Communicative Patterns Within Community Of Discord Users (A Virtual Ethnographic Research On The Communicative Patterns Found Within Discord Communities Of "Shellscrusades" And "Azur Knights Community Server")

Pola Komunikasi Dalam Komunitas Pengguna Discord (Penelitian Etnograf Virtual Terhadap Pola Komunikasi Yang Ditemukan Dalam Komunitas Discord "Shellscrusades" Dan "Azur Knights Community Server")

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Abstrak

Discord adalah VoIP (voice over application protocol) yang didirikan oleh Jason Citron pada tahun 2015. Discord dibuat sebagai media bagi sub komunitas *gamer* untuk terlibat dalam interaksi dan aktivitas komunikasi. Masalah penelitian menjadi analisis dan diskusi tentang pola komunikasi yang ada dalam sub-komunitas tertentu dari berbagai server Discord. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui dan menganalisis keberadaan pola komunikasi yang ada di dalam sub-komunitas aplikasi Discord, sekaligus terlibat langsung melalui observasi aktivitas mereka dalam setting etnografi virtual. Metode penelitian yang digunakan dalam makalah ini adalah yang bersifat kualitatif dengan pendekatan etnografi virtual. Fokus pendekatan ini adalah analisis pola komunikatif, ucapan, bahasa, nada dan gerak tubuh yang ditemukan dalam sub-komunitas tertentu dalam VoIP Discord, dalam bentuk server.

Kata kunci: pola komunikatif, etnografi virtual, Discord, komunitas Discord, pengguna Discord

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Abstract:

Discord is a voIP (voice over application protocol) founded by Jason Citron in 2015. It was created as a medium for the gamer sub-community to engage in communication interaction and activity. The problem of the research becomes the analysis and discussion of the communicative patterns that exist within specific sub-communities of various Discord servers. The objective of this research is to determine and analyze the existence of communicative patterns that exist within the sub-communities of the Discord application, while also being directly involved via observation of their activities in a virtual ethnographic setting. The method of research used in this paper will be that of a qualitative nature with a virtual ethnographic approach. The focus of the approach is the analysis of communicative patterns, speech, language, tone and gestures found within specific sub-communities in the Discord voIP, in the form of servers.

Keywords: communicative pattern, virtual ethnography, Discord, Discord community, Discord users

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1. INTRODUCTION

Discord is a voice over internet protocol (voIP) founded in 2015 by Jason Citron. It is a form of Digital Communication media that aims to provide text and video-based communication service. It was created and targeted at the target audience of *gamers*.

The focus of the research is the analysis of communicative patterns that are found within the Discord community, specifically within servers of specific sub-communities.

The identification of the problem becomes the determination of communicative pattern that may be present within Discord communities. The research is performed via method of qualitative research, using the approach of virtual ethnography.

2. Theories

2.1 General Definitions of Communication

According to Keith Davis, communication is defined as "a process of passing information and understanding from one person to another" *(Siregar, 2010: 4*, accessed 27/9/20*)*.

According to Megginson, communication is "the process of transmitting meanings, ideas and understanding of a person or a group to another person or group" (*Sharma, 2017:259*, accessed 4/10/20).

According to G.G. Brown, communication is defined as "transfer of information from one person to another, whether or not it elicits confidence. But the information transferred must be understandable to the receiver" (*Hans&Hans, 2014: 72*, accessed 4/10/20).

2.2 New Media

New media is defined by *Forbes* as technology and media that serves as the modern-day equivalent to communication technology in prior generations, such as radio, television and newspapers. They are primarily consumed via modern-day devices such as cellphones and computers. The birth of new media isn't necessarily death of the old ones. More akin to the concept of reincarnation, old media is simply rebirthed into a new form that is more fitting toward the current generation and their style of media consumption. For example, news media may not be delivered via the previously established medium of newspapers and radio, opting instead to use websites and other means, they still serve the same purpose as their previous reiteration: bringing news to the masses.

2.3 Communication Pattern

Communication pattern is defined as the structure in which communication flows within an organizational context. It is most widely applied in the context of business; however, the concept of communication pattern can also be applied generally to communication taking place within a group or organization.

According to *Saville (1982: 25-26)* in *Kartika & Utaridah* (2016:85 accessed 10/9/21), when it comes to understanding interpersonal communication patterns, it is important for participants within the specified community to hold three important components that go hand-in-hand in a mutual cyclic relationship of the communication pattern, as shown by the table below:
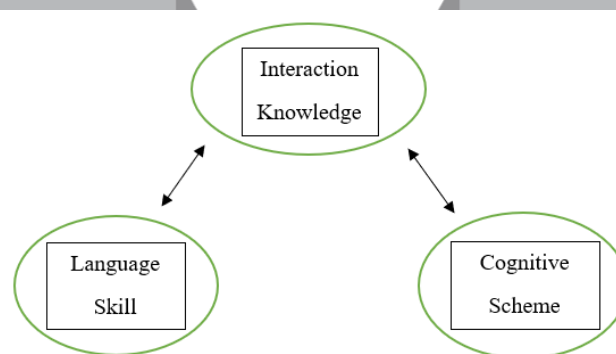
2.4 Types of Communication Patterns

Soejanto (2005:27) separates the types of communication patterns into four separate categories:

- Primary communication pattern

Primary communication pattern consists mostly of the main and direct elements of communication, such as language, tone, speech and gestures. Primary communication encompasses two types of symbols: *verbal* and *non-verbal.*

- Secondary communication pattern
Secondary communication pattern is a type of pattern that involves the usage of tools and other devices, known as *mediums*, in order to achieve communication between the encoder (sender) and decoder (receiver).

- Linear communication pattern
A linear communication pattern is structured around a one-way travel system in which the *message* can only be received from one party to the other via other ends. A linear pattern can only work in this method.

- Circular communication pattern
The circular communication pattern is structured in a way that the pathway of communication is built similarly to a "circle". Communicators can exchange *messages* between each other, and there is no hierarchical system that restricts communication between participants.

2.5 Gamers Community

According to *Bell* and *Newby* (1973:435), community is defined as "A set of interrelationships among social institutions in a locality".

According to *Johnson* (1986:692), community is "a collection of people who share a common territory and meet their basic physical and social needs through daily interaction with one another".

According to *Hawley* in *Bell* and *Newby* (1973:435), community is "A collection of people who share a common territory and meet their basic physical and social needs through daily interaction with another".

According to *Diaz* (2000). communities usually possess common characteristics that can be seen in these forms, regardless of whatever interest or topic that revolves around said community:
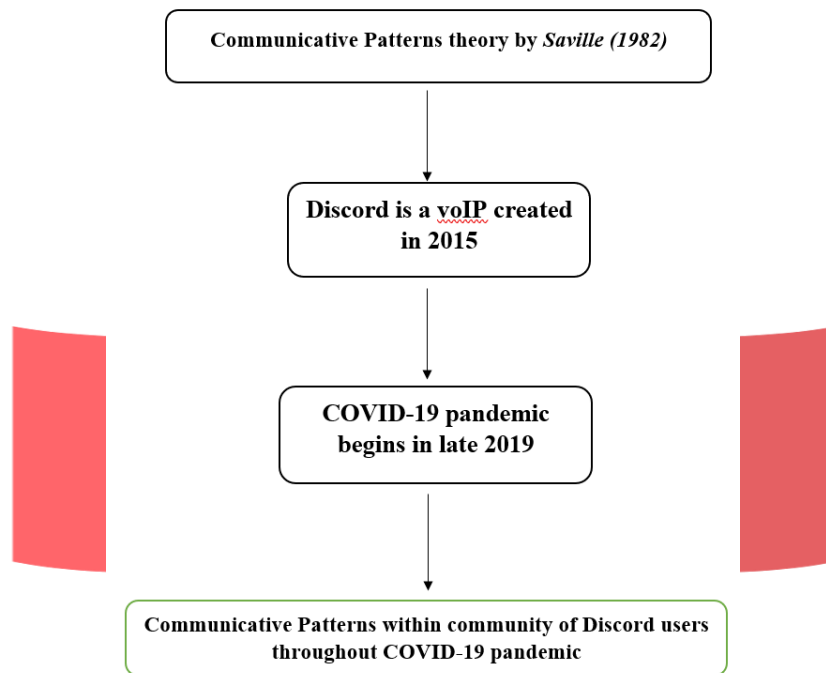
- Self-sufficiency
- Common life
- Consciousness of kind
- Possession of common ends, norms and means

2.6 Symbolic Interactionism Theory

According to *Redmond* (2015:8), symbolic interactionism is defined as "A process in which humans interact with symbols to construct meanings. Through symbolic interactions we acquire information and ideas, understand our own experiences and those of others, share feelings, and come to know our people." *Wood* (1992:63). Symbolic interactionism theory then puts forward the suggestion that communicative interaction between humans is largely symbol-focused. It is worth noting that the word symbol is a general term used to define the means by which communication is interacted with and message is constructed.

2.7 Literature Review

2.8 Framework of Research

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            │  Discord is a voIP created │
            │           in 2015          │
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            ┌───────────────────────────┐
            │    COVID-19 pandemic       │
            │    begins in late 2019     │
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        │ Communicative Patterns within community of │
        │ Discord users throughout COVID-19 pandemic │
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3.1 Research Methods

According to Shank (2002:5), qualitative research is described as "a form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning". In simpler terms, the term "systematic" describes that this method of research must adhere by the rules and standards set by those within the qualitative research community. "empirical" defines that the research is largely based on worldly experience generated by the human sense. Finally, "inquiry into meaning" is defined as how researchers will try to interpret the data according to their own respective experience. Denzin & Lincoln (2000:3) define the approach of qualitative research as *interpretive and naturalistic* (i.e, the researcher attempts to make an understanding of the environment, data and experiences that surround them throughout the course of the research, based on the meanings that outside factors provide them). In conclusion, within the realm of qualitative research, the main objectives therefore are to collect and gather non-numerical data, which would then proceed to be interpreted as subjectively by the researcher, in order to create a definite and concise meaning via discussion.

The specific approach to research that will be used for this thesis is virtual ethnography. Ethnography in its general meaning can be defined as the study of the beliefs, interactions and social behaviors of specific communities and societies, involving participation and observation over time, and, eventually, the interpretation of the data collected (*Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Reeves, Kuper and Hodges, 2008; Berry, 1991*). Virtual or, digital ethnography is a method of ethnographic research that involves the use of ethnographic research approach specifically within a virtual community or culture. This method of ethnography is fairly new, becoming more prominent as the rise of social media and other digital sub-cultures began to grow. According to *Hine* (*2000*), virtual ethnography is defined as "a study of the everyday practices around the internet, as a means to question the assumptions inherent in the prediction of radically different futures" *Angelone* (*2018:277*).

3.2 Research Results and Discussion

3.2.1 Research Result

The results of the research have shown that the data collected from these efforts prove that the correlation between the stated theories chosen in Chapter II and the data results are strongly present. First and foremost, the communicative pattern triangle, aforementioned in Chapter II, consisting of the three traits of *interaction knowledge*, *cognitive scheme*, and *language skill* can be observed within the results gathered by the researcher according to *Kartika & Utaridah* (2016:85).

3.2.2 Research Discussion

The Discord servers chosen possess administrative powers, they hold very little power over the actual members of the server, and usually only take action for disciplinary or correctional purposes. Therefore, the communicative pattern structure of the "ShellsCrusades" and "Azur Knights" servers can be classified as *circular communication* pattern, which, according to *Soejanto* (2005:27), is where the exchange of communication between members are of equal standing, and no communicational hierarchy actually exists and is enforced. This is seen in the data shown above, where members are usually engaged in communication with one another and, even during cases where administrative members decide to join, the flow of conversation continues as usual, proving a rather mutual relationship of communicational exchange.

Symbolic interactionism theory emphasizes that symbols make a up a majority of the structure of communication between human beings. The very meaning of the word symbol itself does have to be literal, as symbols are simply defined as "tools used to construct meaning". Symbols can come in any form and shape, provided they simply exist in order to allow communicators to interact with them in order to give them new meaning as the symbols themselves evolve, according to *Redmond* (2015:8, accessed 02/11/2021).

Therefore, it can be inferred that the existence of emotes, tools used to convey specific messages and meaning, can be classified as symbols. Emotes have long been a part of online communication culture, existing much further before the founding of Discord. In a way, as shown with the data above, emotes are Discord's own symbols, used very frequently by members of community servers in order to help them convey messages better and shorten the meanings of certain messages while still maintaining the core element of the message itself.

4.1 Conclusion

As a final conclusion, based on the research conducted of the topic of "Virtual Ethnographic Research on the Communicative Patterns Found Within Discord Community" with the data gathered in the previous chapter, the researcher can conclude that:

When it comes to discussing the communicative patterns, habits, behaviours and language of the Discord community, it can be fully concluded that communicative patterns do in fact exist within the realm of Discord communities, from the observation of the sub-traits present. A certain fact that can be drawn is that, within the ecosystem of a large Discord group, particularly those that host more than hundreds or even thousands of servers, communication is often a group activity, involving numerous members, each contributing their own opinions and messages to a conversation. Rarely does a conversation initiate within large Discord groups that are interpersonal in nature and, during the cases where communication of this nature takes place happen, it is more often than not looked down upon by other members of the server, especially in cases where interpersonal communication is argumentative or competitive in nature, which will prompt server moderators to threaten action against the active participants.

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