A STUDY ON INDONESIAN K-POPERS' LITERACY ACTIVITIES IN ONLINE ENGLISH FANFICTION COMMUNITY

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Abstract:*The purposes of this study are (1) to know the motivation of Indonesian K-Poper to involve in online English fanfiction community, (2) to know what literacy activities that Indonesian K-Poper was engaged with in online English fanfiction community which focuses on the writing strategies uses by a fanfiction writer and what interaction that most frequently happens between the fanfiction writer and readers.The research applies a descriptive study with qualitative approach using New Literacy Study or NLS theory (Lankshear&Knobel, 2006; Black, 2006; Thomas; 2006) as its core. The data is taken from questionnaire, interview, and documentation of three fanfiction writers from asianfanfics.com. The result reveals four major findings. First, the subjects' motivations in writing English fanfiction are divided into three different categories, such as; self-enrichment, to stay a little longer, and celebration of media content. Second, the literacy activities that the fanfiction writers in asianfanfics.com were engaged with majorly are reading each other's fanfictionand posting or writing fanfiction. Furthermore, based on the analysis using Woodrow's theory of writing strategy, they use Cognitive, Meta-cognitive, and Social category. Moreover, according to the result, the interaction that is mostly happened between the subject and their readers is social interaction which fell under two different indicators; compliment and appreciation.*

Keywords*: EFL, ELL, literacy activities, OEFC, new literacy study, fanfiction, K-woper, writing strategies, social interaction, motivation*

Abstract: *Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah (1) untuk mengetahui motivasi dari K-poper Indonesiauntuk terlibat dalam online English fanfiction community (OEFC), (2) untuk mengetahui kegiatan literasiapasaja (misalnyayang berfokus pada strategi menulis yang digunakan oleh seorang penulis fanfiction dan interaksiapasaja yang paling sering terjadi antara penulis fanfiction dan pembacanya) yang K-poper Indonesia lakukan dalam online English fanfiction community (OEFC). Penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian deskriptif dengan pendekatan kualitatif menggunakan Studi Literasi Baru atau teori NLS (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006; Hitam, 2006; Thomas, 2006) sebagai intinya. Data penelitianinidiambil dari kuesioner, wawancara, dan dokumentasi dari tiga penulis fanfiction dari asianfanfics.com. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan empat temuan utama. Pertama, motivasi subyek dalam menulis fanfiction bahasa Inggris dibagi menjadi tiga kategori yang berbeda, yaitu; pengembangan diri, bisa berkontribusi dalam online English fanfiction community (OEFC) lebih lama , dan berbagi konten media. Kedua, kegiatan literasi bahwa penulis*

fanfiction di asian fanfics.com sebagian besar terlibat dengan cara membaca fanfiction dan posting dariakunmasing-masing penulis fanfiction. Selanjutnya, berdasarkan analisis menggunakan teoristrategi menulis Woodrow, mereka menggunakan Kognitif, Meta-kognitif, dan Sosialkategori. Selain itu, interaksi yang sebagian besar terjadi diantara subjek dan pembaca mereka adalah interaksi sosial yang masuk dalam dua indikator yang berbeda, yaitu pujian dan apresiasi.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of technologies made people easier in interacting, sharing and spreading the information to all over the world, which in turn developed pop culture –a new culture that was known globally.

One of pop culture that exists in Indonesia is K-Pop (Korean Pop). K-Pop is actually a genre of music in Korean entertainment industry that is performed by idol groups. The fans of K-Pop are commonly known as K-Popers –the abbreviation of K-Pop Lovers. Their interest in K-Pop encourages them to join various K-Pop communities that mostly use English to communicate. One of them is online *fanfiction* communities where they publish their self-written fiction about their favorite K-Pop group. In these online fanfiction communities, there are English-language learners (later will be referred as ELLs) from Indonesia who spend their time writing, posting, reviewing in English and even translating fanfiction from English to Indonesia or vice versa.

Fan fiction, as the name suggested, denotes texts written by fans about their favorite media and pop cultural icons. Such texts often extend the plotline of the original series (e.g., characters from Star Trek discover a new planet), explore relationships between characters (e.g., Shaggy and Velma from Scooby Doo fall in love), and/or expanded the timeline of the media by developing prequels and/or sequels of sorts (e.g., a journal detailing the many regrets of Darth Vader before his death); however, these are just a few examples of the many creative contributions such fan texts make to the pop cultural imaginary (Black, 2006).

The members of fanfiction communities borrowed characters, settings, events, and/or concepts from existing TV shows, books, movies, bands, using these borrowing they crafted their original works of fiction by personalizing the source material based on their reader's knowledge of established characters and stories. Their fanfic production is ranging from three-line "drabble" (very short story, usually no more than a few paragraphs, and sometimes just a few lines.) to hundreds chaptered story with complex storyline and well-composed characterization (Chandler-Olcott&Mahar, 2003; Moore, 2005; Berkowitz, 2012)

Although it sounds simple, fanfiction itself is a process that derives from author and the readers. Both interact with each other in an online community on daily basis and said online community hasaudience who are willing to give

feedback whether it is about the grammatical error, the plot of the story, or characterization, and etc. The feedback can be positive or negative; hence, motivation and writing strategy is needed to keep fanfiction author writing.Thus, their motivation and literacy activity will be investigated in relation to the following research problems:

1) What motivated Indonesian K-Poper to involve in online English fanfiction community?
2) What literacy activities that Indonesian K-Poper was engaged with in online English fanfiction community?

    The specific problems are:
    a) What were the writing strategies used by a fanfiction writer?
    b) What interaction that most frequently happened between the fanfiction writer and readers?

BASIC THEORY

Literacy in this study was a meaning-making practice of members of one online community through communicative activities such as: posting fanfiction, giving feedback to each other's stories, reviewing, discussing, roleplaying of such fanfiction and other activities related to the fanfiction (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006; Black, 2006; Thomas, 2006).

To people outside of fan or fanfic communities, the attractiveness of fanfic was not always so easily comprehensible.This then explained by Lee (2011) who conducted a study of similar topic and her study's result revealed that there were five categories of motivation which encouraged a fan to participate in OEFC. They are:

Self-enrichment

Through the process of writing fanfic stories, the writer got a chance to learn 'new' things from the feedback that was given by the preexisting community of people who were interactive and willing to leave comments on the fanfic because it was essential in fanfic community.

To stay a little longer

Fanfiction was a work-in-progress that shifted from writers and readers. The writer identified personal connection in the process of writing which was an engagement to satisfy readers of their story. This connection extended their participation and made them wanted to stay in fanfic community longer.

Extension of Escape from Reality

Some fanfic writers were attracted by 'otherworldliness' of fanfic. They thought fanfic was fun because they got total control in creating an imaginary world as an escape from reality for their own selves and the fandom.

Celebration of Media Content

Fanfiction could be a channel to resist, extend or alter media content offered by established media conglomerates on a much more interactive and personalized level. This meant when fanfiction writers found the content of what they watched, read, or listened to was interesting, they tend to borrow and extracted it into their story.

Personalization of Media Content

The charm of fanfiction laid in the alteration, expansion, and essentially, personalization of existing commercial contents. It allowed the writer to explore and elaborated on things that are never included in the original media content.

Although it seemed easy because some elements of fanfiction had already

been established and all the author needed to do was personalizing them into a new fictional text based on their liking and their targeted audience, they used writing strategies to produce what their audience considered as a good fanfiction (in terms of canon (original history/background of certain content that's being borrowed), plot, setting, characterization, grammar, mistyping and etc.) especially for fanfiction author whose mother tongue was not English.

The definition of writing strategies themselves could be defined as actions or behaviors consciously carried out by writers in order to make their writing more efficient (based on Cohen's definition of learner's strategies, 1998, p. 10-11, in Petric & Czarl, 2003)

The use of writing strategies could be viewed as tools which enabled the fanfiction author to take control of their writing process, which in turn led to an increase of their confidence as independent writers.

Aside from motivation and writing strategy, interaction between fanfiction writer and readers also viewed as one of literacy activities. Interaction in this study referred to the social interaction that happened between fanfiction authors and their readers through the established communication system within their OEFC which was considered as one of CMC (Computer-mediated-communication) just like users on Facebook since they used computer to talk to each other whereas CMC itself was referred to communication through a computer between or among people (Herring, 1996; Levy, 1997 in Yang, 2013).

Therefore, Yang's adaptation (2013) of interactive responses of social presence proposed by Rourke et al (2001) was used to examine the online interaction because Yang (2013) stated that Rourke et al served a reliable categorization to assess the interaction in CMC.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research a descriptive study with qualitative approach in which the subject of the study was three individuals who were investigated in order to find out the motivation of their participation in OEFC and the literacy activities they were engaged with in OEFC that will be focused on the writing strategies they used on their writing process and their interaction with their readers.

The instruments used to collect the data were an adaptation of Mohite'swriting strategy questionnaire which based on Woodrow's theory, an interview guide which consisted of 20 open-ended questions and documentation of three users' personal account in *asianfanfics.com*. Writing strategy questionnaire was used to find out what strategy they used in writing English fanfiction. Interview guide wasused to gain more information about their literacy activities mainly focused on the usage of writing strategies and interaction with their readers within OEFC including their motivation. Documentation of their personal account was used to find out what interaction that mostly happened between the writers and their readers and also to support the data taken from questionnaire and interview.

First, the researcher collected their personal wall pages, their fanfiction stories and their reader's feedback. The researcher made an account on AFF so she could access their account and collected the data needed by using save-html-page option on browser software. After that the data was organized in three

different folders and stored in three subfolders based on the category of data such as; FF, Wall, and Comment.

Second, the researcher sent questionnaire to the subject using Google form application. The application recorded their answers and also the date of when they do the questionnaire before it would directly be sent back to the researcher's Google drive account.

Lastly, the researcher conducted semi-structured interview online via AFF's private message system using an interview guide which consisted of 20 open-ended questions. Semi-structured interview was chosen so the participant could explain their answer in detail and AFF's private message system was chosen regarding the location of participants and the importance of respecting the anonymity and privacy of research participants.

As Jenkins documented in 1992, public had tendencies to label fanfic writers as 'outcast' and 'freaks'. Pugh (2006:7) as cited in Lee (2011) also asserted that fanfic writers often seen as irrational beings whom couldn't differentiate realities and imagination by people outside the community. The researcher put this into consideration and decided to use online interview as it allowed to keep them being anonymous and willing to express their true thoughts and feelings as freely as they would.

The data from interview was collected by copying the question asked in the interview and the entire interview process was recorded by saving the html page of AFF's private message page then the answer given was pasted into three different MS Word documents under their pseudonyms.

The data then being reduced before it was being analyzed using the theory that had been described before. To find out the most frequently interaction that happened between fanfic writer and the readers, the researcher used the Sudjana (1996) below and displayed the data in the form of narrative text. From the data display, a conclusion was drawn as the last part of data analysis.

$$\text{formula: } P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

Explanation:
P = as percentage
F = as frequency of words
N = as total of words

FINDING OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study were to know what motivated the subject in producing fanfiction and literacy activities the subject was engaged with within the OEFC which focused on kinds of writing strategy that was applied by the subject and also their social interaction with their readers.

Motivation

The researcher found that each writer who participates in this study had several motivations in writing fanfiction. As described in Chapter 2, according to Lee (2011) there were five main categories of motivation that made someone produced a fanfiction in OEFC and from those five, the three writers' motivation fell into three different categories which were *self-enrichment, to stay a little longer,* and *celebration of media content.* Further explanation is as follows:

Self-enrichment

The first motivation was self-enrichment. According to Lee (2011), this category meant the writer wrote a fanfiction because she wanted to learn through the process of writing fanfiction and from the feedback to improve their writing skill. From the author notes of Chan's and Veranda's fanfiction, the researcher found that they wrote fanfiction because they wanted to sharpen their English writing skill.They viewed fanfiction as a media to enhance their ability to write in English although it was not their first language and they openly stated they needed feedback from the readers in terms of grammatical error and diction so they could fix it in order to get better which clearly fit self-enrichment category.

To stay a little longer

According to Lee (2011) fanfiction is a work-in-progress that shifts from writers and readers. The writer identifies personal connection in the process of writing which is an engagement to satisfy readers of their story. This connection extends their participation and makes them want to stay in fanfic community longer.

Another motivation that the researcher found was from Veranda who said that she felt really happy when her story got feedback from the readers and did not want to disappoint her loyal readers.

[…] when the readers give me feedback about my story I feel very happy (did not matter if the feedback is positive or negative). Third, I can't let my readers down right? Believe it or not, out there, there are some people who wait me to update my story. Fourth, when I write fanfiction, I feel like I am a real author because you kind of have your own fans. [Veranda, Feb 21ˢᵗ]

This was what happened to Veranda. During her process in writing fanfiction and due to all feedback she got, she built personal connection with her readers which made her want to stay in OEFC longer just so she would not disappoint people who had waited for her stories to be updated.

Celebration of Media Content

According to Lee (2011) fanfiction could be a channel to resist, extend or alter media content offered by established media conglomerates on a much more interactive and personalized level. This meant when fanfiction writers found the content of what they watched, read, or listened to was interesting, they tend to borrow and extracted it into their story.

The researcher found out that Sooyoung's motivation was different from the other two subjects. She liked reading fanfiction to the point she wanted to publish her own as it stated in her interview and she also added that she usually got inspired by anime or manga (Japanese visual novel) or song then altered the setting from one of them to her fanfiction.

Because it's [the fanfiction] fun to read then somehow ending up being 'fun to write'. [Sooyoung, March 1ˢᵗ]

Because I tend to watch or read the original story (anime manga drama etc. in English) I find it easier to write. [Sooyoung, March 1ˢᵗ]

I don't know how I should make this story as some of you know that I kind of fond with umm sad ending and stuff... I'm confused on how this will be... so I decided to just go with the Flow ahahahahahaha…. Oh yes... most of the story will be fill with letter and flash back XPI kind of new to this style of writing... hehehehehe…This story is based on Zone's secret base ~君がくれたもの

~[Sooyoung's AN in her fanfiction's foreword]

This was considered as celebration of media content (Lee, 2011) because she did borrow one existing setting (sending letter, phone calls, and the concept of memory) from a specific media conglomerate then personalized it using SNSD as the characters in one of her fanfiction, Our Little Promise in Our, [Secret Base] which was based on the lyric of a Japanese's song with a title *secret base* sung by an all-female pop rock band, Zone.

Literacy Activities

Based on the entries of the three fanfiction writers in *asianfanfics.com*, they majorly were engaged in reading and writing activities within the community. They usually wrote fanfiction and replies for every feedback they got. According to Black (2006) people in fanfiction community usually spend their time writing and reading or sometimes conversing with one another on various topics which usually story related.

As for the usage of writing strategy and the most frequent interaction that happened between them and their readers would be elaborates as follows.

Writing Strategy

The researcher found that all of the fanfiction writers in this study applied the three writing strategy categories (Cognitive, Meta-cognitive and Social) in their writing process. However, not all strategies in those three categories were used by them. To make it easier to understand, the researcher would describe the findings in three different stages of writing.

Planning Stage

In planning stage, a fanfiction writer prepared what they wanted to write. Based on Mohite (2014), there were ten writing strategies in this stage with nine from Meta-cognitive and one from Social category. According to the questionnaire result, each fanfiction writer in this study had different strategy choices as seen in the table below.

Table 4.1 The Result of Writing Strategy Questionnaire – Planning Stage

NO.	PLANNING STAGE WRITING STRATEGIES	TYPE	NAME		
			Chan	Veranda	Sooyoung
1	I use study guides to English writing a lot.	M	√	√	X
2	Reading around the topic of my fanfiction helps me in writing.	M	√	√	√
3	I plan out first what I want to write.	M	√	√	√
4	I plan out text organization as I write.	M	√	X	X
5	I practice grammatical structure which is required for writing fanfiction beforehand.	M	√	X	X
6	I prepare a list of useful keywords or vocabulary items.	M	X	X	X
7	I brainstorm many ideas first before I start writing.	M	√	√	√

8	I do research before I write my story	M	√	√	√
9	I study some samples of writing first before I start writing.	M	√	√	X
10	Sharing ideas and discussing ideas with other FF authors or beta readers or readers help me a lot in writing.	S	X	X	X

Note: X = No   √ = Yes   C = Cognitive   M = Meta-cognitive   S = Social

From the three writer's writing strategy choices above, it could be concluded that in planning stage, all of the fanfiction writers used strategies from Meta-cognitive category to help them planning out their stories.

Executing/Drafting Stage

In executing or drafting stage, the writer began writing the story and there were ten strategies which were consisted of eight strategies from Cognitive and two strategies Meta-cognitive category (Mohite, 2014). The questionnaire result was presented in a table below followed by explanation of each fanfiction writer's writing strategies choices.

Table 4.2 The Result of Writing Strategy Questionnaire – Drafting Stage

NO.	DRAFTING STAGE WRITING STRATEGIES	TYPE	NAME		
			Chan	Veranda	Sooyoung
1	I refer to my personal experience which is relevant to the topic when I write.	C	√	X	X
2	I pay attention to the meaning than the grammatical correctness.	C	√	√	X
3	If I lack the right word, I described what I want to say.	C	X	√	√
4	The more I write, the better my writing gets.	M	√	√	√
5	If I don't know what to write next, I take a short break to refresh my mind.	M	√	√	√
6	I think in English when writing the text.	C	√	√	√
7	I think in Bahasa Indonesia first then translate my ideas into English.	C	X	X	X
8	I use monolingual dictionary.	C	√	√	X
9	I use a bilingual dictionary.	C	√	√	X
10	I only use the grammatical structures I know well to avoid mistakes.	C	X	√	√

Note: X = No   √ = Yes   C = Cognitive   M = Meta-cognitive   S = Social

As conclusion, in this stage, all of them used strategies from both Cognitive and Meta-cognitive category to help them in drafting process.

Revising

In this stage, the writer usually fixed their grammatical error, diction and also their storyline in general. There were also ten strategies (one cognitive, six meta-cognitive and three social) that could be applied. The questionnaire result was presented in a table below and the explanation of each fanfiction writer's writing strategies choices would follow.

Table 4.3 The Result of Writing Strategy Questionnaire – Revising Stage

NO.	REVISING STAGE WRITING STRATEGIES	TYPE	NAME		
			Chan	Veranda	Sooyoung
1	I always write a draft & then I revise it and correct it	M	√	√	√
2	I benefit from reader's feedback a lot.	S	X	√	X
3	The error correction & beta reader's feedback help me to improve.	S	√	√	X
4	I check the content for clarity & logic.	M	√	√	√
5	I check my grammar.	M	√	√	√
6	I check my vocabulary.	M	√	√	√
7	I read the text to myself to check if it's easy to follow for the reader.	M	√	√	√
8	I check if the content is relevant to the previous chapter or to the topic I want to write.	M	√	√	√
9	I break down too long sentences into shorter and simpler ones.	C	√	X	√
10	I read reader's comment on my previous chapter of my fanfiction & follow the advice in the new chapter I post.	S	√	√	X

Note: X = No   √ = Yes C = Cognitive   M = Meta-cognitive   S = Social

From the data above, it can be concluded that in revising stage, Chan and Veranda applied more strategies from all categories (Social, Cognitive, and Meta-cognitive) whereas Sooyoung used strategies from Cognitive and Meta-cognitive categories.

In total, there were twenty two strategies that were applied throughout the writing process by three fanfiction writers which consisted of seven cognitive strategies, two social strategies and thirteen meta-cognitive strategies.

Interaction

Besides the use of writing strategy, the writers in OEFC also interacted with their readers.Based on the data the researcher got, there was social interaction that happened between the fanfiction writers and their readers. From

Chan's and Veranda's comment section on their fanfiction page, the most frequent interaction indicator that appeared was *appreciation* and based on the data, it happened because they replied their readers' comment more often than Sooyoung which also explained why Sooyoung's most frequent interaction indicator was *compliment* since her readers were more active than Sooyoung herself.

Chan was the most active AFF user who interacted with her readers. She often replied their comments to show her gratefulness towards their interest in her story. She also diligently wrote an author note (later would be referred as AN) on every update to get feedback from them which explained why the frequency of compliment and advice/opinion she received was the same. Both of her and her readers also appreciated each other very often hence the frequency of appreciation was the highest.

In Veranda's case, her readers was less active in giving advice/opinion but most of them appreciated Veranda's effort on producing text and Veranda also replied them all at once as her gratitude for their feedbacks really often which was why most frequent interaction that happened between her and the readers was appreciation.

Sooyoung's readers were more active than herself. They often complimented her story but Sooyoung rarely responded their comments due to her busy schedule as a pre-service dentist. This also supported by her comment reply which said:

To allreaders hey you all!!! Sorry if I'm being a bad author not replying you guys TT__TT I'm so happy you leave a comment. THANK YOU! [Sooyoung, Jan 13th]

According to her profile in *asianfanfics.com*, she did not have time to communicate with her readers due to her tight schedule as a dentist. This caused her to only get people complimenting her story and less people gave her input of opinion or advice about the story or appreciation. In conclusion, the interaction would happen frequently if both parties interacted with each other consecutively.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings that have been described previously, there were three categories of motivation that made the fanfiction writers who participated in this study involved in OEFC. First was *self-enrichment*, because they wanted to improve their English writing skill by producing and posting fanfiction. Second, *to stay a little longer*, since they had loyal readers who waited their stories to be updated and they did not want to disappoint them. Lastly, *celebration of media content*, because they wanted to make their own version of content from the media they liked.

There were two literacy activities that the fanfiction writers in *asianfanfics.com* were engaged with majorly, reading each other's fanfiction and posting or writing fanfiction. As for the use of writing strategies and most frequently interaction between author and readers would be explained as follows:

There were three categories of writing strategies that were applied by the fanfiction writers in this study throughout their writing process from planning/prewriting, drafting, until revising stage. They are classified into three different categories, such as:

a) **Cognitive** (*I pay attention to the meaning than the grammatical correctness,I think in English when*

writing the text, If I lack the right word, I described what I want to say, I only use the grammatical structures I know well to avoid mistakes, I use monolingual dictionary, I use bilingual dictionary, I break down too long sentences into shorter and simpler ones),

b) **Meta-cognitive** (*Reading around the topic that helps in writing, Plan out first what I want to write, Using study guides to English writing a lot, Brainstorm the ideas before writing, Do research first before writing, The more I write, the better my writing gets, If I don't know what to write next, I take a short break to refresh my mind, I always write a draft & then I revise it and correct it, I check the content for clarity & logic, I check my grammar, I check my vocabulary, I read the text to myself to check if it's easy to follow for the reader, I check if the content is relevant to the previous chapter or to the topic I want to write*),

c) and **Social** (*The error correction & feedback help me to improve, I read feedback on my previous writing and follow the advice received in the new writing assignment*).

Based on the findings, the most frequent interaction that happened between the writers and the readers was social interaction which fell under two different indicators that were *compliment* and *appreciation*.

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