BOBBY SAPUTRA AND HIS SATIRE IN THE DIGITAL REALM: A VISUAL-VERBAL VIDEO ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Satire is a linguistic device that can be used as a way to ridicule or critique certain people or group of community. There had been numerous studies related of the use of satire in the world of politics, yet almost none of them addressed the nonpolitical aspect. The use of satire extends beyond political news, rather it has been starting to appear on certain social media posts on social media, including platforms like TikTok. This study sought on the way satire was utilized in some TikTok videos made by @supercoolben10 that were mostly talking about the life of upper class society. To add the novelty of this qualitative study, VVVA (Visual-Verbal Video Analysis) framework was utilized in analyzing the video. After a number of seven videos underwent the six processes of VVVA, it was found that both visual and verbal components take parts in constructing a good satire that could be used as a social critique. The findings in this study were presented into four sub-topics: 1) Satire as Social Critique on Economic Inequality, 2) The Role of Visual and Verbal Elements in Satire, 3) Effectiveness of VVVA for Analyzing Satire on TikTok, and 4) Broader Implications for Satire and Social Critique on Digital Platforms.

Keywords: *Satire; Social critique; Multimodal analysis; VVVA*

ABSTRAK

Satir atau sindiran merupakan suatu perangkat kebahasaan yang dapat menjadi salah satu cara untuk mengejek atau mengkritik orang atau kelompok masyarakat tertentu. Penelitian terdahulu yang berkaitan dengan penggunaan satir dalam dunia politik sudah menjadi hal yang sering dibicarakan, namun hanya sedikit yang membahas aspek nonpolitik. Penggunaan satire tidak hanya terbatas pada berita politik, tetapi juga mulai muncul dalam berbagai unggahan di media sosial, termasuk di platform seperti TikTok. Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana satire digunakan dalam beberapa video TikTok yang dibuat oleh @supercoolben10, yang sebagian besar membahas kehidupan masyarakat kelas atas. Dengan menggunakan kerangka VVVA (*Visual-Verbal Video Analysis)* dalam menganalisis video, ditemukan bahwa komponen visual dan verbal berperan penting dalam membentuk satir yang baik untuk dijadikan kritik sosial. Temuan dalam penelitian ini disajikan dalam empat subtopik: 1) Satir sebagai Kritik Sosial terhadap Ketimpangan Ekonomi, 2) Peran Unsur Visual dan Verbal dalam Satir, 3) Efektivitas VVVA untuk Menganalisis Satir dalam video TikTok, dan 4) Implikasi terhadap Satir dan Kritik Sosial pada Platform Digital.

Kata Kunci: *Kritik sosial; Satir; Analisa Multimodal; VVVA*

INTRODUCTION

The rise of the digital world nowadays makes everything possible. It gives everyone 'voice' and 'power' to do something; even to make a change. One of many opportunities the world offers us is using social media as a platform for media criticism. The renown of social media, especially during and after the global pandemic, completely deforms how society passes on information and discloses any thoughts or personal matters virtually (Dewi & Arifani, 2021; Sekarsari & Wijayanto, 2024). People can almost critique everything on their social media; brands, online shops, artists, and even the governments. However, although it strengthens some people, it may also cause an online firestorm for a certain group of people or company if it is not handled well. Expressing too much truth can sometimes make the one who delivers the critiques in a troubling situation. There was a case where a young well-known TikTok artist criticized a city, leading him to face several unfavorable treatments from the government (Apriani et al., 2024). Criticism on social media does not have to be hostile and aggressive. Hutcheson (1725) illustrated how mockery and ridicule can function as social and moral correctives, bringing us to satire as a tool that has been used as an alternative way to deliver something (Telfer, 1995).

Satire, as a rhetorical practice, blends irony with subtlety to give critique on specified individuals or groups of people, often masking its critique within humor or exaggeration (Johnson et al., 2010; Skalicky & Crossley, 2019). Because it is addressed to certain communities or people, it is often reckoned as an openly political humor frequently studied in the political framework (Faina, 2014; Gray et al., 2009). There is even a term "news satire" which refers to a hybrid genre that blends elements of comedy, news, and political thoughts specifically designed to critique and challenge individuals or even institutions of social and political importance (Baym, 2005; Ödmark, 2023). The reason why satire is favored in the political realm is because it allows people to broaden their understanding of political issues more easily and realistically (Knobloch-Westerwick & Lavis, 2017). Similarly, Ponton (2021) highlights that political satire often targets those in positions of power, as satirical expressions can diminish their authority while simultaneously entertaining the public (Ponton, 2021).

In the political realm, satire could be used as a tool to raise political awareness in society (Nadeem et al., 2020; Ruggieri, 2013). In 2023, research was conducted to examine how political satire consumption and political communication processes related to the potential role of social media. The result of this study showed that any form of exposure to political satire would increase the political conversation which could be meditated by political satire (Jeong et al., 2023). Yet, even though it was confirmed that satire could trigger people's awareness, there was a possibility that people could not differentiate satire and fake news. Bedard and Schoenthaler (2018) sought what factors contributed to the ability to distinguish fake news and satire in news. Their study shows that age, education, sex, and political affiliation could contribute to one's ability to distinguish both (Bedard & Schoenthaler, 2018). Regardless that satire was widely used in the political realm, Luqiu (2017) wrote an

intriguing study on how censorship in China battled political satire on social media. The State Internet Information Office gave political satirists in China nothing but to do self-censorship (Luqiu, 2017). Thus, although satire was proven to be useful in politics, it could concern journalism ethics in terms of censorship and could bring harm to some parts of people as it could lead them to misinterpret the whole news as well.

Several studies in the past show that satire has been used in some public spheres, both online and offline (Bedard & Schoenthaler, 2018; Faina, 2014; Jeong et al., 2023; Luqiu, 2017; Ponton, 2021). Yet, despite the great amount of research done in the past related to satire and its appearance in the digital realm, there is a noticeable lack of studies related to the use of non-political satire online. Studies examining the recurrence of satire in non-political content are still limited. Thus, this case study focuses more on how satire is applied in a non-political in TikTok as it is globally known as the fastest-growing and major landmark of social media used by children and young people (McCashin & Murphy, 2023; Schellewald, 2023). One account that has been constantly using satire in its content is a famous TikTok star, @supercoolben10 as of 9 September 2024, the TikTok account has gained more than 745.900 followers with its highest views up to 15.8 M. He uses satire in his content to divulge and critique the lifestyles of the wealthy.

To give novelty to this study, the researcher decided to try out a new approach which was proposed by Fazeli et al. (2023) known as the VVVA (Visual-Verbal Video Analysis. VVVA itself is a multilayered qualitative approach to content analysis featuring a structured and detailed analytical process that is easy to follow (Fazeli et al., 2023). This approach hasn't been used much since its first publication. Regardless of being relatively new, VVVA would be a good choice for this study as satire often combines verbal and visual elements to convey irony, humor, or criticism. Thus, the researcher wanted to make use of this approach as it would give a new perspective on VVVA in the future. Moreover, this approach is suitable for this study as it would qualitatively analyze multimodal information of visual content (Ben-David et al., 2024). There are two things that the researcher would like to answer based on this research:

1. How does @supercoolben10 utilize linguistic devices in constructing satire on TikTok to serve as a social critique on economic inequality and the behavior of wealthy individuals?
2. How will the VVVA framework work in analyzing satire found in TikTok videos?

By answering these two research questions, this study would shed light to the theoretical understanding of satire in nonpolitical context which remains unexplored. By employing the VVVA framework, this study would also enrich the methodological approaches in analyzing multimodal content. This study also contributed to the practical implications for educators as it would be suitable to use this study as a guide to teach media literacy.

METHOD
Research Design
This qualitative research made use of some @supercoolben10 videos on TikTok. Since there are a great number of videos provided, the researcher only focused on the videos that have more than 7M viewers. As of 9 September 2024, there were nine videos which the highest views were 15.8M ("How Indonesian Billioners Do Business") and the lowest views were 7.4M ("Asian Billionaire Kaviar Diet"). However, as two of them were advertisements for some products, the researcher decided to exclude those videos.

Data Collection
To answer the research questions, the researcher utilized a structured framework by Fazeli et al. in 2023 called VVVA (Visual-Verbal Video Analysis) which can be used in the fields of social sciences, humanities, and medicine (Fazeli et al., 2023). The six steps that should be done in this VVVA process are:

Table 1. Steps of VVVA Framework by Fazeli et al. (2023)

VVA Framework by Fazeli et.al	
Collecting, organizing, and reviewing data	The data were collected and then kept on Google Drive after downloading each video with more than 10M viewers. These videos were watched several times to understand the videos.
Transcribing verbal data	In this process, the researcher transcribed the spoken text manually to build categories such as content, message, emotion, and discourse.
Choosing units of analysis	As the videos uploaded in TikTok are short, the researcher decided to analyze the entire videos.
Extracting and coding data	Extracting data and grouping them into several matrices, which are: a) general characteristics, b) multimodal characteristics, c) visual characteristics, d) characteristics of primary and secondary characters, and e) content and compositional characteristics.
Organizing, describing, and interpreting extracted data	The extracted data are then identified and linked from various categories and sub-categories to describe and interpret how these matrices are intertwined one to another.
Reporting findings	After all the data are extracted and analyzed, the researcher has to disclose all the findings which include graphs, tables, or figures related to the study.

Data Analysis
After the videos were collected, organized, and transcribed, they were extracted and coed based on several matrices. These matrices included general characteristics (e.g., thematic content and context), multimodal characteristics (e.g., the interplay of visual and auditory elements), and the attributes of primary and secondary characters (e.g., roles, behaviors, and interactions). The visual data were carefully described and interpreted to capture the nuances of visual storytelling, such as gestures, expressions, and settings. These visual elements were then connected and integrated with verbal data obtained from the video transcriptions. This process

ensured a comprehensive analysis that highlighted the dynamic relationship between visual and verbal modalities.

FINDINGS
Prevalence and Variety of Satirical Linguistic Devices
The special feature of @supercoolben10 content is the use of excessive satire in each video. He consistently and effectively constructs satire that not only entertains but also provides social criticisms of the behavior and mindset of wealthy individuals. In some videos, he also depicts that often extreme wealth feels disconnected from reality and seems absurd. This approach with previous studies that highlight the use of humor and exaggeration as tools for social critique (van Kampen et al., 2017) (Hütten et al., 2013; van Kampen et al., 2017).

The satires in each video are as followed:
 a. How Indonesian Billionaires Do Business
    This video showcased how Bobby Saputra and Michael Salim made a billion-dollar deal by simply declaring that all Indomie (Michael's family business) should be cooked using Aqua (Bobby's family business). The satire found in this video was presented in the absurdity of how rich people carelessly made a law that affected lots of people's lives without considering the consequences that might come afterward. Instead, they happily celebrated it by eating in a big feast.

> #Excerpt 1
> "And we will show you how Indonesian billionaires do business. We just made a billion-dollar deal that all Indomie must be cooked with Aqua by law. So we celebrated by eating Chinese food."

> #Excerpt 2
> "We ordered everything and ate like pigs like all Chinese businessmen. Everything is All You Can Eat if you are rich enough."

 b. Spoilt Kid, Rich Dad, Beachclub Edition
    As one kind of satire, the mockery in this video was expressed through Bobby's exaggerated complaint to his dad, William Saputra, on how he wanted to move to Bali merely because the air is cleaner there. Responding to the son's whine, William nonchalantly built him a beach club in Jakarta so that he didn't have to move to Bali. The spoilt behavior disconnected the wealthy and the rest of the society whereas it would be an impossible favor asked by lower middle class people.

> #Excerpt 3
> "I hate Jakarta.I don't wanna live here anymore. I wanna move to Bali where there's clean air and beach clubs."

> #Excerpt 4
> "Don't be spoiled. I'm just gonna build you a beach club there."

c. India vs Indonesia, Who's Richer?
    The satire in this video could be seen in how Bobby competed with Mukesh's son on who was richer. For some people, the idea of wealth is seen as a status competition which could sound so absurd for others. In addition to competing, the satire could be seen on how Bobby suddenly gave in to someone who was wealthier than him. This act criticized the condition where people who have more money would get a greater power in the society.

    #Excerpt 5
    "I'm Indo rich. My dad has seven islands in Indonesia."
    "I'm from India. The people there bow to my feet."

    #Excerpt 6
    "My dad has a nickel mine."
    "I have a gold mine."

    #Excerpt 7
    "Is it.. is it Mukesh? I'm… I'm so sorry for the disrespect. You win."

d. Asian Billionaire Son Looks for Friends in Tube
    The disconnection of extreme wealth and good personal relationships with others was displayed in this video through the act of Bobby, a lonely exchange student, who hired a girlfriend in a tube. It represented how wealth does not necessarily bring genuine connections.

    #Excerpt 8
    "I'm a billionaire from Indonesia. I'm very wealthy. But I'm here in London for university. And uh I just wanna see if anyone wants to be my friend or if anyone wants to be my girlfriend. It's been quite lonely in here. So, girlfriend, girlfriend, girlfriend."

e. Indonesia's Most Expensive House
    Through this video, Bobby highlighted how hypocritical some extreme wealth could be. After showing off his lavish lifestyle, he mentioned how his workers were treated in dignity and respect which was in contrast to the subtle hints at the exploitation of domestic workers in his place.

    #Excerpt 9
    "Everyone who works in my house has their own bedroom. Everyone gets treated with dignity and respect."
    "Let me out! I wanna go back to Singapore."

f. Don't Mess with Indonesian Billionaires
    The mockery showed again here when Bobby, after a minor inconvenience, phoned his dad and asked for a bank so that he could fire someone. It is undeniable that wealth brings power and control over others. Thus, Bobby demonstrated how upper-class society could misuse their power, even in petty situations.

    #Excerpt 10

"Dad, we need to buy a bank. Hey, loser! Get up! You are fired. My dad just bought this bank."

g. Indonesian Billionaire Exchange Students in London
When usually it is natural for an exchange student to stay in a boarding house or a place that is affordable, Bobby started his day in a luxurious penthouse which he referred to as his student's accommodation. The disconnection between the wealthy and real-life situations for most people was highlighted more when he had an argument with his girlfriend about the use of public transport instead of his Lamborghini.

#Excerpt 11
"My dad brought this Lamborghini from Indonesia so we can get around. Why do we need to take the tube?"

h. Asian Billionaire Kaviar Diet
This content ridiculed the overindulgent lifestyle of the extremely rich people and the tendency to always use money in solving problems; even the problems that could be settled in a simpler way.

#Excerpt 12
"My doctor said I should eat more eggs. So, I decided to eat one million eggs at a time, which you can only do with caviar."

#Excerpt 13
"But it turns out it's way more expensive than chicken. And it has twice as many calories. So I needed to lose that fat quickly. Because I'm a billionaire, I'm lazy. I never work out. I just get lipostriping at my nearest Lighthouse Clinic. Man it's good to be rich billionaire. 77 China points."

Multimodal Components in the Satirical Narratives
Human's way of communicating and expressing emotions tends to be multimodal (Abdu et al., 2021) which means that it is important to analyze the text, audio, and visual in a video in order to be able to really understand the purpose or intention hidden in it. Thus, VVVA also emphasizes the importance of analyzing the multimodal characteristics in the extracting and coding data part. In this part, the research focused on the speech used in the video (whether it was spoken or written) and the gestures or the mimics. In addition to that, it was also crucial to pay attention if there were images or writing on the screen and also the music used in the video (the beat, rhythm, lyrics, and so on).

In all the seven videos analyzed in this study, @supercoolben10 rarely used music in his video or even when presented, it was generally a neutral audio track with no significant meaning. Therefore, music was not considered a key factor in this analysis. However, the character Bobby in the videos always showed dramatic faces just like a little kid even though he was a grown-up man. The examples are showcased in Table 1 below. In addition to the characteristics of the characters which could be seen in the gestures, viewers could also understand the context

better through the images or writing as in the "How Indonesian Billionaires Do Business" video.

Table 2. Multimodal Characteristics on TikTok videos by @supercoolben10

| Title | Multimodal Characteristics | | | | |
	Speech (Spoken/Text)	Gestures/Body Movement	Images	Writing	Music
How Indonesian Billionaires Do Business	Spoken	-	Picture of a newspaper	Newspaper headline from Jakarta Post: BILLION DOLLAR DEAL Deal of the century. All Indomie must be cooked with Aqua by LAW. Everyone who does not adhere to this LAW will get 15 public whippings in front of everyone in SCBD watching them. Also, some other news about some politician hiding money somewhere in a warung.	No music
	Text	Bobby Saputra and Michael Salim ate gluttonously like pigs in a fancy Chinese food restaurant.	No picture	No writing	No music
Spoilt Kid, Rich Dad, Beachclub Edition	Spoken	Bobby sat next to his dad, William, and pouted his lips because he hated the weather in Jakarta. He also moved his body, physically reacting to something he was upset about.	No picture	No writing	No music
India vs Indonesia. Who's is Richer?	Spoken	Bobby talked to Mukesh's son by bragging about how rich his dad is. He moved his head back and his eyes looked down on Mukesh.	No picture	No writing	No music
Indonesia's Most Expensive House	Spoken	Bobby put both of his hands on the top of his heart; emphasizing the word that he just said about respect. But his eyes were shaking; showing	No picture	No writing	Unidentified music. But there was someone locked

Title	Speech (Spoken/Text)	Gestures/Body Movement	Multimodal Characteristics		
			Images	*Writing*	*Music*
	that he was nervous.				in the room and screamed that she wanted to move back to Singapore.

DISCUSSION

This study investigated the use of satirical linguistic devices by @supercoolben10 on TikTok, particularly as a form of social critique on economic inequality and the behavior of wealthy individuals. Additionally, it evaluated the effectiveness of the Visual Verbal Video Analysis (VVVA) framework in analyzing multimodal components of satire on TikTok.

Satire as Social Critique on Economic Inequality

Through the findings section, it was evident that @supercoolben10 effectively employed a range of linguistic devices such as irony, sarcasm, hyperbole, and mockery to construct satire in highlighting the disparity between the wealthy and the general public. Haugerud (2013) said there are many reasons behind this use of satire in the critique, such as the inequality of growing economic inequality, the political influence, and corporate influence in politics, and the declining number of middle-class people (in Flynn, 2016). Through devices like exaggeration, sarcasm, irony, and many more, satire serves as a form of the public's critical judgment (Peifer & Lee, 2019). As an example, Bobby, the main character in @supercoolben10 videos, portrayed the life of the wealthy with all his absurdity. Many of his statements which employed irony served as moral critiques to highlight the insanity of wealthy individuals. Alongside the use of irony, sarcasm was also heavily employed throughout the videos to make the contents become funny (Blasko et al., 2021). For instance, in videos where characters nonchalantly made billion-dollar deals over their products or demand extravagant favors from family, hyperbole was used to underscore the detachment and entitlement often associated with wealth. Sarcasm and irony also featured prominently in these videos, where characters mock their own wealth, implicitly criticizing the unearned advantages and power wielded by the elite. This use of irony, in particular, reflects the "pretend praise" often found in satire, where outwardly positive statements mask underlying criticism (Smith, 2019). These findings were in line to several classic theories of satire that suggest exaggerated portrayals could spark public awareness of societal issues that happen in their surrounding (Bruhn & Doona, 2022; Zekavat, & Scheel, 2023). Bobby Saputra as the main character was described as someone who acts like a mama boy and has the tendency of excessive consumption and reckless spending. The humor

in these videos is accessible, making complex socioeconomic issues relatable and engaging, as well as entertaining, for viewers.

The Role of Visual and Verbal Elements in Satire

The integration of visual and spoken language was essential in constructing the satirical narrative in @supercoolben10 videos. In this study, the researcher decided to try out VVVA as a framework for analyzing satire. This framework was proven to be useful as satire does not have a straightforward interpretation but rather relies heavily on the context (Palacio & Ibáñez, 2022). Analyzing through the VVVA framework allowed the researcher to analyze the visual irony provided in the contents, such as luxurious settings or exaggerated expressions of boredom in the face of wealth. An obvious example could be seen in the video entitled "Indonesia's Most Expensive House" where the character Bobby Saputra said he respected all his employees and treated them with dignity. At the same time, the sound of someone banging on the door next to him while asking him to let her change Bobby's facial expression. This wiped out the statement he just made, which could be interpreted that the wealthy were so good at constructing a decent self-image whereas in reality, they are not.

In this case, both visual and verbal elements in satire were needed to intensify the critique of economic inequality. The visual elements would complete the whole picture of the satire which verbal elements could not present, for instance, the characters' expressions, the surrounding environment, and the body movement which depict anger, sadness, and so on. These multimodal elements work with verbal satire to create a more immersive and persuasive critique, aligning with VVVA's emphasis on the interdependence of visual and verbal components in meaning-making (Bricker, 2018). By examining both the linguistic and visual elements, viewers could have a better understanding of how humor and criticism were layered to produce impactful satire. In this study, VVVA was particularly useful for capturing subtle interactions between spoken and visual cues, such as the character's exaggerated body language and the lavish settings, both of which reinforce the satirical message about wealth and privilege.

Effectiveness of VVVA for Analyzing Satire on TikTok

The VVVA framework was proven appropriate to be used in analyzing not only medical-related videos but also satire on TikTok videos. Even though Fazeli (2023) had stated that VVVA could be utilized in social science and medicine, the number of research in social science studies was scant. In analyzing satire, VVVA offered a structured way to interpret the complex interactions between spoken language, body language, and visual settings. The part "content and compositional characteristics" in the data code was also proven to be useful in detecting the shifting emotion within each character. Yet, it is undeniable to say that this part could be better used in the medical field (e.g.: psychology). Nonetheless, the framework allowed for a detailed breakdown of how each modality contributed to the satirical message. For example, the visual and verbal components in @supercoolben10's content often rely on exaggerated gestures and sarcastic tone to communicate critique, which VVVA effectively captures through multimodal layering. However, some limitations were noted. TikTok's short video format poses challenges for

comprehensive multimodal analysis, as the brevity restricts the depth of content that can be included in each post. Additionally, TikTok's fast-paced editing style sometimes made it difficult to capture all verbal and visual elements within a short timeframe. Future research could consider integrating VVVA with audience response analysis to better understand how viewers interpret and react to these multimodal satirical messages, allowing for a more holistic understanding of satire's social impact on digital platforms.

Broader Implications for Satire and Social Critique on Digital Platforms

The character of Bobby Saputra, the professional son, successfully proved the potential of satire on social media, TikTok in specific, as a tool for social critique. The number of satirical uses in the political world was living proof of its application as a social critique (Faina, 2014; Gray et al., 2009; Jeong et al., 2023; Ödmark, 2023), yet @supercoolben10 particularly brought it in addressing socioeconomic issues. Through this study, it can be found that satirical content like @supercoolben10's made complex topics that were beyond the reach of ordinary people accessible and relatable, especially for younger audiences who engage frequently with platforms like TikTok. By combining humor with critique, this style of content invited viewers to reflect on economic inequality, privilege, and societal structures, fulfilling satire's role in encouraging critical reflection.

The success of VVVA in analyzing these multimodal interactions suggested that this framework could be appropriate for other fields in social studies. Regardless the fact that previously this framework was only used in studies that were analyzing videos related to medical field and psychology, this study proved that VVVA, just like what Fazeli et al. claimed, could be beneficial in analyzing videos, especially in the realm of linguistics portrayal in media. As social media keeps on evolving, the integration of multimodal frameworks with digital media analysis could deepen one's understanding of how certain linguistic devices function in social critique about certain things. Further research may expand on this study by exploring how viewers engage with satirical content and what impact it has on public perception of socioeconomic issues.

CONCLUSION

Satire has been being used as a tool in stating social criticism. Even though it was popular in news related to politics, many people started to use it in criticizing other things too, such as disparaging wealthy society. @supercoolben10, a TikTok account whose main character is Bobby Saputra ridicules the acts of the upper-class society in his videos by acting like one. Utilizing VVVA (Visual-Verbal Video Analysis), the research sought how satire worked in seven of Bobby Saputra's TikTok videos as well as how well VVVA could be used in social science study. Results stated that irony, hyperbole, mockery, and sarcasm were employed in constructing the satire throughout the videos. In addition to that, VVVA was also proven to be appropriate in analyzing satire as it provided multimodal analysis involving verbal and visual components in the video. The visual components played a crucial role in the satire as it could perfectly depict the situation (context) where the satire was made. Moreover, the analysis of each video in VVVA framework also

presented certain aspects that verbal components could not give, such as facial expression and the body movement of each character in the video.

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