

Indonesia Kris Representation on Virtual YouTuber “Anya Melfissa” Visual Identity

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Abstract. The rapidly evolving motion capture technology has made it possible to solve online identity problems with the medium of moving character design known as Virtual YouTuber. Spontaneous reaction in Livestream media can make a fictional character feels real through a virtual avatar. As such, anthropomorphism representation can be used, and Anya Melfissa is a Virtual Youtuber whose moe anthropomorphism of Indonesia Keris. However, the visual identity of Indonesia Kris is hard to find by most people and the problem is interesting to study using the theory of semiotics, anthropomorphism, and kris visual identity. The method used to analyze Anya Melfissa’s character design will use visual text analysis to identify its visual elements such as icon, index, and symbol. The results of the analysis show that Anya Melfissa’s character design has a kris visual identity which is at the level of thirdness in Peirce’s semiotics theory. The conclusion obtained from the kris representation in Anya Melfissa’s character design is proven to exist and requires a deeper level of understanding of Indonesian kris itself.

Keywords. Virtual Youtuber, Anthropomorphism, Semiotics, Character Design, Keris.

1. Introduction

Advances in technology that support live streams with moving avatars by motion capture have gotten easier to access. Virtual YouTuber is one of the uses of this technology so that someone can have a new online identity as a YouTuber. There have been many popular Virtual YouTubers such as Kizuna Ai, Gawr Gura, and Inugami Korone as the most subscribed reaching more than two million. They can do activities such as playing games, singing, chatting, and interacting with the audience via live messages and YouTube “super chat” donations. The number of Virtual YouTubers is increasing and has reached 10,000 virtual YouTubers according to the local virtual YouTuber ranking [1]. The Virtual YouTuber character design is adjusted to Live2D and Facerig to support the creation of live streaming content. These phenomena of Virtual YouTubers made the topic of virtual avatars interesting to study.

The virtual YouTuber that will be studied is Anya Melfissa from the Japanese company Cover Corp. with an Indonesian branch known as Hololive Indonesia 2nd Generation. Anya is the first character of the company to draw inspiration from Indonesian culture. There are still not many virtual YouTubers inspired by Indonesian culture because the popularity is still saturated in Japanese pop culture. It is interesting to point out that anthropomorphism could be the key to overcome that problem [2]. Eku Uekura, a Japanese illustrator designed Anya Melfissa’s with inspiration from kris which changes its

shape into a girl due to a mystical ritual performed by its owner. However, the representation of the keris in Anya Melfissa’s visual identity needs to be further analyzed because there are still many people who do not see the identity of the keris in Anya. This analysis aims to find out how to prepare character designs inspired by Indonesian culture and the reasons why there are difficulties in finding the visual identity of the keris. The existence of keris identity in Anya Melfissa’s character design will be studied with Charles Peirce’s semiotic theory and will also be reason out with an anthropomorphism approach.



Figure 1. Anya Melfissa Character Design (Source: Twitter @ekureea)

2. Method

Unveiling the representation of kris on Anya Melfissa character design will use the method of visual text analysis using Peirce’s semiotic theory [3] with a literature study followed by the theory of three factors of anthropomorphism [4]. The process of visual text analysis begins by breaking down Anya Melfissa’s character design into parts of visual identity including representants, objects, and interpretants, then identifying each object as an icon, index, and symbol. The identification is then linked to a study of the kris literature so it can get a conclusion on how kris is represented in Anya Melfissa’s character design. The three-factor theory of anthropomorphism is then used to determine the reasons behind this representation relationship.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1 Charles Peirce’s semiotic

There are three levels of marks in Peirce’s triangular model: (1) Firstness - A sense of something. Can be described as a feeling or atmosphere such as the feeling of ‘blue’. (2) Secondness - A fact of something. Physical relationship on one thing to another. (3) Thirdness - a mental level that has combined the two previous levels and is linked to a convention. The three levels are representamen, interpretant, and object.

There are three categories of objects according to Peirce: (1) Icon - a sign resembling, alike, and imitation of what is represented. An example is a photo of a person physically representing the

person represented. (2) Index - the sign has a direct causal relationship between the object and the sign. An example is a smoke which is a sign of fire. (3) Symbols - signs that do not have a relationship with what is represented and a relationship with meaning is a convention. An example is a flag that represents a region or an organization.

There are three categories of representamen: (1) Qualisign - The quality of something and not related to anything. There is potential to be a sign. An example is a redness. (2) Sinsign - A quality that is applied to one thing like the Blue Sea. (3) Legisign - General form that has formed a code. For example, red on traffic lights.

There are three categories of interpreters: (1) Rheme - thoughts that arise to sign users spontaneously and are not bound by convention. (2) Dissent - thoughts that arise in the user of the sign associated with objects or reality. (3) Arguments - thoughts that arise in the user of convention-based signs such as logic, social codes, and habits. The logic of arguments has three categories, namely deduction, induction, and abduction.

3.2 Anthropomorphism

The giving of human attributes, feelings, and intentions to non-human things is called anthropomorphism. This is an inherent predisposition in human psychology. There are three situations in which people will anthropomorphize, namely:

1. Agent knowledge obtained or how much knowledge of an object.
2. Effectiveness, or a sense of wanting to interact and understand an environment.
3. Sociality, a need to build social relationships.

When knowledge is lacking and the effectiveness and need for social relationships are high, people will tend to anthropomorphize. Variables such as situational, developmental, cultural, and dispositional can influence these three factors. Examples of these variables are the need for recognition, social disconnection, cultural ideology, uncertainty avoidance, and others.

3.3 Moe and Moe Anthropomorphism

Historically, Moe is a noun form of Moeru which is defined as burst into bud or to sprout, contain youthful vitality. It also may be used as burning passion. Today, Moe is referring to an affectionate response to fictional characters. Moe is a response to a fictional character but not the character itself. [5]

Moe anthropomorphism refers to anthropomorphism with the quality of moe - a feeling of strong affection for a character in the media aimed at the otaku market - is applied to things other than humans such as animals, objects, concepts, or even phenomena [6].

3.4 Kris Identity


Kris is an asymmetrical and special dagger that has five functions in Indonesian society, namely tradition, social function, art, philosophy, and mystical. Kris is often believed to have magical powers. Kris spread across the island of Java to Southeast Asia in the 10th century.


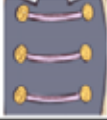





The kris has four parts, consisting of Ukiran (a carving, kris handle), Mendak (kris ring), Wilah (kris blade), and Warangka (kris frame). Kris morphology that needs to be considered is blade curves (luk), ornament (ricikan), color or radiance of the blade, and pamor pattern. Luk on a kris needs to be an odd number of at least 3 and a maximum of 13, more than that it is called a kris kalawija. Kris has a degree of tilt as a characteristic feature as it will not be found on another arm weapon [7]. According to UNESCO's description [8], the aesthetic value of a kris includes dhapur (a form of kris), pamor (blade decoration), and tough.





3.5 Visual Identity Analysis

The visual representation of Anya Melfissa’s character design at the equalizing stage is moe, then at the sinsign stage is a girl with long hair in a dark blue dress and at the legisign, the stage is a more anthropomorphism of a keris. The legisign stage is achieved by looking at the relationship between the objects in the character design. The sinsign stage sees visual text with the quality that is applied. The data of the sinsign stage on the design character is described in the following table.

Table 1. Visual Identity Analysis of Anya Melfissa Character Design.

No.	Representamen	Object	Interpretant
1.		Purple eyes without pupil, eyelashes, and brows (Icon)	Rheme: Cute eyes Dissent: Big eyes along with thick lashes and short eyebrows indicate a character's eyes in a manga style
2.		Red cheeks with a curved line (Symbol)	Rheme: Blush Dissent: The presence of cheeks accompanied with red lines and curved lines depicting a smiling mouth is part of the character's face in a manga style
3.		A twisted triangle, a circle, and a diamond (Index)	Rheme: Yellow shapes Dissent: The various shapes in the hair indicate a pin. Twisted triangles as clothespins, circles as chains, and diamonds as clothespins ornaments
4.		A strand of hair (Index)	Rheme: Yellow Dissent: A strand of yellow hair between brown hair has similarities attribute to human gray hair
5.		Hair tie (Icon)	Rheme: Brown Dissent: The hair is side-tied on both sides indicating the type of twintails. Hidden hair tie and long twintails to the cheeks.
6.		Hair extension (Index)	Rheme: Yellow zigzag Dissent: Yellow hair extension with the zigzag shape
7.		Earrings (Index)	Rheme: Zigzag Dissent: Twisted triangle shape earrings
8.		The ribbon on the collar with gemstone brooch (Index)	Rheme: Luxury Dissent: A white ribbon with gray accents and a yellow gemstone brooch in the center of the ribbon.

9.		Collar and ribbon with brooch ribbon (Index)	Rheme: Charming Dissent: This character dress is backless and features a strap on the collar and a brooch ribbon at the back center of the dress.
10.		Button clothes with string (Icon)	Rheme: Royal; Luxury Dissent: A yellow pouch bridged by a pink ribbon.
11.		Decoration (Icon)	Rheme: Details Dissent: The two ribbons are connected and have a tail that is decorated with a tail.
12.		Decoration (Icon)	Rheme: Sharp Dissent: The accessories on the ends of the ribbon are in the shape of a tortuous triangle and stacked triangles on its top side.
13.		Ornament (Icon)	Rheme: Yellow Dissent: There is a shape that resembles the hilt of a sword that is stuck, accompanied by a jewel (diamond shape) on the top and other diamond shapes on the bottom. The surface of the blade is bent upward with a forked tip. There are also hook-shaped lines on the blade and perpendicular angled lines.
14.		Dress and Skirt (Icon)	Rheme: Youthful Dissent: Dark gray halter dress with yellow ornaments. The chest is frilled vertically which is graded with a yellow accent stripe. Under the dress is a pink mini skirt.
15.		Detached sleeves (Icon)	Rheme: Luxury Dissent: A gray detached sleeves. On the upper sleeve, there is lace with a diamond motif. There is a ribbon connected to the jewel on the bottom side of the sleeve and there is a pink and white frill on the sleeve.

16.		Glove and ribbon (Icon)	Rhemes: Elegant Dissent: The gloves were gray that didn't cover the fingers and had lace over the hands. There is a band with a brooch on the wrist. The gloves are covered by the sleeves so that they are not visible.
17.		Bandage (Index)	Rhemes: Sexy Dissent: Dark gray bandage that attaches to the thigh of the right leg.
18.		Feet Ribbon (Index)	Rhemes: Mystical Dissent: Barefeet with a brooch ribbon and frills on the left leg. There is a dark gray lace covering the legs.
19.		Long hair (Icon)	Rhemes: Messy Dissent: Waist-length wavy long hair. The hair color is brown to yellow from top to bottom.

With this visual text analysis, it can proceed to the legisign stage. Anya Melfissa's design character representation has an object as a girl character icon, each of the existing attributes has an index that provides data that Anya is a character with luxury like a royal princess with a typical mixture of Japanese pop idols [9]. Apart from the interpretation of a princess, Anya Melfissa has several attributes that indicate a kris.

The argument of kris representation is supported by the existence of a hairpin, earrings, yellow hair strands, hair extensions, dress decorations, and ornaments. The existence of a twisted triangle represents a tortuous object, and this can be seen in Anya Melfissa's hairpin, earrings, and dress decorations. These visual identities have at least three curve bends or *luk* as called in part of kris. The *dhapur* in the kris has the same properties and it has the right number of *luk* for kris characteristics. There are 13 Three *luk* kris like *Jangkung* and *Mahesa* and Anya's tortuous object have the same properties with *Mahesa-nempuh dhapur* which does not have any *kembang kacang* [10]. The yellow hair in Anya represented two things, namely oldness and a shiny part of the kris blade. Looking at the kris pamor which has prestige as uniqueness is indicated by a single strand of yellow hair. The representation of old age which is represented by the grey hair-like strand of hair (the single yellow hair) refers to the aged keris. Anya Melfissa's dress is filled with ornaments that have a shape like the hilt of a sword and this becomes an anchor for a sign that the existing representation has a relationship with a sword. The ornaments also could be seen as kris pamor as one of kris characteristics. The use of sword hilt like ornaments is used to inform the observer who not well versed with kris characteristic as Anya Melfissa have some relation with a sword. This should lead to the idea of Anya's origin linked to arm weapons although it is not a direct correlation to the existing Indonesian kris. The existence of tortuous nature,

old age, prestige, and sword marks have a strong relationship with the kris.

The shape of the human body with the visual style of manga is an important part of moe anthropomorphism so the elderly appearance cannot be implemented directly in character designs. The attribute of Moe in Anya Melfissa influences the sign of representation of the Indonesian kris, such as the scale of the small visual signs which intended to make a cute look, and the use of full young human body parts so as not to reduce the value of moe, an affectionate response due to youthful vitality. Miscommunication problems that occur when people observe Anya’s designs are such as the small and far apart signs that make it difficult to connect meanings and correlation between objects. Other to add, the fashion of the character is also heavily referenced from Europe which can be seen in a lot of frills on Anya Melfissa costume and have a lot of plants like lace. These visual identities are noise to Anya kris’s representation, but it is also important as it makes the uniqueness of the character. To top of that, the artist behind Anya Melfissa is not a native so the creation of design is also a process of anthropomorphism which to know better about Indonesian culture, namely kris. This is the reason why Anya Melfissa is not specifically referring to a specific type of Indonesia Kris but a general one with a mix of other cultures.

Anya Melfissa is an anthropomorphism attempt from Eku Uekura to a kris as Indonesian culture. We can find the reasoning behind this activity with the three-factor of anthropomorphism. First, the knowledge of Indonesian culture especially kris is needed as Eku has low information and a foreigner in the Indonesian culture topic. Second, the Effectiveness, the making of Anya Melfissa is a job from Hololive Indonesia agency to know more about Indonesia which triggers anthropomorphism. Last, the sociality, as Hololive Indonesia has the target of the Indonesian market, the creator of character design wants to develop more social relation with the anthropomorphism of kris.

4. Conclusions

Virtual YouTubers, which are currently trending, can be successful with technological developments that virtual avatars are easier to use. This convenience provides a lot of activity, especially with the emergence of new characters who are generally in the visual style of manga or anime characters. This is supported by the concept of moe from this visual style and has become one of the success factors for this virtual YouTuber phenomenon.

The concept of moe with the existing potential of virtual YouTubers opens the door to a wide variety of new content from entertainment to education. Anya Melfissa, which combines Indonesian culture with the concept of moe and is implemented in a virtual YouTuber, is something that can attract people to learn more about Indonesian culture. Moe anthropomorphism is considered a success because there are already many anime titles based on real things such as boats, racehorses, firearms, etc. that have attracted interest in the topic concerned.

Research on moe anthropomorphism and anthropomorphism requires further research because there are still few who discuss research on this topic, even though it has had a sizable impact on netizens.

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