

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is the introduction to the research. It consists of background of the research, statement of problems, Research purposes, scope of study, Research significance, and definition of key terms.

1.1 Research Background

Video game is a communication medium created with a combination of message delivery and visual technology. According to Nicolas (2015), a videogame is a game which we play thanks to an audiovisual apparatus and which can be based on a story. In its development, video games have a long history which then makes them very popular entertainment in the community. Apart from being entertainment, video games have also proven to be able to improve some people's abilities in various ways. In a study conducted by Edery & Mollick (2009), it was concluded that by playing video games a person can improve logical thinking, train the ability to work together, and can develop imagination. Cade, J.D (Organization, 2002) (2016) states that video games can increase literacy, attention, reaction time, and thinking levels. This shows that by playing video games people can train their cognitive and communicative abilities in an entertaining and interesting way.

With the closely related of video games to the realities of society, makes video games often includes problems that occur in society itself as their appeal. Therefore, the process of conveying messages and culture can take place between the developer and the player. This is generally displayed in video games with the action-adventure genre that carries problems to be presented for the players. One of the adventure games that presents a reality that is close to society that is being faced today is a video game with the title *Suikoden II*.

Suikoden II is a role-playing video game developed and published by Konami for the PlayStation video game console and the second installment of the *Suikoden* video game series. It was released in late 1998 in Japan, 1999 in North America, and in 2000 in Europe. The main theme of *Suikoden 2* are conflict, and war that lead by Highland army. The antagonist for the majority of the game is Luca Blight, heir to the throne of Highland. war was beginning. Luca's plan succeeds, and Highland is ready and willing to go to war. Luca leads the first charge, attacking the small village, Ryube Village, then the next one is Toto Village. He leaves zero survivors. Perhaps the most

important theme to Suikoden 2 is the real victims of its conflict. It's always the innocent by standers, the civilians, the people caught in the middle. Children, parents, the elderly. These are the people that spill their blood, unwillingly, for the ambitions of the powerful, the corrupt, the insane. The action taken by Luca Blight are a form of violence. In this matters, he intends to control the territories by using political violence. By attacking the small and weak region first, he intends to give advance-warning to the big strong region as the sign of the start of the war.

In the game sequence, players will be shown both explicitly and implicitly about certain signs that have meaning in them by the game developer. These signs indicate that the game developer is directly or indirectly conveying a communicative message to the player. If the sign indicates a meaning, the meanings can become very broad. In the game Suikoden II, many signs are shown to the player. Starting from the general to the special. In this study, the author focused on examining the visual and verbal signs of appearance, and dialogue of the game characters that refer to the concept of political violence.

Political violence is a phenomenon that, in the past century, has been growing in alarming proportions across the world. Violence is a common method used to achieve particular ends .The turn of the century make a new goal threat. WHO (2002) states that political violence is the deliberate use of power and force to achieve political goals. political violence is characterized by both physical and psychological acts aimed at injuring or intimidating populations. Examples include shootings or aerial bombardments; detentions; arrests and torture; and home demolitions. In addition, it is usually the poorest and most disenfranchised that suffer the most within wars and conflicts as they are particularly targeted and/or face oppression and violence within a multitude of overlapping experiences.

The choice to focus on political violence within Suikoden is not arbitrary but is rooted in the recognition of video games as powerful cultural artifacts capable of reflecting and commenting on societal issues. Political violence, a pervasive theme in numerous narratives, is particularly intriguing in the context of video games due to their interactive nature, offering players a unique platform to engage with and critically reflect upon complex political scenarios. By examining the portrayal of political violence in Suikoden, this research aims to contribute to the broader discourse on how video games articulate and challenge societal norms and political ideologies.

Through the analysis of the signs in the video game, the writer aims to interpret the meaning of a communication sign both visually and verbally. So as to produce a communication motive between the communicators. With the semiotic method, it can be interpreted how a sign constructs a message in writing or orally.

In general, the study of signs is discussed in semiotics. Semiotics is the study of signs that have certain meanings and how they are conveyed. According to Seiter (1992), semiotics is the study of everything that can be interpreted into language meaning such as images, traffic signs, words (letters), flower, music, medical symptoms, etc. More broadly, Seiter considers semiotics can also discuss the meaning transmitted by things other than symbols and signs, in this case flowers, music, or health symptoms.

One of the semiotics experts is Roland Barthes. He is considered a structuralist and post-structuralist who follows the Saussure approach. His work pioneered ideas of structure and signification that support modern study. Kriyantono (2008: 268) states that Roland Barthes, as a successor of Saussure's thought, initiated the interaction between text and personal experiences and user culture, as well as interactions between conventions in the text and the conventions experienced by users.

The selection of Roland Barthes' Semiotics Theory is motivated by its aptitude for analyzing signs and symbols in cultural texts, thereby uncovering latent meanings and ideological underpinnings. Barthes' semiotic approach allows for a systematic exploration of the visual, narrative, and interactive elements within Suikoden, providing a framework to decode the game's semiotic signifiers and their political implications. Through this lens, the study seeks to unravel the ways in which political violence is constructed, conveyed, and interpreted within the game world.

Roland Barthes' semiotic theory is known as the signification theory. This theory is carried out by two important processes to create denotative and connotative meanings. The first stage of significance is the relationship between the signifier and the signified in external reality, known as denotation. The second is connotation which refers to the meaning associated with a sign based on history or culture.

Barthes uses the "level of meaning" of denotative and connotative significance to analyze signs. He divides sign analysis into verbal and non-verbal. Verbal signs are signs in the form of text from an object while non-verbal signs are images in general. Chandler (2001) stated that verbal sign in something that deals with text and word and non-verbal sign generally refer to picture.

In this study, the researcher made the object of research as a video game, with Political Violence variables, analysis with Roland Barthes (1977) theory, and research methods from Miles, Huberman, and Saldana. This study will bring an analysis of the Tactic video game genre with a lot of action in it. The video game also has characteristics which Political Nuances figures play important and dominant role, so

that the reflection of the concept of Political Violence will be clearly seen. The portrayal and interpretation of political violence in video games have been increasingly scrutinized in academic discourse. Political violence in real life often serves as a means of asserting power, addressing grievances, or advancing ideological agendas. Its impact on individuals and societies is well-documented, and scholars have developed frameworks for analyzing its causes and consequences. However, how political violence is presented in video games, and how players engage with these representations, is an emerging area of inquiry.

This research seeks to address this research problem by conducting a semiotic analysis of Suikoden II, exploring how the game's narrative, visuals, and symbols communicate the idea of political violence to players. By comparing and contrasting the representation of political violence in the game to real-world instances, this study aims to enhance our understanding of how video games engage with complex political themes and their potential to contribute to political discourse and awareness. In addition, with Roland Barthes' (1977) semiotic theory, this study will produce an analysis of the meaning of visual and verbal signs about how these signs construct messages in the communication process. Finally, through the interactive model analysis method of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), a more organized and easy-to-understand form of analysis will be presented.

There are some previous studies which also have investigated by using Roland Barthes's theory. First, was revealed by Riza Pahlevi Ginting (2022) who analyzed "Semiotic of Female Masculinity In Video Game The last of Us Part II". He used semiotics theory of Roland Barthes. He focused on analyze the denotative and connotative meanings of visual and verbal signs from the characters of the videogame The Last Of Us Part II. The source of this research data comes from screenshots of the videogame walkthrough which is then focused into 12 data for qualitative descriptive analysis. The 12 data were analyzed for their denotative and connotative meanings, then followed by description of the female masculinity category initiated by Judith Halberstam.

The Second was revealed by Rizal Alexander (2018) who analyzed "Representasi Perempuan Dalam Game Online Mobile Legend". He used semiotics theory of Roland Barthes. He focused on the meaning of connotation and denotation. with the main sources obtained from the mobile legends game itself, while the supporting data was obtained from observation and documentation. From the results of the study analysis conducted, most The female characters in the online game Mobile Legends can be obtained from the meaning where women are not only used as sexual

objects in a game, but these women have something more than just appearance, namely courage, strength, leadership and heroism.

The third was revealed by Amos Ruben Panjaitan, Arsen Nahum Pasaribu (2023) who analyzed “A Semiotic Analysis on FIFA World Cup 2022 Qatar Memes”. The aims of this semiotic analysis study are to determine the signifier and the signified, as well as the denotation and connotation, as well as the meaning of FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 memes. Most of the connotational meaning from memes that have been analyzed focuses on sharing the experience of watching the FIFA World Cup 2022 competition and also trolling the football supporters or even the players that participated.

The Fourth was revealed by Ester Nauli, Hot Saun Halomoan (2021) who analyzed “A Semiotic Analysis of Forget Me Not A Film Directed By Kei Horie Roland Barthes Theory”. This research used the semiotics theory of Roland Barthes that discusses the denotative meaning and the connotative meaning. The writers found the denotative meaning of a necklace is a jewelry with pendant. The connotative meaning of a necklace is to strengthen the relationship. The denotative meaning of a video showing living things to keep precious memories. It denotes that a picture is a thing that is based on an object. The writer concludes that the last connotative meaning of a picture is documenting the story.

The Fifth was revealed by Vinsensa Audrey, Surya Patria (2022) analyzed “Analisis Semiotika Desain Karakter Silverash Pada Game Arknight”. This research using SilverAsh, a character from Arknights to indicate the meaning of the sign using Roland Barthes theory. The first step is to indicate sign from the object, and the second ones to indicate the form of sign and the meaning of its sign.

Based on background above, the author will analyze the signs that reflect Political Violence through the action in The Suikoden II. The author will carry out a series of research stages that have been determined to make a study. Based on the background explained above, author decided to give the title of this research with “*The political Violence In Video Game Suikoden II Through Roland Barthes Semiotic's Theory*”.

1.2 Statement Of Problem

Based on the previous background, the researcher attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. What do visual and verbal of signifier and signified represent the political violence in the dialogues of the game Suikoden II ?
2. What is the denotative and connotative meaning represent the political violence in the dialogues of the game Suikoden II ?

1.3 Research Purposes

Regarded to the problems above, two objectives of the study are:

1. To identify representation of visual and verbal signifier, signified, represent political violence in the game suikoden II.
2. To describe the denotative and connotative meaning represent political violence in the game Suikoden II.

1.4 Scope Of The Study

The author needs to limit his analysis into specific data in order to avoid overly broad and complicated discussions. This is important to get the best results from an investigation. In this research, the author focuses to analyze the semiotic signs related to the concept of political violence in the game Suikoden II. First, the author will identify the signification of Political violence in the story of the game. Second, it will be followed by the meaning realization of Political violence in game Suikoden II. Author will limit the analysis based on scenes of the story that lead to conflicts related to political violence. In the process of identifying the meaning of semiotics in the game Suikoden II, the author uses the semiotic theory initiated by Roland Barthes (1977). In this research, the writer will analyze the meaning of denotation and connotation through Roland Barthes' semiotic theory without participating in analyzing the meaning of myth.

1.5 Research Significance

The significance given by this study is in the form of theoretical and practical benefits which are expected to provide knowledge to the public in understanding the meaning of language through signs contained in semiotics. This study also aims to provide an understanding the meaning of the signs in video games related to political violence, which in this case political violence of the characters in the game Suikoden II, so that readers in general can understand semiotics and the concept of political violence in a game or even in other science.

In addition, this research is also expected to be used as a reference for future researchers related to language and semiotic research or even for research on video games.

1.6 Definition of Keyterms

Semiotics

semiotics defines that the phenomenon of social, society and culture as signs (Sobur:2009).

Political Violence

political violence is characterized by both physical and psychological acts aimed at injuring or intimidating populations.

(WHO, 2022).

Video Game

a videogame is a game which we play thanks to an audiovisual apparatus and which can be based on a story (Nicolas, 2015).

Suikoden II

"Suikoden II" is a role-playing video game developed and published by Konami. It was released for the Sony PlayStation in 1998 in Japan and North America and in 1999 in Europe.