CHARACTERISTICS AND STRUCTURES OF STORYTELLING TECHNIQUES IN CRIMINAL, HORROR, AND MYSTERY GENRES OF YOUTUBERS STORYTELLERS

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ABSTRACT

YouTube is the biggest platform of sharing and watching online videos that enable everyone to have their own channel and upload their own contents. As YouTube attracts people’s interest, this research explores the characteristics and structure of storytelling techniques on storyteller YouTuber. This research analyzes how the storyteller YouTubers use storytelling techniques to deliver the story and how are the audience’s opinion towards the storytelling techniques of the YouTubers, focusing on three big YouTube channels, which is Nessie Judge. This research discovers the unique characteristics of each YouTuber that differentiate them one another.

As the data, researcher chooses three videos of each YouTuber between January 2021 to November 2021 to analyze the storytelling techniques, audiences’ reception through the comment section and used sounds or music in the video. To answer the research questions, researcher applied three theories, which are Storytelling Theory, Audience Reception Theory and Sound Theory. The result of the research shows that these three YouTubers have their own unique characteristic that attracts the audiences’ attention to keep watching their contents.

Keywords: YouTuber, storytelling, characteristic


ABSTRAK


Kata Kunci: Youtuber, Storytelling, Karakteristik.
INTRODUCTION

Social media platforms’ development has been equal to entertainment and mainstream media industries (Hou, 2019). YouTube is now one of the most hype and famous social media platforms that provide people who are creative in creating interesting contents to upload their work as a video content and Youtube is developed and grew-rapidly as more than 100 million videos views per day and YouTube is classified as the third most visited website on the internet (Arif, 2020). YouTuber, the cognomen of those content creators who are regularly upload contents to YouTube, is happening right now. People are competing to be a famous YouTuber, because other than being well-known and famous, YouTubers are also paid by YouTube based on their total subscribers and views and the advertisement on their contents, added with the sponsorship and endorsement from big and famous brands in Indonesia.

There are many different kinds of YouTube contents that can be found on YouTube, such as Fashion and Beauty, Gaming, Automotive, Parenting, Cooking Tutorial, Song Cover, Eating Show and many more. One of them is Horror, Mystery and True Crime storyteller. Most of their contents are talking about famous crime, creepy and mysterious story with their own way in delivering the stories. It makes each YouTuber shows different style and way to deliver the story, even for the exact same story. People nowadays, in Indonesia, are mostly lazier to read than listen so it gives big opportunity to the storyteller YouTuber to create those contents. One of the most watched story contents on YouTube is stories about horror, mystery and true crime. Horror stories are about unseen creatures, that are usually called ghost or paranormal experiences that went viral. Mystery stories are about unexplained and unsolved cases in the world that haven’t been solved yet, even until decades. And true crime stories are about criminal stories that really happened. These three topics are related to each other because it all can trigger the viewers’ tension and curiosity.

In this research, the researcher will be using YouTube as the main platform to find and analyze the data. In YouTube, we can find many types of YouTuber and many people are interested in horror, mystery and true crime stories because besides getting more knowledge about things that happened in this world, it also pumps up the adrenaline. Even though it may scare the audiences, some are still willing to watch those videos because of their curiosity. There are several famous YouTuber that identical with this kind of contents, which are Nessie Judge, Korea Recmit, Hirotada Radifan, and many more. As the most famous video streaming platform, YouTube allows the content creators to interact with their audiences, called subscribers. They can interact through the comment section that is provided by YouTube. The subscribers can share their opinion to each other also give critic, suggestion and recommendation towards the YouTuber related to the uploaded contents. It can be opinion about how the YouTuber delivers the story, how detail the story is, how interesting the way they deliver the story, and many more. To analyze the unique characteristic of the YouTubers, researcher is applying three theories, which are Storytelling Theory, Audience Reception Theory
and Sound Theory. Storytelling theory is applied to analyze how the YouTubers deliver the story, reception theory which is focusing on the audiences’ opinion towards the contents. Reception theory concentrates mainly on the reader’s or viewer’s role and function in nonverbal communication (Heinz, 2018). Reception theory is emphasizing the roles and functions of the participating audiences in the communication process can thus not be fully understood without considering the equally influential roles and functions of the producers and their context (Heinz, 2018). Reception analysis is an alternative approach to understand the audiences and how to interpret the received messages from a media. Last, sound theory is applied to analyze the back sounds or added sounds of the contents.

As has been explained above, researcher aims to confirm the uniqueness of each YouTuber through their contents and comment section. The research questions are formulated to be: How YouTubers use storytelling techniques to deliver the story? And how is the audiences’ reception as the responses towards the storytelling?

Through communication and engagement, media are tools, channels, platforms, and tactics that we can use to obtain, create, and share knowledge about the world around us. The media are at the center of how we, as individuals and groups, interact with society and the wide variety of social activities that take place inside it (Lindgren, 2017). There is no such thing as social media unless individuals utilize it in social ways. Many more tools that facilitate online society, interaction, and community-building precede and surround the things we term social media (Lindgren, 2017).

According to Newman et al. 2017, which is cited by Annika Sehl, Alessio Cornia and Rasmus Kleis Nielsen (Sehl, Cornia, & Nielsen, 2016), the move towards a more digital, mobile, and social media environment presents news organizations with challenges and pressure to keep up with audiences’ changing media use. According to Evans as cited in (Arif, 2020), social media is an Internet based technology that is used to create and share online information, which helps facilitate knowledge and information sharing, collaboration, and participation. People increasingly use search engines, social media, and other platform products and services as their primary means of finding and accessing news online. Social media content is generated in the form of data, audio, text, images, etc. that are saved in a digital format. Information that is shared through social media can be easily re-shared by anyone at any time, especially information in social media. Social media may also be referred as digital media.

Nowadays, using social media has become people’s everyday routine. People watch television and open their social media every day, in fact, the first thing they do after waking up is, mostly, checking their social media accounts. The impact of social media is really big that it can make people spend more time in social media rather than in real life. The impact of social media for sharing news and stories are also has a big impact. Social media give more opportunities for people to be known by other people by creating and uploading contents.
YouTube has become one of the most popular social media platforms for uploading various types of videos (Hou, 2019). YouTube has opened up so many chances and opportunities for everyone in many aspects, such as Vlogger, advertising platform, beauty and fashion enthusiast, and more. In YouTube, the ones that are routinely creating and uploading video contents on YouTube are called as YouTuber. Currently, many people are influenced to be a YouTuber. Besides getting a chance to be famous and known by many people, YouTubers are also paid by YouTube based on their subscribers and views. YouTube, according to Gauntlett, is an excellent example of a digital creative platform because of three factors (Lindgren, 2017).

It provides a framework for involvement. The diverse spectrum of video formats submitted by users ranging from poets and skateboarders to doctors and engineers demonstrates that this is more than just a platform. Specific technical characteristics may encourage certain behaviors, such as liking, commenting, and sharing. YouTube accepts a wide variety of content in general.

Content creator is an action of spreading information that is converted into a picture, video, or text, generally known as content, and then shared through several platforms, as the example is the social media platform. They tend to produce contents for a huge amount of social media followers by sharing inspirational and entertainment contents to educate and entertain the followers (COMMUNITY RELATIONS MILLENIAL CONTENT CREATOR IN FORMING, 2021).

Storytelling theory is applied as the main topic of this research is analyzing the characteristic of the YouTuber in delivering horror, mystery and criminal stories that is also can be said the YouTubers are doing a storytelling session through YouTube contents.

When someone is speaking and telling something to other people about an event or experience, it is known as storytelling. Storytelling is an activity where someone is delivering a story verbally whether it is directly face-to-face or with intermediary. Storytelling’s presence is always there in many aspects of human life (Sherman, 2015). Storytelling can be done by anyone, start form family including parents and grandparents, school, playground, and more. As one of the oldest activities that are done by human, storytelling could possibly be as old as language (Sherman, 2015). Story itself has so many kinds of different genres that are popular in the society. There is romance, fiction, myths, and not forgetting this research topic, which are horror, mystery and criminal stories. A storyteller is said to be effective storyteller when they are able to deliver the story and successfully move the audiences emotionally (Sherman, 2015).

In storytelling, we can find out three different levels of performance (Sherman, 2015). Those are first, everyday storytelling, which are happening everyday about the daily events and mostly shared within the family. As for the example is after going home from school, the children are excitedly telling their parents about things that happened during the school. The second level is casual storytelling. It mostly takes place when we are in gathering events, as seen in school reunions, parties, picnics, and other social events. It could be talking about the personal life of someone, the flashback stories and many more. The third level is a supposed to be well-prepared storytelling, which is formal.
storytelling. In this level, the storyteller needs to do a good preparation before telling the things out because mostly are told in front of the corporate people and the story itself could be a speech or performance by a professional.

In YouTube, people can access many kinds of videos. Tutorial, storytelling, review, daily video blog or mostly known as ‘vlog’, and many more as the examples. In storytelling itself, there are several kinds of stories that can be found on YouTube, such as horror, fiction, mystery, religious, criminal, funny, romance and others.

As for this research, researcher is focusing on the content creators that are telling horror, mystery and criminal stories on YouTube. These three genres of stories are having some similarities. Horror is something scary and frightening things that appear in someone’s mind. It can be reading, listening or watching horror stories or movies. Horror is undoubtedly an extreme form of art. As cited by Hagand & Daigle in Tappan, a wrongful act that is violating the criminal law, done without justification or defense, and sanctioned by the authority as a criminal or misdemeanor, is referred to as a crime (Hagan & Daigle, 2018). According to Herbert Packer in Hadand & Daigle’s book, crime is not a natural occurrence, but a societal phenomenon. It depends on how we define as criminal; we can have as much or as little crime as we want (Hagan & Daigle, 2018). Criminal act is involving kidnapping, murder, robbery, rape.

Crime is defined as action that is forbidden by the states as causing harm to the state and to which the state may respond, at least as a last option, with punishment. The legal description of an act as socially detrimental and the legal imposition of a penalty for the act are two abstract criteria usually accepted by legal experts as crucial elements in a definition of crime (Brown, Esbensen, & Geis, 2018). The scientific study that learns about crime is called criminology. The real purpose of horror is to make the viewers and listeners facing their own tolerance limit, including unequivocally, their own tolerance for what are art or not (Jones, 2018). The responses towards horror story are various. People are commonly responding with fear, frustration or rage (Jones, 2018). Mystery is something that hasn’t been understood, explained and solved by anyone. This type of story is adding more knowledge and insight to the viewers and listeners. Mysterious things are interesting for some people because it engages them to think and try to solve the mystery.

To create a storytelling content, the YouTubers are supposed to use several methods of learning the story first as professionals. If the content creators are lack of information about the story, it could be misleading information for the audiences. Mentioned on the (Sherman, 2015), the most common method is reading the story over and over again to perfectly understand the story. After understanding the story well, storyteller needs to do storytelling practice so the story can be delivered confidently. The key is to understand the story not strictly memorize each words.

Sherman gives seven storytelling techniques that may help the storytellers to get the audiences’ attention (Sherman, 2015). First is Know the Stories, definitely the storyteller should understand the flow of the story even it is just a small pieces of story. Second is Use a Ritual. Similar
to the athletes before begin the competition, the storyteller also could create their own “zone” before going onstage. The ritual that is mostly done by storytellers is deep breathing, that helps human to give more oxygen to the brain cells and make the storyteller be more calm. Third is Discuss the Art of Listening, this technique is applied when the audiences are out of control. It could start with giving question to the audience are they even noticed that when they are talking with a friend, they don’t really focus on listening but actually thinking about what they will be saying after their friend stop talking. Fourth is Use Silence. This is a technique when the storyteller pauses speaking between phrases. Storyteller supposed to do natural pauses so the audiences have time to absorb the imagination of the story. Fifth is Calm Your Nerves. This is one important thing to be prepared during storytelling. People mostly have no confident to speak in front of many people, so in becoming the speaker, a storyteller must know how to handle their nerves so that they could deliver the story well. Sixth is Make the Best of Mistakes. This technique is applied when the storyteller unintentionally made mistake during delivering the story. If the delivered story is an original story of the storyteller, the audiences might not aware with the mistake, but if the story is a common and classic story, the storyteller is not supposed to directly apologize and disrupt the rhythm, but is supposed to keep calm and continue to deliver the story. The last is Focus on the Story. As the important thing in storytelling is the delivered story and message, so the storyteller should be focusing in delivering the story not on the storyteller. Each contents of the YouTuber are definitely can be accessed and watched by people around the world. This makes the YouTubers are willing to do their best in delivering the story so the audiences are still going to watch another content that they upload on YouTube.

To understand more about the characteristic of the YouTuber in delivering the stories through YouTube content is by analyzing the comment section to get more viewpoints of the viewers. Researcher will be analyzing the responses of the audiences is using reception theory. Reception theory refers throughout to a general shift in concern from the author and the work to the text and the reader (Holub, 2013). It concentrates mainly on the readers’ or viewers’ role and function in nonverbal communication (Gunter, 2018).

There are two fundamental theorists of reception, which are Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser. They details reception in different ways, Jauss is paying more attention to the empirical and actual conditions of reading, while Iser is primarily interested in the role of the work in structuring its own reading (Trimble, Trimble, Friedland, Sobocinski, & Gazda, 2013). Through emphasizing the relevance of the reader, reception theory presents the area of literary criticism with a fresh meaning of addressing urgent topics such as the meaning of art, the different entities that play a role in its formation, and the manner in which it is received (Federal & Catarina, 2016).

The important roles that are hold by reception theory is in the history of literary and translation (Lai, Dong, Liu, & Chen, 2018). According to the reception theory’s perspective, a work without audiences’ engagement is lifeless, as the role of the audiences is elevated to this theory in a
high level that is also in literary translation (Lai et al., 2018). Reception theory refers to a general change in focus from the author and the work to the text and the reader as an umbrella term, including both Jauss and Iser’s initiatives, as well as empirical study and the traditional engagement with influences. Shortly, reception theory is generally regarded as a reader-response critic (Holub, 2013) but reception theory is more cohesive, collective undertaking and conscious and came as a way of understanding social literary changes, particularly in West Germany during the (Federal & Catarina, 2016).

To understand more about the characteristic of each YouTuber, researcher also applies narrative theory as the supporting theory in this research. In delivering exist stories, the storyteller is supposed to read the text of the story first also is supposed to prepare their own narration to be delivered on their YouTube content. The text of the story is called narrative text, while the ones that tell the narration is called narrator or also known as storyteller. As what Brian Boyd said, narrative arises from the advantages of communication in social species (Puckett, 2016).

Humans are blessed with two ears that help them to listen to many kinds of sounds. A video itself is supposed to have sound in it to make the viewer understand about what is going on. It applies also in the YouTubers’ contents. As the main point of their videos is doing storytelling, the audiences certainly need to listen to their story. To send the atmosphere to the audiences, YouTubers often add one or several back sound on their video, whether it is only an instrument, song, or jump scares. Sound, according to Peter Sellars, is linked to memory: it is where we locate ourselves, not geographically, but mentally and spiritually. Inside our heads, there is sound. It is the most intimate encounter we have ever had (Bennett, 2019).

RESEARCH METHODS

To analyze how the storyteller YouTubers use storytelling techniques to deliver the story and see how the audience’s opinion towards the storytelling techniques of the YouTubers, there are several stages the researchers did.

First, the researchers analyzed the audiences’ responses through comment section on the YouTubers’ content that refer to the uniqueness of the YouTuber in delivering the stories. To collect the data, researcher is using (decoding encoding) in message. This research is expected to be an advantage for several parties, such as public relations students and practitioners also readers to understand how same-genre YouTubers still get many attentions from the audiences through their uniqueness even the content are mostly similar to each other. Uniqueness itself is being distinctive from others so someone can stand out even in a crowd (Abosag, Ramadan, Baker, & Jin, 2020).

Second, the researchers applied reception theory and conducted through qualitative method to discover the goal of the research including Public Relations students and
practitioners also readers to understand and recognize how YouTubers build their characteristic through the regular contents they uploaded. Last, the researchers took a conclusion from the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. **Nessie Judge**

   Nessie Judge is a female YouTuber that is very well-known as a famous horror, mystery and criminal storyteller. She uploaded video content regularly around 9 to 11 videos each month. The horror, mystery and criminal stories that she uploaded is called #NERROR. Her main categories of contents are unsolved mystery cases, conspiracy theories, scary videos and 911 records, criminal cases, and entertained with fun videos interludes. The special segment of Nessie Judge Channel is #NERROR TAKEOVER, where Nessie collaborates with another famous YouTuber to replace her as the storyteller of her video. This new segment is attracting so many attentions and excitements from her audiences and gives her more supports. In this research, researcher chose two videos of Nessie Judge Channel from January 2021 to November 2021, as explained below:

   **K a s u s B I A D A B : H E L L O K I T T Y M u r d e r | # N E R R O R** The video can be watched through this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HD7_VN-V3wE&t=11s.

   This video is uploaded on April 9th, 2021 on Nessie Judge YouTube Channel and has been watched for 3,035,546 times until November 1st, 2021. In this video, Nessie tells a story from Hong Kong about a woman that was cruelly tortured and murdered. This case is one of the biggest cases in Hong Kong and known as “The Hello Kitty Murder” by the society. This case is discovered by a 14 years old girl on May 1999, named Ah Fong. She told the police that she’s haunted by a woman’s spirit that was tortured till she passed away. The police took it as nonsense, but Ah Fong insisted that she’s not talking nonsense because, surprisingly, Ah Fong was involved in torturing that woman. The police then crossed checking the story that Ah Fong told then went to the place mentioned by Ah Fong. They arrived in a flat with no oddities, but when they came in, they smelled a very strong smell from a big Hello Kitty Mermaid doll covered with blood and there was a human body of a woman, named Fan Man Yee, in it. Fan Man Yee is a young woman and addicted to drugs then decided to be a hostess as her job. She met a man, named Chan Man Lok, who was a member of a gangster. Man Yee and Man Lok had met for several times as Man Yee always “serve” Man Lok. Shortly, Man Yee stole HK$4,000 from Man Lok and got caught by Man Lok. Man Lok brought his two friends, Leung Wai Lun and Leung Shing Cho, also Ah Fong as Wai Lun’s girlfriend.
at that time. Man Lok kidnapped Man Yee and made Man Yee as their personal hostess. From kidnapping Man Yee to become their personal hostess, they began to torture Man Yee and it got worse day by day. After being tortured for a month, Man Yee breathed her last breath. The perpetrators were shocked when they saw Man Yee died and got panicked of getting caught. They mutilated Man Yee’s body and threw away the internal organs of Man Yee. The external body parts of Man Yee were put in a Hello Kitty Mermaid Doll. The three perpetrators were arrested by the police with life imprisonment punishment and Ah Fong, in return of her honesty, she was released.

In delivering the story, Nessie showed that she understood the story well and able to deliver it in detail. The narration of the story made the audiences get the points easily and enjoy the storytelling. According to the three levels of storytelling by Sherman, Nessie is the well-prepared one, where the storyteller has to prepare the story well before delivering the story (Sherman, 2015).

In this video, Nessie doesn’t forget about her iconic opening, which is “Hello guys, its Nessie and welcome back to… Nerror!”. The iconic parts of Nessie’s video attract so many attentions from her audiences. The responses of the audiences are accessible through the comment section and some of it can be read below:

07 CANDRA PRILZA .S 3 months ago
’senyum senyum’ aaaa kgn puol *love

Smangatt kakk Nessie
Shofa nurkhoirunisa 3 months ago Kak Nessie:”Stop senyum-senyum” Huhu Ter favorit

Far Nad 3 months ago
Khas Nessie, “stop senyum-senyum” sampai pas dia ngucapin ikut ngucapin.

The narration of the story also clearly explains the detail of the story. While delivering the story, instead of being more serious, Nessie adds little entertaining jokes, such as “Baru dibilang pintar tapi udah di DO”, “Seismolog apa? Yang mendeteksi getaran di bumi… bukan hati” and more. The responses towards the small jokes are also positive and make the audiences are willing to give their thoughts in the comment section as mentioned:

Bob Morrys 3 months ago
Seismolog itu org yg mempelajari getaran” di bumi, klo getaran di hati tu namanya seismolove *laugh emoticons*
Gracia Angela 3 months ago

Nessie: “Emang ada yang masukin kepala kambing ke kulkas?”
My mom: “hah? Pas bgt HAHAHAHAHAHAH”
*smiley emoticon*
Dira Anggi 3 months ago
Nessie : “emang ada yang masukin kepala kambing di kulkas?”
Me : “ada kak ness, adaa, ayah gue kalo idul adha suka bawa pulang kepala kambing terus taro kulkas, biar pas rendang abis kepalanya di masak dijadiin sop” *upside down smiley emoticon*

The story that is delivered by Nessie also has been successful in engaging the audiences emotionally. It shows from the comment section of the video where many viewers are telling that they got Goosebumps and scared of the story. Some comments can be read below:
Purple! bubble 3 months ago
Bahas kasis murder kek gini seru banget
Serem,merinding,tegang tegang gimana gitu
Isak Sitorus 3 months ago
Scary but fun and full of mystery. It feels like I could go back there, I mean at the time when the murder happened.

From the responses above, the audiences are satisfied by Nessie’s storytelling and willing to wait for more and more similar contents from Nessie because they like the way of Nessie delivers the story.

Reception Theory Analysis
The way of Nessie delivers the story also gets many positive responses from the audiences because they admire it and even they have watched the same story from other people or channel, they are still willing to watch Nessie’s version. Nessie delivers the story with easy-to- understand narration that able the audiences receive the message well. As the important parts in reception theory are the audiences’ thoughts, here the researcher attached
several comments from the viewers that show their perception about Nessie’s storytelling according to her videos:

Karina Karlita 3 months ago
 Ice Box Murder, *aku pernah nonton tapi dimana ya lupa sih.. Tapi penjelasan kak Nessie lebih mudah dimengerti, singkat padat dan jelas* *love emoticon* *Thankyou kak Nessie*

Yuliani 3 months ago
*Niah kenapa senang banget klo kak Nessie udah bahas tentang murder kek gini.. Seru + jelas banget cara penyampaian nya.. Semangat dan sehat terus kak ness dan team*

Sxltd Crml 3 months ago
*Ihhh kangen banget segmen ini, banyakin yang true crimesnya dong aku belum nemu storyteller seenak kak Nessie.*

Mama Canum 3 months ago
*Banyakin bahas kasus2 kek gini Kak, seru. Bahasanya juga enak, gampang dimengerti*

Veneza Pondaag 3 months ago
*Ka nesie banyakin konten nerrorr plasee....*

The way he tells the story is so cool!!!

The responses of the audiences are mostly similar to the analysis before, which shows that Nessie Judge is delivering the story using easy-to-understand words and telling the story in details. The way of Nessie Judge talks is also showing that she is an intelligent and educated woman.

**Sound Analysis**

In Nessie’s contents, there are not many audiences are commenting about the sounds that Nessie added. Nessie almost never put jump scare sound effects and it becomes one of the reasons why her audiences stay on her channel.

Veronica Florencyana 3 months ago
*Yang dilakukan sebelum nonton nerror ini, mencari komentar tentang jumpscare nya dulu, baru play videonya.. *excited emoticons*

*hiburan disaat isoman.. sehat selalu Nessie..*

*Kiss emoticons*

Crystalville 3 months ago
Kak Nessie suka hgt background musicnya kalem gini disbanding yg dulu jengjengjeng suka trigger anxiety huhu keep the good work kak!! *pleased emoticon* *love emoticon*

Dewan pemberantasan jumpscare 3 months ago.

*Kami dari pihak DPJ (Dewan Pemberantasan Jumpscare), menyatakan video ini bebas Jumpscare.*

*Terima kasih *bird emoticon*

The last comment above has received 3.3 thousands likes and 38 replies from the other viewers until November 5th 2021. It shows that Nessie’s viewers are more interesting in a video with less or even no jump scare back sounds.

**KESIMPULAN**

In this research, researcher found that the YouTuber has great storytelling skills. Here, the researcher concluded the characteristic of each YouTuber according to their storytelling performances and the audiences’ reception through comment section. Nessie Judge narration of the storytelling is understandable for the audiences and she likes to mix two languages, which are Indonesian Language and English, but still can be understood by her audiences. She explained each detail of the case, including the exact time and several CCTV footages. The audiences are getting into the story when Nessie do the storytelling and can emotionally feel the feeling of the victim in the incident;

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