


# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides background of the study, research question, purpose of the study and significance of the study.

### 1.1 Background of the Study



English is indispensable to aviation safety. Numbers of air crash accidents were caused by language problems. For example, one of Indonesia's airline crashes due to miscommunication is Garuda Indonesia flight GA 152 on 26<sup>th</sup> of September 1997. Based on KNKT (National Transportation Safety Committee) report in 2004, Garuda Indonesia Airlines Flight 152 was traveling from Jakarta to Medan. The Pilot called the Medan tower reported the poor visibility caused by smoke from forest fires burning below. At 06:30 am Medan tower instructed GA 152 to turn right heading 046 degrees, GA 152 had confirmed it but the Captain misread the instruction by turning left. While the plane turned left, the First Officer reminded the Captain to turn right. This kind of discrepancy led the plane to fly below the required altitude (1800ft and descending). According to the recording from blackbox, at 06:31 am, GA 152 crashed toward the trees, destroyed the airplane, and killed all aircrews and passengers with a total 234 people on board.

In every situation, Pilots and ATCs (Air Traffic Controllers) are in charge of communicating properly in order to maintain safety for the whole passengers and aircrews. The way Pilots and ATCs communicate is formidable using radiotelephony communication which requires excellent listening skill. They have to communicate without visual contact but are obliged to understand the conversations thoroughly while balancing it with the direct actions. It is what makes the radiotelephony

communication seems difficult but unique. Thus, Pilots and ATCs are required to obtain a standard of ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization) language proficiency level 4 in order to operate English as communication in their working environment. According to the Guidelines for Aviation English Training Programmes (2009), the Operational Level 4 is fundamental because it was developed as the safest minimum proficiency skill level crucial to the radiotelephony communications and its goal is on communicative proficiency.

Successful communicative proficiency in Aviation English can be measured by efficient and intelligible reciprocal conversation with unambiguous meaning. However, English as a lingua franca definitely plays such an important role since numbers of international flights have increased. In international flights, several communication barriers will be found, such as differences in mother tongue, accent, and in the level of English comprehension. These differences will certainly become a problem if left unchecked. Pilots and ATCs could anticipate this by practicing communication. This is where the role of learning materials are needed.

There are two previous articles that are close to the researcher's study. The first article published in 2014 entitled An "*Analytical Evaluation of Aviation English Textbook*" This article attempted to evaluate materials offered in an ESP textbook which was developed for Air Traffic Controllers (ATC) and Pilots to reach ICAO operating level four. The activities in this book are designed to help students achieve and maintain ICAO operating level four by focusing on speaking and listening abilities. Meanwhile the second articles published in 2015 with the title "*Evaluation and Content Analysis of 'English for Aviation for Pilots and Air Traffic Controllers' Textbook as an ESP Book*" discussed the analysis and evaluation of the book in the domain of the skills, contents, sequencing, and sociolinguistics feature.

Learning materials are all of the curriculum content that students must master in order to achieve competency standards for each subject in specific educational units. In general, learning materials are the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students must learn in order to meet predetermined competency standards. Teaching materials are one component of the learning system that plays an important role in assisting students in achieving Competency Standards and Basic Competencies or predetermined learning objectives. It is hoped that by implementing the developed teaching materials, alternatives for the teacher or instructor in delivering learning material will be obtained, allowing the teaching and learning process to run more optimally and vary in order to achieve predetermined goals.

### **1.2 Research Questions**

1. To what extent is communication skills incorporated in the Aviation English learning materials for student Pilots?
2. How is the communication skills incorporated in the Aviation English learning materials for student Pilots?

### **1.3 Research Purposes**

To formulate the problems above, this study aims at:

1. To analyze the extent to which communication skills are incorporated in the Aviation English learning materials for student Pilots.
2. To explain the ways communication skills are incorporated in the Aviation English learning materials for student Pilots.

#### **1.4 Scope of the Study**

This study focuses on analyzing the incorporation of communication skills in Aviation English learning materials for student Pilots. The learning materials that will be analyzed are textbooks, handouts, manual books, and powerpoint slides. These learning materials are obtained from four flight schools or academies in Indonesia. The analysis will be done by answering the research questions.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

Theoretically, the indicators and findings of this study are expected to become a reference when choosing Aviation English learning materials which have incorporated communication skills as a source for learning either for individual or classroom use for student Pilots. Practically, the findings of this study can benefit the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teachers, flight instructors, student Pilots, and flight schools or academies to reinforce communication skills in Aviation English learning.

