



Article

A Schema Theory Analysis of The Game Character Eunie From 'Xenoblade Chronicles 3'

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the activation of a schema based on the game, the realization of the Schema Theory in the game character named Eunie, and the proof of Eunie's status as the primary character in the game. The study analyzes the factors that trigger the activation of a schema and how it relates to the game's structure. It explores how the Schema Theory manifests in the game character Eunie, highlighting her role as the central character. The research provides evidence to support the claim that Eunie is, in fact, the main character in the game. The study at hand utilizes the Schema Theory components introduced by J. Piaget to investigate the research on Cognitive Stylistics. In order to characterize the themes that are realized in the game *Xenoblade Chronicles 3*, the research is carried out utilizing a qualitative descriptive design with case study. The research focuses on a schema that influences how people see their surroundings and the world around them. It suggests that in order for a player to completely understand an idea or a tale from the game, that player's prior knowledge is necessary. There are seven components in the schema theory that must be outlined: Figure and Ground, Prototypicality, Resonance and Ambience, Metaphor and Framing, Simulation and Projection, Mind-Modeling, and Text-Worlds. The result emphasized the importance of schemas in aiding readers to interpret the game's world and characters' accents. This study highlights the significance of Schema Theory in Cognitive Stylistics as a valuable framework for comprehending character development and literary analysis in video games.

I. INTRODUCTION

In contemporary society, the pervasive influence of technology has led to widespread engagement in gaming among teenagers. This phenomenon, often perceived as a mere pastime or even a waste of time, has evolved considerably over the years. Today, the educational potential of video games has garnered significant attention, particularly in the realm of linguistics (Ang & Zaphiris, 2008; Casañ Pitarch, 2017; Mukundan et al., 2014). This study delves into the utilization of video games as a pedagogical tool for linguistic learning, with a focus on the language employed in game character names and the underlying conceptual framework of the games.

As video games have transformed from

being perceived as children's entertainment into a versatile tool employed in various contexts, including education, it has attracted the attention of both younger and older individuals, as well as businesses and educators (De Aguilera & Mendiz, 2003; Jayakanthan, 2002; Kenwright, 2017; Utoyo, 2021). Consequently, video games are no longer viewed solely as a pastime but as a valuable means of improving literacy, particularly for young language learners (Gee, 2015).

Language plays a pivotal role in video games, influencing players' cognitive engagement and the development of positive cognitive effects that is Sherry Turkle, a psychologist and sociologist, has examined the impact of technology on human behavior and cognition, including discussions on video games and their effects on social interactions

and cognitive development the names of game characters, for instance, often incorporate humor and creativity, becoming distinctive features of the games and even transcending into other forms of media. Furthermore, applying Schema Theory to the interpretation of literary texts challenges readers' preconceived notions and highlights the dynamic relationship between background knowledge and interpretation variability (Harrison, Nuttall, Stockwell, & Yuan, 2014).

Language plays a crucial role in video games across various aspects, such as Narrative and Storytelling. Language is a primary tool for conveying the game's story, characters, and world-building. Through dialogues, written text, and voice acting, games use language to immerse players in rich narratives. The next is Instructions and Guidance. In-game instructions, tutorials, and prompts are often conveyed through language. Clear and effective language helps players understand game mechanics, objectives, and how to progress through the game. And then, Cultural and Linguistic Diversity. Games often include diverse characters and settings, showcasing different languages and cultures. This exposure can broaden players' understanding and appreciation of linguistic diversity. And the last one is Emotional Impact. Well-crafted dialogues and narratives can evoke emotions, creating a deeper connection between players and the game's characters or storyline.

To illustrate the relevance of these concepts, this study will examine *Xenoblade Chronicles 3*, an action role-playing game with a vast open world and unique gameplay mechanics. This game's incorporation of linguistic elements, along with its engaging world and character building, serves as a compelling example of how video games can contribute to linguistic learning and literary analysis that includes cognitive that focuses on mental processes like perception, attention, memory, problem-solving, and decision-making. It's highly relevant to understanding how players process information, strategize, and navigate game environments. The theoretical and practical implications of this research hold significant value within the field of pragmatics and cognitive stylistics. This study is expected to contribute to and enrich our understanding of Schema Analysis Theories, a key component of cognitive stylistics, which examines style from a cognitive perspective.

Cognitive stylistics operates on the premise that a text's purpose and meaning are intricately linked to its formal features, encompassing formal description, its connection to a specific spatial and temporal context, and a distinct cognitive framework (Emmott, 2014; Gavins & Steen, 2003; Gibbs, 2006).

In addition to its innovative gameplay, the *Xenoblade Chronicles* series stands out for its distinct use of accents, particularly British accents. The incorporation of diverse English dialects outside of the typical American context has not only enriched the gaming experience but also redefined the series' identity. As we explore this fascinating linguistic aspect within the *Xenoblade Chronicles* series, The study aim to underscore the significance of language in gaming and its potential impact on language learning and literary analysis.

Many writers have written about videogame analysis in the journals and books. Some of these are James P. Gee, who investigated video games through studies with the title of "Thomas Was Alone" (2015: 21–24) and "Metal Gear Solid 4" (2009). The focus of those two studies is different. The first one, by James P. Gee, concentrates on the game's cut scene and examines every aspect of it, including the various outcomes that can follow from choosing to perform or refrain from performing certain activities. In his explanation, he also places emphasis on the design of video games, which means that all of your gameplay decisions affect how successful you are at achieving your objectives (or missions).

Alberto is the second researcher who uses the video game as the subject (2012). He talked about how various video games translate text. Alberto used translational techniques to explain translation in a number of video games in his studies. He places emphasis on features of translations such literal translation, transcreation, no translation, domestication, and foreignization. He included an explanation of the impacts of translation in numerous games that cause the loss of meaning since jokes and puns might not work in another culture.

Moreover, this research aims to incorporate Schema Theory, a cognitive linguistics theory, to systematically analyze literary language and text. By employing Schema Theory, this study endeavors to offer stylisticians and language enthusiasts a methodical approach to analyze literary texts and

enhance their comprehension. It also investigates how Schema Theory can be applied to interpret literary works and explore the connections readers establish between the textual world and their own experiences, bridging the gap between discourse and text worlds.

II. METHODS

The research employs a qualitative descriptive design with a case study approach to provide an in-depth exploration of the themes and topics depicted in the video game *Xenoblade Chronicles 3*. Qualitative research serves as the primary data source, emphasizing the researcher's role as the key instrument. This approach focuses on gathering data expressed in words, rather than numerical data, with the goal of understanding how theories are manifested in various phenomena and their significance to individuals in their natural context (Sugiyono, 2013).

The primary source of data for this study is the video game *Xenoblade Chronicles 3*, developed by Nintendo, a prominent Japanese multinational video game company. The game offers a rich open world and allows for the involvement of up to seven party members, including unique "Hero" characters. These aspects distinguish it from earlier installments in the *Xenoblade* series, where the party size was limited to three characters. The data in this study primarily pertains to the utterances found in the game, with a specific focus on the character named Eunie.

Data collection involves the use of documentary techniques, as only data relevant to addressing the research question is acquired. The process includes retrieving information from the game, applying Schema Theory for data correlation, extracting pertinent points from the theory, and classifying and organizing the selected discourses or literary texts that align with the study's objectives.

The realization of the Schema Theory elements such as Figure and The Ground, Prototypicality, Resonance and Ambience, Metaphor and Framing, Simulation and Projection, and Text-Worlds, all of it will be used to analyze literary language and text from Eunie, using dialogues and utterances from the game or narration to help players analyze and comprehend literary texts. Eunie is chosen as the main character due to the use of British accents and speech patterns to create their personalities and the universe in which they lived.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The theoretical framework for this study is grounded in cognitive stylistics, a multidisciplinary approach that merges rigorous linguistic analysis typical of the stylistics tradition with a theoretically informed exploration of the cognitive structures and processes underlying the use and interpretation of language. Specifically, a cognitive stylistic approach is applied to the characterization of fictional video game characters, seeking to combine linguistic analysis with cognitive insights to illuminate how these characters are constructed and comprehended within the context of video games.

In this study, a cognitive stylistic approach is adopted, and Schema Theory serves as a key theoretical framework. This approach aims to demonstrate the applicability of Schema Theory in the interpretation of literary language and, in this context, the language used in video games. The study seeks to uncover how readers form connections between the textual world presented in the game and their own experiences and background knowledge, effectively bridging the gap between the discourse world and the text world (McVee, Dunsmore, & Gavelek, 2005).

Table 1 The matrices provide a detailed

Table 1. Cognitive Stylistic Elements in the game

Stylistic Element	Description
Metaphors	Examines metaphorical language used in game narratives and its impact on players' cognitive interpretations
Dialogue Structures	Analyzes how different dialogue structures influence players' cognitive engagement and decision-making
Symbolism	Explores symbolic elements within games and their influence on players' cognitive and emotional responses
Narrative Framing	Investigates how narrative framing shapes players' cognitive understanding of game worlds and characters

analysis of the cognitive stylistic components present in games and how they affect various aspects of gameplay. Through this structured presentation, one can gain a better understanding of the intricate relationship between these elements and their influence on the overall gaming experience.

Table 2. highlights the ways in which Cognitive Stylistics can influence the gaming experience. It shows how the use of metaphors, symbolism,

Table 2. Impact of Cognitive Stylistics on Gameplay

Cognitive Aspect	Influence of Stylistic Elements in Games
Engagement and Immersion	Metaphors, symbolism, and narrative framing impact players' immersion and engagement
Decision-Making	Dialogue structures influence players' decision-making processes during gameplay
Emotional Responses	Symbolism and narrative framing evoke emotional responses and shape player experiences
Comprehension	Metaphors and stylistic devices affect players' understanding and interpretation

narrative framing, and dialogue structures affects players' experiences during gameplay. It suggests that the stylistic elements in games play a significant role in shaping players' understanding, interpretation, and emotional responses to the game. Cognitive stylistics can be used in creating an immersive and engaging gaming experience.

Moreover, stylistics acknowledges the crucial role of the reader and the reader's contextual background, aligning with reader response theory. It recognizes that the act of reading involves the generation of textual meaning by the reader, influenced by the reader's sociocultural position and background knowledge. The study emphasizes the reader's role in contributing to the meaning-making process, which is influenced by prior textual and discourse knowledge and the application of cognitive structures such as schemata and metaphorical mapping, as defined within the discipline of cognitive stylistics (Cook, 1994).

IV. DISCUSSION

Figure and The Ground

One critical aspect of schema theory is the concept of "Figure and the Ground." This relates to the reader's ability to distinguish between the main focus (Figure) and the background (Ground) in a text, a matter of mental patterning. In this case, one of the scene from the game in Chapter 1 from the story in the game:

Manana introduces herself, she explains that she's the team chef, responsible for keeping spirits up through good food. And then Eunie glares at Riku, clearly thinking "why don't you do anything like that?" He just glares right back.

This one refers as the perception of the Figure

and the Ground being used. The perception refers to the visual system's propensity to reduce a scene to the main object we're focusing on (the figure) and everything else that makes up the backdrop (or ground). Eunie said to Riku by just looking because of she knew about Manana being good at cooking. Eunie decided to choose Manana as the figure for Riku as she hoping for the team. Manana as the figure to be followed by Riku and then the Ground is the one behind the meaning of the topic in the dialogue, which is being good at cooking food.

Prototypicality

Another aspect discussed is "Prototypicality," a cognitive linguistic concept highlighting how people categorize objects based on their best fit within a category. The article provides an example from the game where characters' prototypicality is evident in their language use. The characters' reactions to a situation reflect how readers may have varied responses to fictional characters based on how well they fit the prototypical characteristics associated with certain attributes or behaviors. The example for prototypicality can be found in Chapter 2 in the story of the game:

After hours of trekking through the dry badlands of the Fornis region as one of the places in the game (with the heat-hating Mio hilariously almost losing the will to go on) the party happens upon an oasis. The girls and the Nopon jump at the chance to cool off and quickly go for a swim. Unfortunately for them, Lanz also decides to jump in, and him being so much bigger and heavier causes an almighty splash that soaks everyone. Once he's resurfaced Eunie erupts in what can only be described as an explosion of Cockney rage. The dialogues are:

Eunie: (gasp) You *muppet!*

Lanz: Ha ha ha!

Eunie: NEVER do that again!

Lanz: C'mon! You're already soaking wet, anyway! What difference does it make?

Eunie: The difference is, you're an *arsehole!*

From the dialogues that happened in the paragraphs above that Eunie is one of a kind language users as Cockney English, Cockney represents the basilectal end of the London accent and can be considered the broadest form of London local accent. Cockney is a regional English accent and dialect that is mostly used by working-class and lower-middle class Londoners. In this case,

she said about *muppet* which is A nicer way to say you are an idiot, or a retard. She also said about *arsehole* which is A British English for *Asshole*. From The dialogue shows that we can categorize Eunie is being one of the English accent users which used the Cockney English as the best fit, Prototypicality in this case is that Eunie is being the one because of the examples such as *muppet* and *arsehole*. These words are always being used by local British English Speakers.

Resonance and Ambience

The study also delves into the concepts of “Resonance and Ambience,” which are built upon the foundation of Figure, Ground, and Prototypicality. These concepts contribute to cognitive grammar models that explain various literary effects. An in-game scene from Chapter 3 illustrates how characters’ responses to Taion’s cooking reflect different perspectives, creating a sense of resonance and ambience. The reader’s imaginative engagement with the text allows for varied interpretations and emotional connections, emphasizing the reader’s role in shaping the literary experience.

In one of the scene from the game, especially from chapter 3, Manana explains that Taion is a terrible cook, which is why she started cooking. Naturally, Taion disputes this. The dialogues are :

Taion: Actually, my cooking just focuses more on efficient absorption of nutrients and convenient portability. And I’ve actually optimized it.

Eunie: ...You mean it used to be even worse?

Mio: H-hey now, I like Taion’s cooking! *It’s... unique!*

Noah: It’s OK. Swallow it down quickly and *you’ll probably be fine*.

Sena: Do you... do you really think you’re helping...?

From these dialogues they can be concluded as the Resonance and Ambience, because of the vary use of clause such as from the words “*it’s... unique!*” and “*you’ll probably fine*” is simply telling about not everything can simply be labeled as bad. To explain more about Resonance and Ambience in this case, The characters Mio and Noah has experienced and knew that Taion is a terrible cook, so in this case the characters are just being polite, or in a setting where criticism is discouraged. This can be happened because of something that happened before that can make another character make their own perspective on it based on what happened. Its also can be used as trolls or cynical critics who prefer to use witty

insults. From the words by Eunie by saying “You mean it used to be even worse?” we can see that Eunie is imagining that Taion’s cooking wasn’t good and already guessed it right, that’s why Taion insist that he already optimize his skill in terms of cooking. From here we can see that based only the experience it can be concluded that Taion wasn’t good in terms of cooking so from this his friends realized that and tried to support Taion while, Eunie in this case just straight insult him. The dialogues use grammatical forms as a triggering tool to literary effects. It works at the clausal level as well as discourse level and all the points between them.

Metaphors and Framing

Metaphors are fundamental to human communication and cognition, as they help convey, reflect, and reinforce various ways of understanding different aspects of our lives. This central role of metaphor is often metaphorically described as “framing.” The concept of framing has been widely discussed and employed in various fields, including sociology, artificial intelligence, and semantics, and it involves the use of specific lexical and grammatical choices in language. In this context, a “frame” represents a portion of background knowledge related to a specific aspect of the world. It generates expectations and inferences in communication and actions.

In one scene from the game, which occurs in Chapter 4, Eunie expresses her displeasure about their exit strategy during a discussion about raiding Keves Castle. Eunie’s statement, “More snuffin’ water. Every time we run, why do we always end up getting drenched? I mean, feathers are a bitch to dry,” exemplifies the use of metaphor. Here, the word “bitch” does not refer to a woman trying to please men. Instead, Eunie employs it as a metaphor to convey her frustration and annoyance whenever her feathers (around her head) get wet. Her feathers are difficult to dry, and this becomes a source of irritation for her.

Another instance of framing through metaphor occurs when they arrive in a city within the game, also in Chapter 4. Valdi refers to the city’s inhabitants as “eyepatch folks.” This can be seen as framing because the term “eyepatch folks” is a way of categorizing the people in the city as those who wear eyepatches. This choice of terminology shapes expectations and inferences in communication and actions. In the same scene, Zeon expresses the feeling of being watched, to

which Eunie responds, “Guess they’ve never seen folks with wings before. They’re the weird ones, just stare back.” Eunie’s statement emphasizes the contrast between her group with wings and the city’s inhabitants, highlighting their differences. This metaphorical framing underscores the impact of knowledge and experience on communication, as the city’s residents are regarded as “weird” by Eunie’s party due to their unique characteristics.

Metaphors and the concept of framing are significant in understanding how language shapes our perceptions and interactions. The metaphors used in these scenes in the game demonstrate how individuals frame their experiences and the world around them, and how specific linguistic choices can influence expectations and inferences in communication and action.

Simulation and Projection

The phenomenon of readers being emotionally impacted by fictitious events and the experiences of the characters in literature can be explained through simulation. When we read literary works, we don’t experience made-up happiness, sadness, or other feelings; however, literary reading does evoke real emotions, moods, and other genuine impacts. In cognitive stylistics, specific textual patterns that enable these experiences can be identified, often through the examination of a text’s deictic elements. Deictic elements encompass all the passages in a text that delineate the various perspectives of the author, the narrator, the fictional characters, and the readers. To construct a reader’s imagined viewpoint relative to this deictic center-point, readers must be able to conceive and adopt the character’s perspective using personal pronouns as well as the spatial and temporal features of the text. The stylistic method that allows a reader to immerse themselves in the imagined scene and keep track of every person in it is known as deictic projection.

In a scene from the game, the Hero characters offer various observations and thoughts about the places they visit, some of which can be quite amusing. For example, Cammuravi has a unique perspective on the behavior of children in the park: Cammuravi: “This is a warzone for these little ones. They fight each other for territory.” Noah: “I didn’t realize parks were such dangerous places...”

From the dialogue, the kids around the park are “fighting” each other to get their own territory.

Simulation accounts for the counterintuitive phenomenon that readers are moved emotionally by those fictional events as though they experience them. In this case the player realized that the park itself is a place where the kids are fighting for their own territory. Even though the player cannot feel the real fight by getting real hit, but it can be imagined that it always happened like that way. While the projection in this case is the park where the fights between the kids always happened.

Eunie, a character in the video game, was chosen for further study due to her unique speech patterns and British accents, which added depth to her character. The study highlighted the role of schemas in aiding readers to interpret the game’s world and how the characters’ accents and speech patterns shaped their personalities and the game’s universe. In essence, schemas allow readers to streamline their understanding of the extensive information presented in the game’s environment. In essence, this study underscores the significance of Schema Theory within Cognitive Stylistics as a valuable framework for understanding literary analysis, character development, and the cognitive processes underlying reading experiences in a video game.

V. CONCLUSION

The exploration of cognitive stylistics within video games unveils a profound relationship between stylistic elements and players’ cognitive experiences. Findings consistently highlight the pivotal role played by narrative engagement, linguistic impact, dialogue structures, and stylistic devices in shaping players’ immersion, emotional engagement, decision-making, and comprehension during gameplay. The integration of cognitive stylistics into game design emerges as a powerful tool for enhancing the gaming experience. Strategies that effectively leverage metaphors, narrative framing, symbolism, and diverse dialogue structures significantly elevate player immersion, enrich emotional connections, influence decision-making processes, and enhance overall comprehension of game narratives. This study underscores the potential for cognitive stylistics not only to elevate entertainment value but also to extend the educational potential of games. By strategically employing stylistic elements, game designers can create more engaging and effective gaming experiences that cater to diverse player preferences and demographics.

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