

IMAGE REPAIR STRATEGIES **IN THE CEO'S TWEETS**
REGARDING AIRASIA'S QZ8501 CRISIS

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**IMAGE REPAIR STRATEGIES IN THE CEO'S
TWEETS REGARDING AIRASIA'S QZ8501 CRISIS**

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IMAGE REPAIR STRATEGIES IN THE CEO'S TWEETS REGARDING AIRASIA'S QZ8501 CRISIS

ABSTRACT

In light of the AirAsia QZ8501 crash in December 2014, Tony Fernandes as the Chief Executive Officer, took to Twitter to provide updates on the next course of actions taken by AirAsia as well as convey his thoughts and feelings. Attempts were made by Fernandes to repair his affected image and that of his company to reduce the risk of running losses and also to regain public trust. His effort was crucial as responses to the crisis would be a defining moment in the history of the corporation, determining whether the corporation makes it or breaks. The attempts to repair the sullied reputation are discussed with reference to Benoit's (2015) image repair theory. It is revealed that Fernandes employed corrective action, bolstering, mortification, denial, and defeasibility. The tweets pertaining to the crisis obtained from Fernandes's official Twitter account are used as the data and analysed to identify the most salient linguistic features present as well as explain how they realise the function of image repair. The features covered in this work are the personal pronouns 'I' and 'we' and their possessive determiners, the modal auxiliary 'will', the present tense, and the past tense. As manual analysis is conducted, a known limitation is that the interpretation and explanation of the data are subjective due to the influence of the researcher's prior knowledge. As such, there is a possibility that the understanding and descriptions provided in this work might differ from those of the readers of this work. That this study does not investigate the effectiveness of strategies adopted enables it to be extended in that particular area in the future.

Keywords: image repair theory, linguistic features

STRATEGI-STRATEGI PEMBAIKAN IMEJ DALAM TWEET KETUA PEGAWAI EKSEKUTIF YANG BERKENAAN DENGAN KRISIS QZ8501

ABSTRAK

Berhubung dengan krisis pesawat AirAsia QZ8501 yang terhempas pada bulan Disember 2014, Tony Fernandes selaku Ketua Pegawai Eksekutif telah menggunakan Twitter untuk memberikan maklumat terkini mengenai kejadian tersebut serta menyampaikan rasa simpati dan buah fikirannya. Fernandes bertindak sedemikian untuk memperbaiki imej diri serta syarikat AirAsia yang terjejas bagi mengurangkan risiko kerugian dan mendapatkan semula kepercayaan orang awam. Usaha beliau amatlah penting kerana respons terhadap krisis tersebut akan menjadi detik bersejarah yang menentukan kejayaan atau kegagalan syarikat tersebut. Kajian ini menggunakan teori pembaikan imej (image repair theory) yang diasaskan oleh Benoit (2015) untuk mengenal pasti strategi-strategi yang digunakan untuk memperbaiki imej diri Fernandes dan AirAsia. ‘Tweet’ mengenai krisis tersebut diperoleh daripada akaun Twitter rasmi beliau bagi tujuan analisis serta mengenal pasti gaya atau ciri bahasa yang menonjol. Gaya bahasa dikaji dari segi perkataan yang membawa makna atau tujuan memperbaiki reputasi. Memandangkan penyelidikan ini dijalankan secara manual, interpretasi dan penerangan data adalah subjektif kerana dipengaruhi oleh pengetahuan awal penyelidik. Oleh itu, pemahaman dan deskripsi dalam penyelidikan ini mungkin berlainan dengan pendapat para pembaca penulisan ini. Disebabkan penyelidikan ini tidak menyiasat keberkesanan strategi-strategi pembaikan imej, aspek tersebut boleh dikaji dalam penyelidikan pada masa hadapan.

Kata kunci: image repair theory, gaya bahasa

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CEO	:	Chief Executive Officer
IRT	:	Image restoration theory/ Image repair theory
LGBT	:	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transsexual/ Transgender

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The introductory chapter of this dissertation opens with the background of the study and its significance. It is followed by the research aims and questions formulated to guide this study and ends with the organisation of the dissertation.

1.1 Background of the study

Crises are part and parcel of life. They can happen to anyone at anytime and anywhere. Some individuals or organisations survive and come out of them stronger whereas others may not be as privileged to experience positive outcomes. This is due to the fact that crises entail losses in various aspects such as finance, reputation, or even lives. Therefore, it is crucial to have immediate and effective responses from the responsible parties in order to reduce the negative consequences of crises as they would constantly be in the public eye. The negative effects can subsequently be reduced, if not completely cut off. This goes hand in hand with Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger's (2013) statement that a crisis which occurs is a defining moment in the history of a corporation or an organisation as the debacle can either be a driving force towards strength and stability or be a struggle to survive. The aforementioned statement reiterates the urgency of timely and tactful responses in order to appease different stakeholders and maintain a reputation, if not repair it.

The aviation tragedy occurred on the fateful December 28th morning of 2014 in which AirAsia QZ8501 was scheduled to arrive in Singapore two hours and ten minutes after departing from the second city of Indonesia, Surabaya at 5.36 a.m local time (Carswell, 2014; Mullen, 2014). The departure of the Airbus A320 was delayed a few minutes and it was flying at a constant altitude when Indonesian Air Traffic Control was said to have lost contact with it 41 minutes into the flight (Calder, 2014). There have been

claims and reports that a strange routing had been requested by the pilot although it appears from the air traffic control records that the aircrew intended to deviate from their track and ascend so that a thunderstorm could be avoided. This is supported by a statement from the airline which states that “the aircraft was on the submitted flight plan route and was requesting deviation due to en-route weather before communication with the aircraft was lost” (Devjyot Ghoshal & Diksha Madhok, 2014). The aircraft plunged into the Java Sea off Borneo, claiming the lives of all 155 passengers and seven crew members onboard. The victims were of different nationalities such as South Koreans, Singaporeans, and one Briton to name a few, implying the severity of the matter as different nations were drawn into it due to their citizens being affected. Search and rescue efforts involving various agencies such as the National Search and Rescue Agency of Republic of Indonesia (BASARNAS) and the Indonesian Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) were deployed not long after to recover the bodies of victims and fuselage of the crashed AirAsia plane.

About four and a half hours later following the confirmation that air traffic control had lost contact with the aircraft, AirAsia took to its official social media accounts namely Facebook and Twitter to deliver news of the unfortunate event, at 11.41 a.m. and 11.47 a.m. respectively. Press statements broadcast live on television and released on the website specifically created by AirAsia to provide updates of the QZ8501 crisis demonstrate the importance of disseminating information to as wide an audience as possible as that will influence public perception. Spreading the word becomes significant as it reflects the efficiency and responsibility of the organisation in handling the situation with the stakeholders’ best interest in mind besides the fact that members of the public need to be constantly informed of what is going on. Tony Fernandes, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of AirAsia Berhad also responded promptly to the crisis by sending out a

tweet using his personal Twitter account an hour or so after an official press statement was released on the company website.

The immediate responses and attention given illustrate the urgency of the situation as any mishap will throw various stakeholders into a whirlwind of shock. The reputation of the company will especially be at risk as customer confidence is lost when a misfortune takes place (Reed, 2014). Consequently, a ripple effect will be evident as share prices would begin to drop and financial gain affected. This is proven to be true as Reuters (2014) reports that the share price of AirAsia fell 13 percent which is its biggest one-day drop in a period of more than three years the day after the mishap. As such, image repair strategies or statements are of utmost significance to reduce the risk of running losses. Bearing that in mind, this research will look into the responses of the Chief Executive Officer of Malaysia's best low-cost carrier company, AirAsia Berhad during the crisis which occurred in December 2014. Specifically, the tweets from Tony Fernandes's official Twitter account during the period of the crisis will be used as the data of this research. By looking into his tweets, it is hoped that conclusions can be drawn and explanations be given on how the salient linguistic features which are observed realise the function of image repair after the occurrence of the unfortunate incident. Image repair according to Benoit (2015, p. 3), involves offering explanations, justifications, apologies, rationalisations, defences, or excuses for one's wrongdoing or behavior when one believes that his or her image has been affected.

1.2 Significance of the study

To date, studies that make use of Benoit's (1995; 2015) image repair theory as the foundation are mainly taken from Public Relations and Communications journals as will be further explained in Section 2.5 on page 34. As such, image repair strategies which are identified in the various crises selected as the focus are briefly described in those studies. Similar to what will be done in this research, each strategy in existing image repair

literature is explained based on the respective authors' understanding of the data collected which includes press releases and advertisements among others. However, previous studies do not stress specific linguistic features which realise the function of image repair such as that which will be emphasised in this work. That this work endeavours to explain how repairing a sullied reputation is made possible through the use of certain linguistic features makes it significant since there is little or none at all of such work. Bearing in mind that this research uses the image repair theory which has not been or is scarcely applied in linguistic studies, the interpretations are largely intuitive and very subjective since understanding of the theory is assisted by reading previous works from other disciplines. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the findings will shed light on the importance of choosing words wisely for the purpose of meaning construction to repair a reputation, besides adding on to the understanding of how image repair works explained in the currently available literature.

1.3 Research aims and questions

A crisis can occur unexpectedly at any time and when it strikes, there is a need to repair or at least maintain an organisation's reputation. Otherwise, the crisis might incur huge losses and bring about adverse effects (Benoit, 2015, p. 2). In order to repair a tainted image, it is important that words and expressions be chosen wisely to convey a certain message as well as to appease different parties and stakeholders. After all, Benoit (2015, p. 3) says that the potential to mend one's face or image lies in discourse.

With regard to the existing problem, the following are the three aims of this research:

- a) To identify the image repair strategies which are employed by Tony Fernandes with regard to the QZ8501 crash.
- b) To identify the salient linguistic features present in Tony Fernandes's image repair discourse.

- c) To explain how the linguistic features identified realise the function of image repair.

As a guide for the research as well as to ensure that it achieves the set objectives, the research questions below are formulated.

1. What are the image repair strategies employed by Tony Fernandes?
2. How do the salient linguistic features identified realise the function of image repair?

1.4 Organisation of the study

This dissertation is organised into five chapters. The first chapter begins by informing readers of the background of the study. It then provides the specific research objectives and questions formulated to ensure that this piece of work moves in the right direction.

Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature pertinent to the research. The chapter first explains what a crisis is before providing the explanation for crisis management. The theory and research methods applied are also described in relation to previous studies.

Chapter 3 gives an overview of how data is collected and analysed for the purpose of this study. The procedures are described in detail with an example of how tweets are analysed included.

Chapter 4 focuses on the findings obtained. The image repair strategies revealed through data analysis are discussed here in relation to the salient linguistic features found to realise the function of repairing a tarnished reputation.

Chapter 5 concludes with a summary of the findings, limitations of the study as well as recommendations for similar research in the future.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, relevant literature pertaining to the study is reviewed. Previous studies which are related to the theoretical foundation as well as research method applied in this work are also described in the chapter.

2.1 Crisis

“The Chinese use two brush strokes to write the word 'crisis.' One brush stroke stands for danger; the other for opportunity. In a crisis, be aware of the danger – but recognise the opportunity.”— John F. Kennedy.

The quote above as cited in Auwen (2013) reflects the need for positive and useful communicative approach in managing crisis to minimise its impact. This is due to the fact that a crisis can happen in just about every industry, to any politician, corporation, or country. This is apparent as many crises have been and are being reported all over the world from time to time. Some examples of major crises affecting big companies are Union Carbide’s devastating chemical release at its pesticide plant in Bhopal back in 1984, the chemical poisoning catastrophe in the Gulf of Mexico due to the explosion of Deepwater Horizon oil rig belonging to British Petroleum which occurred in 2010, and Toyota’s 2010 recall of its vehicles in the United States and later around the globe due to faulty accelerator pedal. When a crisis strikes unpredictably, the image of a company or an organisation is at stake and this can affect many aspects from corporate shares to employee morale (Hearit, 2001; Lyon & Cameron, 2004). According to Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger (2013), a crisis comes as a surprise that poses a serious level of threat and forces responses in a short period of time. As a result, it becomes a unique moment in the history of a certain organisation as it will determine whether the organisation makes it or breaks. It is noted by Coombs and Holladay (1996; 2008, as cited in Kiambi & Shafer, 2015) that previous studies show that what an organisation says and does after a crisis go

a long way towards protecting organisational reputation. As such, it is of paramount importance that an organisation employs crisis response strategies which are appropriate to minimise the negative effects brought about by the crisis and also protect its image.

As scholars, it is essential to understand what a crisis is, the course it may take and the effects it ultimately has on an organisation (Knoespel, 2011). According to Fearn-Banks (1996, as cited in Wright, 2009), a crisis is given the definition of a major occurrence or event which has a potential to bring negative result impacting an industry or organisation as well as its products, services, reputation, or publics. In yet another definition by Hamblin (1958, p. 322), a crisis is a critical situation in which all members of a group experience a common threat. Fink (1986) also contributes to the definition of crisis by claiming that it is any occurrence that has the possibility to escalate in intensity such as falling under close government and media scrutiny, interfere with usual business operations, and may affect the reputation as well as bottom line of a corporation. Furthermore, a crisis as defined by Lerbinger (1997, p. 4) is an occurrence that brings or can potentially bring an organisation or body into disrepute as well as impede its growth, profitability, and probably its very survival in the future. Last but not least, a crisis is viewed as an event with low-probability but high-impact which threatens an organisation's viability and is characterised by uncertainty of cause, effect, and solution in addition to the belief that decision-making needs to be quick (Pearson & Clair, 1998, p. 60, as cited in Wright, 2009).

Although the definitions provided above differ slightly, there are numerous similarities revealed through a closer examination. King (2002) states that a crisis possesses three primary features. Firstly, a crisis is an unplanned occurrence which has the capability to disrupt an organisation's internal and external structure. Secondly, it can happen at any time and the affected individual or corporation is typically caught unaware. Lastly, the legitimacy of an organisation could be at risk due to a crisis. This owes to the

fact that the media can greatly impact the perception of the public in regard to matters concerning cause, blame, response, resolution, and effects. For instance, the legitimacy of an organisation is susceptible to threats when it is presented in a negative light (King, 2002; Ray, 1999). Once that happens, the probability or likelihood of the organisation surviving the crisis is significantly reduced. As such, it is crucial for effective strategies to be in place so that an organisation's reputation can be repaired or the effects of a tainted image be minimised when a crisis occurs. The three characteristics above meet the definition informed by and agreed upon during discussions held at the 2005 NCA Pre-Conference on Integrating Research and Outreach in Crisis and Risk Communication. From the discussions, the definition provided for crisis is the perception or opinion of an event which is unpredictable and causes significant expectancies of stakeholders to be threatened, an organisation's performance to be seriously affected, as well as negative outcomes to be generated (Coombs, 2007).

With reference to the various definitions above, the AirAsia QZ8501 crash is regarded as a crisis due to the fact that lives were lost and the corporation had to answer to different stakeholders involved. According to Coombs (2010), harming stakeholders should be rated as the most significant negative effect and the harm could be of any type including financial, physical, and psychological. It is shown that the image of the corporation was affected when AirAsia Berhad shares fell 13 percent to 2.56 ringgit which was the lowest in the last three years the day after the crash (Chan & Lim, 2014). Not only that, Hong Leong Investment Bank Berhad also advised investors to sell AirAsia shares and lowered its target price on the label from 3.15 ringgit previously to 2.64 ringgit (Chan & Lim, 2014; Madsuki, 2015). These are two brief, yet relevant examples which demonstrate the undesirable effects of the crisis and imply the need for strategies to repair the image of the company or organisation in order to regain customer confidence and trust.

2.1.1 Types of crises

Over the years, several crisis taxonomies have been developed in the field of research. The crises are categorised as natural disasters (tsunami, wild fires, and earthquakes), industrial accidents (explosions, spills, and products), and intentional events (product tampering, violence at the workplace, and terrorist attacks) as well as various harm-inducing occurrences (Seeger, Sellnow & Ulmer, 1998, as cited in Abramenka, 2013). It is vital to distinguish the type of crisis or disaster as it influences the requirements for effective communication. As such, public relations officers or practitioners should be astute in addressing the issue in an accurate, coherent, and timely manner to thwart any sense of ambiguity and panic among stakeholders and the general public.

Three classifications of crises have been proposed by Coombs (2007): victim clusters (workplace violence, rumours, natural disaster, and product tampering); accident clusters (challenges, megadamage, recalls due to technical error, and accidents due to technical error), as well as preventable clusters (human breakdown product recalls, human breakdown accidents, organisational misconduct, organisational misdeed with injuries, and organisational misdeed without injuries). The various typologies by Coombs (2012, as cited in Abramenka, 2013) are adapted and synthesised in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Modified Crisis Typologies by Coombs (2012) as cited in Abramenka (2013)

Cluster	Crisis	Explanation
Victim	Workplace violence	When violence is committed by an employee or former employee against other employees on the grounds of the organisation
	Rumours	When distorted or false information which concerns an organisation or its product is intentionally circulated with the aim to harm the organisation

Table 2.1, Continued

	Natural disasters	When there is damage to the organisation as a consequence of the weather or ‘Acts of God’ such as bad storms, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, and floods
	Malevolence	When some external actor or opponent uses tactics which are extreme to attack the organisation such as tampering with product, computer hacking, terrorism, or kidnapping
Accident	Challenges	When the organisation is faced with stakeholders who are discontented with claims that it is not running or operating in an appropriate way or manner
	Technical error product harm	When there is failure in the technology which is utilised or provided by the organisation and results in a defect or a product with potential to harm
	Technical error accidents	When there is failure in the technology utilised or provided by the organisation and leads to an industrial accident
Preventable	Human error product harm	When an error made by human results in a defect or a product with potential to harm
	Human error product accidents	When an accident is caused by human error
	Organisational misleads	When actions are taken by management with the awareness that stakeholders might be put at risk or that they consciously violate the law

With reference to the QZ8501 crash, the crisis can be classified under the natural disaster typology of the victim cluster. This is because initial reports state that Air Traffic Control lost contact with the plane after the pilot requested to diverge from the original route and ascend so that bad weather could be avoided. The plane was later discovered to have crash into the Java Sea off Borneo. Besides that, the crisis can also be a technical error accident in the category of accidental cluster as well as human error product accident

under the preventable cluster. According to Otto and Pasztor (2015) as well as Paton (2015), the official national transportation safety committee of Indonesia carried out investigations and found that the pilots made an attempt to reset the control system while flying the plane manually after a warning during flight. A fault with the rudder control system coupled with the pilots' response caused the plane to enter a prolonged stall from which they were unable to recover, resulting in the crash. This statement clearly shows that an issue with the flight system or technology as well as human action or 'error' contributed to the crisis.

2.1.2 Crisis management

Crisis management is defined by Coombs (2007) as a set of designed factors to overcome crises as well as to diminish the actual damage done. Besides, the aims are that the negative effects of a crisis can be prevented or reduced, hence providing protection from harm to the organisation, stakeholders, and/ or industry. He adds that the crisis life cycle consists of the following stages: (1) pre-crisis which requires efforts for crisis prevention and preparation to manage a crisis; (2) crisis which is the reaction or response to an actual occurrence or incident; and (3) post-crisis which includes efforts and initiatives to learn from the crisis situation.

A critical element in crisis management is crisis communication which has witnessed impressive growth in both the academic and professional community. It can be broadly explained that crisis communication entails the collection, processing, and dissemination of information necessary to deal with or manage a crisis event. It typically focuses on the crisis phase or crisis response which is concerned with what organisations say and do after a crisis. As mentioned by Coombs (2012, p. 20), responses to a crisis are clearly perceptible to stakeholders and significant to ensure the effectiveness of the effort in managing the crisis as they will either improve or make the situation worse.

Generally, crisis communication is said to be a largely applied concept as managers or higher-ranked officers will follow the advice offered and recommended in various literature or writings to assist them in managing crises. With reference to that, Coombs (2012) asserts that crisis communication is a nexus of praxis where theory and application have to intersect. This applied focus stems from the belief that better management of crisis assists in safeguarding organisations and stakeholders. The vast development of its body of knowledge reflects the applied nature of crisis communication.

Early research in crisis communication was produced by practitioners using war stories and cases and appeared in non-academic journals. Applied research aims to solve real-world problems using theories. Realising that, publications started to appear in academic journals when academics later embraced the need to resolve problems in crisis communication. The next evolution after the use of war stories was the introduction of principles or theoretical frameworks for analysing case studies. The academic case studies were deemed more rigorous as specific analytic frameworks were systematically applied and a perfect example given by Coombs is the image restoration research carried out by Benoit and his adherents in 1995. The framework which is developed by Benoit (1995) is widely utilised in numerous published articles (e.g., Kiambi & Shafer, 2015; Masaviru, 2016; Walsh & McAllister-Spooner, 2011) even until today and this implies the relevance of Benoit's (1995) framework, which becomes a motivating factor for its application in this research. In connection with crisis communication studies, the majority come from public relations and communication studies in which the discourses used in crises are basically explained as a whole, instead of looking into specific linguistic features which realise different functions such as dissemination of information or image repair. As such, this research endeavours to investigate crisis communication specifically in the area of image repair, from a linguistic perspective which is deemed to be different from the usual methods of analysis carried out in research which concerns crisis communication or

management. This indicates the hope and expectation to clearly explain how image repair is accomplished through the use of various linguistic features in Tony Fernandes's discourse.

2.2 Benoit's Image Repair Theory (IRT)

The theory of image restoration is developed and introduced by Benoit (1995) to redress the wrongdoings of a crisis through the use of certain communication strategies. He asserts that communication is essentially a goal-directed activity to assist an individual in maintaining a favourable reputation and presents five strategies in his theory, namely *denial*, *evasion of responsibility*, *reducing the offensiveness of the act*, *corrective action*, and *mortification*. The aforementioned strategies are used to demonstrate the reality that there are several options to be considered for any individual who is forced to defend himself or herself against the attacks or suspicions of others during or after the occurrence of a crisis. This is due to the fact that a crisis threatens one's reputation which consequently affects the individual's credibility. The strategies and an example of a statement to show how each is employed is provided in Table 2.2 after the detailed explanation of each strategy.

Currently, the theory of image restoration is more commonly referred to as the theory of image repair. Benoit (2015) states that this is due to the opinion that using 'image restoration' might indirectly imply that complete image restoration can and should be expected by one who is accused or at fault, eliminating any stigma in the image. As such, 'image repair' is used as a replacement in the hope to avoid giving the impression that one can or should expect to fully restore a sullied reputation. By using 'repair', Benoit explains that a reputation is not necessarily restored to how it was originally but a 'repaired' image is much better compared to a tainted one. Although image repair might also be successful and completely dissipate all negative feelings towards the accused, Benoit's intention is that the theory does not imply that full restoration is always possible

or is the only desirable outcome. Having informed that Benoit made a change to the name of his theory, the theory will be referred to as the theory of image repair from here onwards.

2.2.1 Denial

One of the options for image repair is to deny performing a certain wrongful act. It is observed by Goffman (1971, as cited in Benoit, 1995, p. 75) that the occurrence of the offensive act or that it was committed by the accused may be denied. In support, Schonbach (1980) says that one may claim the undesirable event did not happen or as Schlenker (1980) states, one can also cite innocence as an option. Benoit (1995; 2015) asserts that the accused should be absolved of culpability immaterial of whether the accused denies the wrongful act occurring or being committed. Benoit (1995, p. 75; 2015, p. 22) also states that explanations of apparently damaging facts or insufficient supporting evidence may be provided as a supplement to the act of *denial*. As a result of *denial*, others may wonder who is responsible for the undesirable action if not the accused. In response to this, Burke (1970, as cited in Benoit, 1995, p. 75) mentions victimage or shifting the blame which Benoit considers a variant of *denial* as the repugnant act cannot possibly be committed by the accused if another party actually did it. Benoit adds that such a strategy may well be more effective than simply refuting the wrongdoing because a target for any negative feelings from the public or audience is given and it provides answer(s) to the question of who is actually accountable for the offensive act. The act of *denial* may also involve the presence of an alibi which is a popular defence strategy in criminal trials. Basically, there is a witness who testifies that the person accused was somewhere else at the time the unfortunate incident or crime occurred and thus, cannot possibly be responsible for it. This clearly shows that an alibi has the role to provide statements or pieces of evidence which if accepted, effectively deny that the defendant committed the crime.

To sum up, when *denial* is used, it can either be claimed by the communicative entity that it did not perform or carry out the act or shift the blame by stating another party is to be held responsible for the offense.

2.2.2 Evasion of responsibility

One who is unable to deny committing the questionable act may possibly be able to evade or diminish his or her responsibility for it. Benoit (1995; 2015) identifies four variants of this strategy of *evading responsibility*. According to Scott and Lyman (1968, as cited in Benoit, 2015, p. 23), *scapegoating* or renamed *provocation* by Benoit suggests that the accused may claim that the offense was committed as a reaction to another wrongful deed which clearly provoked the wrongful act in question. If it is agreed upon by the other person that the accused was justifiably provoked, the provocateur may be held responsible instead of the accused.

The next strategy for *evading responsibility* is *arguing defeasibility* by stating a lack of or insufficient control over or information about significant influences in the situation. In this attempt to survive an image threat, the actor might suggest lack of volition, information, or ability rather than denying the occurrence of the act to imply that he or she should not be held accountable for the offense. For instance, those who are late to a meeting should not be blamed or be held responsible completely if unforeseen circumstances like traffic congestion resulted in their tardiness. Benoit (2015) adds that this strategy should decrease the perceived responsibility of the one who is accused for the despicable act if it is successful. Nonetheless, the effectiveness of this variant of the *evasion of responsibility* strategy is somewhat dependent on the actor's role or position. For example, Benoit and Henson's (2009) find that it was risky for the then President Bush to use defeasibility when responding to the Hurricane Katrina which hit New Orleans in 2005. Bush explained that it was an extraordinary disaster that could not be prepared for, likely with the intention of getting the understanding and consideration of

the audience as the authorities dealt with the aftermath. Unfortunately, using *defeasibility* only served to portray him as a leader who could not solve the problem as it had been noted for days before that the storm was headed for the Gulf Coast. Knowing that a storm was imminent, he should have made preparations to face the disaster.

A third strategy is the actor can give an excuse based on accidents as others are usually held responsible only for factors they can logically be expected to control. An example of wrongful act which happened by accident provided by Benoit (2015) is someone inadvertently missing a meeting due to forgetting. Again, the actor attempts to give information or details that may reduce his or her responsibility for the wrongdoing instead of denying that it occurred.

Fourthly, the actor may suggest that committing the offensive act be justified based on intentions. When using this strategy, the actor does not deny the act in question and yet, asks that he or she is not held fully responsible because the act was committed out of goodwill rather than bad intentions. After all, Benoit (2015) states that individuals who do evil while attempting to do good are typically not blamed as much as those who have the intention to do bad.

In short, in *evasion of responsibility*, it can be argued by the communicative entity that provocation was present and therefore, acted in response to the act of another. It can also argue defeasibility due to insufficient information or the lack of ability, say that the occurrence was a misfortune or an accident, or that there were good intentions when the act was carried out (Holtzhausen & Roberts, 2009, p. 4).

2.2.3 Reducing offensiveness

An organisation or corporation can also strive to *reduce the offensiveness of the act* through six different ways: (1) *bolstering* by stressing or emphasising on its good traits, (2) *minimisation* by stating that the offensive act is not as grave or serious as portrayed, (3) *differentiation* by claiming that the act is not as offensive or as bad as other acts that are similar, (4) *transcendence* by asserting the presence of other considerations which are more important, (5) *attacking the accuser*, or (6) *compensating the victim(s)*.

First and foremost, *bolstering* may be used to mitigate the negative consequences of the misbehaviour by enhancing the audience's positive feelings or affect for the actor. In this case, the accused might associate positive qualities they possess or good deeds they have done in the past with the purpose of adding new beliefs or reminding the audience of beliefs related to positive values which might have been forgotten. Even though the ill feelings from the accusation remain unchanged, increasing positive affect towards the accused may help to mitigate or offset the negative affect towards the offensive act, resulting in a relative improvement in the actor's image (Benoit, 2015, p. 24). A clear instance of *bolstering* is when Union Carbide, a chemical company declared that the management and employees of the company were shocked by the Bhopal tragedy in which there was emission of a cloud of poisonous gas in the town of Bhopal. It was reported that over 2000 were killed and estimated that as many as 200,000 were injured in the tragedy (McFadden, 1984, as cited in Benoit, 1995, p. 133). By stating that the tragedy shocked the management and employees, the image of the company was bolstered as it was depicted as a corporation comprised of caring and concerned individuals. In the same case, Union Carbide's image was enhanced when the company promised full cooperation to investigate the causes that led to the mishap. *Bolstering* is apparent here as an image of a corporation which is innocent and has nothing to hide is portrayed.

Second, there is a possibility of one trying to reduce the amount of negative feelings associated with the misdeed through *minimisation*. The amount of ill feelings associated with the act that is offensive is minimised when the audience can be convinced by a certain source or individual that the act is not as terrible as it might first appear. An individual's or corporation's reputation is repaired based on how successful the strategy is. *Minimisation* is illustrated in the case when Exxon mentioned that major environmental damage was not expected as a result of the oil spill in Alaska in 1989. President Bush said that the oil spill was a major catastrophe both for the environment and the people there (Hoffman, 1989, as cited in Benoit, 1995, p. 119) whereas Browne (1989) stated that the petroleum compounds in the oil slick seemed certain to affect the food chain, capable of damaging wildlife and carrying toxic chemicals into food for human consumption. Although comments about the oil spill were uniformly negative, the number of animals killed and miles of beaches contaminated were understated (Baker, 1989, p. 8, as cited in Benoit, 1995, p. 125). *Minimisation* is adopted as the company attempted to downplay the consequences of the oil spill.

A third strategy likely to be employed to reduce the offensiveness of misbehaviour is to engage in *differentiation* (Ware & Linkugel, 1973). Here, the act committed is distinguished from other similar but less desirable actions. Comparatively, the act may be portrayed as less offensive and Benoit (1995; 2015) emphasises that this may contribute towards reducing the audience's unfavourable feelings towards the wrongful act and the actor.

The fourth strategy that can be employed is *transcendence*. The function of this image repair strategy is to place the act in a different context or suggest a frame of reference which is different (Ware & Linkugel, 1973). For instance, a police officer could make an attempt to justify the action of illegally planting evidence on a defendant as the only measure to protect society from a dangerous but intelligent criminal (Benoit, 2015,

p. 25). Here, the strategy is used to his advantage as he is perceived to have the safety and best interest of others in mind. The perceived unpleasantness of the act in question can be reduced and actor's image be improved through the use of such positive context (Benoit, 2015).

Fifth, it is suggested by Rossenfield (1968, as cited in Benoit, 2015) that an offender can attack his or her attacker at times. This is due to the fact that the threat to one's reputation from accusations may be mitigated if the credibility of the source of accusations can be decreased. Semin and Manstead (1983) also mention that if the individual who is accusing is also the victim of the offense, the impression or perception that the victim was deserving of what befell him or her may be created by the apologist, reducing the perceived offensiveness of the misdeed. Here, the actor's reputation is again improved. Benoit (2015) also stresses that the strategy of *attacking the accuser* has the potential to divert the attention of the audience from the original accusation, hence lessening the blow to the actor's reputation.

The final strategy is *compensation* which can likely be employed to reduce the unpleasantness of an offense (Schonbach, 1980). In this strategy, an individual or organisation offers to remunerate the victim in different forms such as valued goods or services or even reimbursement in order to offset the ill feelings which arise from the offensive act. Benoit (2015) provides an example of someone experiencing a delayed departure and being compensated with a coupon by the airlines. The main purpose of the coupon was to repair its image and the passenger perceived it as a successful move since a positive action was carried out to reduce any negative affect he or she might have had. In essence, *compensation* works as a bribe. Thus, the proffered inducement should have sufficient value in order to be accepted by the victim and to outweigh the unpleasantness from the objectionable act.

In a nutshell, none of the tactics or strategies to *reduce offensiveness* denies that the person accused performed that wrongful act or tries to reduce his or her responsibility for the offense. Instead, all attempts to decrease the negative affect towards the accused by boosting the audience's impression or esteem for the person or organisation at fault or by diminishing their unpleasant feelings towards the act and the actor.

2.2.4 Corrective action

When using *corrective action*, a plan to prevent or solve a problem is offered. According to Benoit (1997; 2015), the situation can be restored to the state of affairs before the undesirable act and/ or a promise to make amends or 'mend one's ways' is made in order to prevent the offensive act from recurring. If the act is one that has the likelihood of recurring, the actor's position may be strengthened by providing assurance to the audience that changes or modifications will be made to prevent its recurrence in the future. Goffman (1971) states that this could possibly be a component of an apology. Nevertheless, it is possible for *corrective action* to be done without admission of guilt, as appropriately demonstrated by Tylenol in introducing tamper-resistant bottles following the incident in which poisoning was experienced by their customers (Benoit & Lindsey, 1987, as cited in Benoit, 2015). *Corrective action* differs from compensation in that the actual source of offense is addressed in the former whereas the latter utilises a gift aimed to counterbalance rather than rectify the offense.

2.2.5 Mortification

Mortification is practised when a body or corporation admit the offense and apologises. If the apology is perceived to be sincere, the despicable act may be forgiven. One may also acknowledge a mistake made and express remorse in what Schonbach (1980) terms as concessions. Benoit (2015) states that it is probably wise to engage in *mortification* with ideas or plans to rectify or prevent the offense from recurring although

the tactics can exist independently. He further mentions that *mortification* is an especially complicated image repair strategy as there is no conception of ‘apology’ stipulating the criteria of an apology that is universally agreed upon. This implies that there is no fixed manner as to how an apology should be made – one can express remorse, accept blame explicitly, or ask for forgiveness in the act of apology.

Nonetheless, a risk of further damage to a persuader’s reputation is present when a wrongdoing is admitted and Knoespel (2011) states that doing so can even bring about lawsuits from victims or stakeholders. Forgiveness is definitely hoped for but there is no certainty of it. As such, some individuals or corporations exploit the ambiguity in language. For example, Benoit (2015) explains that the expression “I’m sorry” can be uttered to express sympathy as in “I’m sorry you have been hurt” or admit guilt as in “I’m sorry I hurt you”. Such ambiguity is exploited in the hope of getting out of trouble without specifically admitting guilt.

In other cases, apologists who admit guilt may be vague about what exactly they are confessing in order to divert from specific admissions and/ or because rehashing details of the offense may be embarrassing. For instance, in a linguistic analysis carried out by Chimbarange, Mukenge and Kombe (2013), they make an evaluation that the Zimbabwean Prime Minister did apologise about the affair brought to light but also chose to not explicitly address other concerns raised about his conduct towards women. The Prime Minister confessed in his statement that there exists “a dark patch in my private life” but it was unclear as to whether the guilt was only concerning his affair in question or includes his previous rumoured relationships. In a case as such, the audience is left to read between the lines which makes the issue of image repair very subjective and open to various interpretations.

Table 2.2 Image Repair Strategies (Benoit, 2015, p. 28)

General strategy	Tactic	Example
Denial	Simple denial	I did not embezzle money.
	Shift blame	Steve took your wallet, not me.
Evade responsibility	Provocation	I insulted you but only after you criticized me.
	Defeasibility	I was late because traffic delayed me.
	Accident	Our collision was an accident.
	Good intentions	I didn't tell you because I hoped to fix the problem first.
Reduce offensiveness	Bolstering	Think of all the times I helped you.
	Minimization	I broke your vase, but it was not an expensive one.
	Differentiation	I borrowed your laptop without asking; I didn't steal it.
	Transcendence	Searching travellers at the airport is an inconvenience, but it protects against terrorism.
	Attack accuser	Joe says I embezzled money, but he is a chronic liar.
	Compensation	Because the waiter spilled a drink on your clothes, we'll give you dessert for free.
Corrective action	-	Because the waiter spilled a drink on your suit, we'll have it dry cleaned.
Mortification	-	I'm so sorry I offended you. I regret hurting your feelings and I apologize.

2.3 Discourse analysis

The study of naturally occurring sentences which are connected, in spoken or written form, is one of the most rapidly developing and promising areas of modern linguistics (Vishnu Kumar Sharma & Mahesh Kumar Sharma, 2010). The focus has been on sentence-centred analysis in traditional linguistics but now, the way language is used instead of what its components are, is of more concern to linguists. This gives rise to the

question of how language users are able to interpret what others intend to convey. Vishnu Kumar Sharma and Mahesh Kumar Sharma (2010) also explain that when further research is conducted on how it is exactly that language users comprehend what they read in texts, make sense of speakers' intended meaning despite what they say, recognise and are aware of connected as opposed to jumbled or incoherent discourse, and essentially succeed in involving themselves in a complex activity known as conversation, then one is undertaking what is termed as discourse analysis.

According to Jorgensen and Phillips (2002), discourse analysis is a broad approach within the social sciences which focuses on analysing language as a system of thought or reflection of social practices. Underlying the word 'discourse' is the notion that generally, language is structured according to various patterns that people's utterances follow when they participate in different domains of social life, a couple of instances which are familiar being medical discourse, computer-mediated discourse, et cetera (Alice Shanthi, Lee & Lajium, 2015). From a sociological perspective, Ruiz (2009) defines discourse as any practice by which reality is imbued with meaning by communicative entities. Willig (2008) adds that discourse analysis focuses on the analysis of texts and/ or utterances within specific socio-cultural context and points to a data analysis method that can inform researchers about the discursive construction of a phenomenon. Cook (1989) further explains that discourse analysis investigates how stretches of language, considered in their full textual, social, and psychological context, become not only unified but also meaningful for their users. Simply put, discourse analysis is interested in the use of language within a social context (Salkind, 2010). This is supported by Griffin (2013) who also asserts that the focus of discourse analysis is on the investigation of language as it is actually used in reality as opposed to an abstract system or structure of language. With reference to the aforementioned statements, it is no wonder that real or authentic samples of the language used in a specific context are studied

with the aim to investigate or find out more about the ideologies and assumptions that are embodied within them. To study a certain discourse, Prokopová (2008) states that the context is most relevant as it will assist in the understanding of the relationship between participants, their experience, and the situation. Context as defined by Widdowson (2007, p. 128) is the aspects of extra-linguistic reality which are considered relevant to communication whereas Brown and Yule (1983) simply explain the term as the circumstances or environment in which language is used. These explanations imply that text and context are two inseparable units which need to co-exist when discourse analysis is concerned.

Due to the fact that analysing discourse depends on careful, contextualised interpretation and explication of texts, the focus has customarily been on in-depth analysis or study of small volumes or samples of language with an emphasis on reading between the lines so that any bias in ideology can be detected (Breeze, 2014). This allows varied interpretations and conclusions to be drawn based on an individual's prior knowledge and experiences, making discourse analysis an interesting matter. Nonetheless, discourse analysis is also notoriously eclectic in terms of its approach or method of study and certain scholars have attempted to come up with techniques whereby the powerful tools and functions of corpus linguistics can be possibly utilised for discourse analysis, either in exploratory studies at the beginning stage of research or to test out hypotheses involving larger amounts or bodies of text (Hunston, 2002; Stubbs, 2001).

The current research which concerns discourse analysis involves a qualitative study of a small sample of authentic text, 54 tweets taken from the official Twitter account of Tony Fernandes who is the CEO of AirAsia Berhad. During the period of data collection, Twitter only provided its users with a maximum of 140 characters for each tweet. Keeping that in mind, the number of words for each tweet is 28 if an average of 5 characters is considered for each word. As such, the total number of words for all of

Fernandes's tweets is too little for a corpus compilation. This explains why each tweet is instead analysed manually. The fact that the characters available in a tweet are limited necessitates that tweets be concise. This indicates the possibility of acronyms, contractions and omissions being present in tweets which are short and clear in nature, suggesting that they do not necessarily need to be grammatically accurate.

2.4 Salient linguistic features

Throughout Fernandes's tweets, some linguistic features have been found to be salient and are explained in the subsequent paragraphs. The functions and examples provided are however by no means exhaustive. Therefore, it should come as no surprise if other functions, examples, or expressions associated to the linguistic features which will be explained below are encountered in various works by other grammarians or linguists. A linguistic feature is considered salient if it appears in at least 10 of Fernandes's tweets which is 18.5% of the data.

2.4.1 Personal pronouns and possessive determiners

'Pronoun' is a term used to grammatically classify words, referring to the closed sets of items which can be used to substitute for a noun or noun phrase. There are many types of pronouns but this research will focus on personal pronouns and one of their variant forms, possessive determiners. Personal pronouns are divided into three categories, the first person, the second person and the third person. They function as pointers to the neighbouring text which is typically the preceding text or to the speech situation (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech & Svartvik, 1985, p. 335). Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan (1999) explain this by stating that personal pronouns are function words which allows the possibility of referring succinctly to the speaker/ writer, the addressee, and identifiable things or persons apart from the speaker/ writer and the addressee. Personal pronouns are also used to identify the speaker who is the person

speaking and addressee, the person spoken to (Eastwood, 2002, p. 240). This type of pronoun also commonly functions as the subject in a clause, hence it being known as subject pronoun too (Jarvie, 1993).

According to Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan (1999), personal pronouns are most typically used as reference to definite specific individuals who are identified in a certain speech situation (first and second person) or the preceding text (third person). The first person pronouns include 'I' and 'we'. The first person singular pronoun is generally clear in its reference to the speaker/ writer. On the other hand, the meaning of 'we' which is a first person plural pronoun is often vague. This is due to the fact that 'we' can be inclusive by including the speaker/ writer and the listener/ reader or be exclusive by referring to the speaker/ writer and some other person or people associated to him/ her (Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan, 1999). Therefore, inferring the exact meaning of 'we' is left to the listener/ reader.

'You' is the only second person pronoun and the form is maintained for singular and plural. It is used to refer to the person or people one is speaking or writing to. Besides that, 'you' is also commonly used in spoken English to refer to people in general, instead of the person one is talking or writing to (Sinclair, Bullon, Ramesh Krishnamurthy, Manning & Todd, 1990, p. 29). For instance, 'you' refers to everyone in general in the statement '**You** cannot predict what will happen tomorrow'.

The third person pronouns comprise four subject pronouns. 'He', 'she' and 'it' are the third person singular pronouns whereas 'they' is the third person plural pronoun. A man or boy is referred to in conversations as 'he' instead of having to repeat the person's name whereas a woman or girl is given the reference 'she'. When referring to anything which is neither male nor female such as an object, place, organisation, or something abstract, 'it' is utilised. 'It' is used for an animal as well when the gender is unknown. Sinclair, Bullon, Ramesh Krishnamurthy, Manning and Todd (1990) state that babies are

also sometimes referred to in this way. It is essential to note that ‘it’ also has non-referential uses; one of them being an empty subject as demonstrated in the sentence ‘It is cold’ (Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan, 1999). Conversely, ‘they’ is utilised when mentioning a group of things or people. It does not include the speaker/ writer or the person or people one is speaking or writing to.

Possessive determiners or also known as possessive adjectives correspond with their respective personal pronouns. This is shown in Table 2.3 below. These variant forms of personal pronouns are used when one intends to indicate that a thing belongs to someone or that it is associated in some way with someone.

Table 2.3: Personal pronouns and their corresponding possessive forms

Person		Personal pronoun	Possessive determiner
First	Singular	I	My
	Plural	We	Our
Second	Singular	You	Your
	Plural	You	Your
Third	Singular	He	His
		She	Her
		It	Its
	Plural	They	Their

2.4.2 Modal verbs

It is not always the case that language is used to make simple statements and ask questions as means of information exchange (Sinclair, Bullon, Ramesh Krishnamurthy, Manning & Todd, 1990). Sometimes, suggestions, offers, or requests are made and intentions and wishes are expressed. One might even want to be tactful or indicate his or her feelings about what is being said. As such, many modal verbs exist and are frequently used in English to convey these meanings. In layman’s terms, this means that each modal has different functions. Modal verbs are also known as modals or modal auxiliaries. The 9 most commonly used modals and their functions as stated by Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan (1999) are summarised in the following table.

Table 2.4: Modals and their functions

Functions	Modals
To express ability, permission, or possibility	can, could, may, might
To express obligation or necessity	must, should
To express volition or prediction	shall, will, would

Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan (1999) also assert the possibility of grouping modals into pairs with meanings that are related as shown in the following table. They explain that the pairs can be used to differentiate between past and non-past time in certain circumstances. The corresponding modals that can refer to past time are furthermore typically associated with conveying politeness and overtones of tentativeness as well as hypothetical situations. Since they can be categorised according to the aforesaid functions, separate examples for the corresponding modals that are used to refer to past time will not be provided.

Table 2.5: Modals referring to non-past time and their corresponding modals that can refer to past time

Modal referring to non-past time	Corresponding modal that can refer to past time
Can	Could
May	Might
Shall	Should
Will	Would

‘Can’ is typically used to show ability or skill (Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan, 1999; Eastwood, 2002; Sinclair, Bullon, Ramesh Krishnamurthy, Manning & Todd, 1990). An obvious example is the sentence ‘I **can** swim’. Sinclair, Bullon, Ramesh Krishnamurthy, Manning and Todd (1990) state that ‘can’ is also utilised to say that one is aware of something through one of his or her senses. For instance, ‘I **can** see you’ means that one is able to see using his or her eyes. Permission is also requested using ‘can’ as in the sentence ‘**Can** I please have some food?’ which is commonly used in conversations. Another use of ‘can’ is to express likelihood or possibility (Eastwood,

2002; Sinclair, Bullon, Ramesh Krishnamurthy, Manning & Todd, 1990). To show this function, Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan (1999) provide the example ‘Well, you **can** get cigarettes from there, can’t you?’.

Another modal, ‘may’ is generally used to seek permission in more formal situations (Sinclair, Bullon, Ramesh Krishnamurthy, Manning & Todd, 1990, p. 227). For example, one may ask ‘**May** I please be excused from the conference?’. So, it is unlikely for one to say ‘Can I please be excused from the conference?’ as the person definitely has the ability to leave the meeting but might not necessarily have the green light to do so in that formal setting. ‘May’ is also utilised to say that there is a possibility that a particular thing will happen. For example, the sentence ‘Training **may** be available for students who want to take up editing’ shows that there exists a possibility of training being held.

In contrast to ‘may’ which shows likelihood, ‘must’ is used to indicate certainty that something will happen due to certain facts or circumstances (Sinclair, Bullon, Ramesh Krishnamurthy, Manning & Todd, 1990, p. 225). For instance, the example ‘The outcome of the general election **must** be followed by the formation of a government’ shows that a government will definitely be formed after the result of the general election. ‘Must’ can also be utilised when expressing an intention, that it is essential to do something. For example, ‘Students **must** wear uniforms to school’ indicates that it is likely a rule that students are obligated to obey.

Apart from that, the modal ‘shall’ is also used to say that something is certain to happen (Sinclair, Bullon, Ramesh Krishnamurthy, Manning & Todd, 1990, p. 225). This modal is used when one is talking about situations or events over which he or she has some control such as when making a resolution or promise. For instance, ‘I **shall** be leaving soon’ demonstrates that one has decided to take his or her leave in a short while. Another function of ‘shall’ is it always indicates that one is talking about a future situation

or occurrence as evident in the example ‘I **shall** be away next week’ provided by Eastwood (2002, p.128).

According to Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan (1999) and Conrad, Biber and Leech (2003), the modal verb ‘will’ is used for two different functions. One is to make predictions and another is to express willingness or volition. An example for the former function is the sentence ‘The prices of goods **will** drop soon’ and for the latter, ‘I **will** accompany you to the manager’s office’. Volition is also associated with immediate decisions or intentions (Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad & Finegan, 1999; Leech, Cruickshank & Ivanič, 1991, p. 544). Eastwood (2002) explains further that under the function of prediction, ‘will’ also indicates a definite action in the future. It shows certainty, not just a wish. For example, the sentence ‘I **will** buy a pair of shoes from that shop’ shows the speaker’s certainty in carrying out the action of buying shoes from a particular shop and not just a wish to do so there. The modal ‘will’ is further explained in Section 2.4.3 as some linguists consider it a word which forms the future tense. Although ‘will’ is referred to as a modal by some and future tense by others, this thesis will consistently identify ‘will’ as a modal.

The examples provided above prove that each modal functions differently. It is important to be reminded that the explanations of modals provided are those regularly used. Due to that, there are a lot of examples or situations in which modals are used to carry out different speech acts such as making suggestions or enquiries which might have been excluded from this section. Not only that, some authors also distinguish modals from semi-modals by including other expressions or words that can be used in place of modals. As such, explanations and even categorisation of modals might be dissimilar to those which are given in this work.

2.4.3 Tenses

It is without a doubt that tense is an extremely challenging subject in linguistics. Tense is grammaticalised expression of location in time (Comrie, 1985). What is meant here is that tense locates events or situations relative to a reference time.

In Reichenbach's (1947) tense model, he introduced a reference point, an abstract time from which events are viewed. English tense connects actions to two grammaticised points of reference. In other words, English grammar only has two tenses – past and non-past although some linguists argue that there are three including the future tense. Despite the different opinions on the number of tenses for English, it will not have any influence on this research. This is because the research does not endeavour to decide on the number of tenses and prove it. Instead, the main focus is to explain how the tenses convey different meanings with the aim of repairing a threatened image. The following shows some examples in English which concern the past and non-past reference points in time.

PAST			NON-PAST		
had eaten	ate	would eat	have/has eaten	eat	will eat
_____x_____	_____x_____	_____x_____	_____x_____	_____x_____	_____x_____

The non-past reference point is the time when the speech is made. This is the speaker's present, which is also the primary deictic centre. According to Comrie (1985), "all clear instances of tense cross-linguistically can be represented in terms of the notion of a deictic centre,...,location at, before or after the deictic centre, and distance from the deictic centre" (p. 9). According to Yule (1996, p. 129), the deictic centre is the location and time of the speaker during the time the utterance is produced. In English, these reference points, past and non-past are important as events or situations can be found at, before or after them.

Generally, the present tense is used to talk about; (1) a present state such as feeling, opinion or relation, (2) a repeated action such as a habit or routine, and (3) universal truths (Conrad, Biber & Leech, 2003; Eastwood, 2002, p. 39). Conrad, Biber and Leech (2003) as well as Eastwood (2002) also posit the use of the present tense to refer to a future time. Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan (1999) add that the present tense is utilised in special cases to make reference to events in the past. They call it the historic present time which is explained to occasionally occur in fiction to provide a more vivid description, as if the events were being enacted at the time of speech or writing. The present tense is typically identified by identifying verbs in the root form or those with –s or –es inflections. Singular pronouns would take verbs with the aforesaid inflections whereas plural pronouns take the root forms of verbs. An example of sentence for each aforementioned function is given in Table 2.6 below.

Table 2.6: Functions of the present tense and sentence examples

Function of the present tense	Example of a sentence
To talk about a present state	My dad works in America.
To talk about a repeated action	Jane sleeps at 10 o'clock every night.
To talk about universal truths	The sun rises in the east.
To talk about an event in the future	Dan leaves for London tomorrow.
To describe past events in fiction, as if they are being enacted at the time of speech/ writing	Lydia walks to the kitchen and grabs a cup of coffee.

When talking about the past, it is necessary to have an adjunct of time or other time expression to specify the exact time in the past that is referred to (Sinclair, Bullon, Ramesh Krishnamurthy, Manning & Todd, 1990, p. 250). The time reference can be established in a previous statement and the verbs in the following statement(s) is/ are subsequently put in the past tense. In general, the past tense is used to say that; (1) an event happened or that something was the case at a certain time in the past, (2) a situation existed over a duration or period of time in the past, and (3) an activity took place repeatedly in the past but no longer occurs. The past tense is usually determined by

identifying verbs with –d or –ed inflections or even change in the whole form as in the case of irregular verbs such as ‘drive’ which becomes ‘drove’ and ‘keep’ which becomes ‘kept’ in the past tense. Sentence examples for each function stated are also given in the following table.

Table 2.7: Functions of the past tense and sentence examples

Function of the past tense	Example of a sentence
To say that an event took place or that something was the case at a certain time in the past	John flew from London yesterday.
To say that a situation existed over a duration or period of time in the past	The old lady lived in Paris during her last years.
To say that an activity took place regularly in the past but no longer does	We picnicked a great deal during my childhood.

According to some linguists and certain grammar books, another tense is the future tense. If something is planned to happen or is thought to be likely to happen, the modal ‘will’ precedes the base form of the verb in the utterance or statement. This is termed as the future tense (Sinclair, Bullon, Ramesh Krishnamurthy, Manning & Todd, 1990). ‘Shall’ is also sometimes used with the subjects ‘I’ and ‘we’ to talk about future events. The future tense can also be used to talk about general truths and to state what can be expected to occur if a particular situation arises. A sentence example is provided in Table 2.8 below for the two functions of the future tense stated above.

Table 2.8: Functions of the future tense and sentence examples

Function of the future tense	Example of a sentence
To talk about something that is planned to happen or likely to happen in the future	Chris will meet to Anne next week.
To talk about general truths or to say what can be expected to happen if a certain situation arises	When peace is available, people will support it.

2.5 Previous studies using Benoit's IRT

The widely cited image restoration theory (IRT) which has been developed by Benoit (1995) and later renamed to image repair theory (Benoit, 2015) offers a methodological impetus and theoretical guide to analysing image repair discourse enacted by different parties ranging from political figures, celebrities to religious leaders to name a few. Ferguson, Wallace and Chandler (2012) explain that it is because the theory provides a descriptive system of examining image repair strategies utilised in crisis situations. Having said that, this research employs the IRT as its basis for analysing the image repair discourse of Tony Fernandes during the QZ8501 crisis which befell AirAsia in December 2014. There are many studies in both the past and recent years which use the IRT as their theoretical framework, implying its importance and relevance to this day even though the theory was proposed more than two decades ago, in 1995.

One such study which applies the IRT is that of Chimbarange, Mukenge and Kombe (2013) in which they identify the specific image repair strategies employed by the Zimbabwean Prime Minister, Morgan Tsvangirai in his apology letter to the public following allegations of immoral relations with his fiancée. The letter was released not long after he divorced his wife. The researchers critically analyse the content of the media release apology based on the context of use and classify the data according to the themes and motifs deduced. They find that five techniques, namely reducing offensiveness, denial, mortification, evading responsibility, and corrective action were employed. It is concluded in the study that his image repair was to a large extent effective as he portrayed himself as a victim of political circumstances, a flawed human being, and a humble individual who is capable of admitting his faults.

Another research which uses the IRT to analyse discourse is that by Walsh and McAllister-Spooner (2011). The rhetorical effectiveness of the discourse of Michael Phelps, a sports personality and other stakeholders used following the incident in which a picture of the then 23-year-old swimmer allegedly smoking from a marijuana pipe surfaced in a British tabloid is analysed and evaluated in their work. This study is interesting as the authors review the image repair tactics used by not just one but various parties, namely the offender himself, his sponsors, and the organisations that govern him as an amateur swimmer. It is made known that a few strategies which are mortification, bolstering, defeasibility, corrective action, and minimisation were used together. Phelps engaged in mortification by apologising and admitting that his behavior was inappropriate, bolstered his reputation by bringing up his past achievements of winning 14 Olympic gold medals, and utilised defeasibility when he mentioned his young age, hinting that it allowed him to err. Corrective action was also adopted by promising that his regrettable actions would not be repeated in the future. On the other hand, his sponsors attempted to bolster his image by using expressions such as ‘a great champion’ and ‘strongly committed’ to refer to him whereas his organisation employed minimisation by stating that his transgression could have been much worse such as violating anti-doping rules.

The IRT is also used as the theoretical framework in a research carried out by Malinda (2014). In her work, the theory is applied to the apologetic discourse offered by various parties involved in the crisis surrounding Phil Robertson after his interview with GQ Magazine. Robertson made comments which offended African Americans and LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transsexual/ Transgender) people in his January 2014 interview, hence the need for image repair. Data collected to investigate the image repair strategies employed by the reality show actor includes a collection of letters, news segments, and articles that contained apologetic discourse. It is revealed in her work that

transcendence which is placing the offensive act in a different context was the most prevalent strategy. She further explains that the various parties involved in Robertson's image repair directed the audience's attention to higher moral values by affirming that he was merely responding to questions in the interview based on his personal beliefs that was firmly rooted in his faith. As such, there was no intention to offend as he was just sharing his faith when he quoted the Bible. In relation to this, Blaney and Benoit (2001) state that religious connotations are included in some apologies so that the public would be more accepting of the apology. This is due to the fact that the public are able to compare the comments made from a religious perspective instead of an individual's personal condemnation. In her discussion, Malinda also identifies the strategies adopted by various parties by interpreting their comments made in press releases and interviews.

The IRT is proven to still be relevant as it is also the foundation of a recent study by Masaviru (2016). In that study, the researcher investigates whether Manny Pacquiao, a Filipino professional boxer applied the IRT following his action of passing derogatory remarks against the LGBT community and which strategies were most frequently used. Pacquiao's statements posted on his social media accounts which are Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter are used as the data. It is discovered that Pacquiao used mortification most which was effective in his case. This is because he showed remorse for his offensive act which was caught live on television and asked for forgiveness instead of using defensive strategies which Jung, Graeff and Shim (2011) posit would not be viable if an individual is undoubtedly guilty. Other tactics he employed are differentiation, transcendence, good intentions, and bolstering.

In all four studies described above, the data is analysed to ascertain the image repair strategies which are used by the respective parties facing a threatened image. However, the explanations and descriptions provided are rather brief and general likely due to the fact that the studies are not specifically linguistic studies, hence the absence of

interpretations of how certain words or phrases realise the function of image repair. The studies are instead related to the fields of mass communication and public relations which use the IRT as their foundation. This is no surprise as Avery, Lariscy, Kim and Hocke (2010, p. 190) state that the IRT has become “somewhat of a paradigm in crisis communication research in public relations”, functioning as the theoretical foundation for numerous researches in that field. To add on, a quick search on Google reveals that most studies which use the IRT as their theoretical framework are from Public Relations and Communications journals. This is in accordance with Valdebenito’s (2013) statement which claims that the IRT has not been applied to the field of critical discourse analysis to the best of her knowledge. This implies that research using the IRT to critically analyse or study the discourse in times of crises in detail is still scarce if any at all is present. As such, this research makes an interesting piece of work as it will add to the number of studies on image repair strategies currently available by thoroughly analysing the salient linguistic features present in the discourse of Tony Fernandes during the crash of AirAsia’s QZ8501 and how they realise the function of repairing a tarnished reputation. It is hoped that the findings will enlighten all readers on the importance of choosing words wisely in order to construct meaning for the purpose of image repair.

2.6 Previous studies using content analysis

Content analysis is a qualitative research technique which allows researchers to make inferences or draw conclusions by coding and interpreting textual materials. The method is used in numerous studies such as that by Chimbarange, Mukenge and Kombe (2013), Walsh and McAllister-Spooner (2011) as well as Malinda (2014) to name a few.

In the study by Chimbarange, Mukenge and Kombe (2013) which investigates the image repair discourse of the Zimbabwean Prime Minister, the content of the media release apology is critically examined based on the context of use and classified according to the themes and motifs which are deduced. It is noted as an interpretative approach in

which the researchers start off by immersing themselves in the data or text to identify the salient features or themes (inductive), followed by the use of a categorical scheme or theoretical construct for assessment (deductive). By using such approach which is called content analysis, interpretations of why language is used in the manner and frequency it is used are made and the effectiveness of the linguistic devices used for image repair is explained. Nevertheless, it is vital to take note that the study provides a general description and interpretation of the letter instead of dissecting statements into words or phrases which is more likely to explain the effectiveness of linguistic devices. This proves that the study is largely interpretative as even the effectiveness of the linguistic devices used in image repair discourse is explained based on the researchers' own understanding and interpretation of the apology letter. This illustrates the fact that discourse is examined and interpreted based on the researchers' understanding of how language is used in a particular context and whether the message delivered is the intended one.

In Walsh and McAllister-Spooner's (2011) research concerning Michael Phelps, the data or responses of stakeholders are obtained by searching generally using the Google search engine during a period of 21 days after the initial reporting of the controversial matter in which Phelps was photographed allegedly smoking from a marijuana pipe. Not only that, the responses of the media online and in print towards the controversy are also briefly included in order to determine whether Phelps's campaign to repair his image was a success. The authors conduct a qualitative content analysis by explaining the image repair tactics employed based on their own understanding. This is similar to the method used in the previously mentioned literature, affirming the position that the study of discourse is subjective in nature and thus open to various interpretations.

Another aforesaid work which uses content analysis is that by Malinda (2014). In her work, the said research method is used to examine Pacquiao's discourse but it is slightly different and more complicated than the content analysis method used in the two

studies described earlier. The method of content analysis used by Malinda involves another assistant which helped to code or interpret data. For example, 1 is assigned when a certain strategy is used and 2 if it is not. Inter-coder reliability is then analysed by comparing the codes using Cohen's Kappa which takes into account the agreement between coders by subtracting out the agreement due to chance. Using this method of content analysis which is also quantitative in nature is more cost and time consuming although it increases the credibility of the results or interpretations.

Based on the studies briefly described above, it can be concluded that content analysis can be conducted in various ways and either individually or involving more than one researcher. Further explanation on this research technique is provided in the Research Methodology chapter on page 41.

2.7 Previous studies using social media data

The rapid expansion of social networking sites such as Instagram and Twitter has allowed for the exchange of an infinite number of data among social media users all over the world. Consequently, social media has become part of a majority of people's everyday lives. In support of this, it has been reported by Rainie, Smith, Schlozman, Brady and Verba (2012) that social media is used by nearly 66% of users in the United States alone to engage in various political and civil activities. This could be due to the fact that a platform is provided by social media for their participants to express views and opinions which reach a wide audience from all walks of life in the blink of an eye. Responses to online posts are also almost immediately provided by other participants, enabling prompt discussions or debates among members of virtual communities.

In connection with that, social media is defined by Solis (2010) as the democratisation of information as people are transformed from the role of content readers into publishers. Therefore, it is no wonder that many members of the community take to social media to share their thoughts and exchange opinions. This in turn makes it possible

for various parties especially researchers to obtain valuable and authentic information which uncovers people's perceptions and opinions through the way language is used.

Adding to that, there is a growing number of studies which use Twitter data to study discourse such as Clark, Staton, Wang and Agichtein's (2015) which analyses the public's discussion on the issue of same-sex marriage and Page's (2014) work that looks at apologies posted by companies using their corporate Twitter accounts. Clark, Staton, Wang and Agichtein exploit Twitter as it offers big data for the examination of mass opinion discourse whereas tweets are selected for use by Page due to their naturally occurring nature. These two reasons imply the relevance and importance of data obtained through social media as they are immediate and genuine responses or opinions of the public which are also available in large amounts.

2.8 Summary

The current chapter reviewed past studies relevant to this research which aim to investigate the image repair strategies used by Fernandes following the crash of AirAsia's QZ8501. The theoretical framework used as the foundation of this research has also been included. Additionally, several linguistic features were highlighted and explained to prepare readers with an understanding of what they are before encountering them in the following chapters. Having reviewed the common terms, past literature as well as linguistic features, it is hoped that readers will have a better understanding of what this work is about and the objectives which are desired to be achieved.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the methods applied in carrying out this research. Research methodology procedures for data collection and analysis are also explained.

3.1 Background of data

To ensure that this research achieves what it sets out to do, 54 of Tony Fernandes's tweets concerning the QZ8501 crash are taken from his official Twitter account (@tonyfernandes) as they were his regular responses when the crisis occurred. Some unrelated tweets around the time of crisis are such as those concerning Queens Park Rangers, the football club that he owns and the matches played. Since it is entirely impossible to determine a clear date of the end of the crisis, a large period of the crisis, specifically from 28 December 2014 to 1 December 2015 is looked at in order to attain a representative sample for analysis. According to Polit and Beck (2012, as cited in Elo et. al, 2014), credibility is associated with the aim of the research and refers to the confidence in how well the intended research aim is addressed by the collected data. With that in mind, all the crisis related tweets from Fernandes's official Twitter account are included in order to ensure the credibility of the findings as well as to paint an accurate picture of the image repair strategies widely employed by Fernandes and the words regularly used to realise the function of image repair. The discourse of Tony Fernandes is decided upon as he is the CEO of AirAsia Berhad and he is synonymous with the brand. Fernandes almost always comes to the mind of readers and listeners when the airline is mentioned, hence the decision to select him in order to increase the credibility of this research. This is supported by Pratap Chandra Mandal (2018) who states that credibility requires that the respondents identified for the research must be true representatives who can shed light upon an issue under investigation accurately.

It is a pleasant surprise as a quick Google search reveals that Fernandes's tweets have been compiled on a webpage by Ballingall (2015). Nonetheless, the tweets need to be compared with those on his official Twitter account to ensure the credibility and relevance of the data to the intended research and that has been done by simply clicking on them. His statements published in newspaper articles are not used as they are mainly those made in response to questions by reporters. As for his statements made in interviews, they are not included as part of the data due to time constraint as there is a need for transcription. The tweets are considered valid and from a reliable source as social media sites, namely Instagram, Facebook and Twitter are becoming increasingly popular as outlets to express opinions on different issues, hence the motivation for using tweets as the data in this research.

3.2 Qualitative content analysis

Polkinghorne (2005) states that qualitative research enables one to be inquisitive in order to describe and clarify human experience. This is due to the fact that qualitative research provides the opportunity to gain insight to human experience in the most individualistic ways (Myers, 2011). It is further mentioned that researchers who use qualitative methods collect data which serves as evidence for their descriptions, capable of explaining phenomena in a way that quantitative methods are unable to. Such detailed descriptions are made possible as interviews or authentic texts such as press statements and audio recordings are typically used as methods of data gathering in qualitative studies. It is recommended that qualitative methods as such be employed to better understand behaviours, opinions, beliefs, and emotions on a particular issue which is of concern as credible data is acquired (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011). This is supported by Polkinghorne who says that unlike qualitative methods, data gathering methods which are quantitative in nature such as short-answer questionnaires with Likert scales are only capable of gathering surface information which is insufficient to capture the richness and

fullness of an experience (p. 138). This makes explaining a phenomenon comprehensively a challenging task because the data gathered is limited and does not provide further information which might be required to facilitate understanding.

To study the discourse used in repairing image when a crisis occurs, this research takes the qualitative approach for data analysis. It can be considered content analysis in the sense that the data is critically analysed for the content and meaning so that classification into different image repair categories can be done in order to understand the discourse used for the purpose of repairing a threatened image, similar to the method utilised in studies by Chimbarange, Mukenge and Kombe (2013) on the image repair discourse of the Zimbabwean Prime Minister, Walsh and McAllister-Spooner (2011) which concerns Michael Phelps's image repair discourse as well as Malinda (2014) which investigates Manny Pacquiao's discourse of apology following his negative remarks against the LGBT community. These studies have been previously explained in Section 2.6 of the Literature Review chapter on page 37.

Content analysis is often regarded by many researchers as a method that is flexible for the purpose of analysing text data (Cavanagh, 1997), hence the various ways of analysing data in the previously mentioned studies. Hsieh and Shannon (2005, p. 1278) explain that content analysis is a method to subjectively interpret data content through the process of classification which involves coding and identifying patterns or themes systematically. In this research, the method of content analysis used is solely qualitative as there is no other coder involved in interpreting the tweets. As such, there is no inter-coder reliability count. This is dissimilar to certain studies which have two or more coders to interpret the same data in which '1' is marked if a particular strategy is used in discourse and '2' if a specific strategy is absent. An example of such research using content analysis that is quantitative is that of Malinda (2014) explained in the earlier chapter.

What this research does is explain how various linguistic features are utilised to realise the function of image repair. This research adopts what Hsieh and Shannon (2005) call directed content analysis which strives to extend or in this research, validate a theoretical framework, Benoit's (2015) theory of image repair to be specific. However, a known limitation is that the data will be approached with an informed but nonetheless strong bias (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). A strong bias is inevitable as the data will be looked at and analysed based on the researcher's own understanding and prior knowledge which clearly differs from others'. Therefore, it is essential that every step taken in this research is documented and explained clearly to increase the validity of the findings.

Having mentioned that this study takes a qualitative approach, it comes as no surprise that the issue of reliability or trustworthiness might arise due to the interpretation being very subjective and possibly intuitive as well. As such, Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend giving thick description where a phenomenon or subject is described in depth to allow transferability judgements to be made by others. Li (2004) also adds that thick descriptive data which includes extensive details of the methods and context should be provided in the research. Being aware that thick description increases transferability which is a criterion of trustworthiness, the data collection method is clearly described and an example of how data is analysed is provided. Elo and Kyngas (2008, p. 112) especially support demonstrating the process of collecting and interpreting data as that increases reliability by enabling readers of the work to follow the process and procedures undertaken. This is also in line with the idea that there is a need for transparency and clarity every step of the way from data collection to the interpretation and explanation of the findings since the findings in qualitative studies can be subjective (Noble & Smith, 2015).

The tweets obtained for this work are subsequently numbered for easier reference, read through again and categorised accordingly based on Benoit's IRT. After categorising the tweets, they are read again, this time for further analysis. This is what Anney (2014) calls the code-recode strategy which increases dependability as it allows multiple observations by the researcher and assists in obtaining a deeper understanding of data patterns. He also suggests giving a gestation period of one or two weeks between each coding and comparison of the results be done after to check whether they are the same. An example of the code-recode strategy carried out is attached in Appendix A on page 96 and 97. The final coding with detailed explanations of the data is given in Appendix B. Words and phrases which seem to represent a particular strategy or strategies are highlighted and coded to aid explanation and discussion later. According to Glaser and Laudel (2013), codes are used to index raw data and they can be in the form of numbers, phrases, or mnemonics that indicate the presence of specific information assigned to segments of the text. In this study, different letters or acronyms are used to represent each image repair strategy such as RO for reducing offensiveness, M for mortification, and etcetera. Once the analysis is completed, the data is also tabulated to allow easier reading and understanding. Polit and Beck (2012) say that reliability necessitates that a link between the results and the data be established. Therefore, Elo and Kyngas (2008) recommend the use of appendices and tables. Doing so ensures that the findings can be easily interpreted and followed which is of utmost significance as Thomas and Magilvy (2011) state that it increases the dependability and reliability of the study. According to Bitsch (2005), dependability is referred to as the consistency of findings over time.

With regard to tabulation, it is important to mention that there are two strategies which overlap in certain tweets. Therefore, they are categorised under the heading of both strategies together in Appendix B. They are however explained separately in the Findings section to enable clear understanding of each image repair technique. Following the

tabulation of data, conclusions on strategies which are widely employed and how they are realised through the use of different words and expressions are then explained.

In connection with data analysis, Dornyei (2007, p. 56) states that space limitations usually inhibits qualitative researchers from providing more than several exemplary instances of the data that has led to a certain conclusion and this problem is aggravated by the fact that justification is rarely provided for the selection of the specific sample extracts. He further says that due to that, readers of qualitative studies are usually not in a position to judge whether the analysis is systematic, let alone to provide any possible alternative interpretations. With this awareness in mind, it is essential to mention that only a few examples of tweets are chosen for explanation in Chapters 4 to support the conclusion of the image repair strategies employed by Fernandes and how they are realised through the use of different linguistic features. The linguistic features identified are explained in relation to a specific strategy based on its heading in Chapter 4 and thus readers should not be confused if the features also point to the use of other strategies. Each strategy is explained separately to ensure clear understanding of how certain features realise that particular image repair strategy which is highlighted. In the discussion of findings however, tweets which contain overlapping strategies are shown and explained together since clear understanding of the strategies is assumed. Nonetheless, the full analysis is provided in Appendix B on page 98 and should therefore be referred to for better comprehension of the research findings.

3.3 Data analysis procedures

In order to analyse the data, each tweet is read repeatedly to ensure that the interpretation is correct or in case new understanding surfaces. Words and phrases which point to certain strategies are underlined or highlighted. Books and previous works which use Benoit's (1995; 2015) IRT are also referred to. Adding to that, responses from the public to Fernandes's tweets are also looked at to assist understanding of the strategies

used but not included in this work. An example of how a tweet is interpreted is demonstrated in the following paragraphs.

Tweet 2



Referring to Tweet 2 above, it is identified that Fernandes uses the first person plural pronoun 'we'. The reason for the use of this personal pronoun is then explained. For instance, Fernandes uses 'we' to include himself in the AirAsia team which is managing the crisis. This illustrates the presence of unity as Fernandes who is the CEO is also involved in handling the problem. He does not wash his hands off the matter although he could possibly delegate the duties of getting information and updating the public to his team of staff. This shows *corrective action* as measures are taken to improve the situation.

The tweet above is also an example in which ellipsis occurs. The subject pronoun 'I' has been omitted but the meaning is still understood. The tweet should read "I am on my way...". Although there is ellipsis, the use of the possessive determiner 'my' enables the reference to Fernandes himself. So, it is obvious that he is on his way to Surabaya. Similar to explaining the use of the pronoun 'we', the possessive determiner 'my' is also given explanation in relation to how it realises the function of image repair. *Corrective action* is evident as Fernandes makes an effort to improve the situation by stating his next course of action which is going to Surabaya, Indonesia to attain more information about the situation. It can be inferred that he will be present there physically instead of just sending a representative to answer for the company which is at stake as he talks about his own journey using 'my'. He does so as soon as the crisis began on 28 December morning.

The fact that he tweets regarding the crisis at that time shows that he is bold in facing the situation and is attempting to improve it. This is generally well-received as some Twitter users commended his action as shown below in the responses to his tweet. The responses are looked at to help understand if the strategy identified is correct. They are however not included in the analysis as it is not the intent of this research to investigate the effectiveness of the strategies used. For instance, the two tweets below mention that Fernandes is certainly providing information on developments regarding the crisis. The positive comments are testimony to *corrective action* being employed and accepted by the public.



Tweet 2 is also analysed for other linguistic features which may be present, in this case, the present tense. This is evident through the word 'get'. When Fernandes says 'get', he is stating what the team will do, which is to update the public with information obtained pertaining to the crisis and this demonstrates *corrective action*.

Similar to the given example of tweet analysed, other tweets are also manually analysed by identifying words or phrases which allow for categorisation into certain image repair strategies. The following analytical framework summarises how the analysis will be carried out with the inclusion of a few examples of words and phrases from Fernandes's tweets which make up the data of this research. The image repair strategies

are taken from Benoit's (2015) image repair theory which can be referred to in Table 2.2 on page 22.

Table 3.9: Categories of Image Repair Strategies

Image repair strategy	Example of words or phrases	Explanation
Corrective action	Tweet 2 - On my way to... - Providing information as we get it.	- shows that actions are taken to manage and improve the situation
Reducing offensiveness - Bolstering	Tweet 8 - I am touched by the massive show of support... Tweet 22 - ...we have been world's best... Tweet 29 - My heart and deep sorrow goes out...	- enhances image by stating that support is present - enhances image by reminding the public of AirAsia's achievement - portrays himself as a sympathetic individual
Mortification	Tweet 31 - ...how sorry I am.	- apologises for the misfortune
Denial	Tweet 30 - ...aircraft did not have a stalled engine.	- refutes claims made by newspapers
Evading responsibility - Defeasibility	Tweet 30 - ...ground power had to be restarted.	- mentions a technical error which cannot be avoided

3.4 Summary

This chapter gives readers an idea of how data is gathered and subsequently analysed, besides explaining qualitative content analysis which is the specific method used to carry out this research. A step-by-step example of how tweets are examined is also included to increase the trustworthiness of this research considering that the results of qualitative research are subjective and open to interpretation. Understanding the data analysis procedures especially will make it easier to comprehend the findings that will be presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on data analysis as well as findings which are then discussed. Each strategy discovered in the tweets is described in detail with reference to the salient linguistic features which realise the function of image repair.

4.1 Findings

One of the main concerns and problem statements of this research is to investigate the salient linguistic features which realise the function of image repair in the face of AirAsia's QZ8501 crisis. When it comes to delivering speeches or making statements in public, one who is rational and aware of his or her image would be careful with his or her choice of words in order to maintain a positive image or impression others have of them. Tony Fernandes did just that in his tweets during the above mentioned AirAsia crisis. Throughout the period of crisis, Fernandes's tweets employed five different image repair strategies which are *corrective action*, *bolstering* which is a substrategy of *reducing offensiveness*, *mortification*, *denial*, and *defeasibility*. Only one tweet demonstrated *mortification* whereas another had a subtle hint of *denial* and *defeasibility*, a substrategy of *evading responsibility*.

It is worth mentioning again that some strategies overlap in a single tweet but are explained separately according to their respective headings. Due to that, the same tweet might appear repeatedly as examples of different image repair strategies. Based on close analysis of Fernandes's tweets, the salient linguistic features are the personal pronouns 'I' and 'we' and their possessive determiners 'my' and 'our', the modal 'will', the present tense, and the past tense. That the aforementioned linguistic features are the most plentiful due to their appearance in at least ten tweets and provide enough data for a study of this

scale justify why they are chosen as the focus of this work. The features are discussed in relation to how they are employed for the purpose of repairing a sullied reputation.

4.1.1 Corrective action

4.1.1.1 The use of the personal pronouns 'I' and 'we' and their possessive determiners 'my' and 'our'

Fernandes uses the pronouns 'I' and 'we' when speaking about himself and from his perspective. In the tweets, 'I' is used to inform the public about what he will do to manage the crisis and his next course of actions. When 'we' is used, unity is illustrated as Fernandes includes himself in the team that is involved in crisis management.

As mentioned in the example of tweet analysed on page 46, the use of 'I' by Fernandes shows great leadership as he is united with the team at AirAsia. He also portrays himself as one who is responsible. When responsibility is shown, Fernandes is making use of the *corrective action* strategy because he states the actions he is taking or will take in order to handle the crisis. The use of 'I' shows that he is taking responsibility over what has happened and does not leave the answering or communication with the public to his public relations team or subordinates. This is shown by the following tweets.

Tweet 3

tonyfernandes
@tonyfernandes

Our priority is looking after all the next of Kin for my staff and passangers. We will do whatever we can. We continue to pass information aa it comes.

7:13 PM - 2014-12-28

Tweet 4

 **Tony Fernandes** ✓
@tonyfernandes

 Follow

In Jakarta this morning to communicate with Search and Rescue. All assets now in region. Going back to Surabaya now to be with families.

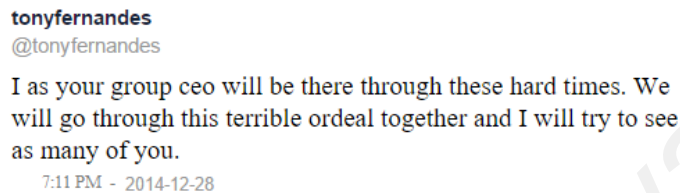
12:58 PM - Dec 29, 2014

11 383 233

Tweet 5



Tweet 32



Tweet 45



In Tweet 4 on the previous page, the subject pronoun 'I' has been omitted although the meaning of the tweet is still understood. Tweet 4 should be "I am going..." to make a complete sentence. Nevertheless, it can be implied that the tweet relates to Fernandes's actions as it is sent out by him. *Corrective action* is evident as Fernandes updates the public about what he is doing to ensure that the crash is being looked into as well as what he is going to do. 'I' is not explicitly mentioned, but it is implied. He says that he is travelling from Jakarta which is on the northwest of the island of Java to Surabaya which is on the northeast. In a way, this shows his willingness to travel from one place to another which is about one hour and thirty minutes away by flight to meet with the families of victims onboard.

In Tweet 5 by Fernandes included above, the use of 'I' obviously reiterates the fact that he is involved in the crisis management. Similar to Tweet 4, this tweet from 30 December indicates that he is trying to make amends by going to Surabaya. This aligns with the folk wisdom that action speaks louder than words. Generally, people are more

forgiving and less condemning when action is taken to solve a problem as it is better than the responsible party being silent, lying low and doing nothing. Tweet 32 also proves Fernandes's involvement as he uses 'I' to say that he will personally try to see as many families of victims as possible.

Tweet 45 is an example in which 'my' is used. The use of the possessive adjective shows reference to the speaker or writer. Fernandes states that he is concerned about the families of victims, reiterating the fact that he cares and is taking actions to ensure that they are being looked after as mentioned in his earlier tweets such as Tweets 33 and 43 which can be referred to in Appendix B on page 110 and 115 respectively.

To realise the strategy of *corrective action*, 'we' is also used. In some tweets, Fernandes uses 'we' to include himself in the team of people working hard to manage and resolve the crisis. It shows his cooperation instead of just letting others handle the problem. Tweets 3, 5, and 32 provided previously also consist of 'we' to show that his subordinates are not on their own, but that they have him in the team as well. The use of 'we' demonstrates that Fernandes and his staff members are united in providing the best service that they can to assist in managing the crisis and will face the problem together. This highlights the existence of togetherness in the attempt to improve the situation, indicating corrective action.

The possessive determiner 'our' is also utilised for the purpose of image repair. Similar to 'my', belonging is also shown by 'our'. Therefore, when Fernandes says 'our priority' as seen in Tweet 3, he means that taking care of the welfare of the victims' families is the main focus for him and the AirAsia team.

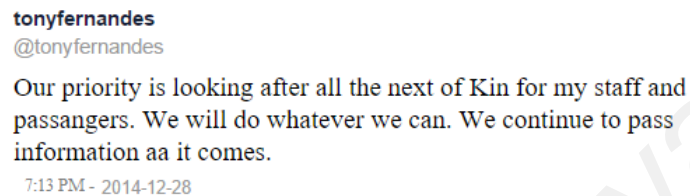
4.1.1.2 The use of the modal 'will'

In order to realise the *corrective action* strategy, the modal 'will' is also used. Some instances where 'will' is used in Fernandes's tweets are provided on the following page.

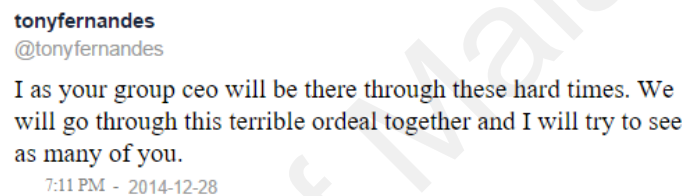
Tweet 1



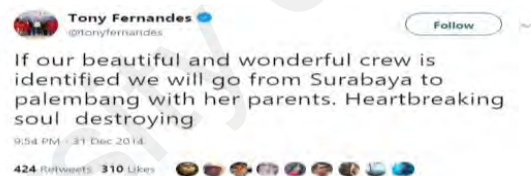
Tweet 3



Tweet 32



Tweet 40



Looking at all the tweets above, 'will' which is used denotes that the actions are volitional. This is in accordance with Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan (1999) and Leech, Cruickshank and Ivanic (1991) who assert that 'will' is volitional when it expresses an immediate intention or decision. For example, AirAsia is willing to put out another statement to update the public, go through the ordeal together as a team, do whatever they can to look after the relatives of those onboard the flight, and accompany the parents of their crew member if necessary. Here, Fernandes is communicating the actions he and his team intend to take in order to manage the crisis. The modal 'will' in all the tweets above also demonstrates the certainty of the actions mentioned taking place.

Apart from that, the modal ‘will’ is also associated with time, implying that an action will happen in the near future. For instance, in Tweet 1 on the previous page, ‘will’ is used to show that updates will be given not long after the time of tweet. Similarly in Tweet 40, ‘will’ is used to show a future action, what the team plans to do if the body of a crew member is identified. Based on these explanations about the use of the modal ‘will’, it is obvious that *corrective action* is employed and realised through the use of that particular modal as Fernandes tweets about his next course of actions for crisis management which are done willingly and the likelihood of them happening in the future.

4.1.1.3 The use of the present tense

Apart from that, Fernandes uses the present tense in many tweets to talk about his current actions, showing the use of the *corrective action* strategy. The examples are as given below.

Tweet 3

tonyfernandes
@tonyfernandes

Our priority is looking after all the next of Kin for my staff and passangers. We will do whatever we can. We continue to pass information aa it comes.

7:13 PM - 2014-12-28

Tweet 45



Tony Fernandes ✓
@tonyfernandes



Qpr fans hammering me. My concern right now is only families of our Surabaya flight.

12:32 AM - Jan 5, 2015

212 543 415

Tweet 47



Tony Fernandes ✓
@tonyfernandes



There is a good team now at qpr. Les, Chris, Phil mark Rebecca and @Ruben_E_G from shareholders helping harry. While I focus on Airasia.

8:49 AM - 4 Jan 2015

77 Retweets 126 Likes



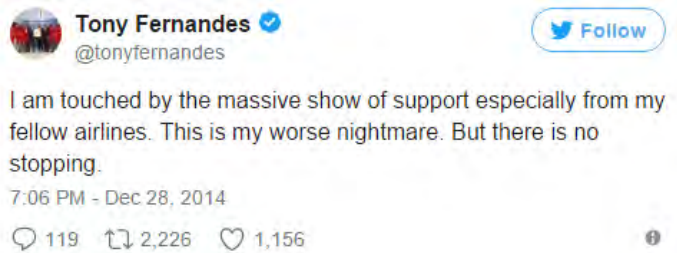
In Tweet 3 on the previous page, the present tense is apparent through the use of 'is', 'can', 'continue', and 'comes'. *Corrective action* is employed when Fernandes tweets that their priority 'is' taking care of the welfare of the victims' families. This means that at that time, that is the plan which they will execute. Using 'can' means that Fernandes and his team will look after the families of victims to the best of their abilities at that time. 'Continue' and 'comes' are used to demonstrate that the action of delivering updates and information is ongoing. The present tense used in Tweet 45 shows that Fernandes's thought is real at the time of tweet. He says that his concern at that time 'is' the families of those onboard although there is an upcoming football match for the football team which he owns, QPR. So, he will put his focus on the problem in Indonesia which is more crucial. His intention to concentrate on taking care of families is once again highlighted in Tweet 47 when he uses 'focuses' in the present tense, illustrating the presence of the thought at the time of tweet. This is supported by Zegarac (1991) who asserts that the present tense describes a state that is simultaneous with the time of communication.

4.1.2 Reducing offensiveness – Bolstering

4.1.2.1 The use of the personal pronouns 'I' and 'we' and their possessive determiners 'my' and 'our'

The function of image repair, *bolstering* specifically, is also realised through the use of the pronouns 'I' and 'we'. In many tweets, Fernandes uses the first person singular pronoun 'I' to express opinions from his point of view. According to him, there is still support and trust from the public. This means that a positive image is still present among members of the public. The examples of tweets are as follow.

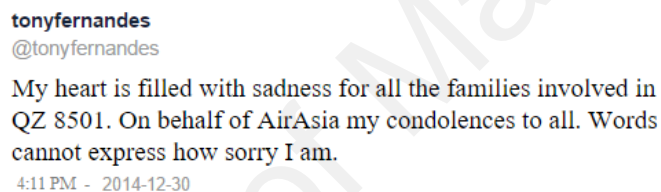
Tweet 8



Tweet 13



Tweet 31



Referring to Tweet 8, Fernandes repairs the affected reputation of his company by using 'I' to say that he personally feels touched that there is a massive show of support from the public especially from the fellow airlines. That there is support received from the public illustrates that the company is probably well-liked. If that is not the case, words of encouragement would likely not be offered. This is due to the logic that one would not be supported or shown concern if there is no positive affect for him or her.

Fernandes's second tweet above, Tweet 13 reinforces the idea that the company is liked and accepted as Fernandes asserts that support is obtained wherever he goes in Indonesia. He uses 'I' to talk about his personal experience. As for Tweet 31 above, 'I' is used to express his heartfelt sympathies towards the families of victims who have been involved in the crash, portraying him as a sympathetic individual. By implying that support is received and sympathy is felt, Fernandes attempts to repair the sullied reputation of his company.

‘My’ is the possessive adjective of ‘I’ which functions to show possession or belonging. Just like ‘I’, ‘my’ is also used by Fernandes to express his thoughts and feelings. Two examples are provided below. Fernandes uses ‘my’ in “My only thought...” to express his own concern for those onboard the QZ8501 flight which was yet to be found during the time of tweet as shown in Tweet 7 below. He also mentions ‘my’ when referring to his crew, implying that he is responsible for his subordinates which is a positive characteristic of a leader. In Tweet 31 below, ‘my’ which is used also enables Fernandes to express his heartfelt condolences and convey that his heart is filled with sadness. This realises the function of *reducing offensiveness*, specifically to bolster Fernandes’s image and that of his company. This is because showing concern and sympathy puts across an image of one who is sympathetic and understanding of how the families of victims would feel. When a positive image is depicted, the readers of the tweet or the public would be more accepting of the doer of the action.

Tweet 7

tonyfernandes
@tonyfernandes

My only thought are with the passangers and my crew. We put our hope in the SAR operation and thank the Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysian governments.

4:40 PM - 2014-12-28

Tweet 31

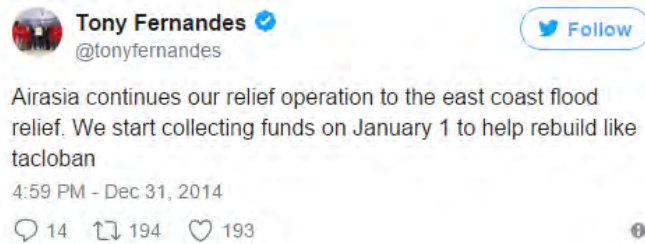
tonyfernandes
@tonyfernandes

My heart is filled with sadness for all the families involved in QZ 8501. On behalf of AirAsia my condolences to all. Words cannot express how sorry I am.

4:11 PM - 2014-12-30

By using ‘I’ and its variant form ‘my’, Fernandes shows that he himself is deeply saddened by what has taken place. He speaks for himself by himself. This in a way shows that he is a down to earth person who does not require representation by others to convey his messages. To reinforce a positive image, the first person plural pronoun ‘we’ is also used as shown in the subsequent tweets.

Tweet 18



Tweet 22



Based on Tweet 18 above, 'we' is used to refer to Fernandes and his company, illustrating the existence of unity. Despite the crisis that occurred in Indonesia affecting his company, Fernandes informs the public that relief effort is being carried out to help the society during the flood which hit the northern and east coast states of Malaysia. This helps to bolster the image of his company as it shows that AirAsia cares about what is happening locally as well although it is faced with a crisis. 'Our' which is the possessive adjective of 'we' is also used to show their responsibility in helping out in the relief effort. In the second tweet on top, Tweet 22 Fernandes uses 'we' to describe the achievement of his company. He mentions that they have been the best globally for six years and counting. By bringing up the achievement of his company, it reminds the public of the trust that they have gained since six years ago. He also attempts to regain any trust which might have been lost and hopefully, restore the faith of the public in the company. This clearly proves that Fernandes makes use of *bolstering*.

4.1.2.2 The use of the modal ‘will’

Bolstering is also evident when Fernandes mentions that he ‘will’ stand by his team in Tweet 32, once again portraying great leadership and support as the head of the company who does not leave the problem in the hands of his employees. This is because the modal ‘will’ signifies his own willingness and certainty in going through the ordeal with his employees. Not only that, *bolstering* is again evident in Tweet 48 as Fernandes portrays the image of one who is confident when he says that the truth behind the crash will be revealed in the future. The use of ‘will’ here is related to a future event and there also seems to be feeling of certainty.

Tweet 32

tonyfernandes
@tonyfernandes

I as your group ceo will be there through these hard times. We will go through this terrible ordeal together and I will try to see as many of you.

7:11 PM - 2014-12-28

Tweet 48

 Tony Fernandes
@tonyfernandes

 Follow

As I have said we never hide. All will come out at right time. Focus is finding all guests and looking after families

12:36 AM - Jan 5, 2015

 19  184  188

4.1.2.3 The use of the present tense

Bolstering is also done using the present tense to voice Fernandes’s thoughts and feelings at the time of crisis. Using the present tense enables him to show the genuineness of his thoughts and feelings as the present tense is typically used for general truths and facts as stated by Conrad, Biber and Leech (2003) and Eastwood (2002).

Tweet 7

tonyfernandes
@tonyfernandes

My only thought are with the passangers and my crew. We put our hope in the SAR operation and thank the Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysian governments.

4:40 PM - 2014-12-28

Tweet 8



Tony Fernandes ✓
@tonyfernandes



I am touched by the massive show of support especially from my fellow airlines. This is my worse nightmare. But there is no stopping.

7:06 PM - Dec 28, 2014

119 2,226 1,156

Tweet 31

tonyfernandes
@tonyfernandes

My heart is filled with sadness for all the families involved in QZ 8501. On behalf of AirAsia my condolences to all. Words cannot express how sorry I am.

4:11 PM - 2014-12-30

Referring to the first tweet directly above, Tweet 7 Fernandes uses the present tense as demonstrated by the words ‘are’, ‘put’, and ‘thank’. By using the present tense, Fernandes conveys his feelings and thoughts at that point of time. When he says “My only thought ‘are’...”, it can be implied that he is only concerned and thinking about the passengers and crew onboard the flight at that point of time. He also uses ‘put’ and ‘thank’ to show his trust and gratefulness to the relevant authorities and agents who have been helpful in the search and rescue mission. This shows that his feelings of trust and gratitude are relevant and exist at that time of tweet. Zegarac (1991) supports this by saying that the present tense used in utterances is intended to be interpreted as representing thoughts as they occur to the speaker. This is also in line with the use of the present tense to indicate states or situations that exist or hold at the present moment (Ureel, 2011). By using the present tense to be transparent and explicit about his feelings in Tweet 7 above, Fernandes is depicted as a concerned and grateful individual. Both having faith in others and

thankfulness are positive traits which function to give a good image or repair a damaged one, proving that *bolstering* is employed.

In Tweet 8 on the previous page, Fernandes also uses the present tense to convey his feelings. ‘Am’ and ‘is’ are evident in the second tweet above. Fernandes says “I ‘am’ touched...” to express that he is moved due to the overwhelming support received from the public at that time. By saying that, Fernandes is making it known that there is still support and trust from the public. This assists in boosting the reputation of his company as logically, one needs to be liked in order to gain support. He later says that the mishap ‘is’ his worst nightmare, portraying himself as a sympathetic individual who also regrets what has happened. The use of ‘is’ which is a verb to be in the present tense indicates that the thought exists at that time of tweet. By showing sympathy, Fernandes is also able to reduce offensiveness among members of the public as sympathy will also be offered in return. Similar to Tweets 7 and 8, the third tweet also makes use of the present tense to convey feelings which are relevant and real at that point of time. Fernandes mentions that his heart ‘is’ filled with sorrow and that words cannot express how sorry he is, shown by the use of ‘am’ as he speaks from his own perspective. Through the use of the present tense which illustrates the relevance of his feelings at the time of crisis, Fernandes puts up an image of a sympathetic and apologetic person who is truly sorry for what has happened. Just like the second tweet, being truthful about his feelings helps to reduce offensiveness as the public would tend to sympathise over what has taken place. This is proven by some reply tweets that can be seen on Fernandes’s official Twitter account which expresses sympathy and sadness in response to the tweets he posted. Consequently, his image and that of his company will not suffer badly and might even get a boost for being honest.

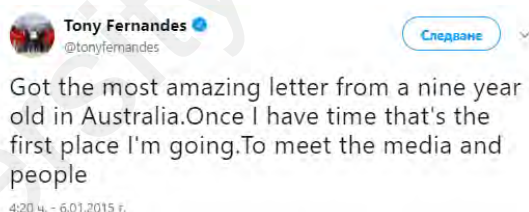
4.1.2.4 The use of the past tense

When employing *bolstering*, the past tense is also present as evident in the tweets below. In Tweet 15, the past tense is signalled by ‘told’, ‘gave’, and ‘was’. They are used to relate a positive encounter to the public, boosting the image of AirAsia. The past tense is utilised yet again in Tweet 24. Similarly, Fernandes describes a positive occurrence using the past tense demonstrated by the word ‘got’. By tweeting about positive experiences that have taken place, Fernandes is able to enhance his reputation and that of AirAsia. This is due to the fact that both tweets mention that support was shown and one is likely favoured in order to garner support.

Tweet 15



Tweet 24



4.1.3 Mortification

4.1.3.1 The use of the personal pronoun ‘I’

In order to realise the *mortification* strategy for the maintenance of reputation, Fernandes once again uses the subject pronoun ‘I’. This strategy is seen in only one tweet which is provided below. Fernandes speaks from his perspective using ‘I’ and states that he feels deeply sorry about what has happened. He says that there are no words to describe the regret that he feels. Here, Fernandes also apologises for what has happened although he neither admits that AirAsia is at fault nor says that it is to be blamed for the crash. He

is vague about what he is sorry for likely due to the fact that Fernandes does not want to court more trouble especially in terms of facing possible lawsuits from families of victims at a time when his reputation and that of AirAsia is already at stake. Nevertheless, by saying “I’m sorry”, Benoit (2015, p. 27) states that the offender or accused hopes to be let off the hook. Fernandes could also be expressing sympathy by saying “I’m sorry”. Ambiguity in language is exploited but still, remorse is shown in the hope that the public would be more forgiving. Referring to this, Benoit asserts that the public might decide to pardon the offense if the apology is perceived to be sincere.

Tweet 31

tonyfernandes
@tonyfernandes

My heart is filled with sadness for all the families involved in QZ 8501. On behalf of AirAsia my condolences to all. Words cannot express how sorry I am.

4:11 PM - 2014-12-30

4.1.3.2 The use of the present tense

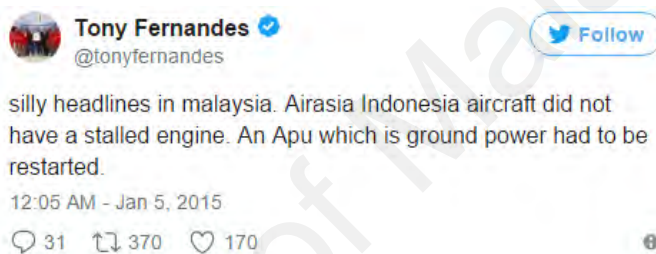
In Tweet 31 above, it can be seen that Fernandes uses the present tense as shown by the verb to be ‘is’, the modal ‘cannot’, and the verb to be ‘am’. These three words function to show that Fernandes’s feelings are current and relevant at the time of tweet. It would have meant differently if Fernandes were to say ‘my heart was filled’ or ‘words could not express how sorry I was’ as that would be describing an event in the past, indicating the irrelevance of the feeling at that time. By using the present tense, he shows that he is able to relate to the sorrow felt by the families of victims and regrets that they feel that way.

4.1.4 Denial and Evasion of responsibility

4.1.4.1 The use of the present tense

The tweet which demonstrates the use of *denial* and *evading responsibility* is provided below. In that tweet, Fernandes corrects the claim made in newspapers that the crash occurred due to a technical error. Here, Fernandes utilises the present tense demonstrated by ‘is’ to state a fact or explain a matter to enlighten the audience. He explains that ‘APU’ which is the acronym for auxiliary power unit is ground power. It must be said that the use of the present tense here does not play any role in image repair.

Tweet 30



4.1.4.2 The use of the past tense

What plays a role instead for the purpose of image repair is the past tense. In Tweet 30 provided above, Fernandes refutes the claim made in newspapers about the aircraft experiencing a stalled engine. He denies the claim as a stalled engine likely happens due to human error (Jacobson, 2010; Wiegmann et. al, 2005) which would mean that AirAsia is to be held responsible for the crash. He uses the past tense to state what actually occurred, that is the ground power had to be restarted during the flight which is a technical error and not that the engine stalled. He does not agree with the remarks made which he describes in the past tense. The two causes might not mean any different to many but those with knowledge in the aviation field would likely know who if any party is to be blamed for the truth. By saying that the crash occurred due to a technical error, Fernandes is implying that the air crash is beyond control due to it being an unforeseen circumstance and so, AirAsia should not be held accountable for what happened. This

indicates *defeasibility* which is a substrategy of *evasion of responsibility* as Fernandes pleads the lack of control over the important factor which led to the crash of the aircraft. This tweet of *denial* and *defeasibility* is different from others which mostly use the present tense and the modal ‘will’ to realise the function of image repair. There is also no personal pronoun present in this tweet.

Based on manual analysis, most of Fernandes’s tweets employ the *corrective action* and *reducing offensiveness* strategies. The specific tactic used under *reducing offensiveness* is *bolstering*. Only one tweet portrays the use of *mortification* and another shows a subtle hint of *denial* as well as *defeasibility*. With reference to the explanations in the previous paragraphs, it is obvious that certain linguistic features such as the pronouns ‘I’ and ‘we’ and their possessive determiners ‘my’ and ‘our’, the modal ‘will’, the present tense as well as the past tense are used to realise the function of image repair, specifically *corrective action* and *bolstering*. The two strategies mentioned are preponderantly utilised by Fernandes during the QZ8501 crash based on manual analysis. They work well together as *corrective action* reinforces attempts to enhance AirAsia’s reputation. *Mortification* is employed by using the singular subject pronoun ‘I’ and the present tense. Two other strategies are *denial* and *defeasibility* which only appear once in the same tweet and is done somewhat covertly. The *denial* is subtle as Fernandes does not clearly tweet that AirAsia is not in the wrong but merely disagrees that the cause was a stalled engine which is likely associated with human error (Jacobson, 2010; Wiegmann & Faaborg, 2005). Further analysis of other tweets can be obtained in Appendix B on page 98.

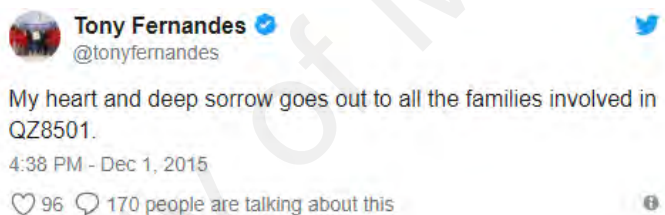
4.2 Discussion of findings

The results obtained from Fernandes’s tweets reveal information necessary to answer the research questions constructed at the beginning of the research. The questions will be answered in this section.

1. What are the image repair strategies employed by Tony Fernandes?

Based on the analysis carried out manually, it is discovered that the *reducing offensiveness* strategy, specifically *bolstering* is most widely employed by Tony Fernandes. Out of 54 tweets, 47 tweets contain words which convey the meaning and intention of improving the reputation of the speaker and the corporation he belongs to. For instance, Tweet 29 and Tweet 53 below express sympathy. By tweeting about the sadness and sympathy felt towards the families of victims onboard QZ8501, Fernandes manages to portray himself as a concerned and sympathetic individual. Both are positive traits brought to mind when the tweets are read and serve to reduce offensiveness among the readers or the public.

Tweet 29



Tweet 53



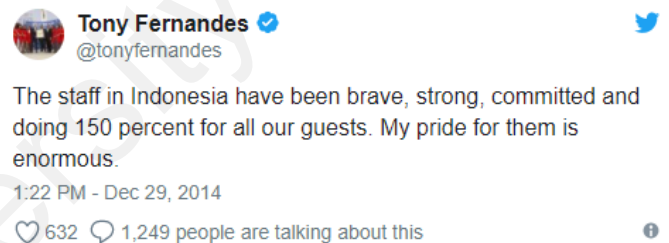
Besides that, *bolstering* is utilised when Fernandes tweets about his responsibility and cooperation in managing the crisis as seen in Tweet 41 on the next page. This shows that Fernandes is responsible by accompanying and bringing the body of his late crew member, Nisa home to Palembang. He does not just leave the work of crisis management to his employees but instead, gives a hand in the matter. Playing a part in managing the crisis creates a favourable image especially since Fernandes is the CEO who could easily delegate crisis management duties to his employees.

Tweet 41



Bolstering is also evident when Fernandes praises his team of staff. Some examples are Tweet 12 and Tweet 26 given after this paragraph. In both examples, Fernandes praises the members of his staff. He mentions that they have been committed in doing their best to help the families of the victims onboard and commends the leadership skills of the captains respectively. By praising his subordinates openly, he employs the strategy of *bolstering* as a good impression of his employees is given to the public. This helps to repair his sullied reputation and also that of AirAsia as the public would likely view them in a more positive light.

Tweet 12



Tweet 26



Other than that, Fernandes makes use of the *bolstering* tactic when he brings up the achievement of AirAsia in his tweet. A couple of instances are Tweet 21 and Tweet 22 provided after this paragraph. In the former tweet, Fernandes mentions a great achievement of AirAsia, that it changed the experience of flying. It is understood that

AirAsia made it possible for more to fly with its more affordable fares compared to other airline companies. In the latter tweet, he tells his staff members to be focused and show the world why they have been the best globally for six years and counting. By raising the issue of success and achievements, offensiveness is reduced as the public is reminded of the good which has been done in the past. This is similar to Phelps's *bolstering* technique found in Walsh and McAllister-Spooner's (2011) study as Phelps also reminded the public of his past success of being an Olympic gold medalist for fourteen times when he has to salvage his damaged reputation after he was photographed smoking from a marijuana pipe.

Tweet 21

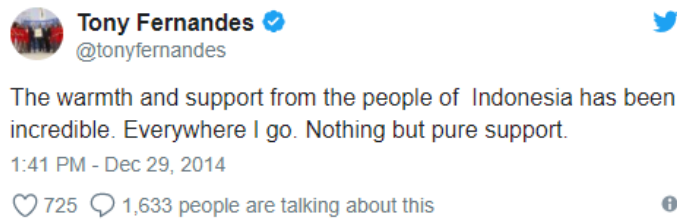


Tweet 22



Finally, *bolstering* is used when Fernandes makes it known that there is support received from different parties during the crisis. Tweets 13 and 14 on the next page are examples which tell of the support received. By saying that others support one, it can be implied that not all trust is lost and that one is probably still liked. If not, criticisms and negative comments would more likely be received.

Tweet 13



Tweet 14



With reference to Fernandes's discourse during the period of the QZ8501 crisis, it is obvious that *bolstering* is employed to put forth a positive image which has been tainted due to the crisis.

Another image repair strategy discovered in Fernandes's tweets is *corrective action*, with a total of 29 tweets. In the tweets which demonstrate the use of *corrective action*, Fernandes talks about his next course of action. He is transparent about what he will do as part of crisis management. A few examples are as follow.

Tweet 2



Tweet 4



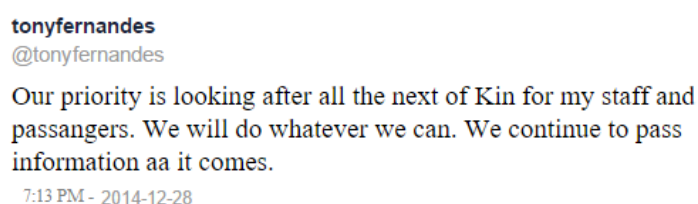
Tweet 41



In the first two tweets given on the previous page, Tweet 2 and Tweet 4, Fernandes tells the public that he is travelling to the different places to find out more about the crisis and also to be with the families of victims who were onboard. By mentioning his whereabouts and what he has done or is going to do, Fernandes shows that he is involved in the effort to improve the situation. In Tweet 41 above, Fernandes says that he is bringing the body of one of his late crew members back to Palembang. This shows *corrective action* as he is showing his respect and doing what is decent by accompanying Nisa, the late crew member back to her home. Accompanying her back would likely appease the family members and the public as it shows that he is responsible and doing his part in managing the problem at hand.

Other than that, *corrective action* is evident in Tweet 3 and Tweet 48 given after this paragraph as they inform the public about the priority of AirAsia which is looking after the next of kin of those onboard. He makes it known that he and his team of staff are focused on looking after the families, proving that they are making amends by taking necessary actions to remedy the problem. By being concerned, the negative feelings the public might have towards the company are reduced.

Tweet 3

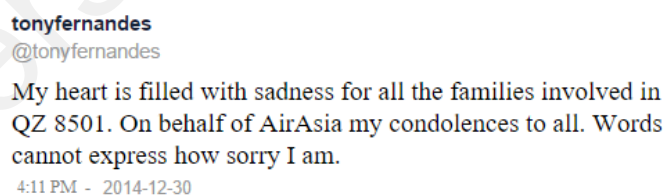


Tweet 48



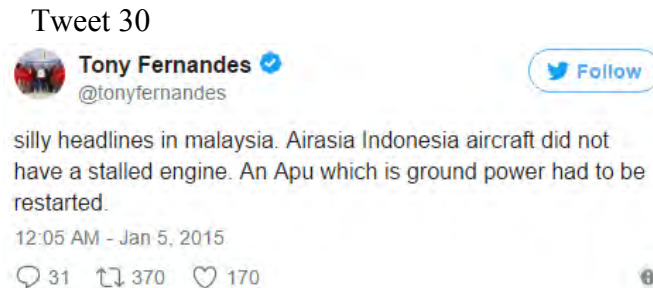
Apart from *bolstering* and *corrective action*, the use of *mortification* is revealed in Tweet 31 which is given below. His use of ‘sorry’ is ambiguous as Fernandes could either be apologising or expressing sympathy to the families of victims. As explained earlier in Chapter 4, Benoit (2015, p. 27) states that one expects to get off the hook by saying “I’m sorry”. This shows that Fernandes’s use of ‘sorry’ functions to reduce the offensiveness of the unfortunate event which has affected many. Nevertheless, Fernandes does not state what exactly he is sorry for which means that AirAsia is not necessarily taking the blame for what has happened. This tweet also proves the use of *bolstering*. By stating that sadness fills his heart, an impression of one who is sympathetic is further strengthened as it shows that sorrow is personally felt.

Tweet 31



Denial is also shown in a tweet. In Tweet 30 provided following this paragraph, Fernandes denies that the aircraft which crashed had a stalled engine. He does not agree with the claims made by the newspapers and explains what happened instead in his tweet. He uses *denial* as he does not want the public to have a misconception about the cause of the crash or point fingers at AirAsia for causing the crash. In the same tweet, *defeasibility* which is a substrategy of *evading responsibility* is revealed. When Fernandes says that groundpower has to be restarted, he is saying that it is a technical error. As such, the error

could not have been avoided, rendering the crash to be an accident which AirAsia had no control over. That there is a lack of or no control over a situation indicates that the accused party or offender cannot be fully held responsible.



Based on the explanations above, it is apparent that Fernandes utilises five different image repair techniques in his discourse. At times, only one strategy is used in a tweet whereas at others, a strategy is coupled with another. As explained earlier in the literature review in Chapter 2, engaging in a couple of strategies is wise (Benoit, 1995). For instance, in Tweet 31 included earlier on page 72, Fernandes utilises *corrective action* and *mortification* which probably work well together. This is possibly due to the fact that apologising requires humility and is able to appease the audience or listeners whereas having plans to rectify a mistake or situation shows that an individual or corporation is executing plans to improve the situation and taking the initiative to prevent the recurrence of the same problem in the future.

The fact that Fernandes engages in a couple of strategies together in certain tweets is further proven since other tweets are found to contain overlapping strategies. *Bolstering* and *corrective action* are also likely to be effective when used together since he vividly shows concern and a sense of responsibility through actions which are consistent with his statements. An example is when he is physically present in Indonesia to obtain firsthand information and also meet with the families of victims as portrayed in Tweet 33 included on the next page. He expresses that going through and managing the crisis have been difficult, demonstrating that he somewhat understands the agony felt by families of

victims. This enhances Fernandes's reputation as one who is sympathetic on top of the fact he is portrayed as a responsible leader who takes the initiative to be involved in managing the crisis when he talked about spending a large part of his day meeting the victims' families.

Tweet 33



In yet another tweet given following this paragraph, *bolstering* and *corrective action* are used hand in hand. *Corrective action* is employed as Fernandes mentions being on the way back to Surabaya, the departure city of the plane which crashed, suggesting his involvement in crisis management. There is also proof of *bolstering* when he says that he is touched by the warmth of everyone in Indonesia. This is because one probably needs to be liked in order to be treated warmly and kindly. So, receiving warmth as said shows that good rapport still exists between him and/or AirAsia and the public.

Tweet 39



The frequency of image repair strategies utilised by Fernandes is shown in the following bar chart, Figure 4.1.

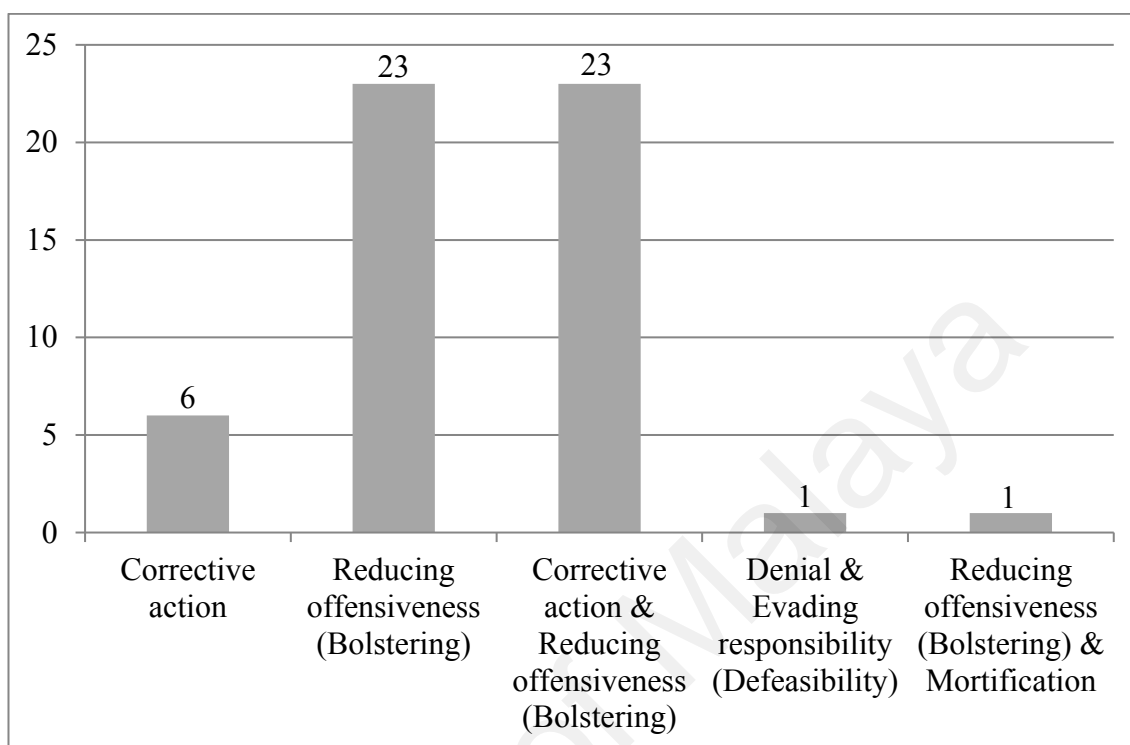


Figure 4.1: The frequency of image repair strategies in Fernandes's tweets

2. How do the salient linguistic features identified realise the function of image repair?

In the image repair discourse of Tony Fernandes, a few salient linguistic features are observed. They are the frequent use of the personal pronouns 'I' and 'we' and their corresponding possessive adjectives 'my' and 'our', the modal 'will', the present tense which is shown by either the -s or -es inflection on a verb or the root form of a verb in the sentence, and the past tense which is identified through the -d or -ed inflection on a verb or change in the whole form of a verb. Throughout the 54 tweets, Fernandes uses the personal pronoun 'I' 26 times in 19 tweets whereas its possessive adjective 'my' is used 31 times in 21 tweets. The personal pronoun 'we' appears 28 times in 22 of his tweets and the possessive adjective 'our' appears 19 times in 16 tweets. As for the modal 'will', it is noticed to be used as much as 14 times in 10 tweets. The present tense is used in 47

out of 54 of Fernandes's tweets whereas the past tense is utilised in 10 tweets. In one tweet however, the past tense is also used to show *denial* and *defeasibility*. A single appearance in the only tweet which contains two other strategies used only once throughout the entire data makes explaining the past tense noteworthy. The number of tweets which contains each linguistic feature is shown in the bar chart that follows.

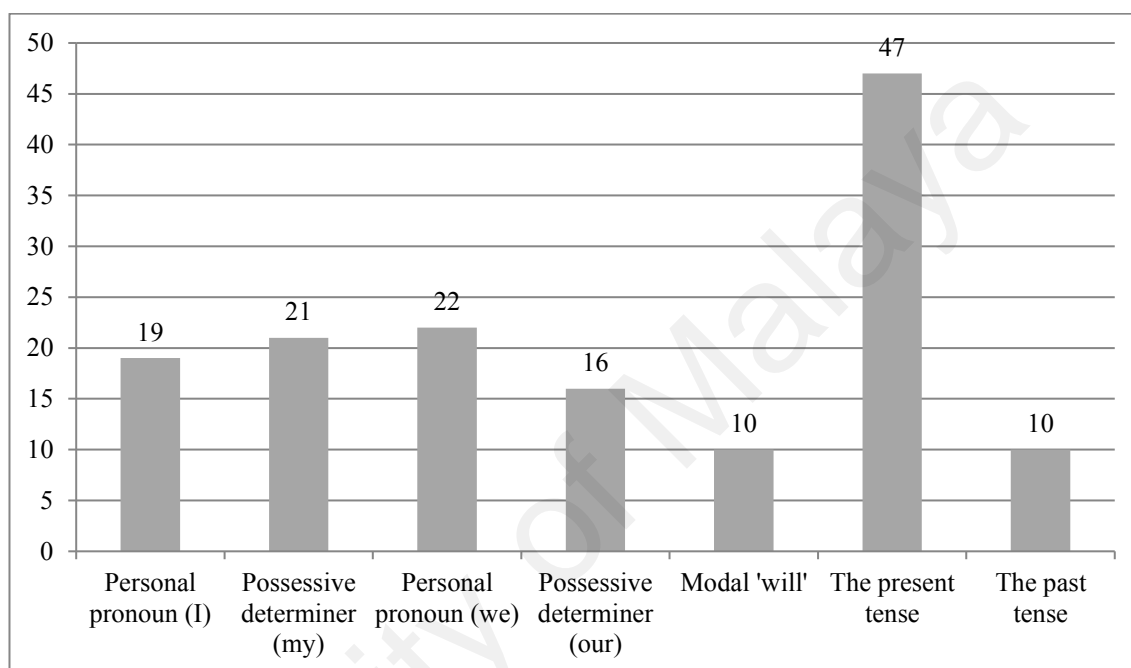


Figure 4.2: Number of tweets which contains each linguistic feature

(a) ***Personal pronouns 'I' and 'we' and their corresponding possessive determiners 'my' and 'our'***

The personal pronouns 'I' and 'we' are used by Fernandes as he speaks from his own point of view. The difference is when 'we' is used, he includes himself as part of the AirAsia team which is managing the crisis, illustrating the presence of unity. For instance, Tweet 3 and Tweet 48 which Fernandes sent out show that he stands with AirAsia in doing whatever they can during the crisis.

Tweet 3

tonyfernandes
@tonyfernandes

Our priority is looking after all the next of Kin for my staff and passengers. We will do whatever we can. We continue to pass information as it comes.

7:13 PM - 2014-12-28

Tweet 48

 **Tony Fernandes** ✓
@tonyfernandes

 Follow

As I have said we never hide. All will come out at right time.
Focus is finding all guests and looking after families

12:36 AM - Jan 5, 2015

 19  184  188

In other tweets, Fernandes uses ‘I’ to state what his plans are and the actions he will take in order to solve the matter at hand. This shows that he employs the *corrective action* strategy as he tries to make amends to mitigate the negative impact of the crisis towards the company, especially the reputation. He also uses ‘I’ to express his heartfelt condolences to the families of victims. By using ‘I’, he shows transparency and genuineness that he is also affected by the tragedy that has taken place. As the CEO of the company, he can definitely delegate the duty of communicating information to the public to his subordinates and just be silent over the matter, which without a doubt, would further jeopardise the reputation of AirAsia which is already at stake at that time. Being possibly aware of that, he chose not to do so, but to be actively involved in managing the crisis as well as making his feelings and thoughts known through frequent Twitter updates. When he tweets about his heartfelt sympathies, he portrays an image of a concerned and sympathetic individual which helps to reduce offensiveness among members of the public. This signifies the use of the *bolstering* strategy.

‘Our’ and ‘my’ are also used to show ownership and responsibility. For instance when Fernandes says that “Our priority is...” as seen in Tweet 3 above, it shows that he and the company are responsible and involved together in providing the necessary service to the victims’ families in regard to the crisis. When ‘my’ is used as in “My heart is...”

in Tweet 31 below, Fernandes talks about ownership, that he himself is affected by the misfortune. Both ‘our’ and ‘my’ function like ‘we’ and ‘I’ respectively in Fernandes’s tweets.

The singular subject pronoun ‘I’ is also evident in the *mortification* strategy in which Fernandes mentions that “Words cannot describe how sorry I am” in the same tweet. He demonstrates remorse and apologises to the public although he does not directly say that he or AirAsia is to be blamed for the crash of QZ8501.

Tweet 31

tonyfernandes
@tonyfernandes

My heart is filled with sadness for all the families involved in QZ 8501. On behalf of AirAsia my condolences to all. Words cannot express how sorry I am.

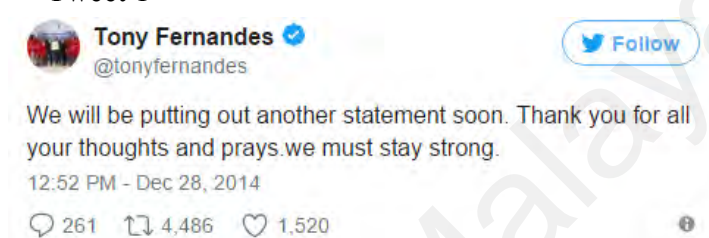
4:11 PM - 2014-12-30

(b) *The modal ‘will’*

The modal ‘will’ which appears repeatedly in Fernandes’s tweets indicates that the actions referred to are volitional, have strong possibilities of happening or are expected to take place in a future time. Fernandes uses ‘will’ in Tweet 1 on the following page, showing that the action is volitional and is very likely to happen. In a way, it implies a promise to ensure that updates and more information will be given. This indicates *corrective action* as actions will be taken to manage the crisis. The explanation for the modal ‘will’ here is in line with an example of text from a memorandum of understanding (MoU) included in the work of Su’ad Awab (1999) in which willingness is applied to an action that might take place in the future through the use of the particular modal. In the excerpt from the MoU, ‘will’ used by a book publisher functions as guarantee in the form of a promise to carry out a future action of publishing any written materials which are produced. That the modal carries the notion of volition towards a future act is supported by Austin (1962, as cited in Su’ad Awab, 1999) who mentions that a commissive act is

performed when one indicates a willingness to carry out a particular action as well as Searle (1976, as cited in Su'ad Awab, 1999) who states that it is an illocutionary act which commits the speaker to some future course of action, coinciding with social goals such as offering or promising (Leech, 1983, as cited in Su'ad Awab, 1999). It is further posited that the combined definitions given support the use of the modal 'will' to show willingness to carry out a future action.

Tweet 1



In one of his tweets, Tweet 48 given below, the use of 'will' is associated with time. He means that the truth about the crash not being the crew's fault will come to light soon. Using 'will' here implies a feeling of certainty and confidence that AirAsia did not contribute to the crash.

Tweet 48



In yet another tweet provided after this paragraph, Fernandes uses 'will' to signify his intention or promise. This reinforces a positive image as he is depicted as a supportive and responsible leader who intends to go through the catastrophe together with his team of staff. The use of the modal 'will' here is similar to that used in the manifesto of the New Patriotic Party, a Ghanaian Political Party analysed in Nartey and Yankson's (2014) work. They reveal that the modal 'will' is largely used in the manifesto to indicate an

intention or a promise as well as certainty which functions to provide reassurance of a better country when they are given the mandate to govern.

Tweet 32

tonyfernandes
@tonyfernandes

I as your group ceo will be there through these hard times. We will go through this terrible ordeal together and I will try to see as many of you.

7:11 PM - 2014-12-28

(c) *The present tense*

Another striking linguistic feature is the use of the present tense in Fernandes's tweets. He uses the present tense to inform the public of his actions or feelings at certain times. For instance, he mentions "Our priority is..." in Tweet 3 and "My thoughts are..." in Tweet 52 attached on the following page. 'Is' and 'are' are both examples of the different present tense forms of the verb to be. In the former tweet, the present tense is utilised to show that the main focus is taking care of the next of kin of staff and passengers onboard QZ8501 at the time of crisis. If the past tense was used, for example "Our priority was...", it would mean that the focus on the next of kin is in the past, not at the current time. So, using the present tense to state the reality as seen in Fernandes's tweet definitely makes a big difference in conveying the intended meaning. Since Fernandes says that their priority is looking after the relatives of those onboard, it shows that *corrective action* is employed as the company is making an effort to do what they can to mitigate the negative effects of the crisis. In the latter tweet, 'are' is used to express Fernandes's feelings. Fernandes states that his thoughts 'are' with the families and his crew, demonstrating the relevance and existence of his feelings of concern and sympathy at that point of time. The use of the present tense in expressing thoughts and feelings enables Fernandes to provide a positive impression to the public. This is probably due to the fact that the public can also relate to how he feels. *Bolstering* is likely effective as sympathy

begets sympathy, so the public would sympathise if he shows that he is also affected by the mishap.

Tweet 3

tonyfernandes
@tonyfernandes

Our priority is looking after all the next of Kin for my staff and passengers. We will do whatever we can. We continue to pass information as it comes.

7:13 PM - 2014-12-28

Tweet 52

 **Tony Fernandes** 
@tonyfernandes

would like to thank the KNKT for the very thorough investigations. My thoughts are to the families and my (cont)
[tl.gd/n_1snvbe4](https://t.me/n_1snvbe4)

4:31 PM - Dec 1, 2015

♡ 32 💬 33 people are talking about this



The present tense is also used to demonstrate *mortification* in one tweet. In Tweet 31 below, Fernandes says that his heart 'is' filled with sadness, indicating the reality of his emotion at that point of time. Similarly, the use of the modal 'cannot' and verb to be 'am' which are both in the present tense reinforces the idea that what he feels is real and exists at the time of tweet.

Tweet 31

tonyfernandes
@tonyfernandes

My heart is filled with sadness for all the families involved in QZ 8501. On behalf of AirAsia my condolences to all. Words cannot express how sorry I am.

4:11 PM - 2014-12-30

(d) *The past tense*

To realise the function of image repair, specifically *bolstering*, the past tense is also utilised. This linguistic feature is evident in tweets that contain descriptions of positive experiences as provided in one example on the next page. Here, Fernandes relates

his daughter's praises for the AirAsia cabin crew, giving a boost to their reputation as the public is given a positive impression.

Tweet 15



In the tweet which contains the element of *denial* and *defeasibility*, Fernandes uses past tense to describe what actually happened to the plane. He says "...did not have..." in Tweet 30 to clearly explain the situation and refute the claims made in different news reports about a stalled engine on the flight. Although the present tense is used as shown by the verb to be 'is', it plays no function in image repair as it is only to explain the meaning of the acronym 'APU'.

Tweet 30



4.3 Summary

In essence, interpretation of the data reveals that five image repair strategies have been employed by Fernandes in the wake of the plane crash. It has also been demonstrated that a few linguistic features are commonly used to achieve the aim of repairing a possibly tarnished reputation.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings which have been summarised to enable readers to know what the results are with a quick read. The limitations of this research are also brought up to inform readers of hindrances which have arisen so that researchers who plan to conduct similar studies in the future know what to expect beforehand. The conclusion signals the end of this piece of research.

5.1 Summary of findings

As planned at the beginning of this study, 54 of Fernandes's tweets relating to the QZ8501 crash obtained from his official Twitter account were analysed manually. The objectives of doing so were to identify image repair strategies employed and subsequently explain the salient linguistic features that realise the function of image repair. The thorough analysis reveals that the Chief Executive Officer of AirAsia employs five different image repair strategies in his tweets, namely *corrective action*, *reducing offensiveness*, *denial*, *evasion of responsibility*, and *mortification*. The frequency of use for each image repair strategy can be seen in Figure 4.1 provided on page 75.

In some tweets, it is shown that Fernandes uses a single strategy whereas in others, a strategy is used together with another. As previously explained, engaging in more than one strategy is wise, hence the overlapping strategies discovered in several tweets. For instance, *corrective action* and *bolstering* which are sub-strategies of *reducing offensiveness* are found to be present together in many tweets, 23 to be exact. These two strategies are most widely utilised by Fernandes to maintain if not repair his tainted reputation. Other strategies such as *denial* and *defeasibility* which are sub-strategies of *evasion of responsibility*, and *mortification* record a one time use in the CEO's tweets.

With the identification of image repair strategies done, the salient linguistic features observed were then explained in relation to how they made image repair possible. The linguistic features highlighted in this work are the personal pronouns ‘I’ and ‘we’ and their corresponding possessive adjectives ‘my’ and ‘our’, the modal ‘will’, the present tense which is shown by either the –s or –es inflection on a verb or the root form of a verb in the sentence, and the past tense which is identified through the –d or –ed inflection on a verb or change in the whole form of a verb. The frequency of occurrence for each linguistic feature can be referred to in Figure 4.2 on page 76.

5.2 Limitations

Having discussed the different image repair strategies employed in Fernandes’s tweets and how they are realised through the use of various linguistic features, it is essential to note that there are limitations in this research. Firstly, it needs to be stressed that the analysis of tweets is done manually. The tweets are read repeatedly and interpreted with reference to previous works in a similar field as well as those which use Benoit’s (1995; 2015) IRT as their theoretical framework. Therefore, biasness could be present due to prior knowledge and the level of understanding of the researcher. This means to say that what is thought of by the researcher might not necessarily be in agreement with that of other readers of this work. The nature of manual analysis is also that it is very subjective, so it should be understood that difference in opinions and interpretations of tweets might arise due to that.

Next, the effectiveness of the strategies employed is not studied in this research due to time and financial constraints. Although reply tweets in response to Fernandes’s tweets are referred to in the interpretation of data, it is insufficient to appropriately gauge the positive impact or effectiveness of Fernandes’s image repair techniques. This is because there is no frequency count for the number of positive and negative reply tweets included in this work to allow for comparison. Fernandes’s tweets are only analysed for

meanings which hint at repairing an affected reputation. That this research does not study the effectiveness of strategies employed allows for it to be extended in that particular scope in the future. Noticeable linguistic features which realise the function of image repair are also explained based on the researcher's reading and comprehension of the issue. For instance, it is discovered that the subject pronouns 'I' and 'we' and their corresponding possessive adjectives 'my' and 'our', the modal 'will', the present tense as well as the past tense are most commonly used in Fernandes's tweets. As such, only these linguistic features are explained despite the fact that there may be other linguistic features which appear to realise the function of image repair. The results serve as a cautionary tale and are not suggestions as to what strategies are the best to be used in times of crises.

In addition to what has been said, it is significant to stress that only Fernandes's tweets are included as the data in this study. As such, all findings and conclusions drawn relate only to his discourse and cannot be generalised to other stakeholders involved in the particular crisis. In order to increase the credibility and confirmability of the findings, it is recommended that triangulation be done. This indicates that data can be collected from different sources such as press releases, newspaper articles and interviews. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explain that credibility relates to the confidence in the truth of the findings whereas confirmability is concerned with the degree of neutrality to which the results and interpretations made are shaped by the data collected and not due to researcher bias or interest. As the focus of this work is on the image repair techniques used in relation to the crash of AirAsia's QZ8501, the strategies identified in other crises might differ. Even if it is a similar crisis, strategies utilised might not be the same. Malinda (2014) supports that the findings on image repair strategies cannot be generalised by saying that image repair discourse is not a one size-fits-all solution and so strategies employed in a specific crisis will not necessarily work or be used in other crises or by other individuals.

5.3 Conclusion

This research set out to answer two research questions formulated to guide the process of this research. This research was carried out with the aim to identify the image repair strategies employed by a prominent figure, Tony Fernandes, who is the CEO of AirAsia Berhad. By studying his discourse during the QZ8501 crisis, it is revealed that the careful use of words are important as they bring different images and impressions to mind. Certain linguistic features which frequently appear such as the modal 'will' and the pronoun 'we' enable him to get his meaning across clearly. For instance, when Fernandes says 'will do whatever we can', assurance is given that he and his team will do their best to manage the crisis, especially to take care of the victims' families. It shows that he is a responsible leader who is united with his team and intends to handle the unfortunate situation. *Corrective action* is indicated and this helps to lessen any ill feelings the public might have towards him and AirAsia. This is only an example which proves that careful consideration should be given before one speaks or writes as communication is essentially a goal directed activity, in this case which the goal is to repair an affected reputation. Through thorough analysis of Fernandes's tweets, it is hoped that this research will contribute to the understanding of all readers, especially leaders and members of public relations sectors on the importance of choosing words thoughtfully in order to provide a positive image or repair a tainted one. That way, the goal of image repair would be more feasible.

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APPENDIX A

First coding

CA - corrective action
M - mortification
ER - evading responsibility
RO - reducing off

1. **Tony Fernandes**
We will be putting out another statement soon. Thank you for all your thoughts and prays. we must stay strong.
12:52 PM - 28 Dec 2014
I action CA

2. **Tony Fernandes**
On my way to Surabaya where most of the passengers are from as with my Indonesian management. Providing information as we get it.
3:58 PM - 28 Dec 2014
doing something CA

3. **Tony Fernandes**
My only thought are with the passengers and my crew. We put our hope in the SAR operation and thank the Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysian governments.
4:40 PM - 28 Dec 2014
RO - Bolstering → sympathetic

4. **Tony Fernandes**
I am touched by the massive show of support especially from my fellow airlines. This is my worse nightmare. But there is no stopping.
7:06 PM - 28 Dec 2014
RO - Bolstering → sympathetic
→ says that support is present

5. **Tony Fernandes**
To all my staff Airasia all stars be strong, continue to be the best. Pray hard. Continue to do your best for all our guests. See u all soon
7:09 PM - 28 Dec 2014
RO - Bolstering → implying that staff is good/ provides good service

6. **Tony Fernandes**
I as your group ceo will be there through these hard times. We will go through this terrible ordeal together and I will try to see as many of you.
7:11 PM - 28 Dec 2014
action CA shows responsibility

7. **Tony Fernandes**
Our priority is looking after all the next of Kin for my staff and passengers. We will do whatever we can. We continue to pass information as it comes.
7:13 PM - 28 Dec 2014
CA - steps taken to improve situation

8. **Tony Fernandes**
In Jakarta this morning to communicate with Search and Rescue. All assets now in region. Going back to Surabaya now to be with families.
12:58 PM - 29 Dec 2014
CA

Second Coding

CA → corrective action

RO (Bol) → reducing offensiveness (bolstering)

Tony Fernandes's Tweets	Analysis
1. (We will be putting out another statement soon.) Thank you for all your thoughts and prayers. We must stay strong. 12:52 PM - 28 Dec 2014	CA - shows he is taking responsibility of the situation (not washing hands off) - future marker / event in the absolute future ↳ express present time intent - dynamic modality → indicates subjects internal capabilities / willingness
2. On my way to Surabaya where most of the passengers are from as with my Indonesian management. Providing information as we get it. 3:58 PM - 28 Dec 2014	CA - trying to improve the situation by going to Indon (solve the prob) - is physically present instead of just sending a rep
3. My only thought are with the passengers and my crew. We put our hope in the SAR operation and thank the Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysian governments. 4:40 PM - 28 Dec 2014	RO (Bol) - expressing sympathy as a way to create a positive image as one who is sympathetic
4. I am touched by the massive show of support especially from my fellow airlines. This is my worse nightmare. But there is no stopping. 7:06 PM - 28 Dec 2014	RO (Bol) - implying that AirAsia has a positive image (need to be liked in order to gain support) → creating an image of a sympathetic person (reinforcing)
5. To all my staff Airasia all stars be strong, continue to be the best. Pray hard. (Continue to do your best for all our guests.) See u all soon 7:09 PM - 28 Dec 2014	RO (Bol) - praising that staff members are excellent → to gain support and maintain reputation → implying that service has been continuously excellent CA? -
6. I as your group ceo will be there through these hard times. We will go through this terrible ordeal together and I will try to see as many of you. 7:11 PM - 28 Dec 2014	- Use of 'I' and 'we' → show togetherness RO (Bol) - positive image of one who is responsible CA - will cooperate and give support in order to make the situation better / appease stakeholders shows that he is making an effort

Traditionally, 'will' has been used for 'what's 'will' in study

© modal 'will'

① how lang users use pronouns / modals

long-run grammar of English
semantic meaning
Leech, Sitwale
(verbs - pronouns)

* volitional 'will' has tentative implications

APPENDIX B

No	Strategies	Tony Fernandes's Tweets	Analysis
1.	Corrective action	<p>1. We will be putting out another statement soon. Thank you for all your thoughts and prays. we must stay strong. <u>12:52 PM - 28 Dec 2014</u></p> <p>2. On my way to Surabaya where most of the passengers are from as with my Indonesian management. Providing information as we get it. <u>3:58 PM - 28 Dec 2014</u></p>	<p>In this tweet, Fernandes uses the <i>corrective action</i> strategy. He states that he and his team will be giving out another statement soon through the use of the subject pronoun 'we'. By using 'we', he places himself as part of the AirAsia team which is involved in managing the crisis despite his position as a CEO who has the discretion to instruct his employees such as the public relation officers to communicate the ongoing actions. He however involves himself, demonstrating the fact that he does not wash his hands off the matter. This shows that he is taking responsibility for the situation. 'We' is also used in the third sentence to indicate that he is also among those who have been affected by the crisis. He says 'we' to mean that he and his team are united and that they should stand together to get through this ordeal. The use of the modal 'will' shows that his action is volitional and certain to take place in the near future.</p> <p><i>Corrective action</i> is evident here as Fernandes makes an effort to improve the situation by stating his next course of action which is to go to Surabaya, Indonesia to find out more about the situation. He makes it known that he will be physically present there instead of just sending a representative to answer for the company which is at stake. This is understood through the use of the possessive determiner 'my' which refers to the personal pronoun 'I'.</p>

			<p>The personal pronoun ‘we’ is used to indicate he is part of the team which is involved in helping to improve the situation. The use of ‘get’ is in present tense to state what he and the AirAsia team will provide information when obtained.</p>
		<p>3. Our priority is looking after all the next of Kin for my staff and passengers. We will do whatever we can. We continue to pass information as it comes. <u>7:13 PM - 28 Dec 2014</u></p>	<p><i>Corrective action</i> is demonstrated as he states that the AirAsia team will look after the next of kin of the crash victims. The possessive determiner ‘our’ is used to show that taking care of the families of victims is his and the team’s responsibility. That they will look after the relatives of victims is indicated by the word ‘is’ which is in the present tense as Fernandes mentions that they are the priority at that time. The use of the possessive determiner ‘my’ also emphasises his awareness of his responsibility over the victim. He also continues the use of ‘we’ to show unity with his team in managing the crisis.</p>
		<p>4. In Jakarta this morning to communicate with Search and Rescue. All assets now in region. Going back to Surabaya now to be with families. <u>12:58 PM - 29 Dec 2014</u></p>	<p>This tweet shows <i>corrective action</i> as Fernandes updates the public about what he is doing to ensure that the crash is being investigated. ‘I’ is not explicitly mentioned, but it is implied since the tweet is obtained from his official Twitter account. He also updates the public about his next course of action. In this tweet however, the linguistic features which are given focus are absent.</p>
		<p>5. I am rushing to Surabaya. Whatever we can do at Airasia we will be doing. <u>4:12 PM - 30 Dec 2014</u></p>	<p>‘I’ shows that Fernandes is involved in the crisis management. ‘We’ is used to show that his subordinates are not on their own, but that they have him in the team as well. The use of ‘we’ is continued to show his</p>

		<p>6. At Pengkalan Bun. A very professional job is being done. Hampered by bad weather. First two evacuees has just taken off to Surabaya. <u>3:44 PM - 31 Dec 2014</u></p>	<p>support and cooperation as part of the team that is handling the crisis. The <i>corrective action</i> strategy employed here shows that Fernandes and his team are united in providing the best service they can to help out.</p> <p>It can be implied that ‘I am’ have been left out of the tweet. The use of ‘am’ which is a present tense form conveys Fernandes’s action at the time of tweet, which is being at Pengkalan Bun physically. Pengkalan Bun is mentioned as it is the city with Iskandar Airport where a post was set up to coordinate the search for victims of the crash. This shows him trying to take <i>corrective action</i> by getting firsthand information, hence providing updates.</p>
2.	Reducing offensiveness (Bolstering)	<p>7. My only thought are with the passengers and my crew. We put our hope in the SAR operation and thank the Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysian governments. <u>4:40 PM - 28 Dec 2014</u></p> <p>8. I am touched by the massive show of support especially from my fellow airlines. This</p>	<p>Fernandes uses ‘my’ which is the possessive adjective of the personal pronoun ‘I’ to express his concern for those onboard the AirAsia flight. ‘We’ is used in the next sentence to show that he and his staff members are a united team and hoping for the best with the assistance from different parties. The present tense is also signalled by ‘are’ and ‘put’ to show his present emotions. By being transparent about his current feelings such as being concerned and hopefulness, Fernandes attempts to bolsters his image and also that of his company.</p> <p>Fernandes tweets from his perspective, using the personal pronoun ‘I’ and its possessive adjective ‘my’ to express his personal feelings. By stating that he</p>

		<p>is my worse nightmare. But there is no stopping. <u>7:06 PM - 28 Dec 2014</u></p>	<p>is touched, it can be implied that AirAsia has a positive image as one needs to be liked in order to gain support. When he says the crisis is his worst nightmare, he attempts to create a positive image as a sympathetic person. The use of the present tense indicated by 'am' and 'is' shows that the feelings are felt at the time of tweet.</p>
		<p>9. To all my staff Airasia all stars be strong, continue to be the best. Pray hard. Continue to do your best for all our guests. See u all soon <u>7:09 PM - 28 Dec 2014</u></p>	<p>Fernandes encourages his staff to continue being strong and excellent in an attempt to maintain their reputation. He uses 'my' which indicates his responsibility an possibly authority over them. Praising his staff members using the present tense 'continue' implies that AirAsia's service has also been excellent in the past. He also uses 'our' which is the possessive adjective of 'we' in "...our guests." to show that he is also part of the team which provides service to guests. This helps to reduce offensiveness as humbleness is shown by someone in position.</p>
		<p>10. Keeping positive and staying strong. My heart bleeds for all the relatives of my crew and our passangers. Nothing is more important to us. <u>12:59 PM - 29 Dec 2014</u></p>	<p>Fernandes tweets about his current emotions indicated by the use of the present tense 'bleeds' and 'is'. By doing so, he portrays himself as a sympathetic person who prioritises the relatives of victims. This helps to bolster his reputation as he expresses that the public matters to him and the crisis is not a matter to be overlooked. Using the possessive determiner 'my' indicates that the feeling is personal for his subordinates and that he is aware of his responsibility for them as their leader. 'Our' shows that the passengers are a shared</p>

		<p>responsibility between him and his team.</p>
	<p>11. My Allstars in Surabaya and red house in Jakarta have been amazing. Its at times like this you see the true quality of humans. <u>1:20 PM - 29 Dec 2014</u></p>	<p>This relates to his praise for his team, enhancing their positive image in order to obtain and also regain trust which might have been lost. He uses 'my' to imply he is responsible for the team. The present tense signalled by 'see' shows the relevance of his thoughts and emotions at that time, that he witnesses human qualities which impress him.</p>
	<p>12. The staff in Indonesia have been brave, strong, committed and doing 150 percent for all our guests. My pride for them is enormous. <u>1:22 PM - 29 Dec 2014</u></p>	<p>Fernandes tries to enhance the reputation of AirAsia by praising the team members. He uses 'is' which is the present tense of a verb to be to express his pride for their commitment and dedication.</p>
	<p>13. The warmth and support from the people of Indonesia has been incredible. Everywhere I go. Nothing but pure support. <u>1:41 PM - 29 Dec 2014</u></p>	<p>He mentions the incredible warmth and support from the public, implying that trust is likely still present among the people since support is received. The present tense signalled by 'go' indicates support exists at the time of tweet. This helps to bolster AirAsia's image as a company which is accepted and is not alone in the time of a crisis.</p>
	<p>14. The relatives of my crew were inspirational and so moving. Their support and love for Airasia was unbelievable. Gave me huge strength. <u>5:48 AM - 30 Dec 2014</u></p>	<p><i>Bolstering</i> is evident as Fernandes says that love and support have been received by AirAsia. This is because generally, an individual or body has to be liked or accepted in order to obtain support from others. Here, Fernandes tries to enhance the positive image of AirAsia. The past tense is used as demonstrated by 'were', 'was', and 'gave'. This is to talk about the positive support he had witnessed before the tweet.</p>

		<p>15. She told me what amazing service our cabin crew gave and how everyone was so happy. It shows the spirit and the strength of our people. <u>12:10 PM - 31 Dec 2014</u></p>	<p>Fernandes attempts to enhance the reputation of his company by relating what his daughter said about his staff using the past tense which is proven by the use of 'told', 'gave', and 'was'. She told him that they were amazing and optimistic despite what had happened. He then uses the present tense 'shows' to indicate that their current optimism and mood reflected the positive spirit of the team.</p>
		<p>16. reality of seeing the evacuees and some of my aircraft parts are soul destroying. But we stay strong for the families, Allstars and our guests. <u>3:56 PM - 31 Dec 2014</u></p>	<p>The present tense is used as shown by 'are' and 'stay' to convey his current feelings and thoughts. Fernandes expresses his heartfelt sadness by saying that the reality of seeing the evacuees and parts of the wreckage 'are' soul destroying. This portrays a positive image as one who is sympathetic. He also uses 'stay' to mention the need to be strong at that point of time. As a way to bolster his image, 'my' is also used to show ownership, showing that Fernandes is not ashamed to take responsibility for the crash of the aircraft that belongs to the corporation he represents. He also shows togetherness by including himself in the AirAsia team through the use of the pronoun 'we' to say that he will also maintain a strong spirit in order to continue providing support and manage the situation.</p>
		<p>17. I apologise is basarnas. Type to quick. I hope they can locate the aircraft quick. <u>4:21 PM - 31 Dec 2014</u></p>	<p>The present tense is used as shown by 'hope' to express his hopefulness that the whole aircraft would be found soon. This creates an image as one who has a sense of urgency in solving a problem. He also uses the subject pronoun 'I' to indicate that he himself feels that way.</p>

		<p>18. Airasia continues our relief operation to the east coast flood relief. We start collecting funds on January 1 to help rebuild like tacloban <u>4:59 PM - 31 Dec 2014</u></p>	<p>The present tense is evident as demonstrated by the use of ‘continues’ and ‘start’. Fernandes uses the present tense ‘continues’ to state AirAsia’s involvement in providing assistance in the flood relief effort that is happening locally in Malaysia at that point of time while managing the crisis in Indonesia simultaneously. ‘We’ is used to include himself in the effort of helping the public in spite of the tragedy affecting his company. This is an attempt to reinforce a positive image that AirAsia still cares about issues in the country despite going through such a big crisis. The present tense ‘start’ used in the second sentence indicates what his company plans to do next to help in the relief effort, which also bolsters the image of AirAsia as a company made up of patriotic and concerned individuals.</p>
		<p>19. Cargo relief operation are in full flow and has been very successful. Thank you all stars <u>5:01 PM - 31 Dec 2014</u></p>	<p>Fernandes uses the present tense as demonstrated by ‘are’ to say that the team is going all out at that point of time to provide assistance and that the operation has been efficacious. This gives a boost to the company’s reputation. He also thanks his team as a way to bolster the image of AirAsia as that implies that the team members have been cooperative in helping out relief efforts despite the fact that AirAsia is experiencing a crisis.</p>
		<p>20. am hoping that the latest information is correct and aircraft has been found. Please all hope together. This is so important. <u>1:51 PM - 1 Jan 2015</u></p>	<p>Fernandes uses ‘hope’ in the present tense to express his need for support and hope at that point of time that the latest information about the aircraft is right. ‘Is’ also signifies the present tense as he states that the matter is vital as it would likely determine</p>

			<p>whether AirAsia is at fault. These few lines employ the <i>bolstering</i> strategy as the present tense enables him to voice his thoughts at that moment, which is for the matter to be solved urgently. As such, he is portrayed as one with a sense of urgency and responsibility.</p>
		<p>21. Human spirit is amazing. Stay strong Airasia all stars. Don't let newspaper headlines deflect the amazing job you do. Airasia changed flying <u>9.12 AM - 4 Jan 2015</u></p>	<p>The use of 'is', 'stay', and 'don't' shows that the present tense is used to convey Fernandes's thoughts at the time of tweet. For instance, he mentions that his staff members are amazing and that they should continue to stay strong in order to provide the much needed support to the public. He also advises his team to not let the negative newspaper headlines dampen their spirits as AirAsia has changed flying probably by allowing many to do so with its more affordable fares or providing better service. Saying that AirAsia changed flying also reminds the public of their past achievement which lessen any negative feelings which might exist. Through the lines in the present tense, Fernandes demonstrates the use of <i>bolstering</i> as he compliments his team and advises them not to be affected. This is because he is portrayed as an individual who is caring and supportive of his staff members.</p>
		<p>22. To all my staff stay strong. stay focused. Show the world why we have been world's best for 6 years running. Love you all. <u>12:19 AM - 5 Jan 2015</u></p>	<p>The present tense is apparent through the use of 'stay', 'show', and 'love'. Fernandes advises his staff members who are his responsibility as shown by the possessive adjective 'my' to continue being strong and focused despite the negative headlines during the crisis. He is using the <i>bolstering</i> strategy as an image of one who is</p>

		<p>supportive is presented when he offers support to his team and tells them that he loves them using the present tense which functions to indicate a present feeling or thought. He also tells the team to 'show' or rather prove to the public during that time of crisis why AirAsia has been the best globally for six years and counting. He brings up the achievement of AirAsia which is through the use of the phrase 'have been' which is in the present perfect tense, an aspect of the present tense to state that their positive track record has started in the past and is still relevant until that point of time as a technique to enhance the reputation of his company. He uses 'we' to include himself as one who has also played a part in AirAsia's excellence. This reduces the blow to his image as he is depicted as a leader who is cooperative and involved in the work at the company.</p>
	<p>23. We hope and pray for good weather tomorrow so that SAR team can focus on doing the great job that they are doing. <u>1:10 AM - 5 Jan 2015</u></p>	<p>'Hope' and 'pray' are in the present tense to show that at that point of time, Fernandes wants the matter to be solved quickly, reinforcing the positive image of one with a sense of urgency. He includes himself by saying 'we' to show that he and the whole team hope for a quick resolution. He also recognises that the search and rescue team is doing their best, enhancing his image as he is seen as an individual who is grateful for the work of others.</p>
	<p>24. Got the most amazing letter from a nine year old in Australia. Once I</p>	<p><i>Bolstering</i> is evident as Fernandes tells about the support which has been received. The past tense is</p>

		<p>have time that's the first place I'm going. To meet the media and people <u>8:20 PM - 6 Jan 2015</u></p>	<p>utilised as shown by 'got' to relate the event of receiving a letter of support from a child in Australia. It can be implied here that Fernandes who is synonymous with AirAsia is still generally liked by the public as one has to be liked or accepted in order to gain support. He uses the present tense shown by 'have' and 'is' which is contracted in the word 'that's' to say that he will go to Australia in the near future to meet the public when he has time. Saying that gives a boost to his reputation as it shows that he is grateful for the support received and has plans to personally thank the public as shown by the use of the personal pronoun 'I'.</p>
		<p>25. I am led to believe the tail section has been found. If right part of tail section then the black box should be there. <u>1:31 PM - 7 Jan 2015</u></p>	<p>The present tense is evident in the passive form 'am led'. This shows that he believes that the tail section has been found and this will help clear AirAsia's name. Fernandes tries to bolster his image by being transparent about the situation at that time.</p>
		<p>26. Some of my crew. What's great is I saw all captains being real leaders and leading crew on and off the plane. <u>5:02 PM - 10 Jan 2015</u></p>	<p>The present tense 'is' is evident in the contracted form, used in 'what's' to express his thought at that time; that his team is good in their job. This gives a positive image to the readers of the tweet as he praises the captains of his crew for their leadership skills. He uses 'I' to express his opinion which is likely meaningful to his staff due to his position as the head of the company. The past tense is also evident through the use of 'saw' to talk about a pleasant event that he witnessed. The public is given a good impression of the AirAsia crew when</p>

		<p>27. Let's hope today is a major breakthrough day and we can find main fuselage. Its important to us to find all our guests. Thanks to Basarnas and all navys <u>11:18 AM - 11 Jan 2015</u></p> <p>28. We are led to believe Blackbox may have been found. Still not confirmed. But strong info coming. But my main thoughts is fuselage. <u>11:27 AM - 11 Jan 2015</u></p> <p>29. My heart and deep sorrow goes out to all the families involved in QZ8501. <u>12:38 AM - 1 Dec 2015</u></p>	<p>Fernandes relates the positive occurrence.</p> <p>The present tense as signalled by the use of 'hope' and 'is' helps to express Fernandes's thoughts at the time of tweet. He tells everyone to keep their fingers crossed that there would be a major breakthrough on that day as it 'is' crucial that all victims onboard the flight be found. By tweeting that, he is using the <i>bolstering</i> strategy as the image of one who is responsible is illustrated. 'We' is used to imply his cooperation in the search and rescue effort, improving his image of a leader who is personally involved in crisis management.</p> <p>The present tense is shown through the use of 'are led' which is in the passive voice. This shows that Fernandes believes that there will likely be breakthrough in the investigation of what went on before and during the flight before the crash. Although uncertain, he is focused on getting the fuselage so that the truth can be revealed. His focus at that time is demonstrated by the use of 'is' in the present tense. This serves to <i>bolster</i> his image as one who is transparent in providing information to the public.</p> <p>Fernandes uses 'my' to show that his feelings are personal. The use of the present tense 'goes' shows the relevance of his sympathy at that point of time. This reinforces his image as a sympathetic individual by expressing the sympathy he feels personally for all the families who are entangled in the crisis.</p>
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3.	Denial and Evasion of Responsibility (Defeasibility)	<p>30. silly headlines in malaysia. Airasia Indonesia aircraft did not have a stalled engine. An Apu which is ground power had to be restarted.</p> <p><u>12:05 AM - 5 Jan 2015</u></p>	<p>Throughout all Fernandes's tweets regarding the QZ8501 crash, only one has the element of denial. When the crisis happened, many headlines and newspaper reports blamed AirAsia for it. Fernandes refutes the claim that it is AirAsia's fault by saying that the headlines are silly, implying his covert denial. He stresses that the aircraft did not stall as claimed, but that the ground power had to be restarted. The past tense is used as he explains what actually took place leading to the unfortunate incident. Although denial seems to be present, he does not push away the responsibility over the families of victims onboard the aircraft. When Fernandes states that the ground power had to be restarted, he is implying that it is a technical error. A technical error is unexpected and could not have been avoided. This points to the possibility that AirAsia had little or no control over what has happened and this is known as <i>defeasibility</i>. The present tense as indicated by 'is' is only used to explain what APU is and does not realise the function of image repair.</p>
4.	Reducing offensiveness (Bolstering) and Mortification	<p>31. My heart is filled with sadness for all the families involved in QZ 8501. On behalf of AirAsia my condolences to all. Words cannot express how sorry I am.</p> <p><u>4:11 PM - 30 Dec 2014</u></p>	<p>The present tense is proven through the use of 'is' in the first sentence to show that his feeling of sadness is real and exists at the time of tweet. The use of 'my' further strengthens the fact that the sorrow is personally felt. By tweeting that, he puts across an image of one who is sympathetic and aware of how the families of victims would feel. This helps to repair the image of AirAsia if the public has started to lose confidence</p>

			<p>as the CEO shows that he sympathises and cares. <i>Mortification</i> is also apparent as seen in the last sentence in which Fernandes uses the present tense shown by ‘cannot’ and ‘am’ to indicate that his feeling of remorse is indescribable. It is likely that he is making an apology although it is unclear if he is admitting guilt for the crash. This strategy is realised through the use of present tense shown by the modal ‘cannot’ and verb to be ‘am’. Saying sorry could also be a way of expressing sympathy. He also speaks from his own perspective as the CEO of AirAsia through the use of the first person singular subject pronoun ‘I’.</p>
5.	Corrective action and Reducing offensiveness (Bolstering)	<p>32. I as your group ceo will be there through these hard times. We will go through this terrible ordeal together and I will try to see as many of you. <u>7:11 PM - 28 Dec 2014</u></p> <p>33. Been one of my toughest days. Spent a large part of day meeting families of passengers. Doing whatever we can. <u>5:44 AM - 30 Dec 2014</u></p>	<p>The use of ‘we’ shows togetherness, that he is present with his staff and public through this tough time whereas ‘I’ shows his humbleness as a leader who is equally involved in handling the crisis. Using the aforesaid pronouns and possessive determiners creates a positive image as a leader who is responsible and supportive. The modal ‘will’ is used repeatedly to indicate actions of his own volition which will be taken to make the situation better, proving that <i>corrective action</i> is in mind.</p> <p>Fernandes expresses his personal sympathy by saying that experiencing the crisis and trying to manage it have been difficult through the use of ‘my’ which refers to himself. The purpose of sympathising is to reduce offensiveness and <i>bolster</i> his image as a sympathetic individual. It is also likely that he is attempting to gain</p>

			<p>sympathy at the same time. He also employs <i>corrective action</i> by mentioning that a large part of his day has been spent on meeting families of victims through the use of the past tense signalled by 'spent'. 'We' is also used to convey the message that he is together with his team in doing their best to handle the situation. This once again highlights <i>corrective action</i> and also <i>bolsters</i> his image as a leader who is personally involved although he can delegate duties and does not necessarily need to be out in the field. The use of 'can' is in the present tense, indicating the team will provide assistance to the best of their abilities at that point of time.</p>
		<p>34. I also met the families of my crew and pilots. Not been able to see 3 families. Engineer, fo and one crew. <u>5:45 AM - 30 Dec 2014</u></p>	<p>The use of 'I' shows Fernandes's own intent and action to meet up with the victims' families in an attempt likely to provide comfort and support, indicating <i>corrective action</i>. <i>Bolstering</i> is also present through his honesty of mentioning that he was unable to meet 3 other families. By being transparent about his action and shortcoming of not being able to meet three families, Fernandes gives a better impression and this increases trust.</p>
		<p>35. Working with airport to prepare all facilities. And hospital. Chief pilots have been making all arrangements. <u>10:06 AM - 31 Dec 2014</u></p>	<p>The subject pronoun had been omitted but it can be implied that it refers to Fernandes or his team, or even both parties. Fernandes updates the public on AirAsia's ongoing effort in preparing to handle the relatives of victims who might show up at the airport and also victims which need to be rushed to the hospital. <i>Bolstering</i> is also present as Fernandes portrays his team as</p>

		<p>cooperative and willing to bear responsibility for what has happened. None of the linguistic features focused on in this work is found in this tweet.</p>
	<p>36. I hope to fly to evacuation site to thank everyone for putting in so much effort in finding the site. And keep everyone informed. <u>10:07 AM - 31 Dec 2014</u></p>	<p>Fernandes uses ‘hope’ which is in the present tense to notify others of what he will do in the near future. By expressing his hope to go to the evacuation site, he gives an impression that he is one who is appreciative of what others are doing as he is willing to fly all the way to show his gratitude. This is a boost to his image as it shows that he is being thankful and also trying to do his part in keeping the public informed of the current situation. In this tweet, both <i>bolstering</i> and <i>corrective action</i> exist.</p>
	<p>37. Staff from all over asean India and Japan flying to Surabaya to assist our wonderful Indonesia All stars. Seeing it shows how asean could be <u>10:17 AM - 31 Dec 2014</u></p>	<p>The strategy of <i>corrective action</i> is utilised as Fernandes uses ‘shows’ in the present tense to talk about how impressed he is with his staff members from various countries are flying to Surabaya to help in managing the situation. This shows that AirAsia is taking action to solve the problem and also creates the image of a responsible and cooperative corporation. Fernandes also attempts to <i>bolster</i> AirAsia’s image by praising the staff members as wonderful likely due to their involvement and willingness to provide assistance.</p>
	<p>38. I want the world to know what amazing people I have in this company. Yesterday my daughter flew to bali.</p>	<p>The present tense is again obvious through the words ‘want’ and ‘have’ used to state his thought at the time of tweet. Fernandes uses ‘I’ to speak from his perspective as he praises that his staff members are amazing.</p>

		<p>And she said the crew sang. <u>12:09 PM - 31 Dec 2014</u></p>	<p>This is a way to improve the image of the company. He also reinforces the positive image by mentioning what his daughter told him. When describing the pleasant event in the past, the past tense is utilised as evident through the word ‘flew’ and ‘said’.</p>
		<p>39. On my way back to Surabaya. I'm touched again by the warmth of everyone in Indonesia and so impressed with Basenas and army. <u>3:58 PM - 31 Dec 2014</u></p>	<p><i>Corrective action</i> is employed as Fernandes states that he is on the way back to Surabaya, suggesting his involvement in crisis management. This is proven through the use of ‘my’, the possessive adjective of ‘I’ to refer to his journey. <i>Bolstering</i>, is evident as he expresses that he is touched by the warmth and support received using the pronoun ‘I’. The present tense shown by ‘am’ which has been contracted in ‘I’m’ indicates his feeling which exists at the time of tweet. By saying that he is touched, it can be inferred that there is still good rapport with the public in order to obtain support and this enhances his image.</p>
		<p>40. If our beautiful and wonderful crew is identified we will go from Surabaya to Palembang with her parents. Heartbreaking soul destroying <u>1:54 PM - 1 Jan 2015</u></p>	<p>‘Will’ denotes the certainty of accompanying the victim’s parents in the future and also that the action is volitional. In the line ‘Heartbreaking soul destroying’, the phrase ‘It is’ is likely omitted. Nonetheless, Fernandes’s feeling of sorrow is expressed in the present tense to show that pain is felt at that time. He portrays a sympathetic image which is a way to reduce offensiveness. ‘We’ is used to say that he and his team will be present.</p>
		<p>41. I'm arriving in Surabaya to take Nisa home to Palembang. I cannot</p>	<p>Here, Fernandes shows responsibility as the head of AirAsia by being in Surabaya to bring back</p>

		<p>describe how I feel. There are no words. <u>4:55 PM - 2 Jan 2015</u></p>	<p>the body of his late crew member, illustrating <i>corrective action</i> being made although the statement is in present continuous tense. In his second and third sentences, the present tense is used to state that his feelings cannot be expressed with words, showing that deep regret and sympathy are probably felt. <i>Bolstering</i> is evident as he portrays himself as one who is responsible for what has happened to his late employee and also one who is sympathetic.</p>
		<p>42. Many messages of strength for my staff all over Asia. Makes me sure we will come back stronger. But first and only priority is families. <u>7:50 PM - 3 Jan 2015</u></p>	<p>The present tense is evident through the use of 'makes' and 'is'. Fernandes utilises the <i>bolstering</i> strategy when he states that there are many messages of support for 'my' staff which is the object pronoun of 'I' due to the implication that one probably has to be liked in order to garner support. He reinforces the notion that he or his company is well-liked by the public when he shows appreciation by saying that the messages make him sure that the company will 'stand up' from the fall. He uses 'we' to say that they will come back stronger, showing that he is united with his staff in improving the company. <i>Corrective action</i> is also employed when Fernandes states that the families of victims are the priority of AirAsia now as this shows that they are doing their best to manage the crisis and take care of the families. The fact that the families are their main concern is proven through the use of 'is' in the present tense which functions to state a present thought or feeling.</p>

		<p>43. Many sensational headlines on Airasia. We have kept quiet as our focus is on families. One by one facts will come out and clear us. <u>12:02 AM - 5 Jan 2015</u></p>	<p>Fernandes uses the present tense 'is' to convey that AirAsia's priority is the families of victims which shows that the action of ensuring their well-being happened and is a reality at that time tweet. Fernandes uses the modal 'will' to <i>bolster</i> his image by stating the possibility that facts will prove their innocence when the investigations are complete. He shows confidence in AirAsia's capability despite the sensational headlines in the press which report otherwise.</p>
		<p>44. facts will come out. As I have said we are calm, will take the hits now as our focus is families. But time will show what Airasia is all about. <u>12:15 AM - 5 Jan 2015</u></p>	<p>The use of 'we' highlights the existence of unity and he once again emphasises it by using 'our' to say that he and the team are taking care of the victims' families together. This shows that they are responsible and are taking action to handle the situation. The present tense is evident with the words 'are' and 'is' in the second sentence to clearly state that AirAsia is focused on the families at that point of time. The modal 'will' is also in the second sentence to signify volition, that AirAsia will bear with criticisms from all parties as their main priority is the families. Similar to the tweet before, Fernandes uses 'will' to <i>bolster</i> AirAsia's image by showing confidence that the reputation of the airline will be redeemed soon. In the fifth line, 'will' is again used to show confidence that the truth will be out in the future.</p>
		<p>45. Qpr fans hammering me. My concern right now is only families of our Surabaya flight. <u>12:32 AM - 5 Jan 2015</u></p>	<p>Fernandes uses 'is' in his second sentence to state that his main focus at that moment is surely the victims' families. He uses 'my' to express that it is his personal opinion. This</p>

			shows that he is taking care of them, indicating <i>corrective action</i> and enhancing his image as one who is caring. 'Is' is a present tense form of a verb to be used to state a fact or truth.
		<p>46. Getting hammered by Qpr fans. only concern is the families affected by our plane. But experimental side today. 19 points. League not cup. <u>12:35 AM - 5 Jan 2015</u></p>	<p>Similar to the tweet above, Fernandes again emphasises with the use of 'is' that it is a reality that they are focusing on the victims' families at the time of tweet, giving a boost to their image. <i>Corrective action</i> is evident as Fernandes implies their best effort in looking after families of victims. The use of 'our' once again shows that he and the team are one.</p>
		<p>47. There is a good team now at qpr. Les, Chris, Phil mark Rebecca and @Ruben_E_G from shareholders helping harry. While I focus on Airasia. <u>12:49 AM - 5 Jan 2015</u></p>	<p>Using 'I' implies that Fernandes knows his priority because he is speaking for himself. The present tense is evident through the use of 'focus' to indicate that Fernandes is concerned and doing his best for the families of victims when he sent out the tweet.</p>
		<p>48. As I have said we never hide. All will come out at right time. Focus is finding all guests and looking after families <u>12:36 AM - 5 Jan 2015</u></p>	<p>Fernandes is firm in stating that AirAsia never hides which is in the present tense, implying that AirAsia is transparent in all that is done which is a positive trait. He uses 'I' to state his firm belief in the company and also includes himself in the act of transparency by using 'we'. The present tense is also used when he mentions that the priority at that time 'is' finding all victims and taking care of their families. This shows that the <i>corrective action</i> strategy is utilised as Fernandes and the team know that they should manage the victims and their families first. 'Will' which is a</p>

		<p>49. We need to find all parts soon so we can find all out guests to ease the pain of our families. That still is our priority <u>1:32 PM - 7 Jan 2015</u></p> <p>50. Spent all day with my staff. Engineers, ramp, office staff. I always thought we had the world best staff. Now I really see it. <u>4:58 PM - 10 Jan 2015</u></p> <p>51. With our engineers. We have all been so affected by this but are determined to be even better. <u>5:00 PM - 10 Jan 2015</u></p>	<p>modal also signifies Fernandes's certainty and optimism that the truth will be revealed in the future and that it will clear AirAsia of all wrongs and blames.</p> <p>'We' is used to show inclusion, that Fernandes is also part of the team which is working to improve the situation. This shows a united front which is positive. He also uses the present tense evident in the verb to be 'is' to indicate that the victims' families remain as their focus, portraying that the team comprises of caring individuals.</p> <p>In the first two sentences of this tweet, Fernandes mentioned that he has spent all day with his staff members who are playing a part in managing the crisis and also that he has always thought of them to be excellent. This description of what was done which signals <i>corrective action</i> is tweeted in the past tense evident through the words 'spent', 'thought', and 'had'. The last sentence is in the present tense as shown by the use of 'see' to reemphasise his belief at the current time that his AirAsia team is the best, reinforcing a positive image if not repairing a tainted one. The use of 'I' demonstrates his unwavering confidence in his team at AirAsia</p> <p>Fernandes uses 'we' to emphasise inclusion, that the crash has also left a deep impact on him and his team members. He includes himself and attempts to gain sympathy which is a <i>bolstering</i> strategy. The present tense is shown through the use of the</p>
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		<p>52. would like to thank the KNKT for the very thorough investigations. My thoughts are to the families and my crew who still remain our number 1 priority. <u>12:31 AM - 1 Dec 2015</u></p>	<p>verb to be 'are' which shows that at that point of time, he and his teams are truly determined to improve their company. By saying that, he resolves to make amends in the future.</p> <p>'Are' which is a form of verb to be in the present tense is used to convey his thoughts and concern towards the families of victims and his crew. Using present tense indicates that the action of thinking or feeling is current. He expresses his sympathy personally through the use of 'my' which is the possessive adjective for 'I'. When 'my' appears for the second time, he implies that he is a leader who is responsible for his crew. 'Remain' in the present tense is also used to say that the families and crew continue to be the main focus as search and rescue operation carries on. Here, 'our' is used and Fernandes includes himself in the team of people who is focusing on managing the crisis. <i>Bolstering</i> is apparent as Fernandes portrays a sympathetic image. When he says that the families and crew are still the number one priority, he is employing <i>corrective action</i> to make sure that steps are being taken to resolve the matter.</p>
		<p>53. These are scars that are left on me forever but I remain committed to make Airasia the very best. We owe it to the families and my crew. <u>12:35 AM - 1 Dec 2015</u></p>	<p>The present tense is obvious with the use of 'are', 'remain', and 'owe' to convey Fernandes's thoughts when the crisis occurred. He sadly expresses that the crash of the airplane and deaths of the passengers 'are' everlasting scars left on him through the use of 'me' which is the object pronoun of 'I'. Here, <i>bolstering</i> is present as he is portrayed as a sympathetic</p>

		<p>individual who is also trying to obtain sympathy, probably in hope that the public would not be too harsh on him and his company over what has happened. Despite what has happened, he says “I ‘remain’ committed” to say that he will continue to be committed to make AirAsia the very best. This shows that he is being responsible and also taking steps to maintain the company’s performance if not make it better. Using ‘my’ once again emphasises that the crew members are his responsibility.</p>
	<p>54. My heart and deep sorrow goes out to all the families involved in QZ8501.</p> <p>There is much to be learned here for Airasia, the manufacturer and the aviation@ industry. We will not leave any stone unturned to make sure the industry learns from this tragic incident.</p> <p><u>12:37 AM - 1 Dec 2015</u></p>	<p>Fernandes once again uses the present tense, seen through the words ‘goes’ and ‘is’ to convey his thoughts at that point of time. He is depicted as an individual who is sympathetic towards others when he expresses his personal feelings using ‘my’. He also mentions that there ‘is’ much to be learnt, implying that it is a fact that lessons should be learnt to help improve the company in the future and to prevent such incidents from recurring. This is supported by the last sentence in his tweet in which he uses ‘we’ to include himself and ‘will’ to state their future action of not leaving any stone unturned. The use of the modal ‘will’ indicates their intention and promise to make things right and not let history repeat itself in the future.</p>