Symbolic Violence in Verbal and Visual Discourse of Virtual YouTuber Kanna Tamachi

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji penggunaan kekerasan simbolik pada wacana *live streaming virtual youtuber* (Vtuber) Kanna Tamachi, dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dan metode analisis wacana post-struktural. Unsur-unsur yang dikaji adalah elemen kekerasan bahasa dari Vtuber, baik kekerasan visual maupun verbal, dalam relasinya dengan *viewer* serta konteks sosialnya. Penelitian ini menarik karena mengkaji kekerasan bahasa dari sudut pandang budaya lokal. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mendapatkan relasi antara penggunaan kekerasan simbolik dengan penerimaan *viewer* terhadap kekerasan. Melalui metode analisis wacana post-struktural, secara spesifik akan dikaji unsur-unsur kebahasaan dari Vtuber dalam kaitannya dengan konten kekerasan bahasa. Akan tetapi, kekerasan bahasa yang dimaksud ditempatkan di dalam konteks budaya lokal, dengan makna yang sesuai dengan nilai dan karakter budaya setempat. Berdasarkan hasil analisis, penggunaan kekerasan bahasa dalam konteks wacana budaya lokal Jawa Timur pada Vtuber tidak selalu bersifat negatif, dan destruktif. Melainkan justru bersifat positif dan konstruktif dalam menimbulkan daya tarik penonton, meningkatkan nilai hiburan, meningkatkan keakraban dan kedekatan, dan bahkan memberikan nilai ekonomi sebagai sebuah komoditas, meskipun konten tersebut merupakan kekerasan simbolik.

Kata Kunci: kekerasan simbolik; modal simbolik; komodifikasi bahasa; analisis wacana; budaya lokal

ABSTRACT

This study examines the usage of symbolic violence in the discourse of the livestream of an Indonesian virtual YouTuber (vtuber), Kanna Tamachi, using a qualitative approach and post-structural discourse analysis (DA) method. The focus of this study is on textual elements of language violence used by the Vtuber and their relation to the viewer in their social context. This study aims to examine the relations between the usage of symbolic violence and the viewer's reception. Through the DA method, the linguistic elements of the Vtuber are specifically studied in relation to the language violence content. However, the violent language is studied in the context of local culture, the meanings of which are relevant to values, norms, and characteristics of the local culture. The result of this study confirms that the language violence used by the Vtuber in the context of local culture in East Java is not always negative or destructive. Instead, it provides positive and constructive value by attracting and entertaining viewers and giving them the senses of familiarity and closeness. It also provides economic value to the Vtubers through their status as a commodity.

Keywords: symbolic violence; symbolic modal; language commodification; discourse analysis; local culture

INTRODUCTION

Communication is a fundamental necessity for humans as inherently social beings. Nevertheless, effective communication cannot occur in the absence of language. Language serves as a medium for articulating situations, circumstances, or realities to fulfil communicative objectives (Hansen & Machin, 2019, p. 163). Therefore, language has the trait of "reflection", which is when language is used at the right occasion according to the current situation or "context" (van Dijk, 1998). As a messenger medium, language is not only verbal (oral, speech), but could also be visual (images, visual texts) (Franzia, Piliang, & Saidi, 2015, p. 382).

In communication, the interpretation of a message varies depending on the context. When communication occurs through signs or symbols, it is categorized as symbolic communication. The reception of a message can be either positive or negative, influenced by factors such as its content, delivery, and context. A message with negative content may still be perceived positively if conveyed properly, and vice versa. For instance, certain words that are typically considered foul—such as *jancuk* in Javanese—may carry a positive meaning when used in friendly interactions, serving as an indicator of closeness between individuals. Messages can be utilized to foster closeness between two parties (Hanggraito, 2021, p. 3). The party who said such profane expressions may be considered as a familiar person and has closeness with the other party (Sriyanto & Fauzie, 2017, p. 100).

From a different perspective, the meaning and perception of violent expressions in profanity depend on the context in which they are used. In Javanese culture, profanity is often incorporated into daily conversations. Such words are not solely employed for cursing or conveying negative emotions but can also serve as a form of 'linguistic play' in interactions (Salsabilla & Arimi, 2023). Moreover, Holly Lopez and Sandra Kübler (2025, p. 4) identified two distinct categories of profanity.

The first category consists of speech that is not intended to cause harm (non-abusive). This type of language use can occur in various contexts, including argumentative discourse (where it serves a critical function), meta-language (where obscene terms are referenced to convey a response), casual interactions (where such expressions are used hyperbolically without targeting specific individuals or groups), and irony (where jokes, sarcasm or ironic remarks are employed without the intent to demean).

The second category includes speech intended to cause harm (abusive). This type of language use can occur in the context of explicit violence, where it is used to insult, attack, or demean others. Additionally, it can manifest in the form of implicit violence, in which negative stereotypes or undesirable traits are linked to a particular group, often targeting an individual's identity.

The media can incorporate elements of violence, as it serves as a form of discourse, and all discourse has the potential to contain symbolic violence. (Recuero, 2015, p. 1). In this case, symbolic violence can be defined in two ways. First, profane words or images that are generally viewed as a form of violence.

In this context, 'violence' does not refer to physical harm but rather to psychological or emotional distress. This represents the core idea of symbolic violence—language that inflicts psychological harm. Second, language that 'subtly coerces' individuals, which is not always viewed as a form of violence because it can be unintentional or non-violent. This definition of symbolic violence can be described as 'violence that is not realized as violence'. (Hu & Wang, 2024). Due to the invisible nature of such violence, it is often normalized, accepted, and continuously reproduced within society (Thapar-Björkert, Samelius, & Sanghera, 2016).

Violence can also manifest systematically, posing a threat to social structures and order (genders, exclusions, discrimination) (Koot & Veenenbos, 2023). This form of violence is referred to as symbolic violence. Symbolic violence operates within discourse, exerting harmful and coercive effects in a subtle manner (Recuero, 2015, p. 2).

Language, beyond serving as a medium of communication, can also function as symbolic capital, taking the form of a commodity. When language becomes a commodity, it can be exchanged within various economic markets. Language commodification occurs in specific situations, such as foreign language studies within the frameworks of the "education market", "tourism market", or "job market" (Holborow, 2018; Stainton, 2018). Just as language, in general, can be commodified, so too can the language containing symbolic violence (Fitchett, Lindberg, & Martin, 2021, p. 1). Although symbolic violence is inherently a form of violence, its content can generate

sensational and controversial entertainment (Sukowati, 2017, p. 107). Through the process of commodification, symbolic violence becomes a consumable product (Choiriyati & Wiendijarti, 2020).

Consumption is associated with individuals' desire to acquire or experience new objects (Petrenko, 2015). This desire is often linked to social class positioning. Symbolic violence can function as symbolic capital, contributing to prestige and social status, and distinguishing different social classes: the upper, middle, and lower classes. Language also serves as a marker of class distinctions, with variations such as upper-middle-class language and lower-class language reflecting these social divisions (Vershinina & Rodgers, 2019).

Vtubers, or Virtual Youtubers, are influencers (Tan & Greene, 2025) who provide their audiences with entertainment through various contents, which may include symbolic violence. A Vtuber is a content creator who represents themselves as a digital character or avatar while engaging with their audience either in real-time through live streaming or via recorded broadcasts (VOD). Viewers of Vtuber live streams can actively participate by posting comments on live chat features available on platforms such as YouTube or Twitch. These platforms facilitate audience interaction and engagement by allowing viewers to respond to the content in real time (Yu, Gong, & Zhang, 2024). Comments of viewers can also serve as live reactions toward the Vtuber's actions during the broadcast.

Previous research suggests that language and visual content containing symbolic

violence can foster a sense of closeness and familiarity among individuals (Hanggraito, 2021; Sriyanto & Fauzie, 2017). However, such content is still perceived as symbolic violence when used to express hatred and resentment, depending on the context. The media contributes to the normalization of symbolic violence (Recuero, 2015, p. 2), as it is often believed to generate sensation and controversy, drawing audiences into the experience (Sukowati, 2017, p. 107). Language and visual elements featuring symbolic violence can thus become commodities for content creators and consumer goods for the public (Fitchett et al., 2021, p. 1; Holborow, 2018, p. 59). For some influencers, the use of symbolic violence in language can enhance their influence. For others, it may have the opposite effect (Tan & Greene, 2025).

These studies illustrate how language and visual content containing symbolic violence can influence audiences, how the media incorporates symbolic violence, how sensational and controversial content attracts viewers, and how symbolic violence can be commodified. However, no existing research has specifically examined how language and visual content featuring symbolic violence is transformed into a commodity within Vtuber media, including the contextual factors influencing its use. This study aims to analyze how Vtubers commodify symbolic violence for their audiences, how it serves as capital to attract viewership, and how it is shaped within a socio-cultural context.

This study focuses on the use of symbolic violent discourse in one of the live streaming broadcasts of Kanna Tamachi.

In this broadcast, Tamachi repeatedly uses obscene Javanese words such as *jancuk* and *matamu* (literally "your eyes"), along with visual elements displayed on the streaming screen, such as blood splatters or depictions of deceased characters. While these linguistic and visual elements may be considered ethically inappropriate by the general public due to their violent nature, they appear to enhance the broadcast's appeal to viewers. This phenomenon is particularly compelling for analysis, especially regarding the role of symbolic violence in Vtuber streaming, where it serves as capital that allows Vtubers to generate economic benefits through language commodification within a specific socio-cultural context.

METHOD

This study utilizes both primary (verbal and visual) and secondary (web-based) data sources. The analysis is conducted using the post-structural discourse method. Figure 1 illustrates the three levels of data analysis applied in this study.

Based on the above schematics, analysis applied in this study is conducted according to three levels of discourse analysis:

The first level of analysis focuses on both textual and visual elements, as well as their interrelation. Text analysis examines the use of language within discourse to identify aspects of symbolic violence. Meanwhile, image analysis explores the use of visual elements that depict violence within the context of the relationship between Vtubers and their viewers. At this level, the study also analyzes the connections between words within the text,
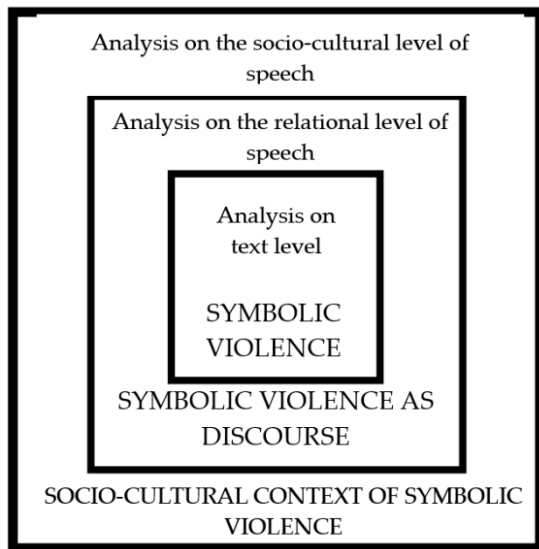
Figure 1. Data Analysis model of Discourse Analysis
(Source: author documentation)

relationships between images, and the relation between textual and visual components.

The second level of analysis examines discourse relations, focusing on the linguistic connections between speakers within the discourse, particularly between the Vtuber and other Vtubers, both verbally and visually. Verbal relation analysis explores how linguistic choices reflect the dynamics of symbolic violence among the involved actors. Meanwhile, visual relation analysis delves into how violent imagery is "addressed" towards certain viewers.

The third level of analysis focuses on the socio-cultural context of symbolic violence, particularly within socio-economic structures, symbolic levels, and the commodification of culture in digital discourse. The socio-cultural context refers to the actual conditions in which texts and images are presented, aligning with the perspectives of Glynos and van Dijk on co-text and context.

In discourse analysis, enunciation is a crucial element that must be examined. This study identifies two key speaker positions: (1) the enunciator, who is the Vtuber, and (2) the co-enunciator, who is either a viewer or a fellow VTuber (Angermüller, Maingueneau, & Wodak, 2014, p. 147). The interaction between the enunciator and the co-enunciator occurs within three communicative roles: interlocutors, speakers, and addressees.

Speakers are those actively engaged in conversation during the live stream, including the Vtuber and participating viewers. The addressees are those who receive and interpret the discourse. Collectively, speakers and addressees are referred to as interlocutors. Additionally, a third element mediates the interaction between them—the topic of discussion (Angermüller et al., 2014, p. 148). For instance, if a Vtuber discusses the depiction of blood in a game with their audience, the Vtuber and the viewers serve as interlocutors, while the blood imagery functions as the topic that connects them in discourse.

The speech consists of text, which forms an essential part of discourse. In the analysis of symbolic violence, context is a crucial factor. Context refers to the specific social situations and conditions surrounding communication, such as whether a Vtuber engages in a friendly interaction or adopts a more aggressive and confrontational tone. Viewers, as addressees, interpret this context based on their own perspectives and prior experiences (Angermüller et al., 2014, p. 149).

Discourse analysis that emphasizes the context of discourse is a key characteristic of the post-structural discourse analysis

approach. In this perspective, the meaning of a text or image is not strictly determined by codes such as agreements or social conventions but is shaped by the context in which the text or image appears. In other words, meaning is derived from the *enunciation* situation. Similarly, the interpretation of an image is influenced by both its surrounding conditions and its internal elements. This view aligns with the idea that meaning is constructed within a social context (van Dijk, 1998). This contrasts with structural discourse analysis, which interprets textual meaning as denotative or literal—based on dictionary definitions or grammatical conventions (Silverstein, 2014). For instance, the word *'anjing'* (dog) has a literal meaning as an animal, but its interpretation changes depending on the context in which it is used. In certain social situations, the word may carry a violent or offensive connotation, whereas in a friendly environment, it might take on a different, more casual meaning. Thus, meaning is not fixed but is entirely dependent on context.

In the post-structural discourse approach, context plays a central role in shaping meaning. This perspective suggests that meaning in discourse is not only interpreted denotatively but also connotatively, depending on the specific social situations and conditions in which the discourse occurs (Silverstein, 2014, p. 138). Context, in this sense, refers to the actual social conditions and interactions that uniquely shape discourse (van Dijk, 1998). Unlike the structuralist approach, which views meaning as determined by agreed-upon social codes, the post-structuralist approach argues that meaning is specific to the context in which discourse takes place, rather than relying on fixed social conventions. In structuralism, a text or image refers to a general, predefined reference (a type), whereas in post-structuralism, meaning is derived from a specific reference (token) within a particular context (Silverstein, 2014). For instance, in a structuralist view, the word *blood* generally refers to the bodily fluid. However, from a post-structuralist perspective, *blood* can take on a different meaning depending on the context, such as "blood that appears on the screen" in a Vtuber's live stream, where it becomes a symbol within a specific discourse.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Language—whether written, spoken, or visual—plays a fundamental role in communication and social interaction. Van Dijk (1998, p. 6) explains that language serves various functions, including achieving goals, effecting change, reinforcing ideas, acquiring knowledge, articulating thoughts, or influencing others. The essence of communication lies in the transmission of information within a linguistic context. Without language, information cannot be effectively conveyed, as each word carries specific meanings and values that represent reality (Hansen & Machin, 2019, p. 65). Language acts as a medium through which information is transmitted, facilitating an exchange known as discourse. Through this process, meaning and values are shared, establishing a discourse relationship among participants. In this sense, discourse is a form of social practice (van Dijk, 1998, p. 9). Reality

is constructed and represented through discourse in written, oral, and visual forms, and its meaning is shaped by how the audience interprets it (van Dijk, 1998).

As a means of communication, language can serve as peaceful purposes, but it can also be used to inflict harm (Žižek, 2008, p. 60). However, violence may be perceived differently—while some forms of violence are explicitly recognized, others are not. The latter, which is "not perceived as violence," is what Bourdieu defines as *symbolic violence*. This concept, introduced by Bourdieu and further explored by other scholars, refers to a form of unconscious violence that is not necessarily acknowledged as such by those who experience it (Thapar-Björkert et al., 2016). For instance, symbolic violence can arise from class distinctions, where one social class exerts dominance over another without being fully aware of this power imbalance. Examples include the government-activists or Vtubers-viewers relationships (Martin, Ferguson, Hoek, & Hinder, 2021). Because symbolic violence operates subtly, it may not be recognized as coercion, even if it contains elements of domination. A historical example is the New Order era in Indonesia, during which President Suharto urged citizens to "tighten their belts" due to economic difficulties—despite the fact that the burden should have been placed on state officials and conglomerates. This kind of "subtle coercion" exemplifies how symbolic violence is often accepted as a norm rather than recognized as a form of oppression. The interpretation of symbolic violence varies depending on the social and cultural context, which allows it

to be integrated into 'cultural products' with economic value (Pret, Shaw, & Drakopoulou Dodd, 2016). This economic value is influenced by the amount of capital individuals or groups possess and their positions in various fields (social, academic, cultural) (Roumbanis, 2019).

Žižek categorizes violence into two main types: *subjective violence* and *objective violence*. Subjective violence refers to acts committed by specific individuals or groups, such as criminals or terrorists. Objective violence, on the other hand, is divided into two subcategories: *symbolic violence* and *systemic violence*. Unlike Bourdieu, who defines symbolic violence as a form of unconscious coercion that is not always recognized as violence, Žižek argues that symbolic violence arises from language or symbols themselves. Even if a message does not explicitly convey violence, if the symbol used contains violent elements, it is still considered symbolic violence. This perspective highlights the inherent power of symbols and language in shaping perceptions of violence. Additionally, Žižek introduces the concept of *systemic violence*, which refers to the harm that emerges as a result of social, political, or economic systems. This type of violence is embedded within institutional structures (such as the system of government, economy, and politics) and is often normalized, making it less visible but no less harmful (Žižek, 2008, p. 1).

Symbolic violence can manifest in various forms, including symbols, images, and behaviors. It has the power to shape or impose a specific symbolic field, influencing perceptions and interactions within a discourse. According to Žižek (Žižek, 2008, p.

60), language in symbolic violence serves as a medium for confrontation and aggression, reinforcing power dynamics through its usage.

Violence, including symbolic violence, exists on a spectrum. At one end, there is a "normal" standard—situations that are not perceived as violent. At the other extreme, situations are explicitly recognized as violence (Žižek, 2008, p. 64). This gradation suggests that symbolic violence is not always immediately identifiable as harm but can escalate depending on context, interpretation, and the social or cultural frameworks in which it operates.

Symbolic violence is deeply intertwined with the emotional responses we experience on a psychological level. These emotional surges act as impulses that drive actions, whether positive or negative. Language plays a crucial role in shaping and expressing these emotional outputs. In particular, emotions such as hatred, anger, frustration, and despair are more easily articulated and understood through language. While emotions manifest in many forms, violence often becomes the default mode of expression because it is a more immediate and impactful response compared to peaceful alternatives (Glynos & Howarth, 2007, p. 57). This explains why symbolic violence is so prevalent, not only in media but also in everyday interactions, where aggressive or confrontational language is frequently used to communicate strong emotions.

Symbolic capital refers to value derived from physical manifestations (Drewski, Gerhards, & Hans, 2018, p. 5), such as appearance, behavior, and cultural traits, which contribute to social recognition and prestige (Zhuang & Jiang, 2023). This form of capital plays a crucial role in establishing symbolic boundaries between different social groups, including ethnicities, genders, and social classes, often based on cultural capital. Symbolic capital gains its power from being socially recognized as a marker of prestige and appreciation. It encompasses features such as appearance, traits, and habits, which distinguish individuals or groups from others (Korkeila & Hamari, 2020). These distinguishing characteristics create social hierarchies, reinforcing identity and differentiation within a given cultural or social framework.

Cultural capital is often overlooked as a form of 'capital' because it is less visible compared to economic capital, which is tied to material and financial assets. However, it is rooted in symbolic capital which is based on recognition and social appreciation (Ihlen, 2018). Cultural capital exists in three distinct forms: *Embodied*, *Objectified*, and *Institutionalized* (Philip, Newman, Bifelt, Brooks, & Rivkin, 2022)

Symbolic capital—whether economic, cultural, or linguistic—can generate benefits, making it a valuable commodity. Commodities take various forms, including language, material culture, personal aspirations, large institutions, and abstract concepts, all of which are shaped by specific social contexts (Skotnicki, 2024). This process embeds commodities within culture, transforming them into symbols of status, identity, and social belonging.

Commodities gain value when they are

exchanged in the market, benefiting those who trade them (Skotnicki, 2024, p. 538). To maximize profit, commodities must attract consumer attention. Sensational content—such as violence or sexuality—often holds strong appeal, despite its controversial nature (Nurwani & Martozet, 2022; Sukowati, 2017, p. 107). The meaning and exchange of commodities are shaped by social conditions, including status and hierarchy, such as race and gender (Skotnicki, 2024, p. 538).

The analysis in this article focuses on a specific live streaming broadcast by Vtuber Kanna Tamachi, which aired in February 2021 on YouTube. Kanna Tamachi was selected as the subject of study due to the complexity and interrelation of verbal and visual elements in her content. This stream will be examined using discourse analysis, specifically examining symbolic violence present in dialogues and images exchanged between Vtubers, as well as the role of viewers in the discourse. The analysis will explore symbolic violence within the discourse by observing its context.

The analytical process follows these steps: First, segments of dialogue, including content and speech (enunciation) between the involved parties, are displayed. Second, words and visuals containing symbolic violence are identified. Third, discourse is examined in relation to the complete sentence, known as co-text (Angermüller et al., 2014, p. 149). Fourth, words, sentences, and visuals are analyzed in relation to the discourse's context, including the digital media environment and situational factors.

During the streaming session, the Vtuber presents a game to viewers and other

Vtuber. The streaming screen features content perceived as containing symbolic violence, both in language and visuals. The first instance of symbolic violence in visual form occurs when the screen depicts an accident involving the main character's pet dog. The context of this event is that the game prompts the Vtuber to throw a stone into the street, leading the pet dog to chase after it. The dramatic turn of events unfolds as a truck suddenly appears at high speed, followed by the sound of a collision and the screen fading to black. When the display returns, both the truck and the dog are gone, leaving only a red puddle resembling blood on the road. The Vtuber and viewers react with shock and hysteria, with the Vtuber yelling and the chat filling with intense comments from the audience.

Initially, when the screen fades to black, viewers express fear and surprise with comments like *"huaa," "kak saya takut"* ["I was scared"], and *"kaget" ["was shocked"].* However, when the screen returns—revealing Kanna's character alongside the bloody path—the tone shifts. Some viewers laugh at Kanna's hysterical reaction, leaving comments such as *"ulang aku kedip tadi" ["repeat please I blinked"], "wkwk,"* and *"Lucu banget gila" ["It was soo funny"].* Others engage in dark humor or violent expressions, with remarks like *"kaget anj-!!"* ["I was shocked fu-!!"] or *"die doggo."*

The *puddle of blood* serves as an explicit representation of violence, evoking psychological reactions such as fear, horror, and hysteria—evidenced by both the Vtuber's and viewers' responses. This kind of situation what Baudrillard described as *seduction,* which suggests that such imagery creates a

paradoxical experience: it provokes a sense of hatred, yet simultaneously fascinates and entertains.

In the game, fear takes on an ironic role, as the Vtuber's fear becomes a source of entertainment for the audience (Baudrillard, 1990, p. 7). The viewers find comfort in this fear, as evidenced by their reactions when the game's screen showed a bloodstained path. They laughed at the Vtuber's response and even made jokes about the symbolic violence. For them, symbolic violence is framed within an entertainment context. This aligns with the principle of symbolic violence—violence that is either unconscious or accepted as such due to a shift in context. In this scenario, both the symbolic violence and the Vtuber's reaction to it are transformed into commodities for the audience. Viewers consume both the violent imagery and the Vtuber's fearful response as entertainment. This results in a commodity exchange, where the Vtuber offers their performance as a commodity, while the audience reciprocates through recognition, either in the form of donations or comments (Chapman, Chua, & Fiedler, 2021; Skotnicki, 2024).

The second visual element that conveys symbolic intensity is the streaming screen display, which shows a splash of blood against a black background. This occurs when Kanna's character is captured by a black shadow. As the blood appears on the screen, Kanna turns his face to the right, moving away from the screen, and exclaims, "*AAAHHHH MATIIIIII* [dead] *HAHAHA*." In response, Raska remarks, "*ya jangan lurus kesonooo! Haha*" ["Then just don't go straight over there! Haha"]. Meanwhile,

Figure 2. Vtuber's reaction to the visual appearance of symbolic violence in the form of a collision.
(Source: Kanna Tamachi Ch., 2021)

viewers react with laughter and playful comments such as "*larinya salaaah* 😄" ["she ran the wrong waaay"], "*SUARA TITAN BARU GESS*" ["THE NEW VOICE OF TITAN GUYSS"], and "*malah didekatin* 🤣" ["she just approached it 🤣"]. Even after the screen transitions back to the regular game display, one viewer makes a donation to Kanna.

This screen display strongly emphasizes intensity, as the blood splashes appear increasingly massive. The blood is rendered vividly, seemingly splattering toward the player's face, almost covering the entire game screen. Areas not entirely filled with red are illuminated by a maroon hue, enhancing the brightness of the red and amplifying the overall visual impact. This effect creates a sense (seduction) of challenge and excitement for both the VTuber and viewers (Baudrillard, 1990). The symbolic depiction of violence is

further reinforced by the presence of black creatures capturing the player, the blood splatter, and the "game over" sign indicating the character's death.

Violence in this game carries an element of irony, where the intended meaning differs from the apparent one. This irony is evident in the VTuber's reaction—initially displaying fear and shock but eventually laughing, even if out of fear. Amused by this reaction, viewers respond with laughter and jokes. Kanna's fear becomes a form of entertainment, turning into a commodity for the audience. In response, some viewers make donations, effectively exchanging money for the symbolic portrayal of violence. The combination of intense visual elements and the VTuber's reaction creates a compelling spectacle that captures viewers' attention, leading to a transactional exchange (Skotnicki, 2024, p. 538).

In addition to visual content, live-stream broadcasts also feature language that conveys symbolic violence. Seven dialogues from the streaming broadcasts are analyzed in relation to their connection with symbolic violent language.

The first dialogue comes from the Vtuber while streaming alone:

> *"Ga ada* [There's nothing]. *I don't have any courage. Aku ga punya* [I don't have it]. *I have nothing! Like fuck this shit!"*

In this dialogue, the words "fuck" and "shit" carry symbolic violent content. The VTuber uses these words as an emotional expression of despair and fear, conveyed through language (Glynos & Howarth, 2007,
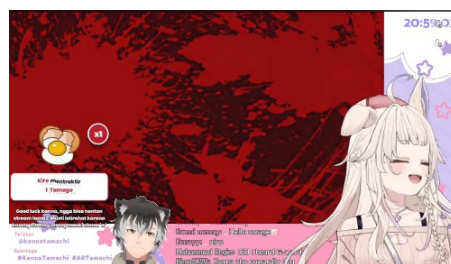
Figure 3. Vtuber's reaction to the visual appearance of symbolic violence in the form of blood splatter.
(Source: Kanna Tamachi Ch., 2021)

p. 57). This intense language appears during gameplay, particularly while playing a horror game.

After the VTuber spoke these words, viewers reacted with comments such as "wow f word" and "she said the word." Some even requested that a clipper (someone who creates snippets from streams) include the moment in a clip, as seen in the comment "CLIP IT!" In Western culture, the words "fuck" and "shit" embody symbolic violence, as they inherently carry aggressive connotations (Žižek, 2008, p. 1). However, in this context, these words function as expressions of fear and despair rather than directed symbolic violence. Although the words are addressed to the audience, their reaction is one of excitement and amusement. Viewers perceive the use of such symbolic language as a commodity that offers a sense of thrill and intrigue, compelling them to continue engaging with the content despite its violent symbolism (Baudrillard, 1990; Sukowati, 2017).

The second dialogue occurs between two VTubers, Kanna and Raska, when Kanna, feeling afraid to play alone, asks Raska to join the stream:

Kanna: *Gue ikutin aja deh kata lo. Dosamu ntar di akhirat anjing ntar urusannya.*
Raska: *Kampret*
[Kanna: "I'll just do what you say. Your sins will be your problem in the 'dog' afterlife."
Raska: "Damn it"]
Kanna and Raska: *[Laughter]*

In this exchange, the words *anjing* (dog) and *kampret* (bat) contain elements of symbolic violence. The word *anjing* has two meanings: first, it is commonly used as a curse word to express anger or annoyance; second, it can function as a joke, which is evident from Kanna and Raska's laughter. Additionally, *anjing* serves as a signifier for Kanna's VTuber avatar, which represents a dog or wolf. Viewers found the dialogue amusing, as shown by a comment referencing the *akhirat* (afterlife): *"akherat [of] anj[in]g awkkaowka."*, although it contains symbolic violence.

Raska responds to Kanna's statement with *kampret*, a word that, according to the **Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI)**, refers to a small, insect-eating bat. However, in spoken language, *kampret* can convey two meanings: as a joking expression of familiarity or as an insult expressing frustration (Lopez & Kübler, 2025; Salsabilla & Arimi, 2023). In this dialogue, both *anjing* and *kampret* function as markers of camaraderie while also carrying an ambiguous undertone of symbolic violence.

The third dialogue takes place while Kanna is being chased by a black shadow in the game. At that moment, Raska offers encouragement while urging Kanna to keep moving forward:

Raska: *Kebut aja.*
Kanna: *Iya, iya! Udah kebut jancok!*
[Raska: Hurry up.
Kanna: Ok, ok! It's already the fastest I can you fool!]

In this exchange, the word *jancok* contains elements of symbolic violence. Commonly used as a curse or an expression of frustration, *jancok* can also serve as a term of familiarity among close friends (dalam Sriyanto & Fauzie, 2017, hlm. 90). Here, the word carries three meanings: an expression of fear, a curse, and a marker of camaraderie between the two VTubers. The symbolic violent content arises in the context of Kanna's fear while being pursued by the black shadow. The curse is directed both at the shadow and at Raska as a reaction to his encouragement. In this instance, jancok conveys both Kanna's fear of the shadow and his frustration with Raska for urging him to speed up.

The fourth dialogue occurs when Kanna, feeling scared due to an in-game situation, reacts to Raska, who intentionally tries to frighten her:

Kanna: *Guys, guys. Ini teman bangsat kayak gini guys.*
Raska: *Hahaha, kampret. Jelek, buru-buru.*
[Kanna: "Guys, guys. This is the kind of jerk friend I'm talking about!"
Raska: "Hahaha, beat it. Hurry up, ugly"]

In this exchange, the words *bangsat*, *kampret*, and *jelek* contain elements of symbolic violence. Kanna addresses the viewers ("Guys, guys") before using *bangsat* to refer to Raska. According to the **online KBBI**, *bangsat* means an "evil person." Here, the word carries two meanings: first, as an acknowledgment of

Figure 4. Kanna said the word "bangsat".
(Source: Katsui Riku Ch., 2021)

Raska's mischievous intent, and second, as a joking expression to establish familiarity between Raska and the viewers (Hanggraito, 2021). This occurs in the context of Kanna feeling scared while Raska exacerbates his fear, prompting Kanna to jokingly call him *teman bangsat* to the audience. Raska responds with laughter, followed by *kampret* and *jelek* as a reaction to Kanna's symbolic violent language. Their shared laughter reinforces the idea that symbolic violence in this exchange serves as a sign of camaraderie rather than hostility.

In this dialogue, viewers also react to Kanna's speech with comments such as *"b word,"* *"keluarin semua kata2 mutiara" ["get all those wise words out!"]*, and *"wkwkwk" ["lmao"]*. These responses indicate that the audience perceives Kanna's use of symbolic violent language as a form of entertainment, leading them to laugh. Some even describe it as *"kata mutiara"* (wise words).

According to the **online KBBI**, *kata* means "speech," while *mutiara* refers to pearls, symbolizing something valuable. In this context, the phrase *kata mutiara* is used humorously to refer to Kanna's use of *bangsat*.

This reinterpretation distorts the original meaning of *bangsat*—typically associated with symbolic violence—transforming it into something appreciated by the audience. As a result, the word becomes normalized and even enjoyed by viewers (Recuero, 2015).

The fifth dialogue takes place when Kanna expresses her feelings about the live stream to Raska:

> *Raska: "Nanti minggu depan sekali lagi tuh lanjutin ke Part Two"*
> *Kanna: hah… PART TWO!? MATA-MU!"*
> [Raska: "Just do it once more next week, continue to the Part Two"
> Kanna: "Huh….PART TWO!? IN 'YOUR EYES'!"]

In this exchange, the phrase *mata-mu* (literally "your eyes") contains symbolic violence. In Javanese, *mata-mu* is considered a swear word, typically used to curse or attack the eyes of the other person (Salsabilla & Arimi, 2023). However, its usage does not always carry a negative connotation. Depending on the context, *mata-mu* can express irony, sarcasm, or humor (Lopez & Kübler, 2025). In this instance, the phrase holds two meanings. First, it functions as a curse directed at Raska, implying frustration over his suggestion to continue the game despite Kanna's fear. The expression conveys Kanna's disbelief, as if accusing Raska of being oblivious to her distress.

Second, *mata-mu* is also used as a playful response to a joke. Raska jokingly suggests that Kanna should do another horror stream, prompting Kanna to retaliate with symbolic violent language in a humorous manner. After Kanna says *mata-mu*, both VTubers

laugh, reinforcing the comedic nature of the exchange. The symbolic violence in this context arises from Kanna's mixed feelings—being both scared and amused by the stream. Raska's joke implies that Kanna enjoyed the experience and should continue with a second part. Following this exchange, viewers respond in the live chat with comments such as *"M WORD ACQUIRED"* and *"your eyes wkwk."* These reactions suggest that the audience was anticipating Kanna's use of *mata-mu* and felt entertained when she finally said it. The phrase creates a sense of excitement, delivering a moment that viewers had been waiting for (Sukowati, 2017).

In this sixth dialogue, Kanna reacts when their in-game character dies after being attacked by a black shadow:

> *"BALIKNYA JAUH AMAT! BANGSAT! BALIKNYA JAUH BANGET BANGSAT! Hahaa…"*
> ["THE BACKTRACKING IS TOO FAR! BASTARD! THE BACKTRACKING IS TOO FREAKING FAR! Hahaa…"]

Here, the word *bangsat* contains symbolic violence. Unlike its usage in the fourth dialogue, where it was directed at another person, in this instance, *bangsat* expresses frustration and disappointment over having to restart the game (Glynos & Howarth, 2007). The intensity of Kanna's emotions is evident in the repeated use of the word and the loud shouting, followed by a sad or ironic laugh. The repetition emphasizes Kanna's annoyance and despair, as they direct their frustration toward two co-enunciators, namely both the game and the viewers (Angermüller et al., 2014). Toward the game, *bangsat* conveys
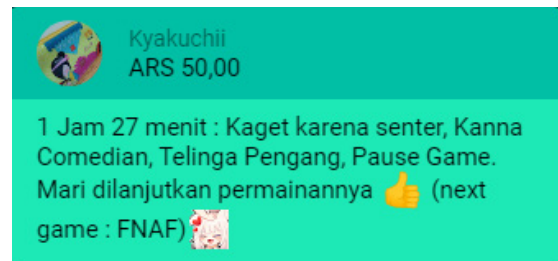
Figure 5. Super Chat from a Kanna Tamachi viewer.
(Source: Kanna Tamachi Ch., 2021)

Kanna's irritation, while for the audience, this emotional outburst becomes a form of entertainment. (Fitchett et al., 2021). Viewers respond with comments such as *"sungguh nikmat B word-nya"* [*"the B-word was chef's kiss"*], *"B WORD AHAHAHAHAHAH,"* and *"B-Word!!!* ."* The use of *nikmat* (meaning "pleasurable" or "enjoyable") suggests that viewers find Kanna's outburst entertaining. Their laughter, represented by *AHAHAHAH* and emojis, further indicates that symbolic violent language is being transformed into an amusing spectacle, turning Kanna's frustration into a consumable entertainment commodity.

In this seventh dialogue, Kanna responds to a Super Chat (a paid feature that highlights a viewer's message) (Guarriello, 2019):

> The English translation of the above Superchat is as follows: "*1 Hour and 27 Minutes: Shocked by flashlight, Kanna Comedian, Ears Ringing, Pause Game. Let's continue the game (next game: FNAF)*

Kanna then replies:

> "*Gua bukan mau bercanda, gua emang goblok*"
> [*"I was not joking, I am indeed stupid"*]

The word *goblok* (meaning "stupid" or "foolish") is the symbolic violent expression in this dialogue. However, it is directed at Kanna herself rather than at someone else. The phrase is ironic—while Kanna insists she is not joking, the self-deprecating use of *goblok* turns it into humor. Viewers also perceive it as a joke, reinforcing the idea that symbolic violence in this context serves as entertainment. This is evident in their responses, such as *"Kanna pelawak alami"* ["Kanna is a natural comedian"] and *"Kanna comedian bukan idol bener wkwkwkwk"* ["Kanna is a comedian, not an idol lmao"]. The audience's reaction shows that symbolic violent language is something they expect and enjoy from Kanna (Recuero, 2015). Their response also reflects a sense of closeness between these two interlocutors; Kanna and the viewers (Hanggraito, 2021). Additionally, this use of symbolic violence contributes to Kanna's symbolic capital, as it becomes a defining characteristic of her persona. The fact that a viewer donated via Super Chat further reinforces how symbolic violence can function as both symbolic capital and a commodity, as it monetizes audience engagement and attention (Guarriello, 2019).

Throughout the vtuber Kanna Tamachi's broadcast, the audience's reactions to symbolic violent speech varied depending on the specific words used. However, the most prominent response was a lively and enthusiastic reaction.

The above viewers' response suggesting that they enjoy hearing Vtubers use words associated with symbolic violence, often anticipating them eagerly. For them, these words enhance the entertainment value of the
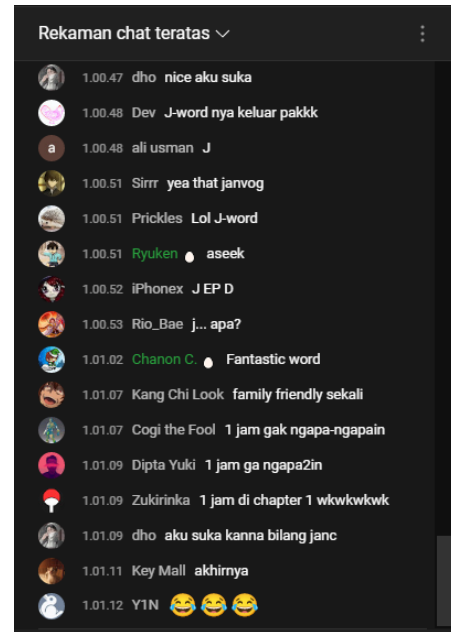
Figure 6. Viewers respond to a symbolic violence narration
(Source: Kanna Tamachi Ch., 2021)

live stream and reinforce the sense of closeness between the Vtuber and the audience (Sriyanto & Fauzie, 2017). Viewers do not perceive these words as actual violence, as they are spoken in an entertaining context (Lopez & Kübler, 2025; Thapar-Björkert et al., 2016). However, from a semiotic perspective, these words still qualify as symbolic violence due to their inherently violent connotations (Žižek, 2008). Ultimately, such language serves as symbolic capital for Kanna Tamachi and functions as a sought-after commodity for viewers (Fitchett et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of symbolic violence in the visual elements and dialogue of Kanna Tamachi's Vtuber broadcast, several conclusions can be drawn. Generally, symbolic violence manifests as insults,

ridicule, and emotional outbursts. However, it is not always perceived as destructive; rather, it can be constructive by providing entertainment, fostering a sense of engagement, and strengthening familiarity or closeness between participants. Language, as a medium of symbolic violence, can also become a commodity. In vtuber broadcasts, this commodification transforms symbolic violence into symbolic capital that viewers actively consume. Despite its violent nature, this very aspect makes it an appealing form of entertainment.

The findings of this study contribute to the understanding of discourse and culture by expanding the concept of symbolic violence. This research highlights that symbolic violence is not merely an expression of anger, frustration, or despair but also a tool for establishing closeness, familiarity, and enjoyment. Moreover, this study reveals that symbolic violence can function as symbolic capital within economic exchanges, making it a commodity capable of generating economic value.

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