Chapter II
Cognitive Narratology of Plot Structure
in "Solo Leveling" Webtoon
by Redice Studio and Chu-Gong

2.1 Previous Research

This research also has some similarity or relationship with some previous findings research such as:

Faiz (2019) in his research, "Analysis of Character Presentation and Storyline in the Comic "Vulcaman-Z"". He discus the presentation of plot or storyline of comic book in his thesis. The research mainly focuses on how the author or the illustrator of the comic book tell the story to the reader using its features. For example, the use of layouts, characters drawing, colors, expressions, action line and word balloons. He used a descriptive qualitative method on the research with interview, literature study and observation data collection.

Irawan (2021) under the title of "*Analisis Struktur Alur (Plot), Penokohan, dan Latar pada Novel Cinta Itu Luka Karya Revina VT*". This research is approaching study of Structuralism. Structuralism is an approach that pays attention to the study of elements of literary texts. Structuralism means understanding between one element and another by considering the relationship between intrinsic elements by explaining the theme, plot, setting, characters, and characterizations.

Yuliana (2014) with the research of "The Analysis of Plot of Murder Revelation in Sandra Brown's Novel "Low Pressure". Her research has a same similarity to others research, but using the elements of plot by Gustav Freytag theory. She used the theory to find the plot elements and twist to the story.

No.	Title	Topic/Themes	Theories	Intersection with this study
1	Analysis of Character Presentation and Storyline in the Comic "Vulcaman-Z" (Faiz, 2019)	Narrative of the comic	Scott Mccloud Comic Theory	Similiar Object different topic
2	Analisis Struktur Alur (Plot), Penokohan, dan Latar pada Novel Cinta itu Luka Karya Revina VT" (Irawan, 2021)	Structural analysis on a literature	Structualism	Same topic but different object
3	The Analysis of Plot of Murder Revelation in Sandra Brown's Novel "Low Pressure"	Plot Analysis	Gustav Freytag Pyramid Theory	Same topic with same theory but different object

	(Yuliana, 2014)			

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Thus, after comparing the research above, this research also has similarity. The Similarity are the Analysis plot with approach of structuralism study and the use of Gustav Freytag theory on the elements of plots. While the research above has same similarity, it does have different object that they research. Therefore, also this research has different object that is Webtoon "Solo Leveling" by Dubu (Redice Studio) and Chu-Gong.

2.2 Literature Review

2.2.1 Narrative

Narrative is a form of communication that allows individuals to make sense of their experiences and the world around them. According to Fisher (1984), narrative is "a symbolic representation of meaning or experience". It is a way of constructing a coherent and meaningful story out of events, emotions, and actions. Narratives are used in many different contexts, such as literature, film, history, and everyday conversations. According to Cobley (2014), narrative is a re-presentation of events and chiefly re-presents space and time ,He also suggests that narrative is how human cooperative understanding grows, as it involves the creation of imaginative projects and experiences displayed in expressions of movement and voice

Narrative theory has been studied extensively by scholars in various fields, including psychology, linguistics, and literary studies. Scholars have developed a variety of approaches to understanding narrative, including structuralist, post-structuralist, and cognitive approaches. One influential approach is cognitive narratology, which focuses on how readers and listeners construct meaning from

narrative texts. This approach emphasizes the cognitive processes involved in comprehension and interpretation, such as memory, attention, and inference (Herman, 2013).

In Indonesia, the study of narrative has also been developed by experts in the field. One of the prominent figures in Indonesian narrative studies is Dr. A. Teeuw, who introduced the concept of "sastra cerita" or "narrative literature" in Indonesian literature studies. According to Teeuw (2017), narrative literature is a form of literature that emphasizes the narrative element, rather than other elements such as character or setting. Teeuw's work has had a significant impact on the study of Indonesian literature and has influenced the development of narrative studies in Indonesia.

2.2.2 Cognitive Narratology

Cognitive narratology is a theoretical framework that examines the cognitive processes involved in the creation, reception, and interpretation of narratives. According to Herman (2002), cognitive narratology "emphasizes the ways in which narrative is a mode of thinking, rather than simply a way of conveying information". This approach highlights the role of readers' cognitive processes, such as attention, memory, and inference-making, in constructing meaning from narratives.

One of the key concepts in cognitive narratology is the idea of "narrative worldmaking" (Herman, 2003). This refers to the way in which readers create mental representations of the narrative world presented in the text, using their own

knowledge and experiences to fill in gaps and make sense of the story. This process involves a combination of top-down and bottom-up processing, as readers draw on their knowledge of genre, cultural conventions, and personal experiences to construct meaning from the text.

Another important concept in cognitive narratology is "narrative empathy" (Keen, 2006). This refers to the ability of readers to emotionally engage with characters and events in the narrative, and to experience a sense of shared feeling with them. According to Keen, this emotional engagement is an important aspect of the reading experience, as it helps to foster a sense of connection between the reader and the text.

Suppose a reader is reading a novel. Cognitive narratology would analyze the reader's mental states while reading the novel, such as their emotions, thoughts, and perceptions. It would also examine how the reader constructs meaning from the story and how they use their prior knowledge and experiences to interpret the narrative. Additionally, cognitive narratology would analyze how the reader's mental states change as they progress through the story and how the story affects their understanding of the world around them. By studying the reader's mental processes, cognitive narratology can provide insights into how stories shape our understanding of ourselves and the world we live in.

2.2.3 Plot

Plot is one of the fundamental elements of literature, playing a crucial role in shaping the narrative and engaging readers. According to Booker (2004), plot is the arrangement of events in a story, including the sequence of their occurrence, the relationships between them, and the causal connections that bind them together. This definition highlights the importance of both structure and meaning in plot development.

Various scholars have explored the role of plot in literature. For instance, Freytag (1863) introduced the concept of the "dramatic arc," which describes the basic structure of a story, including exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. Meanwhile, E. M. Forster (1927) emphasized the importance of a story's "causality," or the way in which events are linked together in a cause-and-effect chain.

More recently, scholars have applied cognitive and psychological theories to the study of plot. Oatley (1999) argues that stories are a form of simulation that allows readers to engage with characters and events in a way that mirrors real-life experiences. He suggests that plot is an important factor in creating this sense of immersion, as it helps readers make sense of the story and predict what might happen next.

2.2.3.1 Elements of Plot

According to Foster (1995), the elements of plot are the building blocks of a story, which include exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. Exposition sets the stage for the story by introducing the characters, setting, and other necessary background information. For example "In the bustling city of Metropolis, where skyscrapers touch the clouds and neon lights paint the night, lived a young journalist named Clark Kent. Unbeknownst to the world, Clark harbored extraordinary powers, a secret he guarded with utmost care".

Rising action builds the conflict and tension leading up to the story's climax for example "As Clark Kent began to embrace his alter ego, Superman, a series of mysterious disasters struck Metropolis. Buildings trembled, and panicked citizens sought refuge. As he investigated, Superman discovered a nefarious plot by the villainous Lex Luthor, who aimed to unleash chaos upon the city. With each new revelation, the stakes grew higher, pushing Superman to his limits". Climax is the turning point of the story where the main character faces their biggest obstacle. For climax example "In a dramatic showdown, Superman confronted Lex Luthor atop the towering skyscraper, the fate of Metropolis hanging in the balance. The two clashed with titanic force, unleashing a cataclysmic battle that reverberated through the city streets. At the critical moment, with the lives of countless citizens at stake, Superman summoned every ounce of his strength and resolve to thwart Luthor's sinister plan".

Falling action shows the aftermath of the climax and how the characters deal with the consequences. Resolution is the end of the story where loose ends are tied up, and conflicts are resolved.

Furthermore, Booker (2004) suggests that there are seven basic plot types in literature, including overcoming the monster, rags to riches, the quest, voyage and return, comedy, tragedy, and rebirth. Overcoming the monster plot involves a hero fighting against a powerful enemy, rags to riches plot involves a character starting from a low position and rising to a position of power and wealth, while the quest plot involves a hero searching for a particular object or reaching a specific location. Voyage and return plot involve a journey to an unfamiliar place and returning transformed. Comedy plot involves humor and happy endings, while tragedy plot involves sad endings. Finally, the rebirth plot involves a character undergoing a profound change or transformation.

Moreover, according to Freytag's pyramid (Freytag, 1863), plot structure can be divided into five parts: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. In this pyramid, the rising action and the falling action are split into three parts, making a total of five parts. The pyramid is shaped like a triangle with the exposition at the bottom and the resolution at the top.

In summary, the elements of plot include exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. Booker suggests that there are seven

basic plot types, while Freytag's pyramid divides the plot structure into five parts.

2.2.4 Comic

McCloud (1993) defines comics as "juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer." This definition highlights the visual and narrative elements that make comics a unique form of storytelling.

Comics have been studied by scholars across various disciplines, including literature, art, and media studies. Williams (2010) argues that comics should be considered a distinct form of literature, as they share many characteristics with traditional literary works such as character development, plot, and themes. Additionally, comics utilize a combination of visual and textual elements to convey meaning, which requires a different set of analytical tools than those used to analyze purely textual works.

In Indonesia, the popularity of comics has also increased significantly in recent years. According to Mochtar (2018), the growth of the Indonesian comic industry can be attributed to several factors, including the rise of digital publishing platforms, increased government support for the arts, and the popularity of local comics among younger readers.

2.2.5 Webtoon

According to Rizka (2014), webtoon is an acronym of website and cartoon. Webtoons contain collections of storytelling images (comics) published online. Webtoons are often considered part of manhwa (Korean comics). However, webtoons and manhwas differ in the way they use the publication media. Manhwa is published in the form of books/magazines, while webtoons are published via the internet on comic hosting sites. From the above definition, it can be interpreted that a webtoon is a comic that contains illustrated stories in the form of comic strips published in web form and can be enjoyed online on mobile devices or personal computers.

Webtoon, a digital comic that has been gaining popularity among comic enthusiasts worldwide. As a relatively new form of comics, webtoon has its own unique characteristics and storytelling techniques that differentiate it from traditional comic books. Webtoons are digital comics that are usually published in a vertical format, which means they are designed to be read on a smartphone or computer screen, and readers scroll down to read each panel. This format is well-suited to mobile devices and has contributed to the success of webtoons in the digital age. Webtoon creators also have the freedom to experiment with different genres and storytelling techniques. Some webtoons are episodic, while others are serialized and released in long-form storytelling. Webtoons often blend genres, combining elements of romance, action, comedy, and drama.

Moreover, webtoon platforms are varied and diverse, ranging from free, ad-supported platforms to subscription-based platforms with exclusive content.

This variability in the platform provides opportunities for both aspiring and professional comic creators to publish their work and reach a wider audience. The rise of webtoon has not only impacted the comic industry but also the entertainment industry as a whole. Some popular platforms for reading webtoons include Line Webtoon, Tapas, Lezhin Comics, Toomics, Manhwa, Spottoon, and TappyToon. These platforms offer webtoons in various genres, such as romance, action, horror, and comedy. In addition, some platforms are specific to certain regions or languages, such as Comico for Japanese webtoons, KakaoPage for Korean webtoons, and Tencent Comics for Chinese webtoons. With the rise of webtoons, more digital platforms are emerging, making it easier for readers to access webtoons from all around the world.

2.2.6　Solo Leveling

"Solo Leveling" is a popular South Korean webtoon series that has gained a significant following since its initial release in 2018. Written by Chugong and illustrated by Jang Sung-rak, the series follows the story of a young man named Sung Jin-woo who lives in a world where portals to a magical realm have opened up, unleashing powerful monsters and transforming the world into a dangerous place. Sung Jin-woo is a "Hunter," a person who has gained the power to fight these monsters and level up their abilities as they progress.

One of the key reasons for the success of "Solo Leveling" is its engaging plot, which is filled with action, suspense, and dramatic twists and turns. The story is well-paced, with each chapter building on the events of the previous one and pushing the narrative forward in a compelling way. The characters are also well-

developed, with Sung Jin-woo being a particularly memorable and likable protagonist. As the series progresses, readers are drawn into his struggles and triumphs as he fights to become the most powerful Hunter and save the world from the monsters that threaten to destroy it.

In addition to its engaging storyline and characters, "Solo Leveling" also benefits from its format as a webtoon. The use of vertical scrolling and full-color illustrations allows for a dynamic and immersive reading experience that is well-suited to the action and fantasy elements of the series. The webtoon format also makes it easy for readers to access and read the series, with new chapters being released on a regular basis on platforms like KakaoPage.

According to reports, "Solo Leveling" has been a massive commercial success, generating significant revenue for the creators and the platform. The series reportedly earned over 200 billion won (approximately $178 million USD) in revenue for KakaoPage in 2020 alone, making it one of the most profitable webtoons in the platform's history. The first chapter of "Solo Leveling" was released in March 2018, and the series has gained immense popularity since then. As of 2022, the webtoon has over 200 chapters and has been read by millions of people around the world.