

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **II.1. Review of Related Theories**

The field of electronic text analysis has been increasing rapidly over the past decades. This is not only due to the development of information technology and software development, but also as a result of there are numbers of people who is interested in using electronic resources to make an interactions and to find some information online. This study focuses on language use and gender identity in Friendster.com. The data analysis will be divided into four categories which are disclosure of personal information, sexual identity, emotive feature, and language gender in Friendster.com.

These features are important to reveal identity in virtual world by considering the broaden technology of networking area where people are mostly spend their time communicate in virtual interactions. This occurrence makes people join communities or peer-group relationship online. By joining the communities such as Friendster.com, they are available to obtain friendship with other user of online group. Therefore the writer is intended to analyze the features in Frindster.com to distinguish how the user represent their identity in virtual interaction and language differences use by male user and female user using the theory of identity, netspeak, and language and gender.

### **II.1.1. Disclosure of Personal Information in Friendster.com**

Identity is often characterized in terms of one's interpersonal characteristics, such as self-definition or personality traits, the roles and relationships one takes on in various interactions, and one's personal values or moral beliefs (Calvert, 2002). Identity also involves a sense of continuity of self images over time (Grotevant, 1998), a continuity that may be disrupted when puberty creates radical alterations in one's physical appearance. With sexual maturation come changes in the roles that one is expected to assume with members of the opposite sex, for the youngster is increasingly expected to assume a sexual identity, one of the markers and anchors of a mature identity (Erikson, 1993; Grotevant, 1998). This statement means that identity can be seen from the way people make interaction with others, from the language use and/or from the body movement. In Friendster.com the identity of the user is reflected through profile which is created by the user by concerning to the disclosure of personal information and sexual identity.

According to Danah Boyd and Jeffrey Heer (2006), Profiles have become a common device for presenting one's identity online. With the popularity of online social networking services such as Friendster.com, Profiles have been extended to include explicitly social information such as the term "Friend" relationships and Testimonials. With such Profiles, users do not just represent themselves, but help to shape the representation of others on the device. This is an interesting object when names, age, and even location can be obviously connected with both online and offline identity. In 'interactive written discourse' (IWD)

participant word process conversational turns in an online written simulated conversation. Such discourse can take many forms including informal open-ended 'chat' and complex specialist role playing games such as those in multi-user dungeons (MUDs) (Calvert&Huffaker, 2005).

According to Shortis (2001), The conversation involves participants who arrive in a virtual space or 'room' with an identity which is usually not their real name and which may cover age, gender, and other aspects of IRL identity. Simulating a different identity or attitude is common practice used in virtual conversation in order to avoid the hacker sense of the word 'trolling' for purposely ambiguous identity and behavior designed to provoke a response. Contrary with the Shortis theory which most of the user in cyberspace prefer of being someone different rather than being real. While, the users in Friendster.com offers different things in which they are likely to represent their real identity by giving their real name, age, location, birthdate, etc. It is interesting to analyze how they represent their real identity by considering their blog becomes their personal experience which must be private and not be shown in public.

### **II.1.2. Sexual Identity**

While the sexual maturation changes in the process of shaping someone's identity, it is begun that one is expected to make interaction with members of the opposite sex (Erikson, 1993; Grotevant, 1998). Female and male reveals their sexual identity in many different ways. During adolescence, sexual orientations, whether heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, or transgender, often appear

(Grotevant, 1998). While the challenges of assuming a mature sexual identity occur for all youth, these challenges may be particularly difficult for those who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered.

In the study done by Calvert and Huffaker (2005), virtual world is where flexibility and anonymity possibly used by the user. Youngsters may feel more comfortable expressing their sexual orientation and exploring their sexual identity beyond social prescriptions. It means that youngsters are more likely to show their status and to make a relationship in cyberspace. In online forums such as Friendster.com, language is a key means through which sexual identity can be expressed and explored. As in Friendster.com, most of the users give information about their sexual identity such as single, married, and complicated. Although the virtual world provides freedom and flexibility for the user to represent their sexual identity of being heterosexual, homosexual or transgender, there are still social values which control their way to show their sexual identity.

### **II.1.3. The Use of Emotive Feature**

*Emoticons*, also referred to as *smileys*, derive from the hybrid of "emotion" and "icons", and are either composed of punctuation characters or of graphical symbols. Online interactions lack the facial expressions and body gestures vital to expressing opinions and attitudes, emoticons were introduced to fill a void in online communication (Crystal, 2001).

How do emoticons affect the interpretation of a message? While one study suggests verbal content still outshines emoticons in the interpretation of a message

(Walther & D'Addario, 2001), the impact of emoticons and smileys is not relegated to the message itself. They also help form impressions of the author's disposition or attitude. For instance, in a study of chat room moderators, the use of emoticons caused the moderator to be perceived as more "dynamic," "friendlier," "valuable," and "talkative" than moderators who did not use emoticons (Constantin, Kalyanaraman, Stavrositu, & Wagoner, 2002a).

In a study of 3,000 online messages, found that females used more graphical accents, including emoticons, to express emotion in their discourse than males (Witmer & Katzman, 1997), a pattern that is also reflected in youngster males' tendency to deny their feelings, including sadness (Ruble & Martin, 1998). In an analysis using instant messaging dialogues, males rarely use emoticons in conversations with other males, but do use them with females, while females use an equal amount of emoticons in both male and female conversations (Lee, 2003). Similarly, an examination of online newsgroups finds that women are more apt to express emotions, but males will adapt in mixed-gendered newsgroups and express more (Wolf, 2000).

#### **II.1.4. Language Use in Cyberspace**

Traditional gender roles embody the male role as agentic, where action, self-expansion, and individuality are the rule. By contrast, traditional gender roles define the female role as communal, embodying emotional expressiveness and a focus on the needs of others (Bakan, 1966). The work of Deborah Tannen suggests that the communication patterns of males and females often differ, with

males using a direct and forceful style while females use a more indirect and intimate style of interaction (Tannen, 1995). Such linguistic styles parallel the masculine principle of agency and the feminine principle of communion.

There are, however, differences in the modes of CMC, which may have consequences for language use or social interactions. For instance, online chatting differs from the turn-taking patterns of face-to-face or telephone conversation because online posts appear out of sequence, thereby impacting language coherence (Herring, 1999; Greenfield & Subrahmanyam, 2003). Instant Messaging (IM) may encourage intimacy among users, including self-disclosure and sentimental feelings, because it cultivates social connectedness (Hu, Smith, Westbrook, & Wood, 2003). The language use in female and male Friendster account can also reveal some of the elements in the construction of virtual identity of the blog users.

## **II.2. Theoretical Framework**

In cyberspace, identity can be reflected as the mixture of what people think of themselves and their position in the society. Identity is expressed in language through speaking and writing. Otherwise, identity requires the telling of stories both by and about oneself (Whitebrook, 2001:21). Basically, this study concerns with identity and gender. The writer is interested to analyze the identity reveals in cyberspace where people started to open their self by giving personal information and the reason behind this behavior. Then, the way how the user represent their sexual identity by identifying their relationship status as single, in a

relationship, married or it's complicated. Each of this status means something to the users and to other users who visit their profile. It because the youngster does not only interested to make friendship but also dating friends and activity partners.

The next is to compare the way users present themselves online in terms of disclosure of personal information, sexual identity, emotive feature and language used with the way they see themselves in real life as a virtual entity. This is in relation to the concept of identity that is seen as way people define themselves also in terms of personality traits that differentiate someone from other person. This includes the way people see themselves in various roles and relationship in a variety of interactions in addition to one's personal values or moral beliefs (Calvert, 2002). Identity is also related to a sense of continuity of self-images over time.

### **II.3. Review of Related Studies**

There are three studies related with this research. The writer takes these studies as comparison and support to the analysis.

First study is about *Gender, Identity, and Language Use in Teenage Blogs* conducted by David A. Huffaker and Sandra L. Calvert from Georgetown University (2005). This article discusses about online identity and language that is used between male and female in teenage blogs as a personal journal that is explored in the World Wide Web. Identity plays an important role in the process of creating weblogs especially in the youngster year rather than they were in childhood. Nowadays, online setting and online venues such as Multi User

Domains (MUDs) becomes the most common place for youngster to explore their identity. Online environment enables the youth to explore their physical attributes such as the body, biological sex, race, or age and also it gives flexibility for them to explore identity through language, their role play, and the personality assumption. Here, language is a key which the identity can be explored and constructed especially in the online setting.

This study intends to analyze gender similarities and differences of weblogs created by teenager. The author examined how youngsters present their identities online as well as they use language to express their experiences and feelings by using content analysis of their weblogs. The context which interest them are:

1. How personal information, such as name, age, location is published,
2. How the emotive features are explored,
3. How sexual identity is intimated,
4. How language is used to express ideas and feelings.

By using quantitative methods, research found that teenagers are more likely to spend their time in online interaction. Therefore, the author in this article randomly selects the weblog participants between teenage males and females. These blogs include *LiveJournal* (n=30), *Xanga* (n=6), *Blogspot* (n=27), *Blog-City* (n=2), *t-Blog* (n=1), and *Journalspace* (n=1), except for three cases, where the blog is a personally hosted web site with a vanity URL such as "www.myname.com."



The result of this study said that internet arena allow flexibility to design and create personal identity whatever they like. Exploring identity in online interaction can be various ways; people can present themselves as well as their real life or prefer to present themselves as fictitious figure. In fact, this study found that youth prefer to present themselves realistically. The use of emoticons is common in the online interaction which there is more than half of total users in the participants of this article write graphical icons as their text-based. This study found that males actually posted emoticons more often than females did.

Second study is *Profiles as Conversation: Networked Identity Performance on Friendster* done by Danah Boyd and Jeffrey Heer (2003). In their study, they examine communication aspects of profile within the friendster service. They use two kinds of methodology: ethnography and visualization. The ethnography component consists of a 9-month participant-observation during 2003, including interviews, qualitative surveys and focus groups with over 200 friendster early adopters. The communication aspects in physical are bodies (audiences), conversation, and other elements of context, but in digital environment, the audiences are unknown.

Conversation within friendster occurs through profiles. Profile could be a conversation since it shares information and ideas among the members. A profile represents individual embodiment and interpreted as conversational anchors like clothing. Initiating conversation in friendster is done by using some features in profile that considered as an offer to make friendship or group by considering the terms 'add as friend', 'send message', 'invite to group', and 'add comment'.

Moreover, the picture of the user can also lead a conversation that attracts any user who sees it. In conclusion, the friendster profile builds digital body, a social creation, an initiator of conversation, and medium for ongoing conversation in multiple modalities.

The last study is done by Yuniati Rohmah the student of English Department of Airlangga University entitled *Hyperreal Identity Performance in Friendster.com Profiles through Signs* (2007). This study said that the way of communication in cyberspace is indefinite since it across the time and boundaries. Virtual identities are reproduced when making a virtual communication because the persons who communicate each other are not clear. It is because the user can give vague identity in their profile. She mentioned that everytime the users log in internet they build new identities which are unreal. She also said that the identity in digital publishing, especially Friendster, is blurring. People can not exactly notice the truth or lies there. Online identities may be multiple, fluid, manipulated and/or may have little to do with the 'real selves' of the persons behind them.

This study used hyper-sign since the cyberspace such ad Friendster is a product of hyperreality. According to Piliang (2004) Hyper-sign is a sign that out of principle, definition, structure and it self's function (Rohmah, 2007). Hyper-sign itself is divided into several types such as artificial signs and recycled signs. This study randomly chose four profiles without any preconception on the topics because the author tries to limit any subjectivity interpretation and the influence of prior belief or assumption when doing the analysis. Therefore, the writer is

intended to analyze the reason why there are some users who would rather reveal their real identity than become explicit and hide in the public mask.