CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Online fan culture has been developing since the increasingly global entertainment industry has reached out to the global market. The notion of internet in the fan culture drives members of fan culture to interact even more in the online forum. Nowadays, Korean popular culture is one of the easiest to be found online. What is more interesting about Korean pop culture is, its border-crossing phenomenon floods the circuit of trans-Asia cultural traffic, and it is more ambitious at globalizing itself than, take as an example, Japanese pop culture (Shin, 2009). One of the famous websites available in the internet covering Korean pop culture is Allkpop. It is a significant English language K-pop entertainment site with four million readers per month. According to WebStatsDomain, it is ranked 3.957 in the world (among the 30 million domains), a low rank means that this website gets lots of visitors. It is owned and operated by 6Theory Media, a company which focuses on Asian entertainment and media content network. Allkpop provides breaking news and articles about recent issues in k-pop industry.

Allkpop acts as an accommodation for fandom to legitimate their existence, yet invites haters to take part in the interaction since it does not require membership or inclusive. Users can sign in using their social networking account, like Facebook or Twitter. Fandom is a term used to describe the existence of sub-culture composed

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of fans who share the same interest; it can be idol, celebrity, hobby, genres, television programs, etc. The members of fandom usually build or create a bonding through their common feelings or thought toward the interest. There are several elements attached to fandom; *fans*: people with a great fanaticism toward a certain person, group, or object, a passively blind receptor to corporate propaganda and establishment ideology, and an obsessive, strange social outcast (Gray, 2003), *anti-fans*: the realm not necessarily of those who are against fandom, but of those who strongly dislike a given text or genre, considering it absurd, stupid, morally corrupt and/or aesthetic drivels (Gray, 2003). It is common for them to gather in groups, often in forums or sites, and this enables them to defy the idols exclusively, *non-fans*: those viewers or readers who do view or read a text, but not with any intense involvement, *haters*: in contrast of fans, haters hate a certain person, group, or object.

These members of fan culture or fandom can possibly interact to one another in Allkpop freely. There are articles in Allkpop that will attract people to flock to each other during their online period. Some of those threads that potentially draw people's attention are those concerning SNSD. They usually made thousands of comments. SNSD (So Nyuh Shi Dae, internationally known as Girls' Generation) is a popular Korean girl band with very big fandom along with very big anti-fandom. Their international album "The Boys" which is released the U.S, Canada, France and the U.K. The album consists of SNSD's third album's main track "The Boys" and remixed versions entered the Billboard Heatseekers Albums Chart at #2.

There are many SNSD fans club or fan café in the internet, for example, soshified with over 200.000 members and ten millions page view per month. And there are many others like daum fan café and SNSD fans club in soompi forum. However there are also anti-fans club like International Anti-SNSD Forum or also known as STAND and the Indonesia anti-fans forum, SAFE (SNSD Anti-Fans for Eternity). They hate SNSD because they think that SNSD is ill-mannered and untalented. They argue that SNSD gives off the "I'm innocent but feel free to take a peek when I flash my panties" image. Their aim is to make SNSD disbanded. They think that it is not fair for other talented girl groups to be left out or lose to SNSD.

The anti-fans are presumably and likely dominated by females. The most accusation against anti-fans is that they are jealous of SNSD. They are said to be jealous because they are beautiful and close to Super Junior and DBSK (both are boy band, their senior in the company). But they fought against those accusations by saying that SNSD members are just average girls at all aspects, whether looks, talents, or charms, so there's none to be jealous of. They also said that they are rational enough to understand that the members of both SNSD and Super Junior or DBSK came from the same company so they are probably close because they had spent half of their lives training together.

Furthermore, SNSD anti-fans want SONE or the fans to realize that not everyone would be astounded by their beauty. There are some people who hate them as well, that are just natural. However, they do not just bash SNSD. They talk tactfully and try to be polite despite the hate. They give out facts through articles,

photos, and videos, also make parody videos. SNSD's anti-fans are well organized and the people talk moderately and reasonably. Therefore it is unlikely for them to have silly arguments in the Allkpop. People who gather in Allkpop are most probably fans, non-fans, or haters. This is due to the fact that the anti-fans have their very own forum and they have bigger mission than to just badmouth SNSD.

The interaction in the comments section of article about SNSD in Allkpop shows different characteristic from the interaction or discussion in other non-kpop sites, for example KasKus, because the participants are most likely fans. Fans are likely to feel emotionally attached to the artists and it may cause them to be easily flamed if the comments are offensive. And SNSD itself represents the ideal role model of being a perfect girl. They sell the image of ideal Asian girls or women. Kpop industry does not merely sell art work or music, they sell something else, it is idealism. In fan girls view, if it is a girl band, they will want to be like them, and if it is a boy band, they will want to have them (as ideal boyfriend or else).

It is interesting to have an observation on SNSD's article in Allkpop, since they have many haters despite the massive number of fans, we may find forms of interaction like trolling, bashing, and flaming from the discussion or comments. The importance of studying the interaction within this forum is to explore the situational manifestation that internet language may carry and to what extent does this affect the development of subculture, in this case, fan culture in the internet.

Research regarding fan culture began to arise several years ago. The previous researches are conducted under different object, concern, and scope. Baron (2003)

conducted a research that examines the linguistics tools people use to make such communication possible. Darling-Wolf (2004) once conducted a research about fan culture which explores, in particular, how participants defined their fan, gendered and cultural/global identities through their involvement with each other and with their favorite star, and negotiated as a group the complex process of virtual cross-cultural identity formation. However there are still few researchers who address trolling, flaming, and bashing issue as a result of interaction in fan culture. In this study, the writer aims to lay out general description about those three and their position in fan culture.

Trolling, flaming, and bashing occur when people start to urge personal ideas to other people. From the language that illustrates those ideas, we can see the particular attitude or tendency they are tied to. In Critical Discourse Analysis proposed by Van Dijk, language meaning is actually given by the readers or language users through their socio-cognition (Van Dijk, 2009). In Van Dijk's socio-cognition, there are three level of text structure; macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure. Macrostructure refers to the global meaning that can be derived from the topic being discussed. Superstructure is how the text being organized. And microstructure refers to the local meaning of the text which can be from the words preference, sentence, and style used. Discourse is believed to be a product of social and ideology practice. We are expected to speak in the manner that is required in a certain situation yet our way of speaking form or create the situation itself. Since

internet affects people both linguistically and socially, it will be beneficial to address this issue from discourse perspective.

The result of this study is expected to describe the how a certain social reality, in this case the issue about SNSD plastic surgery is being constructed in discussion in the internet and its implication in the language in general and individual language use in particular. This problem is important because from the interaction we may learn how people displaying behavior or language that only occurs on the internet that seemingly different from everyday language. It shows how internet is having effect on the people and the language.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The writer wishes to describe how the issue of SNSD plastic surgery is being constructed in the article and comments section to understand how the interaction in the internet is having effect on the people and the language. Thus, this study aims to answer the question:

How is the construction of the issue of plastic surgery in the Allkpop article about SNSD?

1. What is the Macrostructure of the Article?

2. What is the Superstructure of the Article?

3. What is the Microstructure of the Article?

3.3 Objective of the study

This study is intended to describe how plastic surgery issue is seen and constructed in the Allkpop article about SNSD. By using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the common linguistic properties used in the interaction in SNSD thread discussion in Allkpop forum can be seen and the meaning of a certain language set can be interpreted, remembering the fact that language is never neutral. Thus, the research question above may answer the question of how the construction of the plastic surgery issue in Allkpop article about SNSD.

3.4 Significance of the study

The writer hopes that this study will give contribution to the study of Critical Discourse Analysis and the study of internet language and to provide reference for further studies. This study is expected to increase people's understanding about the growing phenomenon of internet language. In general, it may also give better understanding and benefit for common people that language bears a certain meaning or intention and seldom neutral. Ultimately, the writer expects this study to be informative enough to describe the interaction within the fandom as a youth movement.

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW