

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Background of the Study

This thesis deals with the use of modality in the editorial text of the daily *Jakarta Post*. Editorial texts are typically meant to voice mission of the newspaper (Iedema, 1995). Thus, a newspaper has its own way of organizing the editorial texts. A text is a semantic unit, not a grammatical one. But meanings are realized through wordings; and without a theory of wordings – that is a grammar – there is no way of making explicit one's interpretation of the meaning of a text. (Halliday, 1994)

Functional grammars views language as a resource for making meaning (Gerot and Wignell, 1994). Whenever we use language, we draw on certain grammatical resources to represent meanings, such as *ideational* meanings where language is used to organize, understand and express our perceptions of the world and of our consciousness, *interpersonal* meanings where language is used to enable us to participate in communicative acts with other people, and *textual* meanings where language is used to relate what is said (or written) to the real world and to other linguistic events. This involves the use of language to organize the text itself.

Nowadays more and more people read the *Jakarta Post* newspaper. The *Jakarta Post* is considered as the leading national newspaper published in English. Since its conception in 1983 the daily has developed into a prestigious newspaper respected for its independent views and bold coverage of various national and international events. In 1994, the *Jakarta Post* became the first Indonesian newspaper to go global under a

project nicknamed "Go International". Three global companies providing database services from three different parts of the world signed agreement with the *Jakarta Post* to make the paper accessible 24 hours a day to tens of thousands of their subscribers around the world. The *Jakarta Post* also has received many international awards, such as the International Newspaper Marketing Association – Editor & Publisher Award. In 1994 it won the first place among newspaper with circulation under 50,000 copies daily in the category of public relations printed materials. Presented in Phoenix, Arizona, USA, on May 16, 1994, the *Jakarta Post* also received another Certificate of Merit for the same category. The *Jakarta Post* received two similar awards in 1991 and two more in 1993. This paper is the first and so far the only Indonesian newspaper thus internationally acknowledged.

By taking advantage of the new innovation in the system of circulating the newspaper, the paper now reaches not only certain class people who live in big cities but also any citizen who is interested in reading the news presented, in any part of the country. As an English language newspaper, the *Jakarta Post* plays a vital role in delivering its information to its readers. Based on the above facts, the writer has chosen the *Jakarta Post* as the object of study in this research in the view point of Functional grammar.

The *Jakarta Post* is a popular newspaper for some reasons. First, it is a newspaper that has a wide range of readers. The paper is popular because, it is assumed, the articles written in it such as its editorial as a text of exchanging experience are good in giving and asking information, service and good. Second, it is a newspaper where the selection of modality as the lexicogrammatical features used in the clauses of the

texts can provide the interpersonal functions of the language used. It means that the paper is well-known because it is a good media of communication between the article writers and their readers in exchanging experience.

Newspaper contains a range of items; news, comment and analysis, advertising, entertainment, editorial, and many others. Editorials exist to allow the newspaper (usually in the person of its editor) to comment, give views on and draw conclusion from the day's events (Reah, 2002). Modality, as has been mentioned above, refers to opinion or judgment of the speaker on the content and speech function of the clause. This study attempts to analyze the text of *Jakarta Post* editorials based on its modality. The problem to understand the use of modality in the newspaper editorial such as in *Jakarta Post* can be made possible by the application of the functional grammar theories.

The above facts have urged the writer to analyze further on modality of the *Jakarta Post* editorials. The writer thinks that it is significant to analyze the modality to find out how the editorial writers express their opinions from the perspective of modality theory. The types of modality used in the editorials that is assumed to make *Jakarta Post* very popular among the newspaper readers need to be revealed. It is necessary to know the systematic use of the type to help more people understand the paper. Such a study is theoretically and practically important to ease the process of communicative interaction between the article writers and readers.

1.2. The Problem of the Study

The problems to be investigated and explored in this study are restricted to the following points

1. What are the types of modality used in editorials of the *Jakarta Post*?
2. What type of modality is dominantly used?
3. What are realizations of modality in the editorial texts?
4. Why is modality used the way it is in the *Jakarta Post* editorials?

1.3 The Objective of the Study

The objectives of the study are

1. to analyze the types of modality used in *Jakarta Post* editorials,
2. to decide the type of modality dominantly used,
3. to reveal the realizations of modality in the editorial texts, and
4. to investigate why modality is used the way it is in the *Jakarta Post* editorials?

1.4. The Scope of the Study

The study applies the concept of discourse analysis in systemic functional linguistic (SFL) proposed by Halliday and other systemicists. In applying the Halliday's theory of modality as part of interpersonal function, the analysis is focused on the occurrences of modality covering probability, usuality, obligation and inclination.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

The findings are expected to be significant and give benefits in two respects, theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the findings are expected to enrich application of SFL theories on the use of English language in Indonesian media and Indonesian context of culture. Practically, the findings will be beneficial for the readers of the *Jakarta Post* and those who are interested in SFL theories for having better understanding of the English language newspaper publication.