

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology used to investigate how textual and visual elements in the selected episodes of *SpongeBob SquarePants* series contains gay issue. It covers the research design, data collection, which include data collection and analysis, and also data presentation in the last section.

#### 3.1 Research Design

The research design of this study is qualitative approach, because it aims to analyze and investigate how textual and visual elements in the selected episodes of *SpongeBob SquarePants* series work in raising gay issue. Bogdan and Taylor (1984 as cited in Moloeng, 1999) argued that qualitative method deals with the data in the form of written or spoken words of people and behavior. According to Creswell (2009), qualitative approach can be used to reveal and comprehend something beyond phenomenon which has not been disclosed yet. Since the results of this study are in the form of words and utterances, and aims to answer questions about gay issues contain in *SpongeBob SquarePants* series, so the qualitative method is suitable to be applied.

The writer also used a descriptive analysis to strengthen this study. According to Bogdan and Taylor (1975 as cited in Moloeng, 2000), descriptive method is a method in which reasons, descriptions, analysis, and inferences are formulated in the written or essay form. The writer used this method because this study intends to find out and describes the portrayal of gay in the selected episodes of *SpongeBob SquarePants* series. According to Alwasilah (2002), in descriptive qualitative research the data analyzed are neither to be gained by using statistic procedure nor to accept or to reject the hypothesis, but the result of the study is the description from the analyzed indication. Therefore, a descriptive qualitative method was chosen for this study. In terms of textual analysis, this study uses Judith Butler's Gender Performativity (1990).

### **3.2 Data Collection**

The data are collected from the selected episodes of *SpongeBob SquarePants* series, episode *49b season 3: Rock-a-Bye Bivalve* and episodes *16a season 1: Valentine's Day*. In the episode 49b, Spongebob and Patrick assumes to be a mother and father to a baby clam who was left abandoned, with Spongebob as the Mom and Patrick as the Dad. Then in the episode 16a, it tells that Spongebob has a surprise Valentine's Day gift for Patrick but Patrick thinks he isn't getting any presents, and then he goes rampage. These episodes are chosen because it indicates that this story represents the issue of becoming gay, so it fits to be analyzed with queer theory that is taken as main framework in this research.

### **3.3 Data Analysis**

The data were taken from the pictures (visual) and the transcript (textual) to assist the analysis. The data were collected by analyzing of the selected pictures that captured from the selected episodes of the animated series and reading the transcript, which serve as visual evidence that answer the research questions. The collected data were then categorized into how the issue of gay that contains in selected episodes of *SpongeBob SquarePants* animated series were portrayed through characterization of the two characters that indicated as gay. The data were then analyzed using the frameworks of gender and queer theory proposed by Butler and Dobie (2009) as well as Barthes theory of semiotic.

In conducting the research, the following steps have been taken:

1. Selecting the topic. The topic that is discussed in this research is LGBT which focused on the portrayal of two main characters in perspective of queer theory and gender performativity.
2. Scanning and conducting close-reading the selected episodes of *Spongebob Squarepants* series, in order to gain comprehensive understanding of the issue in the movie.

3. Building the research questions to frame the research.
4. Analyzing the data with the literary frameworks that collected from previous researches, books, journals, articles and internet to support the research and to analyze the data.
5. Seeking for visual and textual evidences to be analyzed in terms of finding LGBT issue
6. Selecting some performative acts which are contained in each episode, then described the denotative meaning of the selected pictures, the frame size and camera angle which are used in the selected pictures.
7. Describing the connotative meaning of the selected pictures.
8. Making a conclusion and suggestion for further study.

### **3.3 Synopsis**

This series tells Spongebob's daily life with his friends from the various species which are living under the sea. One of his best friend and also becomes his neighbor is Patrick Star – a starfish. Spongebob also has another neighbor, name Squidward – an octopus which always feels annoyed by SpongeBob's behavior. Besides the species that live under the sea, Spongebob has a friend, named Sandy - a squirrel which always use an astronaut helmet as she can not breath under the sea. Spongebob lives in a pineapple-shaped house under the sea, he lives a remarkably controversial life. In the first selected *49b Season 3: Rock-a-Bye Bivalve*, while playing at the yard of their house, Spongebob and Patrick find the baby scallop that is crying alone without its mother. They decides to keep the baby scallop together and give the baby scallop name Junior, and makes themselves as its parents, Spongebob as the mother and Patrick as the father. Then over their lives as parents of Junior the commotion happend, Spongebob complains because he tired taking care of Junior alone without Patrick's help, because Patrick reasoned always busy with work. Spongebo then angry and follows Patrick to his work place, and finds out that Patrick is not work, but just watching tv and eating. Then they fight and accuse each other of their mistakes, and when they are fighting they hear Junior chirping and will jump from the


window. They immediately run towards Junior, but Junior already falls and they cry and think of themselves as bad parents. It turns out that Junior instead of falling he survives and fly, and then Spongebob and Patrick happy because Junior gives kisses on their cheek.

In the second selected episode *16a Season 1: Valentine's day*, SpongeBob tries to give his best friend Patrick a special gift, a big shaped-heart balloon which is made from chocolate on Valentine's day. In the beginning of this episode, Spongebob gives everyone a gift except Patrick. It is something to do with his plan since he is already prepare something special for Patrick, his best friend. Spongebob invites Patrick to go to a carnival, but the special gift that is planned to be given for Patrick in specific time is not showing up yet, because Sandy the one who help Spongebob by riding the hot balloon to the carnival is attacked by a flock of scallops, which causes the balloon to veer off because she fight them off. Patrick has been waiting for a long time but the gift is still not showing up yet and it makes Patrick angry because he think that he is the only one who does not get gift from Spongebob. Suddenly, Sandy with the hot balloon appears and it makes Patrick blushing and so happy

### **3.4 Data Presentation**


This section shows the result of analysis, especially concerning the portrayal of homosexual or gay in the selected episodes of *SpongeBob SquarePants* series. To investigate how the element works in building gay issue, the data are presented in two sections.

### 3.4.1 Performative Acts Analysis

No.	Characters	Textual Evidences	Visual Evidences	Gender Performative acts	Analysis
1.	Spongebob and Patrick	<p><b>Patrick:</b> You're right. If I was a mom...<i>[the camera draws back to reveal Patrick's hairy, obese, unsightly form]</i>...this would be kind of shocking. <i>[lifts his arms, revealing armpit hair]</i> Just call me Daddy!</p> <p><i>[scene cuts to SpongeBob, in a red, polka-dotted dress, and Patrick, wearing a <u>bow tie</u>, leaving the pineapple with Junior in a stroller]</i></p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Accessories</li> <li>2. Clothing</li> </ol>	<p>In this episode, Spongebob wears a red polka-dot skirt, a red ribbon-hat, high heels and he holds a purple lace umbrella while Patrick wears a bow tie and pushes a stroller. The picture denotes that Spongebob plays a role as a woman or the wife while Patrick is a man or the husband. The accessories and clothes which they wear, implies the same sex relationship. Even though in this picture Spongebob wears woman outfit, but the fact that Spongebob is a male character connotes that this picture portrays the gay family but embedded</p>

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### 3.4.2 Semiotics Analysis

No.	Characters	Visual Evidences	Analysis
1.	Spongebob and Patrick		<p>This frame size used in this picture is wide shot, which makes the viewer easily see the activity and outfit of these two characters. The camera angle taken for this picture is normal angle, since the camera is positioned equal with the characters' eye. It denotes that the viewer can identify Spongebob and Patrick's role as woman and man or as couple. By using a normal angle, this picture connotes that the gay couple acting one as a mother and the other as a father is a normal thing, it is normalized.</p>