

CHAPTER III

METHOD OF THE STUDY

III.1. Research Approach

In this study, the writer uses qualitative methods in analyzing the data. According to Miles and Huberman (in Punch, 1998: 149), qualitative research has some elements. First of all, the researcher essentially focus 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 is mainly to gain holistic meaning of the context which is observed. Finally, since the analysis is done by words, the words can be gathered, subclustered, and broken into semiotic segments, they can be organized to permit the researcher to contrast, compare, analyze, and give pattern upon them. On the basis of explanation above, the writer considers that qualitative approach is appropriate to her study.

This study is intended to see the way the individual performs their identity in the friendster profile through signs and to analyze the signs. In order to attain that goal, the writer applies semiotics-interpretative as methodological framework to analyze the text. The basis of semiotics method is qualitative-interpretative, it is a method that focused on signs and text as the research object and how does the researcher interpret the text and decoding behind the sign and text itself (Piliang, 2003: 270). One branch of semiotics-interpretative method that used by the writer to

analyze the text is textual analysis method. Textual analysis is a way the researcher do to gather information about how other human beings make sense of the world (McKee, 2003: 1). This method analyzes the ways individuals, member of cultures and subcultures, make sense of their identity, and how they fit into the world. Since the writer takes postmodernism as point of view in this study, she does not make claim about whether texts are truthful or not. The writer just considers them as truth, then semiotically reads and analyzes them.

III.2. Population and Sampling

III.2.1. Population

The corpus of this study is all Friendster profiles enrolled in the network service. The consideration to select Friendster profile as the corpus is based on the writer's interest to analyze the way individuals perform their identities in cyberspace. Besides, Friendster is the most popular digital network service in the writer's country, Indonesia, than others. Moreover, the contents of Friendster profile are informations about the personal. It is created by the Friendster user to tell his/her identity by himsef/herself point of view. Thus, the writer assumes that there must be some worth-analyzed issues that could be found in the friendster profile.

III.2.2. Sampling

Since the population is too large, there are more or less 54 millions registered members worldwide (Retrieved January 9, 2008, from <http://www.friendster.com/info/index.php>), the writer then limits until her second degree of friends and only takes four profiles as the samples. The first is ‘-SeBaStiaN-’ (<http://www.friendster.com/22024152>), the second is ‘tambak dono’ (<http://www.friendster.com/39580890>), the third is ‘Satanic-Face’ (<http://www.friendster.com/17259430>), and the fourth is ‘KHAV-third hot’ (<http://www.friendster.com/21914591>).

Four profiles above, were taken on 28 June 2007 at 19.30. The writer chooses them randomly without any preconception on the topics because the writer tries to limit any subjectivity interpretation and the influence of prior belief or assumption when doing the analysis. Thus, the writer considers those samples fulfill the requirement.

III.3. Technique of Data Collection

The writer obtained the data from internet precisely from www.friendster.com 28 June 2007 at 19.30. Due to the writer herself is the member of friendster, she obtained the data from her friends and second degree of friends. In this case, the writer took several profiles which are required to accomplish the analysis. The writer only limited the data until her second degree friend because the amount of profiles are large enough. After that, the writer divided them into two; the ordinary and

extraordinary. The profiles considered as extraordinary whilst they have some distinctive features such as unique photograph, eye-catching performance, not human-made, and so on. Then, selected four of extraordinary group randomly. The writer choosed the samples from the extraordinary group because it is more interesting to be analyzed than the ordinary one. In short, the step that the writer took for data collections are:

1. Searching Friendster on internet.
2. Limiting the profiles only on the writer's friends and second degree of friends.
3. Dividing the data into two categories; ordinary and extraordinary profiles.
4. Selecting four profiles randomly from extraordinary group.

III.4. Technique of Data Analysis

After collecting the data, the writer does some steps to analyze each data. For the first step, the writer identifies the identities of the profile-makers by reading the personal informations and viewing the visualisation of the profile intensively. Then, figures out the signs in each profile which perform the identity based on hipersemiotics theory. After that, classifies the findings into several typologies of sign. In the last step, the writer orders interpretation of those data. The data analysis conducted simultaneously with data collection, data interpretation, and narrative reporting writing.

In short, the procedures of data analysis are:

1. Reading the profiles intensively.
2. Finding signs in each profile which perform the identity.
3. Classifying the typologies of signs.
4. Interpreting the sings.