

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Research Approach

This research focuses on how Sungmin's gender constructed in Super Junior gender switch fan fiction, especially for KyuMin (Kyuhyun-Sungmin) couple in asianfanfics.com. The research uses qualitative approach to find which Korean boy band considered as the most popular who has been written in fan fiction and how the character whose gender is switched is constructed in the story. Qualitative approach used because as David Deacon stated in his writing *Why Counting Counts* compiled in Pickering book, *Research Method of Cultural Studies* (2008) that cultural studies is orientated to deconstruction of meaning (p. 93). He argued that qualitative approach can give more deconstruction of meaning, while quantitative approach is construction of meaning (p. 93). Therefore, by using qualitative approach this study can explore the meaning of switching the gender of Sungmin's character from male to female in genderswitch fan fiction.

In this case, it is Super Junior who is popular and have fan fiction written by fans and posted in asianfanfics.com, with the KyuMin couple, so the research focus on Sungmin's gender construction in some KyuMin fanfictions. As stated before in chapter I, fan fiction is popular among fans and in fan fiction there is a discourse about gender which is easy to find.

Fans are usually unaware of these easy information and accept everything without filtering the information first and influence their opinion about things related to gender and it influences in their fan fiction they wrote.

This study would explore more about Sungmin's character in some KyuMin gender switch fan fiction and to find true and valid answer of the question about how the gender of Sungmin is constructed in KyuMin gender switch fan fiction in asianfanfics.com.

3.2 Data Sources

All of the data sources needed for this study are collected from some books, ebooks or journals, and online research in fan fiction website. The primary data is the KyuMin genderswitch fan fiction in asianfanfics.com (AFF) the writer had chosen. It means that the primary source is the website. Thus the secondary data is library research by reading books or ebooks or online academic journal and videos about Sungmin.

3.3 Limitation

To keep the expected field of the study, the topic of analysis of this study will focus on how the author described the character of Sungmin as a female in KyuMin gender switch fan fiction. The main source of this study is story of KyuMin gender switch fan fiction in asianfanfics.com. The other subject outside the limitation will not be considered in the process of analysis.

3.4 Technique of Data Collection

The data for this study are divided into two. The first data are the data collected from any videos of Super Junior reality show that explored more about Sungmin. The videos collected from YouTube and some others were from the writer's own video collection. First, go to www.youtube.com from the browser. In the YouTube search box, put one of these keywords: Sungmin, super junior reality show, lee sungmin facts, and let's learn about sungmin. The keywords that the writer used based on a magazine *History of Super Junior Volume 2: Group Guide*. The criteria that the writer used in order to choose the videos is those videos must contain the facts about Sungmin.

Based on Sun Jung's book about Korean masculinity, there were some points that indicate Sungmin's character as soft masculinity. It had been mentioned in the previous chapter that in soft masculinity, one point that indicate it is the pretty boy (*kkonminam*) image, which is a male with tall and long legs, have slim feminine face, long and/or wavy hair, and sweet smile. Afterwards, the writer watches the videos that had been sorted and take a note, or instead of watching the videos online, the writer decided to download those videos. For additional information about Sungmin's fact, the writer search from fans' blog. To prove the information, the writer search for some video that said so. The writer chooses *Fantasy Couple* reality show, *Idol World* reality show, and a video about Sungmin, *Let's Learn about Sungmin*.

Those three videos were chosen because from many of Super Junior reality show, Sungmin's facts were hardly found. Aside from using *History of Super Junior Volume 2: Group Guide* magazine, the keywords for searching the videos also got from the fans' blog which post about Sungmin's fact or transcription of a radio show. Therefore those facts posted in fans' blog, even though those were not strongly true, the videos can support the truth as the evidence.

The second data is the fan fiction, precisely genderswitch fan fiction, collected by picking some fan fiction in asianfanfics.com labeled as KyuMin genderswitch fan fiction. The writer did some steps in order to find the right fan fiction to analyze. First, go to asianfanfics.com website and in the search box above typed 'genderswitch fan fiction'. Then the writer counted what fan fiction was the most popular, about which idol the fan fiction was. There were several criteria chosen to find the object of study, such as:

- a. The story must be posted between January 2012 and December 2012

The reason why the writer decided the frequency for a year because in the website, there were many gender switch stories and some of them include KyuMin. In order to find the right stories, the writer decided to make it a year of frequency, so that the writer can find more option about which stories to be analyzed. It was also because there are many fan fiction which got a few subscribers or comments, afterwards, the writer made the frequency into a year in order to find the stories which had many subscribers or comments.

b. Must be labeled as completed story

There were many stories in the website. Because of the limit of the time for the writer to gain some data and analyze it, so the completed stories were chosen. The other reason was that one shot story only has subscribers or comments less than 30, while the ongoing stories, especially the chaptered stories, need minimal more than a week or even more than a month to update. The time for the writer to finish this thesis is limited so the ongoing stories would not be chosen to analyze. However, as long as the story was labeled 'Completed', it does not matter about the number of chapters it has.

c. Those stories chosen by the number of subscribers or comments

The number of subscribers or comments was chosen because it showed that the story was read by many people. In the website, usually the number of chapters, subscribers, views, and comments appeared below the name of the author. The reason why the writer decided to make the criteria based on the number of subscribers or comments was because if the writer looked from the number of views, it did not guarantee that the stories read or commented by the readers. The story must gain a hundred or more subscribers or comments. Based on those criteria, the writer found two Super Junior genderswitch fan fiction with KyuMin pairing, they are *Battle of Pride* (166 subscribers and 320 comments) and *Lee Sungmin is My Maid* (161 subscribers and 486 comments). Those two fan fictions were found in www.asianfanfics.com or known as AFF.

3.5 Technique of Data Analysis

This study aims to find the way fans write fan fiction about Sungmin as female while in real life he is a male. Basically, Jenkins gave ten ways to rewrite television show. Meanwhile to distinguish Sungmin as male and female, the theory of Korean masculinity and Korean women portrayal is used.

Based on Jenkins' textual poacher which stated that in writing fan fiction, fans writing fan fiction from borrowing the character of certain character in television show, movie, anime, or video games and then created their own plot and setting of the story (Jenkins 1992, p. 24). Thus, the writer was looking for the male and female character of Sungmin. The male character of Sungmin revealed from the videos about Sungmin which the writer took from YouTube, while the female character taken from the KyuMin genderswitch fan fiction in AFF. Afterwards, the theory of Korean masculinity is applied when the writer identify Sungmin's character from the videos, then make a justification in which kind of Korean masculinity that Sungmin's character belongs to. The same goes for the female character by applying Korean women theory from Elizabeth Choi to identify the female character of Sungmin in genderswitch fan fiction.

After breaking down the male and female character of Sungmin, then Jenkins' theory of ten ways to rewrite television show used to reveal which ways from those two fan fiction chosen, *Battle of Pride* and *Lee Sungmin is My Maid*, are written.