

CHAPTER III

METHODS OF THE STUDY

III.1. Research Approach

This study uses the theory of qualitative data to analyze the language use and gender in Friendster.com. Qualitative research has several elements in doing analysis study. First, the researcher basically focuses on the main ‘measurement device’ in the study. Second, qualitative research is conducted through an intense contact with the real life situation. Third, the researcher’s role mostly achieves holistic meaning of the context which is observed (Miles & Huberman, 1998:149).

A qualitative researcher focuses on subjective meanings, definitions, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of specific cases. Moreover, qualitative research uses more of logic in practice and relies on the informal wisdom that has developed from the experiences of researchers (Lawrence, 1991). In this case, by using content analyses of Friendster’s profile and blog, the writer examined how youngsters present their identities online, as well as how they use language to express their experiences and feelings.

The Qualitative research has six characteristics: importance of the context, the case study method, the researcher’s integrity, grounded theory, process, and interpretation. Attention to the critical context explained that the qualitative researchers emphasize the importance of social context for understanding the social world. It means that a qualitative researcher notes what came before or

what surrounds the focus of study. It also implies that the same events or behaviors can have different meanings in different cultures or historical areas.

III.2. Corpus and Sample

III.2.1. Corpus

The corpus of the study is taken from Friendster.com as the most popular sites to visit by Indonesian youngster recently. Friendster.com provides several features such as profile, blog, and picture. This site becomes popular because the user is able to join communities in a group of relationship. Furthermore, the users can upload picture and create profile layout in order to attract others to add them as friend. Then, they are also able to create blog to share about their interest by adding their favorite link through other website and to share experience or personal information. Language and identity entail in profile and blog can be compared between female and male user.

III.2.2. Sampling

The writer takes two samples of Friendster's account owned by two students of English Department—KelzAgain (<http://profiles.friendster.com/29178098>), and Akudenan et toi (<http://profiles.friendster.com/akudenan>). In particular, the analysis is based on the interface of the first page (profile page) and the topics of the blogs. They are chosen because they represent the age range (youngster) that comprise the most common users who use the internet and relationship networks such as Friendster. They are also chosen because the writer

knows them so the writer can interview them to ask their opinion about their Friendster account.

III.3. Technique of Data Collection

The data analysis is obtained by the writer from the internet specifically at www.friendster.com 12 May 2008 at 19.00. The writer chose the samples from her close friends to analyze how they represent their identity in virtual world as if it is similar with their real characteristics in non-virtual world. The data is divided into two categories both a sample of female account 'Kelz' and a sample of male account 'Akudenan'. It is collected in order to compare the way virtual identity is presented by male and female user. After that the interviewed the owner of the respective accounts to understand how they (in real life) see themselves in the virtual setting or what they think of themselves in the virtual setting.

In short, there are several steps while taking the data collections:

1. Searching for www.friendster.com
2. Choosing ten samples from the profile of the writer's friend.
3. Dividing the samples into two groups: female and male.
4. Analyzing the samples by focusing with the personal information, sexual identity, gender and emoticons, also gender and language.

III.4. Technique of Data Analysis

The writer categorizes the data based on these four categories:

1. Disclosure of personal information in Friendster.com
2. Sexual identity

3. The use of emotive feature

4. Language use

These are then analysed based on the discussion about how youngster of the internet use those categories to reveal and construct their virtual identity as proposed by Calvert and Huffaker (2005). The participants are interviewed to know what they think of themselves as a virtual identity which is seen as self definition or personal traits, the roles and relationships one take in various interactions and personal values or moral belief (Calvert, 2002). It is also to see how identity involves a sense of continuity of self images (Grotevant, 1998).