	0.11	1	0
20	Airspace	13	0.17	1	4
21	Prayer	9	0.12	1	1
22	Lost	18	0.24	1	13

Table 4 demonstrates the preferred lexical choices in MH17 data as compared with MH370. As can be generated from the Table 4, the dominating preferred lexical choices that appear in MH17 data are overwhelmingly associated with the participants, process and circumstance of the air crash compared with what have been used in MH370. The location: Site and Ukraine, the participants: black box, remains, bodies and the process: crash haven all been found in the comparable list. These lexical choices suggest a divergent focus perceived by the Malaysian Airline. In the incident of MH17, the air crash as the tragic incident was highlighted while in the incident of MH370, the effort devoted to the “search” was always mentioned. This divergence of focus is majorly due to the distinction of nature with respect to the two incidents. In the case of MH370, the investigations of this missing aircraft have not yet reached a shared conclusion while for the case of MH17, the result is transparent enough for the investigators and the public to accept what happened to MH17. The distinction generated from the comparable keyword list can be adopted to see the distinction of centralized focus.

With respect to how Malaysian Airlines portrays itself in MH17 incidents, unlike what it did in the incident of MH370 where its active role in “search and rescue” was constantly brought up, in MH17, it puts itself in the victim position, calling for justice and accuses the Ukraine Separatist and Government. Table five illustrates the collocations that are associated with Malaysian Airlines’ self-evaluation in a passive position.

Table 5
the selected wordlist in MH370 with reference to the victim position of Malaysian Airline

Keywords	Collocations	Occurrences
victim	Malaysian Victim	4
	Achieve justice	2
	Demand for justice	1
	Face the full face of justice without delay	1
Justice	Justice is done	1
	Justice may be done	1
	Be brought to justice	1
Ukrainian	Towards justice	1
	Hostilities in and around the crash site- by both Ukrainian and separatist forces.	1

In news statements associated with the MH17 incidents, three key words with reference to the victim position of Malaysia namely are: victim, justice and Ukrainian, with four, eight and one occurrence respectively. As can be generated from the Table 5,

Malaysian Airline portrays itself in a victim position such as the indication of the specific collocation of “Malaysian Victim”. The victim position granted Malaysian Airline with the courage to call for the justice. As manifested in the selected data, it is Malaysian Airline’s belief, that since it is not majorly responsible for the incident, it has the ultimate right to utilize term such as “call for the justice” in expressing their attitude towards the air crash. “Justice” or collocations associated with justice occurs most frequently in the selected data. The frequent repetition of expressions of justice indicates the negative attitude from the Malaysian Airline towards what was done by the Ukraine. This type of negation as expressed by the Malaysian Airline is through an indirect way. The obligation of what should be done (in this case, “justice must be done”) has not been directly aligned with Ukraine in collocations containing “justice”. This type of expression, in the field of CDA is categorized as “indirect requests” (Fairclough, 1989, p.55) achieved through hints touching upon the circumstantial elements such as time, location, purpose and attempt rather than clearly indicating the actor or the action that is responsible for the incident. Apart from indirect expression of negation, there is one instance of direct expression of negation. The Ukrainian and separatist forces should be accused for the cause of the incident as Malaysian Airline uses the negative expression “hostilities” in the sentence: “Hostilities in and around the crash site- by both Ukrainian and separatist forces”. The right to dispose negation towards others is a demonstration of power (Fairclough, 1988). According to Fairclough (1989, p.125), “negation obviously has experiential value”. In terms of the power relationship, if the negative evaluation towards others is majorly used by one participant, the power relationship for that party is obviously higher than the rest because he has the right to negate other’s performance, behavior or services without fearing of hurting others feelings. In the media statements on MH17, there is only one case accusing Ukraine from the Malaysian Airline, while the remaining expression associated with Ukraine exists no more tone of negation. From the perspective of Malaysian Airline, its shift from the attempt of one-time negation to no longer negation on Ukraine indicates its deliberation in lowering down its power over Ukraine. This may due to its fear of Ukraine and the hidden force of Russia as considered by Russian Today (2014), and this shift of tones in the language choices indicates the shift of attitude from negative evaluation to neutral evaluation.

DISCUSSION

In general, from the CDA perspective, the corpus data for two airplane incidents has been processed and analyzed. Positive self-evaluation is the consistently presented throughout the data. Evidence such as “search and rescue”,

“family and care” are reoccurring. The media statements have been utilized to protect the public image of MH370 as no clue of self-negative evaluation can be found. With respect to how the targeted readers have been positioned, sharp contrast can be found with the comparison between what MH370 data displays and what the public media and the families of the passengers conceived. Extreme negative words such as “chaotic” in the search, and “killer” in describing the Malaysian Airlines can be found in the responses from the media and the families regardless of the overwhelming negative evaluation towards Malaysian Airlines in its attitude in the incident of MH370, Malaysian Airlines insists on portraying itself as caring the families and providing medial and emotional support. This insistence of the choices of words in media statements discards the public attitudes is regarded as the dominant power from the Malaysian Airlines over others in delineating the incident officially. In the incident of MH17, contrasted to the maintenance of high-profile position in MH370, Malaysian Airline lowered its position evidenced through the seek for justice and describing itself as victims. It also accused Ukraine directly for one time to express their anger in the incident. However, this anger was withdrawn as no further criticisms towards the Ukraine could be traced in its media statements replaced by indirect hints of the call for justice. This withdrawn of the power over Ukraine gives rise to the handover of power, as Ukraine takes the leading position. This withdrawn also suggests that the power from Malaysian Airlines has been demolished by itself deliberately. The impetus behind may be due to its fear of the hidden force of Ukraine: Russia.

To be more specific, analysis in this study unveils the controlling power from the text producer (in this case, the Malaysian Airline) who possess the ultimate rights in deciding what can be shown to the public and what needed be hidden from the public. When dealing with MH370 incident, the deliberate choices of wording are “families”, “search” and “resecure”, without confronting directly to the urgent needs from the family members of MH370 in request of the facts of what really happened on MH370. The Malaysian Airline deliberately alienates itself from the casualty of the incident but chose to divert the public attention from the focus of the incident to concentrate on what they have offered to the family members of MH370 and what they have devoted in the action of search and rescue. Although the actual facts behind the MH370 incidents is still unresolved, through the manipulation of language on its official statements, it is the genuine hope from the Malaysian Airline that as time passes away, the public attention will be diverted to focus on other cases, the role played by Malaysian Airline as portrayed by itself will be remained positive at least from its own media. As for the MH17 incident, an obviously different meaning making process is applied with the central focus of media

statement concerning this incident has been diverted to the appeal of “justice” and Malaysian Airline itself has also been portrayed as “victim”. This sharp diversion compared with what they said in the series media statements in relation to MH370 incident clearly marks a more “aggressive style” (Fairclough, 1989, p.194) with the ownership of the authorship of the media statement.

A corpus-based approach applied in this study facilitates the segmentation of text especially at the lexical level, gives rise to the application of CDA and SFL analytical frameworks through the lexical inquiry of two separate data sets. The choices of words including the selection of vocabulary, the wording and the collocations are used to “create social relationships between participants” (Fairclough, 1989, p.116) while register variables such as field and tenor in SFL tradition helps to build up the research as a unified form in which the relationship between language and context can be theorized.

CONCLUSION

How to make mean in media discourse has been one of the current research interests among discourse analysis researchers. A critical discourse analysis approach helps to reveal the ideology as well as the self-evaluation of the media discourse author. In this study, a corpus-based approach is adopted, creating two separate data comprising media statements for two air-crash incidents: MH370 and MH17. All the media statements are written by the Malaysian Airline. Empowered by the technology: Wordsmith 6.0, key word lists for both data sets are created. CDA approach integrated with SFL approach has been introduced to understand how Malaysian Airline portrays itself in these two incidents. The findings of this study are suggestive of sharp differences in terms of wording. In MH370 case, Malaysian Airline attempts to step away from the responsibility of the incident by highlighting their efforts in the process of “search and rescue” and insisting that it is standing by the side of the family of the passengers on MH370. “Family, search and rescue” are the most repeatedly wording in MH370 case. As for the case of MH17, the role of sympathizer and supporter as shown in MH370 case has been shifted to “victim”. “Justice” which is derivative action of what victim will appeal for has been constantly brought up.

To sum up, it is not the intention of this paper to make a seductive inclination to criticize Malaysian Airline for disburden their responsibility in MH370 case, especially compared with its furious appeal for justice in MH17 case. The ultimate purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how the reader’s viewpoint can be manipulated through the careful linguistic analysis of what has been written on the news statement. From a theoretical and analytical perspective, a corpus-based approach has been adopted to group, align and segment media statements in the first

place before moving to the lexical analysis of explicit wording with the assistance of CDA and SFL on the lexical level.

As a unique form of discourse, media discourse is worthy careful investigation. The work and the way of analysis applied in this study only suggests one possible solution. From a more holistic perspective, corpus-based approach can be empowered by CDA and SFL or other theoretical frameworks more comprehensively with corpus-based approach being the underlying infrastructure in accessing language. More insights can be thought of to understand the language phenomena from more than just lexical level when corpus-based approach is included. For example, on the lexical level, apart from the key wording as what this study concentrates on, what experiential values, relational values and expressive values together with the metaphorical meanings pertained by the words in the texts can also be interrogated through the lexical inquiry. On the grammatical level, the grammatical features, such as the mood structure including the declarative mood, interrogative mood and imperative mood, the process type, the nominalization and the sentence subordination can also be adopted to describe the participants’ social relationships. On the textual level, that is moving from the lexical features and grammatical features to investigate the overall textual structure to underpin how the interactional conventions together with the generic structures are enacted with the establishment of power relationships.

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