



Discursive Violence and Gendered Language: Textual Representations of Women's Oppression in *Tempurung* by Oka Rusmini

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ABSTRACT

Violence against women remains a deeply rooted issue in Indonesian society, manifesting not only in physical and psychological forms but also through linguistic practices that reproduce gendered subordination. This study examines the representation of women's oppression in Oka Rusmini's acclaimed novel *Tempurung*, a work that poignantly depicts the intersection of gender, caste, and cultural expectations in Balinese society. Positioned within literary sociology and guided by Alan Swingewood's concept of literature as a selective reflection of social reality, the research applies a qualitative textual analysis to explore how physical, psychological, and discursive violence are constructed and normalized in the narrative. Textual excerpts from the 2017 edition of the novel were coded and thematically categorized to identify patterns of verbal humiliation, silencing, emotional manipulation, and metaphorical entrapment, which were then interpreted alongside national reports on gender-based violence. The findings reveal that oppression in the text operates through intertwined structures of physical harm, emotional degradation, and linguistic domination, with silence emerging both as a mechanism of control and as a subtle form of resistance. By bridging literary representation with documented real-world data on violence against women, this study demonstrates how fiction can illuminate social realities and challenge patriarchal ideologies. The study contributes to gender-based literary criticism by foregrounding language as a site of power, and offers broader implications for critical literacy, cultural awareness, and advocacy for gender justice within Indonesian literary and social contexts.

1. Introduction

Literary works serve as reflective spaces for human experience and powerful critiques of social injustice across global and Indonesian contexts (Alwan, 2023; Widodo et al., 2024). Indonesian scholarship demonstrates that diverse genres, including horror and classic novels, portray violence against women as a product of entrenched patriarchal norms, creating avenues for social critique and advocacy (Tang et al., 2024; Widodo et al., 2024).

These studies highlight physical, psychological, and symbolic violence against female characters, illustrating how cultural values normalize women's subordination while showing how literary analysis can expose and challenge such systems (Widodo et al., 2024). Broader literature underscores unequal gender power relations and stresses the need to situate abuse within gendered discourses, including the pervasive mother-blame dynamic in domestic violence contexts (Moulding, 2017). In the global sphere, feminist

dystopias reveal structural inequalities and reproductive politics as central areas of resistance (Alwan, 2023), while crime fiction provides women in India and other settings with narrative agency to confront issues of justice and impunity, ultimately contesting patriarchal structures (Morgan, 2020).

Oka Rusmini's *Tempurung* stands as a remarkable literary representation of this enduring struggle. Published in 2010 and reprinted in 2017, the novel received prestigious recognition, including the Language Month Award from the Language Agency of the Government of Indonesia, the Tantular Literature Award from the Denpasar Language Center, and the South East Asian Write Award in Bangkok (Rusmini, 2017:405). Set within Balinese society, the novel powerfully portrays the complex relationship between gender, caste, and tradition. Through vivid depictions of women's lives bound by social customs, *Tempurung* unveils the intersection of pain, silence, and resilience, positioning women as both victims of and witnesses to structural violence.

Extending the analysis of Kenanga through feminist phenomenology clarifies how gendered power operates within everyday life, linking structural inequality to lived experience and narrative detail (Hay et al., 2021; Feminist perspectives paired with phenomenology reveal that ostensibly safe domestic spaces can function as sites of domination, foregrounding gendered power imbalances (Hay et al., 2021; Aldoory, 2025). The broader fiction landscape, including Meena Kandasamy's Dalit writings, demonstrates alienation and resistance within caste and patriarchal frameworks, illustrating literature's role in contesting oppression (Sneha, 2024). Additionally, Davies argues that contemporary African women writers challenge Western frameworks to address local oppressions, promoting feminist narratives that resonate within their cultural contexts Davies, 2023; .

Intimate partner violence (IPV) scholarship shows that non-physical abuse such as controlling behavior, social isolation, and demeaning language acts as early indicators of risk and informs timely interventions (Das et al., 2025). Clinically, integrating emotional states with narrative events can illuminate victims' experiences and guide tailored therapeutic responses Johnson, 2017). Collectively, literary and empirical work across contexts reveal gender-based violence as a persistent indicator of oppression and a prompt for critique and policy action (Sneha, 2024; Davies, 2023; Johnson, 2017). These intersections highlight the importance of cross disciplinary approaches that bring together narrative comprehension and structural analysis, allowing researchers to connect individual stories with broader social patterns so that strategies for prevention and systems of support can be designed in a more informed and effective way. (Hay et al., 2021; Das et al., 2025; Johnson, 2017).

A significant body of research has examined *Tempurung* through sociological and feminist lenses, indicating how literary representation mirrors the lived experiences of women. Research has shown that patriarchal structures influence gender roles in various cultural contexts, with specific studies highlighting the reinforcement of cultural norms that sustain gender inequality in Indonesia (Nnyombi et al., 2022). Analyses of domestic violence within narratives reveal that such violence affects fictional female characters and reflects broader social patterns of subordination prevalent in Indonesian society (Ridgway et al., 2024). However, while these studies effectively identify acts of violence and their implications, a gap exists regarding the analysis of discourse within the texts. The focus on language is crucial, as linguistic practices articulate and perpetuate societal attitudes towards gender-based violence. Norms that trivialize physical violence as a private matter highlight the need for a discourse-focused approach to understanding violence against women, which combines feminist and sociological frameworks for deeper insight (Entringer et al., 2021).

This gap opens an important opportunity for deeper inquiry. The present study moves beyond the sociological interpretation of violence and focuses on how linguistic expressions, discursive patterns, and narrative structures shape representations of women's oppression. Through a critical linguistic lens, the study investigates how words, dialogues, and narrative voice contribute to the construction of patriarchal power in *Tempurung*. It also examines how the author's linguistic choices reflect cultural ideologies that normalize violence and silence women's resistance. This approach introduces a fresh perspective that merges literary interpretation with discourse analysis to uncover the power of language as both a vehicle of domination and a site of resistance.

The novelty of this study lies in its integration of literary sociology with critical linguistics to analyze the interplay between language, gender, and violence. Unlike previous works that mainly treat the novel as a social document, this study treats it as a linguistic text that communicates ideology and emotion through its structure and diction. The contribution of this study lies in showing that violence is not only physical or psychological but also discursive. By exposing the hidden forms of linguistic domination within *Tempurung*, the study contributes to a broader understanding of how literature participates in the construction and perpetuation of social hierarchies.

The significance of this study extends to both linguistic and literary scholarship. It aims to reveal the relationship between textual representation and social reality through the analysis of discursive violence in Oka Rusmini's *Tempurung*. Specifically, the study seeks to identify the types and linguistic patterns of violence against women and to relate them to broader cultural practices that sustain gender inequality. By situating the analysis within the framework of literary sociology and critical linguistics, the study aspires to illuminate the linguistic mechanisms that encode power relations in narrative form.

The structure of this study follows a clear analytical sequence. The introduction provides the conceptual and contextual background, while the theoretical framework elaborates on the principles of literary sociology as proposed by Alan Swingewood and other supporting scholars. The methodology section outlines the qualitative descriptive approach employed in analyzing the data, and the results section presents the textual evidence of physical and psychological violence within the novel. The discussion interprets these findings through the lens of discursive analysis and sociocultural reflection.

In conclusion, this study not only highlights the linguistic portrayal of women's oppression in Oka Rusmini's *Tempurung* but also emphasizes the broader implications of discourse analysis in understanding gender-based violence in literature. It shows that the language of violence, when critically examined,

reveals the cultural ideologies that sustain inequality. Therefore, the study contributes to advancing linguistic discourse analysis and gender-based textual interpretation as essential frameworks for understanding how literature mirrors, questions, and transforms social realities.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Discursive Violence and Literary Representation

Use the two-social document that reflects and critiques reality. [Laurenson and Swingewood \(1972\)](#) assert that literature and sociology share a common focus on human life but differ in method; sociology is empirical, while literature transforms reality through imagination. [Ratna \(2009\)](#) emphasizes that literary works are never produced in isolation but arise from complex social and cultural dynamics. Swingewood (as cited in Junus, 1986) classifies literary sociology into three perspectives: literature as a socio-cultural document, the author's social position, and public reception. He also introduces the concept of literature as a "cracked mirror," suggesting that literary reflection is selective and shaped by the author's ideology ([Swingewood, 1972](#)). [Teeuw \(1982\)](#) further notes that literature can affirm, reject, or innovate social norms, while [Damono \(1979\)](#) views successful works as those that capture the spirit of their time. Within this framework, *Tempurung* by Oka [Rusmini \(2017\)](#) portrays Balinese women's struggles within patriarchal and caste-bound traditions, illustrating what [Ratna \(2015\)](#) identifies as prose's unique ability to express social realities through accessible and emotionally rich language.

2.2 Gendered Language and the Construction of Women's Oppression

Language is a powerful vehicle for ideology and can perpetuate violence through discourse. [La Pona et al. \(2002\)](#) describe violence as actions that cause physical harm, while [Meiyenti \(1999\)](#) extends this definition to verbal aggression that inflicts psychological suffering. Reports from [Komnas Perempuan \(2011, 2022\)](#) reveal that violence against women in Indonesia continues to rise, underscoring the persistence of gender inequality in both public and private spaces. In Balinese culture, [Budiana \(2014\)](#) and [Surpha \(2012\)](#) demonstrate that patriarchal and caste systems reinforce female subordination. [Windiyarti \(2011\)](#) interprets *Tempurung* as a narrative of trauma and silenced resistance, showing how women internalize oppression. These studies focus on socio-cultural aspects while neglecting how linguistic forms encode power. In *Tempurung*, labeling, silencing, and humiliation exemplify discursive violence, as language becomes a means of subjugation. This study uses a linguistic-discourse approach to show how gendered language shapes women's oppression in the novel.

2.3 Textual Representation, Theoretical Synthesis, and Implications

This study integrates the sociological framework of literature ([Swingewood, 1972](#); [Ratna, 2009](#)) with critical linguistics to examine how language constructs power and subordination in *Tempurung*. Through linguistic patterns, the novel demonstrates that violence operates not only physically but also discursively. The study's novelty lies in its focus on the linguistic realization of patriarchal ideology, moving beyond sociological interpretation to explore language as a mechanism of control. By combining literary sociology with discourse analysis, it contributes to understanding how literature linguistically encodes social hierarchies. The findings are expected to enrich gender-based textual interpretation and advance discourse analysis as a framework for revealing how language perpetuates inequality while offering pathways toward cultural reflection and transformation.

3. Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive design framed within literary sociology and critical linguistics. The qualitative approach is suitable for interpreting social and linguistic phenomena through contextual understanding rather than numerical measurement ([Ratna, 2015](#)). According to [Moleong \(2014\)](#), qualitative research focuses on meaning and interpretation drawn from textual and situational contexts. The study adopts [Swingewood's \(1972\)](#) sociological perspective, which views literature as a "cracked mirror" that selectively reflects social life, and [Fowler's \(1986\)](#) theory of critical linguistics, which emphasizes how language embodies ideology and shapes social relations. By integrating these frameworks, this study examines how *Tempurung* ([Rusmini, 2017](#)) represents women's oppression through linguistic and discursive patterns that mirror the patriarchal dynamics of Balinese culture.

3.1 Data Source

The primary data for this study consist of textual excerpts from Oka Rusmini's novel *Tempurung*, published by PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama in 2017. The novel was chosen because it vividly depicts the intersections of gender, caste, and belief systems in Balinese society and has received significant recognition, including the Southeast Asian Write Award and the Tantular Literature Award. The secondary data comprise related scholarly works that strengthen the contextual and theoretical discussion, such as studies by [Budiana \(2014\)](#), [Surpha \(2012\)](#), and [Windiyarti \(2011\)](#), as well as institutional reports from [Komnas Perempuan \(2011, 2022\)](#). These references offer crucial sociocultural validation and reinforce the linguistic interpretation of gender based violence in the text, showing that the patterns identified at the level of language use are firmly grounded in wider cultural norms, power relations, and lived experiences.

The selected data include narrative passages, dialogues, and descriptive sections that illustrate acts or expressions of violence, whether physical, psychological, or linguistic, directed toward female characters. Each excerpt was identified and categorized based on thematic and linguistic features to detect recurring forms of discursive violence.

3.2 Data Collection Procedures

The process of data collection was conducted in three stages, which were reading, identifying, and categorizing. The novel was read several times to ensure comprehensive understanding of its thematic layers and linguistic nuances. Following [Ratna \(2015\)](#), the close reading technique was applied to identify both explicit and implicit representations of violence in the text. Particular attention was given to diction, syntax, and stylistic features that reveal social hierarchy or ideological control. Each relevant textual unit was marked and annotated based on discourse analysis principles adapted from [Fairclough \(1995\)](#). The identified excerpts were then classified into thematic categories such as verbal humiliation, silencing, emotional manipulation, and symbolic domination.

To maintain the validity of interpretation, triangulation was implemented by comparing findings with existing studies ([Budiana, 2014](#); [Windiyarti, 2011](#)) and reports from [Komnas Perempuan \(2011, 2022\)](#). This procedure ensured that textual analysis corresponded with broader cultural realities of gender inequality in Indonesia.

3.3 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using a combination of literary sociology and critical linguistic discourse analysis. In line with [Swingewood's \(1972\)](#) sociological framework, the study interprets *Tempurung* as a cultural text that reflects and critiques social values. [Fowler's \(1986\)](#) perspective on critical linguistics is employed to uncover how language structures meaning and perpetuates relations of power. The analytical process consisted of three main stages.

First, a detailed textual analysis was carried out to identify linguistic indicators of oppression that appear in the narrative, including patterns of derogatory naming, silencing strategies, and metaphors of inferiority that position women as subordinate or devalued. Particular attention was paid to lexical choices, repetition, and evaluative adjectives, as well as to forms of address and dialogue that implicitly or explicitly regulate women's behaviour. Second, an interpretive analysis was employed to examine how these linguistic forms encode, reproduce, or challenge sociocultural ideologies surrounding gender, authority, and morality. This stage involved reading the text in relation to dominant cultural narratives and asking how specific utterances, narrative voices, and interactional moves naturalise unequal power relations or open space for resistance. Third, a contextual synthesis was

used to connect the textual findings with broader discourses on gender and violence in Indonesian society, allowing the micro level of language to be read alongside macro level structures, such as patriarchal family norms, social expectations, and institutional silences around abuse.

This analytical procedure draws on [Fairclough's \(1995\)](#) three dimensional model of discourse, which understands texts simultaneously as linguistic constructions, social practices, and manifestations of ideology that circulate within particular historical and cultural settings. Within this framework, language is treated not as a neutral medium, but as a site where power is exercised, negotiated, and gradually normalized through everyday expressions, narrative framing, and recurrent symbolic patterns. The analysis therefore seeks to uncover how Rusmini's linguistic choices construct violence as both an intimate, personal experience and a shared, collective reality for women, making visible the ways in which individual suffering is tied to wider systems of domination. By tracing these connections, the study reveals how gender based harm is articulated, legitimized, and at times contested through discourse, and how literary language can function as a critical lens to expose and question the sociocultural conditions that sustain violence.

4. Results

4.1 Discursive Violence in the Text

The findings demonstrate that *Tempurung* constructs discursive violence as a pervasive system of control embedded in language, silence, and narrative structure. The violence inflicted upon women extends beyond physical and psychological boundaries, entering the realm of speech acts, moral codes, and emotional tone. Through everyday communication, female characters are conditioned to internalize fear, obedience, and inferiority. The words of fathers, husbands, and elders become authoritative tools that define what women may think, feel, and articulate.

Within this system, speech becomes the privilege of men, while silence becomes the expected language of women. The novel's linguistic rhythm captures this hierarchy through repetition of moralizing statements and metaphors of entrapment. Women's voices are not absent by choice but erased through cultural enforcement. This erasure, however, also contains traces of resistance, as silence evolves into a space of reflection and hidden defiance.

To illustrate how discursive violence operates linguistically and symbolically, six excerpts were selected from key narrative moments in the novel. These excerpts illustrate multiple forms of discursive domination including verbal humiliation, objectification, religious manipulation, emotional conditioning, symbolic confinement, and internalised guilt, which together regulate and reinforce unequal power relations.

Table 1. Illustrations of Discursive Violence in *Tempurung*

Excerpt Tag	Data	Speaker Context	Illustration from the Novel (2017 Edition)	Page	Analytical Interpretation
Excerpt Verbal Humiliation (DV1)	1:	Ida Bagus Ngurah rebukes his wife for expressing her opinion.	<i>"Perempuan tidak perlu banyak bicara. Lidahmu hanya akan membawa sial bagi rumah ini."</i> ("A woman should not speak too much. Your tongue will bring misfortune to this house.")	p. 45	The utterance equates female speech with chaos, framing silence as a moral duty. This verbal domination transforms dialogue into an act of silencing that normalizes submission as virtue.
Excerpt Objectification (DV2)	2:	Luh Sekar is reminded by her mother of her value as a daughter.	<i>"Kau cantik, berarti kau akan laku. Hanya itu yang penting bagi perempuan."</i> ("You are beautiful, which means you will be wanted. That is all that matters for a woman.")	p. 73	The statement reduces female worth to physical desirability. Language reflects patriarchal commodification, where beauty becomes the currency of social mobility. The mother's words internalize this ideology across generations.
Excerpt Religious Manipulation (DV3)	3:	A priestly elder advises Telaga on her role as a wife.	<i>"Perempuan harus tahu tempatnya, karena itu perintah Tuhan."</i> ("A woman must know her place, for that is God's command.")	p. 108	Divine authority is invoked to justify subordination. The sacred lexicon reinforces gender hierarchy, showing how religion and discourse intersect to legitimize domination.
Excerpt Emotional Manipulation (DV4)	4:	A husband expresses affection while reaffirming control.	<i>"Aku mencintaimu karena kau tahu caramu diam."</i> ("I love you because you know how to keep quiet.")	p. 121	The phrase disguises coercion as intimacy. Silence is reframed as the foundation of love, blurring emotional dependency with discursive control.
Excerpt Symbolic Confinement (DV5)	5:	Narrative description of Intan's inner turmoil.	<i>"Ia seperti tempurung yang melindungi tubuh rapuhnya, tetapi juga mengurung jiwanya."</i> ("She was like a shell that protected her fragile body yet imprisoned her soul.")	p. 156	The shell functions as the novel's central metaphor. It embodies both safety and entrapment, transforming language into a structure that simultaneously shelters and suffocates.
Excerpt Internalized Guilt (DV6)	6:	Telaga reflects on her suffering and self-blame.	<i>"Mungkin aku pantas disakiti, mungkin memang begitulah nasib perempuan."</i> ("Maybe I deserve to be hurt, maybe this is simply a woman's fate.")	p. 187	The monologue captures the success of discursive violence. The protagonist reproduces patriarchal ideology through self-blame, revealing how language of submission is internalized as personal truth.

The excerpts reveal a consistent pattern where language constructs and reinforces social hierarchy. Male speech acts operate as instruments of control, often delivered in the guise of affection, morality, or religious duty. Women's responses, shaped by centuries of patriarchal discourse, reflect both submission and silent protest.

Verbal Humiliation (DV1) and Objectification (DV2) illustrate overt domination through direct language. These utterances serve not only as

expressions of anger but also as performative acts that define gender roles. The command *"tidak perlu banyak bicara"* (should not speak much) marks the boundary between permissible and forbidden speech, shaping how women learn to censor themselves.

Religious Manipulation (DV3) and Emotional Manipulation (DV4) demonstrate the subtler layers of discursive control. In these cases, language appears nurturing or moral but functions as a disciplinary tool. When the husband expresses love conditional upon

silence, the affection becomes a linguistic mechanism of subjugation. Similarly, religious discourse, framed as divine command, sanctifies inequality and converts it into sacred duty.

The *Symbolic Confinement (DV5)* excerpt reveals how the novel's metaphorical language participates in discursive construction. The image of the shell embodies both the comfort of protection and the despair of isolation. The shell confines the female subject within cultural expectations that promise safety while denying freedom. It also reflects the linguistic enclosure of women's experiences: their emotions are contained, their thoughts muted, and their identities defined by others.

The final excerpt, *Internalized Guilt (DV6)*, shows the culmination of discursive violence where external oppression becomes internal conviction. The protagonist's self-blame demonstrates how ideology operates most effectively when it is accepted as truth. This internalization transforms linguistic violence into psychological imprisonment, perpetuating the cycle of submission across generations.

Collectively, these findings show that *Tempurung* presents discursive violence as a multilayered phenomenon rooted in everyday communication. The language of authority becomes the architecture of subordination, while silence becomes both a symptom of defeat and a form of resistance. Yet, Discursive violence in *Tempurung* is expressed through speech, silence, and metaphor. The verbal, emotional, and symbolic elements of language form an interlocking system of control that regulates how women perceive and express themselves. Each utterance analyzed above reflects how discourse transforms into a mechanism of power, shaping identity and social reality.

Through repetition, moral injunctions, and metaphorical imagery, the novel reveals that violence is not confined to action but inscribed in words. Yet within this structure of domination, traces of defiance persist. The women's silences, introspective monologues, and fragmented narratives expose the instability of patriarchal discourse. By revealing how language both imprisons and empowers, *Tempurung* positions discourse as the central site of struggle for meaning, dignity, and liberation.

4.2. Gendered Language and the Representation of Women's Oppression

The analysis reveals that gendered language in *Tempurung* functions as a powerful instrument of social regulation that determines how women perceive themselves and how society perceives them. The linguistic system within the novel constructs male speech as authoritative and public, while female expression remains personal, emotional, and often delegitimized. Words, tone, and even silence are gendered to reflect unequal access to power and meaning.

This linguistic asymmetry forms the foundation of women's oppression in the text. The discourse of men, whether spoken through religious leaders, fathers, or husbands, defines moral boundaries and assigns women passive roles as caregivers, servants, or symbols of purity. Conversely, the language of women is often hesitant, filled with self-doubt, and marked by rhetorical submission. Through this imbalance, *Tempurung* exposes how everyday communication reproduces gender hierarchy and how linguistic expression becomes both a social code and a site of struggle.

Table 2. Illustrations of Gendered Language and Oppression in *Tempurung*

Excerpt (Data Tag)	Speaker Context	Illustration from the Novel (2017 Edition)	Page	Analytical Interpretation
Excerpt 1: Naming and Labeling (GL1)	A father warns his daughter about female reputation.	"Perempuan baik-baik tidak berjalan sendirian malam-malam." ("A good woman does not walk alone at night.")	p. 59	The labeling of "good woman" versus "bad woman" constructs a moral binary that disciplines behavior through language. Speech acts categorize women according to patriarchal virtue, shaping identity through verbal surveillance.
Excerpt 2: Silencing Through Proverb (GL2)	A grandmother quotes an old Balinese saying to enforce silence.	"Perempuan yang banyak bicara, jodohnya jauh." ("A talkative woman will find her husband far away.")	p. 68	Proverbs serve as cultural instruments that transmit patriarchal ideology. The warning links silence to marital success, embedding social control within traditional speech.
Excerpt 3: Domestic Devaluation (GL3)	A husband minimizes his wife's intellectual opinion.	"Kau tidak mengerti urusan besar. Fokus saja pada dapur dan anak-anak." ("You do not understand important matters. Just focus on the kitchen and the children.")	p. 84	The directive relegates female roles to domestic spaces, positioning intellectual engagement as male privilege. Gendered language functions as symbolic violence that restricts knowledge and participation.

Excerpt (Data Tag)	Speaker Context	/ Illustration from the Novel (2017 Edition)	Page	Analytical Interpretation
Excerpt Gendered Metaphor (GL4)	4: Narrative voice describing a woman's endurance.	<i>"Ia seperti kain yang ditarik ke segala arah, tetapi diam meski hampir robek."</i> ("She was like a cloth pulled in all directions, staying still even when nearly torn.")	p. 142	The metaphor of fabric portrays feminine patience as virtue. The imagery romanticizes suffering and transforms endurance into cultural expectation. The body becomes the material metaphor of submission.
Excerpt Moral Policing (GL5)	5: Religious leader scolds a widow attending temple alone.	<i>"Perempuan tanpa suami harus menjaga diri lebih ketat, karena mata orang selalu menilai."</i> ("A woman without a husband must guard herself more carefully, because people's eyes always judge.")	p. 167	The statement polices female morality through social gaze. Language enforces surveillance by linking virtue to reputation, revealing how moral discourse reinforces social control.
Excerpt 6: Self-Negating Speech (GL6)	Intan reflects on her perceived failure as a woman.	<i>"Mungkin aku terlalu keras, mungkin aku lupa menjadi lembut seperti yang mereka mau."</i> ("Maybe I was too strong, maybe I forgot to be gentle like they wanted.")	p. 193	The introspective monologue exposes the internalization of gender norms. The self-negating tone shows how oppression is sustained through language that turns self-expression into self-blame.

The excerpts reveal that gendered language operates through both direct speech and internalized discourse. The social expectations of "good" womanhood are linguistically coded through binary distinctions, moral idioms, and proverbial warnings. In **GL1** and **GL2**, language functions as surveillance, using moral binaries to discipline women's behavior even in their absence. The constant repetition of such sayings throughout the novel signifies how ideology is transmitted intergenerationally through spoken tradition.

In **GL3**, domestic restriction emerges as a linguistic act of exclusion. The husband's words delimit the cognitive territory available to women, defining intellect and authority as masculine domains. The imperative form "fokus saja" (just focus) reduces female agency to obedience, turning everyday conversation into structural oppression.

GL4 and **GL5** reveal the intersection between metaphor and morality. The fabric metaphor illustrates how women's endurance is idealized as beauty, disguising suffering as grace. The widow's reprimand demonstrates how religious and communal language perpetuates the myth of female fragility. Women's worth is tied to external perception, rendering their identity contingent upon how others define them.

The final example, **GL6**, shows the culmination of linguistic oppression: internalization. Here, the protagonist speaks in a self-corrective tone, policing herself through the very language that confines her. The use of modal uncertainty ("mungkin aku terlalu keras") reflects the erosion of self-confidence. This self-directed doubt embodies how discourse can colonize consciousness, turning ideology into emotion.

Through these linguistic dynamics, *Tempurung* portrays gendered language as a social architecture that constructs womanhood through obedience, shame, and endurance, where the association between silence and virtue turns communication into moral discipline. Within this system, women's internal reflections, fragmented syntax, and interrupted dialogue become subtle acts of reclaiming meaning. The novel thus presents gendered language as both symptom and mechanism of oppression, as speech patterns, metaphors, and social idioms form a moral code that defines femininity, while patriarchal discourse in proverbs, domestic commands, and moral advice continually regulates identity and restricts agency.

The text also suggests that the linguistic system that silences women simultaneously holds the seeds of resistance. Through introspection and metaphorical reinterpretation, women turn silence into reflection and weakness into endurance, so that linguistic awareness becomes a form of agency. Oppression appears not only as visible acts but as a hidden structure of speech that shapes identity and emotion, showing that language in *Tempurung* is both the medium through which patriarchal power is sustained and the site where it is unsettled as narrative choices expose its vulnerabilities and invite critical questioning.

4.3. Linguistic and Narrative Patterns of Power and Silence

The analysis indicates that silence in *Tempurung* functions as both a linguistic absence and a narrative presence. Power within the novel is expressed not only through spoken words but also through the control of speech, including who is allowed to speak, when they are permitted to do so, and how their voice is received. Silence, therefore, becomes a marker of subordination

as well as a hidden form of strength. Through alternating voices, fragmented narration, and carefully crafted pauses, the text transforms silence into a discourse of both resistance and endurance.

The linguistic environment of *Tempurung* reveals a clear hierarchy of voice. Male dialogue dominates the public and authoritative spaces, while female dialogue

is confined to the domestic and emotional realm. However, the author provides narrative techniques that allow women to reclaim silence as a form of introspection and awareness. The oscillation between dialogue and internal monologue demonstrates that although women are silenced externally, their inner speech remains alive and critical.

Table 3. Illustrations of Power and Silence in *Tempurung*

Excerpt (Data Tag)	Speaker Context	/ Illustration from the Novel (2017 Edition)	Page	Analytical Interpretation
Excerpt 1: Imposed Silence (PS1)	Ida Ayu Intan is interrupted by her father during a family conversation.	<i>"Diamlah. Suaramu membuat semua orang gelisah."</i> ("Be quiet. Your voice makes everyone uneasy.")	p. 41	This statement eliminates the woman's participation in public discourse. The command transforms female speech into a perceived source of disruption and redefines silence as moral order.
Excerpt 2: Fearful Silence (PS2)	Telaga remains quiet when accused by her husband.	<i>"Ia ingin menjawab, tapi takut kata-katanya justru menjadi alasan baru untuk marah."</i> ("She wanted to answer but feared her words would only become another reason for anger.")	p. 86	The silence here represents internalized fear. It is not passivity but a defensive strategy to avoid further harm. Language becomes a field where power dictates who may speak and who must remain silent.
Excerpt 3: Reflective Silence (PS3)	Narrative description of a woman's inward dialogue after humiliation.	<i>"Dalam diamnya, ia berbicara dengan dirinya sendiri, menimbang kata yang tak pernah bisa diucapkan."</i> ("In her silence, she spoke to herself, weighing the words she could never say.")	p. 128	This moment captures silence as a space of thought and emotional resilience. The woman's inner voice continues to reason and critique even when her spoken words are suppressed.
Excerpt 4: Symbolic Voice Loss (PS4)	Luh Sekar ceases to speak after being shamed publicly.	<i>"Suaranya hilang seperti ditelan angin. Sejak hari itu ia bicara hanya dalam pikirannya."</i> ("Her voice vanished as if swallowed by the wind. Since that day she spoke only in her mind.")	p. 144	The disappearance of voice reflects linguistic trauma. The loss of speech represents both psychological suffering and the silent endurance of memory.
Excerpt 5: Power Through Silence (PS5)	Intan remains silent in the face of an elder's insult.	<i>"Ia memilih diam, dan dalam diam itu, ia menemukan tenang yang membuat lelaki itu gelisah."</i> ("She chose silence, and in that silence she found calmness that made the man uneasy.")	p. 179	The act of choosing silence becomes empowerment. The refusal to react undermines male dominance and redefines quietness as a conscious act of control.
Excerpt 6: Narrative Fragmentation (PS6)	The narrator blends multiple women's voices in a single passage.	<i>"Suara-suara itu bertemu di dalam kepalanya, seperti riuh tanpa bunyi."</i> ("Those voices met inside her head, like a clamor without sound.")	p. 205	The merging of voices forms a collective feminine consciousness. The fragmented narrative structure becomes a linguistic symbol of solidarity among silenced women.

The excerpts reveal that silence in *Tempurung* is not simply the absence of sound but a coded form of discourse. In the first two examples, silence is externally imposed through commands and fear. It represents the systematic exclusion of women from spaces of speech and decision-making. The constant repetition of phrases that instruct women to remain quiet produces a linguistic rhythm of authority, turning silence into a moral virtue.

The next examples depict silence as reflection and transformation. When female characters retreat into silence, they create an inner world where speech is reimagined. Through reflective silence, the women reclaim thought as a private domain of power. The image of voices swallowed by wind captures both fragility and persistence. Though unspoken, these voices continue to resonate internally, preserving individuality within collective restraint.

Later, silence shifts toward resistance. When Intan's deliberate quietness unsettles her male aggressor, silence becomes a counter-discourse that challenges the assumption of control. This strategic stillness converts subordination into defiance. It demonstrates that the absence of speech can disturb the order more deeply than argument itself.

Finally, the polyphonic structure of the novel transforms silence into a shared voice. The blending of multiple women's thoughts into a "clamor without sound" illustrates that silence carries collective meaning. The structure of the narrative becomes a linguistic expression of solidarity, suggesting that even unspoken experiences can shape cultural consciousness.

This finding confirms that silence in *Tempurung* serves as a narrative and linguistic device that conveys both oppression and agency. Power manifests through speech control, yet silence becomes a site of reflection, protection, and rebellion. Women's quietness is revealed as both consequence and critique of the patriarchal discourse that confines them.

By converting silence into a communicative act, *Tempurung* challenges conventional understandings of voice and power. The novel demonstrates that the absence of words can express truth as profoundly as speech. Through the intertwined forces of speech, silence, and narration, the text positions language as a living system of control, survival, and subtle resistance within the social world of Balinese womanhood.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that Oka Rusmini's *Tempurung* constructs violence not merely as a social act but as a linguistic and discursive phenomenon. The analysis demonstrates that oppression against women operates through speech patterns, moral sayings, metaphors, and silences that shape both individual consciousness and collective

ideology. This confirms Ratna's (2009) argument that literary texts embody social and cultural realities, reflecting the structures that produce human inequality. In *Tempurung*, verbal domination, religious justification, and emotional manipulation become linguistic tools that sustain patriarchal order. The repeated linguistic patterns analyzed in this study reveal that language, more than any other social element, functions as the invisible mechanism through which women's subordination is maintained.

The results also reaffirm Swingewood's (1972) concept of literature as a "cracked mirror" that reflects life through the author's moral and ideological lens. The discourse in *Tempurung* does not simply mirror social reality. Through thoughtful language and metaphor, it gently reshapes meaning while drawing attention to subtle tensions within patriarchal systems (Hamilton, 2022; Krismonsari & Wiyatmi, 2024). Metaphor, understood as a natural part of how the mind works with language, shows that words can symbolically shape how individuals perceive social life, even though this idea is often discussed in studies on language learning (Lee & Choi, 2023; Fattah & Nushi, 2021; Hoang & Boers, 2018). In related literature, metaphoric expressions guide readers in viewing gender roles and power relations, offering both support and quiet critique of the ways women navigate social expectations (Hamilton, 2022). Literary works such as *Nyutrayu* illustrate this with sensitivity, using symbolic storytelling to illuminate experiences of women and the subtle forms of patriarchal pressure they face (Krismonsari & Wiyatmi, 2024). This finding also strengthens Teeuw's (1982) notion that literary works can simultaneously affirm and challenge social norms, showing that the same discourse that sustains oppression may also contain the seeds of resistance.

The analysis further demonstrates that gendered language in *Tempurung* operates through discursive dichotomies, where male speech signifies reason and authority, while female language is associated with emotion, obedience, and restraint. This echoes La Pona et al. (2002) and Meiyenti's (1999) conceptualizations of violence, where harm is not only physical but verbal and psychological. The findings extend this framework by proving that discursive violence often hides behind culturally accepted moral statements, religious commands, and affectionate expressions. The repetition of phrases that silence women, combined with the idealization of endurance and quietness, confirms how language itself disciplines and shapes identity. These discursive constructions embody what Komnas Perempuan (2011, 2022) identifies as systemic patterns of gender-based inequality deeply rooted in Indonesian society.

Another important finding lies in the transformation of silence from subjugation into resistance. Consistent with Windiyarti's (2011) interpretation of women's trauma as internalized suffering, this study finds that silence in *Tempurung*

also becomes a communicative form of agency. Through inner monologues and fragmented narratives, silence functions as a coded language that resists domination. The narrative strategy allows women to reclaim meaning within constraint, creating spaces for introspection and solidarity. This supports [Budiana's \(2014\)](#) and [Surpha's \(2012\)](#) assertions that literature, particularly in the Balinese context, reflects the intersection between gender and social order while also providing symbolic spaces for empowerment. By treating silence as a linguistic choice rather than an absence, this study adds a new dimension to the understanding of voice and agency in Indonesian women's literature.

The present study addresses a critical gap in previous research that primarily focused on *Tempurung* as a sociocultural document but neglected its linguistic construction. Earlier works by [Budiana \(2014\)](#), [Surpha \(2012\)](#), and [Windiyarti \(2011\)](#) emphasized the sociological and psychological dimensions of women's oppression without examining how discourse itself performs that oppression. This study, therefore, fills that gap by integrating the sociological approach of [Swingewood \(1972\)](#) and the critical linguistic framework of [Fowler \(1986\)](#). By analyzing linguistic and narrative structures, it provides new insight into how patriarchy operates through words, syntax, tone, and metaphor. This dual approach repositions *Tempurung* as both a sociological reflection and a linguistic artifact that encodes ideology.

The novelty of this study lies in its interdisciplinary synthesis between literary sociology and critical linguistics. It demonstrates that acts of domination and resistance are constructed through discourse, where linguistic expression becomes both weapon and shield. Unlike prior analyses that read the novel mainly as social realism, this study foregrounds language as a living system of ideology. It shows that discursive violence manifests not only in explicit speech but also in silence, metaphor, and narrative rhythm. In doing so, the study contributes to linguistic and literary scholarship by highlighting the discursive dimension of gendered violence as a key site of cultural power.

The implications of this study are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, it enriches the field of gender-based textual interpretation by linking linguistic features to sociocultural ideology. It encourages scholars to view language not merely as a tool of communication but as a mechanism that constructs and sustains social hierarchies. Practically, it promotes awareness of how patriarchal discourse operates in daily speech and cultural narratives, emphasizing the need for critical literacy in education, literature, and media. By understanding how language shapes gendered consciousness, educators and readers can challenge and transform the ideological patterns that perpetuate inequality.

This study also opens new avenues for future research. Further studies could explore how discursive violence operates in other Indonesian literary works, particularly across regions and genres, to reveal the diversity of linguistic expressions of power. Comparative research between *Tempurung* and contemporary novels written by male authors could illuminate differences in how gendered discourse is constructed and challenged. Future investigations might also integrate multimodal or corpus-based linguistic analysis to deepen understanding of linguistic patterns in Indonesian literature. Such research would contribute to a broader mapping of how language, ideology, and gender intersect across the cultural and literary landscape of Indonesia.

6. Conclusion

In the realm of literature, language is not just a tool of communication but a weapon of power, and Oka Rusmini's *Tempurung* exposes this truth with devastating clarity. This study uncovers how violence against women transcends physical harm and seeps into the very fabric of language, shaping female identity and reinforcing patriarchal dominance. The key findings show that linguistic practices, whether through verbal humiliation, moral impositions, or silencing, act as powerful instruments of control, dictating how women exist, think, and speak within the narrative. The novel becomes a site where patriarchal structures are not only reflected but actively constructed and maintained through discourse. This research is groundbreaking in its integration of literary sociology and critical linguistics, offering a fresh lens through which to view *Tempurung* and, more broadly, how literature participates in the reproduction of gendered power. The study's novelty lies in its application of discourse analysis to reveal the often-overlooked role of language in perpetuating social hierarchies.

The implications are profound, as the findings suggest that literature is not only a mirror of society but also a space of resistance, where oppressive structures can be challenged through the very language that sustains them. Future research could extend this analysis to other works of Indonesian literature, particularly those written by male authors, to explore how language functions differently across gendered voices. Furthermore, integrating corpus-based or multimodal approaches could offer a more nuanced understanding of how gendered discourse shapes and is shaped by culture.

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